



Understanding & Reacting To Google Algorithm Updates

Conductor Expert: A Live Training Series

2024

Agenda



Presentation Duration:

45 minutes



Facilitators:

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Strategy Director
- Customer Success Team

Today we will review the following:

- Types of Algorithm Updates
- Update Announcement To Dos
- Mid and Post-Update To Dos
- Future Proofing Your Site

Tips for Learning

- Log in at app.conductor.com to follow along.
- Ask questions or add your comments/thoughts via the chat.
- Revisit the workflow after today's webinar.
- Reach out to our Conductor Support team 24/5.



What Are Google Algorithm Updates?



Google Search

I'm Feeling Lucky

Three Main Types of Updates

Broad Core Update

- Occur 3-5 times per year
- Includes updates to Google's "core" algorithm
- Usually have wide-ranging impacts

Specified Update

- Occur ad hoc, though recently often concurrent with a Core update
- Updates a specific part of Google's algorithm
- Impacts are usually constrained to the update's target

Ongoing Updates

- Constantly occurring
- Google's algorithm includes machine learning elements that are always updating themselves
- Localized impacts

Types of Updates

Similar to Updates For your Smartphone

Google algorithm updates are similar to how we update our phones periodically

Broad Core Updates - This is when your entire phone OS updates and your phone needs to restart

Specified Updates - This is when you update a few specific apps on your phone

Ongoing Updates - This is similar to your phone's autocorrect learning how you write as you use it more



Broad Core Updates

“Several times a year, Google makes significant, broad changes to our [search algorithms and systems](#). We refer to these as core updates, and we give notice when they happen on our [list of Google Search ranking updates](#). Core updates are designed to ensure that overall, we're delivering on our mission to present helpful and reliable results for searchers.”

- [Google](#)

- These updates usually don't come with a lot of information about what is included in the update, and often occur with a day or less warning from Google
- They usually take about two weeks to fully rollout
- These updates are global and impact all locations and languages Google supports

Specified Updates

These updates target a specific part of Google's algorithm, or have a specified element the update is targeting. For example, in March we had a "Spam Update", which targeted content Google deemed as low quality

- These updates are usually named by their date and target, i.e. "March 2024 Spam Update"
- These updates sometimes come with more warning from Google
- Sometimes these updates rollout by region

Ongoing Updates

Google incorporated machine learning elements into its algorithm years ago, and those elements are constantly updating. These aren't what most people think of when talking about "algorithm updates" but it's important to keep in mind that Google's algorithm is constantly evolving

- These small updates are happening all the time
- Just because there isn't an official "algorithm update" doesn't mean your rankings can't change



What Can You Do?

When An Update Is Released

Gather Information

Learn as much as you can about the update before or at the beginning of its release.

Set Up Monitoring

You want to monitor keyword rankings and analytics data, noting the change from before the update began.

Be Ready To React

If your site is impacted by the update, there are no quick fixes, so you should be ready to get to work on recovery as soon as it's needed.

Gather Information

Updates can come with varying amounts of lead time. Once you know an update is coming or has started to roll out, find as much as you can about it to prepare. Google will make [official announcements on their site](#), trade publication will also have articles on them fairly quickly, and your Conductor team will be ready to advise

- What type of update is it?
- What is the rollout timeline?
- What is the update targeting?

Set Up Monitoring

As soon as an update is announced, you want to make sure you'll be the first to know if it impacts your site.

Conductor makes this easy by adding tables to a workspace with a **fixed start date** the week before the update began rolling out.

Add to a Workspace ✕

Workspaces are custom views you can share. This widget will display exactly as it is now, so adjust any filters and settings (like table columns or sorting) before adding.

Workspace

Title

Description

Report on
 vs most recent

Set Up Monitoring

1. Got to Workspaces and create a new blank workspace. Title it with the name of the update
2. Before adding anything to the workspace, set up an automated email cadence for it to come to your inbox Monday mornings
3. Go to Measure > Keywords and you're going to add the table at the bottom of that page to your new workspace sorted in three different ways:
 - a. MSV highest to lowest
 - b. Rank Change positive
 - c. Rank Change negative
4. Got to Measure > Pages and add the line graph and the table at the bottom sorted in three ways:
 - a. By visits/session largest to smallest
 - b. By change in visits positively
 - c. By change in visits negatively
5. Got to Measure > Market Share and adjust the Search Results filter to display Top 10
 - a. Sort the table at the bottom by Market Share and add it to your workspace

Set Up Monitoring

After following those steps, you'll receive an email with all of the data you'll need to identify if you've been impacted by an update.

The email is a great reminder to check rankings when new data is published. I also recommend creating a recurring calendar event for yourself Monday mornings for the duration of the update as an added reminder.

If the update has a specific target, or you have a priority page or keyword group you want to keep a closer eye on, add that data to your workspace as well.

Be Ready to Act

If your site is impacted by an algorithm update, it will probably take some time to recover. But you should be ready to act to keep that time as short as possible.

If you work with a content team, you can alert them that they might need to deviate from their content calendar to support recovery efforts on existing pages.

If your technical updates have an approval process, alert the team that you may have some priority tickets to submit to support a recovery effort.

During and After an Update

Stay Up To Date

Make sure you know the latest news about the current update and if any trends are emerging.

Monitor Your Data

Monitor rankings and traffic to look for any decreases (or increases).

React If Needed

If you see decreases in metrics, and nothing has changes and there are no other explanations for the drops, begin work on recovery efforts.

Stay Up to Date

Especially with broad core updates that don't come with much detail from Google, the search community is often where we find out about the trends of the update and what it's targeting.

Be sure to keep up with any trends found in the trade publications and what other SEOs are seeing on their sites.

Your Conductor team will also inform you of any trends we're seeing.

Monitor Your Data

Check the workspace you set up when the update was announced every Monday morning.

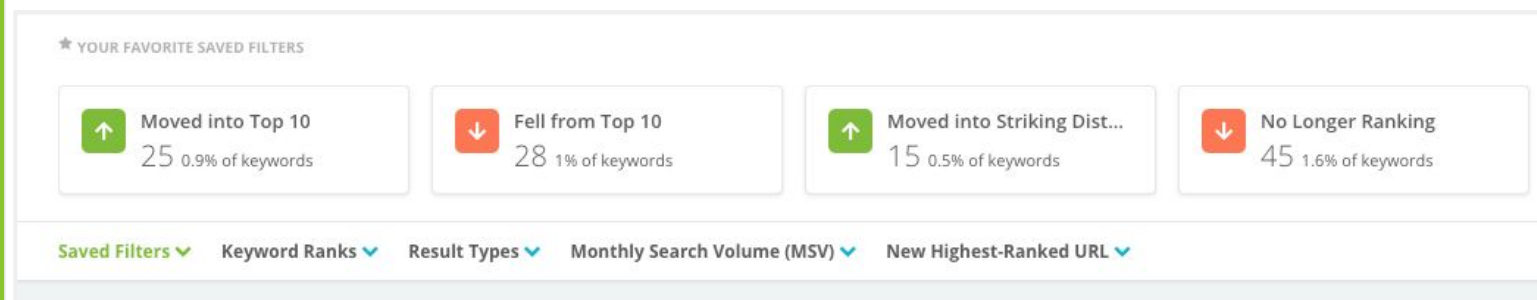
If something looks questionable, dig into the data to see if there's an explanation outside of an algorithm update.

ContentKing's tracked change feature can help you easily identify if anything has changed on the page that could cause changes to your metrics.

Monitor Your Data

Bonus Tip: The built in filter cards on Conductor's Keywords report can be a good bellwether for algorithm impact as well.

If the percent of your keywords that fits one of those criteria is above 15%, it's a good indication that the update has impacted your site.



React If Needed

If your data is telling you that you've been impacted by an update, it's time to get to work on recovery.

If you've seen declines, use your knowledge about the update to optimize your site in line with what Google has changed.

Once you've made your optimizations, be sure to re-submit the URL in Google Search Console for re-indexing.

Content Guidance in Conductor is a great way to see the new pages performing well for your keywords and to what they're doing that you're not to help optimize your page.

React If Needed

If you need additional assistance in recovery efforts, Conductor has resources to help you.

Organic Marketing Requests from the Conductor Marketplace can take work off of your plate, provide additional data points and recommendations, and more.

If further assistance is needed, Conductor's Professional Services team offers packages of consulting hours and projects that can provide additional guidance through the recovery process.

Reach out to your Account Manager if you're interested in additional Marketplace credits or working with the Professional Services team.



Future-Proof Your Website

Future-Proof Your Website

How can you future-proof your website to avoid declines from an algorithm update?

- Follow Google's guidelines
 - Google provides detailed guides on making your site accessible and crawlable that every site should follow
 - They also advise to create content for users, not search engines
- Avoid Black Hat SEO Tactics
 - Google wants its result to be the best, and their detection for anything out of line with its guidelines is very good now
- Avoid Grey Hat SEO Tactics
 - *Google wants its result to be the best, and their detection for anything out of line with its guidelines is very good now*

Future-Proof Your Website

Stay ahead of the game. Here are all of the updates Google's released since Jan 2023. What sticks out to you?

- February 2023 Product Reviews Update
- March 2023 Core Update
- April 2023 Reviews Update
- August 2023 Core Update
- September 2023 Helpful Content Update
- October 2023 Core Update
- October 2023 Spam Update
- November 2023 Core Update
- November 2023 Review Update
- March 2024 Spam Update
- March 2024 Core Update

Future-Proof Your Website

You can also glean insights from non-algorithm-update news from Google.

Recently Google introduced a new Core Web Vital, Interaction to Next Paint. Essentially, INP measures how long it takes for something to happen on a page after a click (a drop down opens, a video starts loading, etc).

Previously, all of the Core Web Vitals were about loading the page as fast as possible initially. Now we have a metric that's more about performing fast as well.

It's logical to assume that one day in the future, there will be an update that favors sites with better INP times. Therefore, you should be optimizing for INP now.



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Thank you!



Poll Questions

Look to the poll tab to participate.

