



Google Search Basics: Rules and Tools

Article by Kelly A. Baltzell, M.A., CEO, Beyond Indigo Pets

Google Search, Part 1

Over the past 25 years, Google has grown and developed into the robust, mature software that we use today. In its infancy, Google was just Google. The plain white page with a search bar, still their signature today, was a game changer. Now, years later, that plain white search bar produces four different search results: organic, mobile, local, and Ads. Plus, Google has now jumped off the page into voice search with the help of Google Assistants. And, the kicker is that a business needs to be in all five in order to be found by its potential and current clients. Why? Because Google is in the business to make money and it says this is the way the system works. This article is Part 1 of a two-part series.

Google rules

If a practice plays by Google's rules, then it will be found and seen in Google. However, that requires patience on the end of the practice because Google requires the rules to be followed for a solid six months to a year. The only shortcut to higher visibility is running Ads on Google. Why does Google make us take deep breaths and wait? First, of course, Google is in the business to make money and the longer we have to work on being good kids on Google, the more money it makes. Second, Google has determined that the longer a business has to follow consistent Google rules, the more likely (according to Google) the business is legit. Google has been working on its current rule book since 2011, when it rolled out the Google Panda rule. Since then, it has added a few key rules that still apply today, e.g. Page Speed and Mobile-Friendly pages. Here are some of the pertinent rules and how they apply to Search Engine Optimization (SEO).

- **Google Panda.** The basic idea of Google Panda is that there should be no duplicate content on a website...ever. Google only wants one version of a piece of content on the internet. Other websites can link to that content, but not copy and paste it onto their own website. If a website has content that is duplicated from another source on the internet, then it will be penalized—period. Google loves this rule so much that it is now embedded into its algorithm permanently. To check if your hospital's website has duplicate content, go to www.copyscape.com and type in your domain name. There is no exception to this rule, per Google. If your website is showing duplicate content, take steps to replace it with your own unique content ASAP.
- **Mobile Indexing.** Google rolled out the responsive website design requirement on April 21, 2015. That meant that responsive design would be a ranking factor for a website from that date forward. Responsive design is where a website changes to adapt to different size screens, from mobile devices to 80-inch TV screens. The layout of the website will change depending on the device. No longer will a miniature version of a website on a mobile device pass muster with Google. A few years later, on July 1, 2019, the Google Developers' website announced that "mobile indexing is now a factor for all new, previously unknown to Google Search." Since then, new websites have been judged to see whether they make the cut to the new, separate Google index that is just for mobile devices. (Index means where Google goes to "look" for data to display in search results.) To find out if your website meets Google's requirements, go to <https://search.google.com/test/mobile-friendly>.
- **Page Speed.** Back in 1995, we were willing to wait for the blue bar to move across our screen, which could take multiple minutes. Now, humanity has zero tolerance for slow-moving website pages. Google knows this since it watches and monitors everything that we do. For people to keep using Google as a search engine, Google knows that search results need to be quick. Plus, the clicks people make need to pull up fast-loading websites or they will bail and do a different search. Google uses its page listing power to "encourage" website owners to have a website that loads quickly. If a page loads slower than molasses, then it will not be found at the top of the search engine results. Google

"To monitor how well the search engine optimization is working, Google has developed some tools for website owners to utilize. Every practice owner should learn how to read the reports that these tools provide to see if their marketing is on track."

even helps a business know if their website page is slow or fast by providing a tool to test page speed. Go to <https://developers.google.com/speed/pagespeed/insights/> to see how fast your website loads on mobile and desktop devices.

Google monitoring tools for search

Once the rules are followed and a marketing program is launched, the results should be measured. To monitor how well the search engine optimization is working, Google has developed some tools for website owners to utilize. Every practice owner should learn how to read the reports that these tools provide to see if their marketing is on track. In addition, every owner of every hospital should be listed as an "Admin" in the following areas:

- **Google Console.** This is where Google gives warnings and messages to the owner of a website. Be it the webmaster, marketing company, or do-it-yourself types, Google Console needs to be monitored on an ongoing basis. This area can give valuable information on how people are finding the website as well. If Google notifies a hospital through Google Console that there are issues, and they go unfixed, SEO will be affected. Google does not want user experience to suffer by sending people to a poorly managed site. To sign up for Google Console, go

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

to <https://search.google.com/search-console/about>.

- **Google Analytics.** This holds the motherlode of data about a practice's behind-the-scenes marketing. Information, from the age of users, location on the planet, traffic flow within the site, mobile usage, and more is listed. This area is akin to a lab report for a hospital. It shows the diagnostics of how the internal workings are performing. To start using Google Analytics, go to <https://analytics.google.com/analytics/web/>. This data-rich environment has grown in complexity over the years to the point where Google offers a free online Academy to learn how to data mine your data. Go to <https://analytics.google.com/analytics/academy/> to start today.
- **Google My Business (GMB).** This has emerged as the newest offering for Google and is focused on local search. Substantial data lives here, such as volume of phone calls made, number of times directions were requested and from where, and clicks to the website. GMB is also the depository for demographic information about the practice, such as hours it is open, address, etc. Google data mines this area to use in other aspects of Google. It assumes the business is keeping it up-to-date and accurate. To sign up and start using Google My Business, go to <www.google.com/business>.

Want help deciphering Google's rule book to focus on your 2020 marketing program? We make it easy with simple marketing plans that keep your marketing car on the road. Marketing done right matters greatly. Our results are the proof in the pudding, with high click-through-rates and tails streaming through doors. Beyond Indigo has been conducting internet marketing for 22 years. Our team knows the old and the new. We focus on results first and discuss costs second. We are committed to staying up to date with the changing online environment, such as ADA compliance. Plus, we are Google Ads Partners, and we know how to build Google mobile-friendly and fast websites. Need help creating a marketing plan? Call 877.244.9322, ext. 100, or go to <https://www.beyondindigopets.com/contact/>.

Also check out:

- Educational Blog at <BeyondIndigoPets.com/Blog>
- Facebook at <Facebook.com/BeyondIndigoPets>
- YouTube at <YouTube.com/BeyondIndigoPets>
- Twitter at [@BeyondPets](https://twitter.com/BeyondPets)



Kelly Baltzell, M.A. is President and CEO of the Beyond Indigo family of companies which she founded in 1997. Beyond Indigo is a full-service marketing company focusing on Search Engine Optimization, is a Google Adwords Partner, Social Media Marketing, Online Reviews and websites. She has been a monthly columnist for MWI Animal Health since 2011. She has also presented and been published in Australia, New Zealand, Canada and the UK.

Beyond Indigo is an MWI Animal Health Distinct Advantage™ program partner. To discuss how your practice can qualify for a free Distinct Advantage program membership, contact your MWI Territory Manager.

Distinct Advantage™
AmerisourceBergen

