

# seo & traffic

## Profit Parrot

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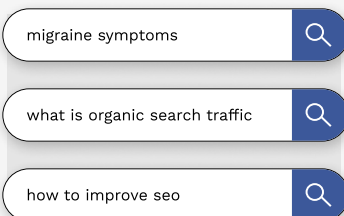


### The Truth About Traffic

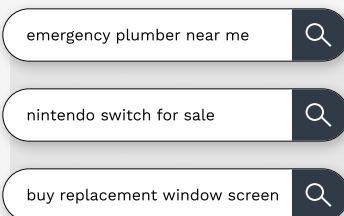
Website traffic comes from a variety of sources—by going straight to a website without using a search engine (direct), through linking referrals, paid ads, or social media. However, organic search is still king and is responsible for **53%** of all traffic coming to a website on average [1]. While organic search traditionally delivers far more traffic to websites than any other channel, *tracking* organic traffic continues to be difficult.

There are **4 core intents** when it comes to organic search. Each of these intents tie into different search layouts and results. This helps the searcher accomplish their goal (or intent) as quickly and accurately as possible.

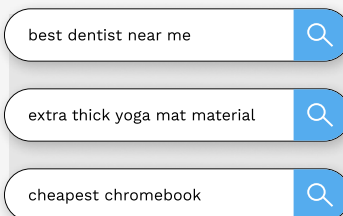
#### Informational



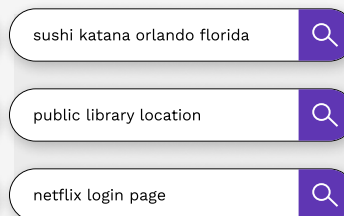
#### Transactional



#### Research



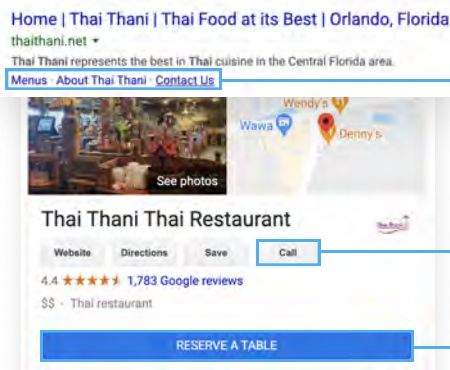
#### Navigational



Each intent has different features that become part of the search result to make the result more useful and accomplish the intent better/faster. For example, **navigational and transactional** searches will likely yield map results with direct click-to-call actions and directions—while **informational** search results have a featured snippet or direct answer at the top of the SERP, requiring no further action (or “zero-click”). In fact, informational search results are often the main culprit in lost traffic—zero-click results are great for the end-user, but requires no additional action which means often there is no click or conversion tracked by your website.

Other results, like **research**, typically yield expanded search features like Google tools (job listings widget, direct booking, etc.), related images, carousel results, and recommended videos. Each of these additional search results/features detract from a website's overall clicks and traffic, which is why we typically see a rise in **impressions** (the amount of times content is displayed) rather than **direct visits** (clicks/traffic leading to a website).

**Important Note:** Good SEO can help capture zero-click customers! For example, if there is a phone number in the meta title or description of your website, this is easily clickable by searchers using a smartphone or tablet. When SEO is done right, searchers can also click on **local listings, maps, and featured snippets** without ever going to a website.



Popular website shortcuts

Zero-click 'call' button

Zero-click 'reserve a table' button

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## Tracking Organic Traffic

How and where you get your organic traffic data can affect what you see and how accurate it is. The most common tools used for website analytics are Google Analytics, Google Search Console, Omniture (Adobe Analytics), and SEMRush. Each of these tools collect and measure data in different ways.

It is the slight differences in how traffic data is collected that causes discrepancies from one tool to another, affecting data accuracy between +4% to -11% of visits received [3]. Even something as simple as a visitor's default internet browser can affect reported traffic by up to 26% [3]. **Because no single tool can provide all the data needed to track a visitor on your website, it's important to pull data from multiple sources and piece it together to form a more comprehensive data picture.**

Currently, the best source for keyword data is Google's Keyword Planner (previously known as Google Adwords). However, this platform no longer provides average search volumes, but instead provides average search volume ranges.

That means we don't truly know what kind of search volume a keyword has since it falls within the fairly large ranges provided by Google and depends on a variety of factors.



Missing data, miscategorized traffic, and spam also continue to be consistent and ever-changing issues with organic traffic. These issues have a larger impact on websites with smaller amounts of traffic (generally those with less than 5,000 visitors a month). While these particular concerns can impact any website, it's often less impactful to sites with higher traffic data.

Missing traffic can also come from ad-blockers, empty referral data, timed-out sessions, missing cookies, or even disabled technology like javascript. All of these things lead to gaps within Google Analytics data.

**Given today's analytics toolset and functionality, we don't have a feasible or scalable way to tie keyword rank to organic traffic.** Most people can make a general case about improved traffic gains from improving keyword rankings, but tying this directly to a singular keyword or keyword phrase is simply not possible at this time.

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## Google Updates & Traffic

**"My keywords are ranking on page 1 but my traffic went down,"** is a common concern in our industry. Traffic has a number of elements that no one can control, including seasonality, industry trends, bots, and Google algorithm updates. When BERT was implemented in October of 2019, many business owners saw a drop in low-intent traffic as BERT was used to better understand context and nuance in search queries. This update helped computers understand language more like humans do and helped match a searcher's intent with more relevant results.

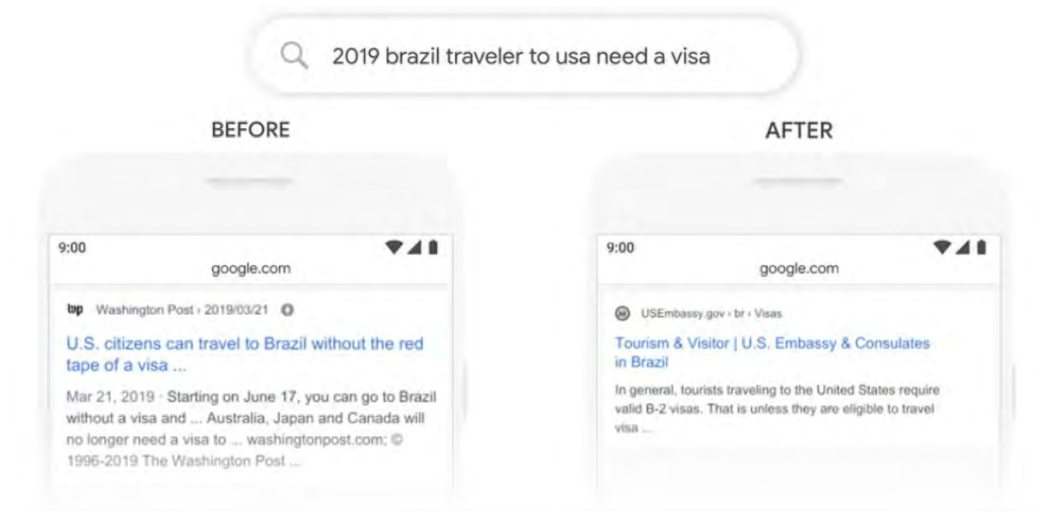
For example, let's say someone from Brazil wants to know if they need a visa to visit the USA. According to Google, "The word "to" and its relationship to the other words in the query are particularly important to understanding the meaning. It's about a Brazilian citizen traveling to the U.S., and not the other way around.

Previously, our algorithms wouldn't understand the importance of this connection, and we returned results about U.S. citizens traveling to Brazil. With BERT, Search is able to grasp this nuance and know that the very common word "to" actually matters a lot here, and we can provide a much more relevant result for this query [4]."

When small business owners saw their traffic dip after BERT's implementation, it was largely traffic that was **NOT** relevant to their business to begin with.

While it's important to always keep an eye on organic traffic, it is not a metric that should be viewed in isolation when deeming whether an SEO campaign is successful or not.

If traffic is viewed correctly in year over year data, accounting for as many controllable variables as possible (correct installation, spam/bot/internal filtering, goal/conversion tracking, etc.), then it is a metric that can be viewed and used accurately to help support the benefits of increased organic rankings and organic leads/conversions. Otherwise, it is best to keep organic traffic as a tracked side metric, but not touted as a guaranteed byproduct of SEO.

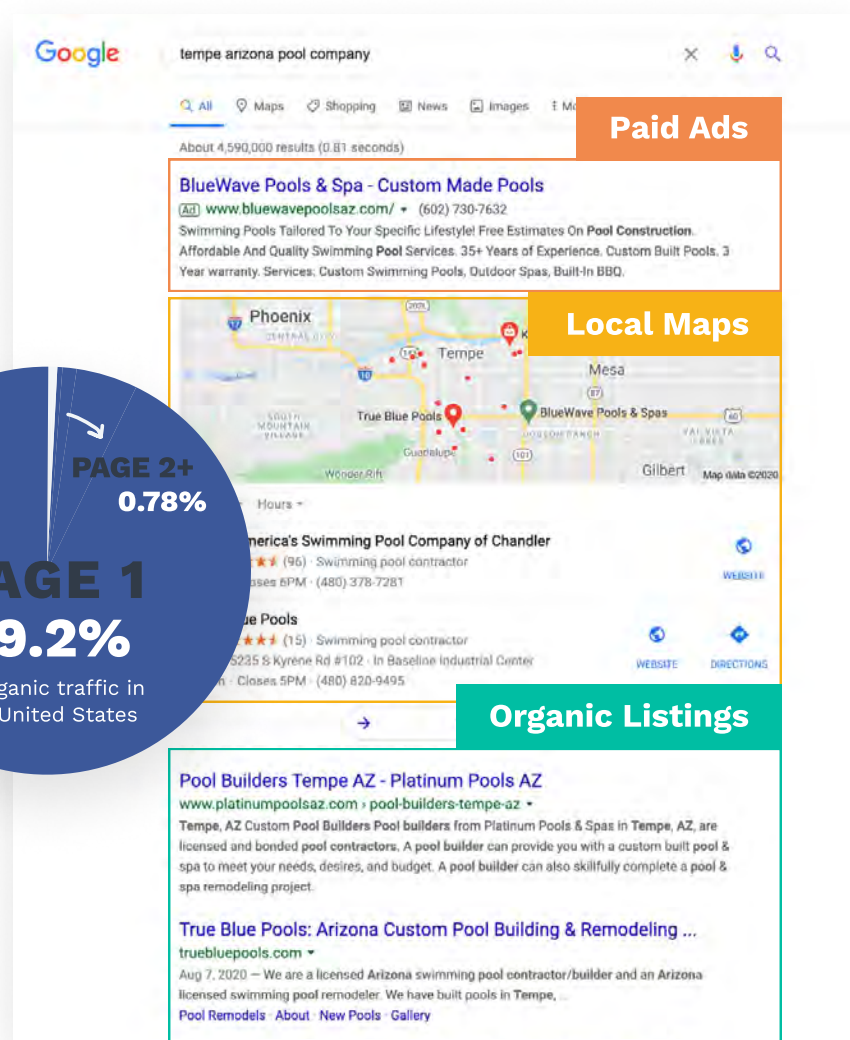


## Why It's Important to Be on Page 1

When users type a query in a search engine, they are presented with results that include paid ads and organic search results. Organic traffic refers to visitors that come to a website from a search engine that was earned naturally, not paid for via advertising. And Search Engine Optimization (SEO) is the work that goes into ranking websites at the top of these organic search results.

SEO is all about online visibility. If your business isn't in the organic search results on the first page of Google, you don't exist to over 99% of searchers [2].

Ranking on the first page of Google is our #1 metric for an SEO campaign's success. While many people see an increase in impressions as they rank higher in Google's Search Engine Results Page (SERP), increased traffic is *not* guaranteed as part of an SEO campaign.



## How SEO Can Help Grow Your Business

We can't guarantee more traffic, but we can get you on the first page of Google where you have the opportunity to be found by more searchers looking for your services/products.

### Traffic Quality is More Important than Traffic Quantity

Forrester Group found the conversion rate of an optimized page is **200% higher** [5]. As part of our process, we optimize your website with **intent to buy** in mind. We interpret "searcher intent"—the action searchers intend to take—for each keyword. This helps us identify people who are more likely to come to your site ready to make a purchase rather than targeting users who are simply looking for information.

### Bounce Rate

Bounce rate is defined as the percentage of visitors that leave a webpage without taking an action, such as clicking on a link, filling out a form, or making a purchase. Quality content and a user-friendly website (thanks SEO!) can improve the browsing experience and make people want to stay on your website longer. The longer people stay on your website, the more likely they are to make a purchase.

### Traffic Conversion

Traffic alone is a vehicle. First page rankings lead to traffic. Traffic can lead to calls/visits. However, at the end of the day, you can't beat a good customer experience and **strong, actionable website content** is what ultimately helps convert traffic into paying customers. Traffic doesn't mean much if people don't take **action** on what they see. If your visitors truly aren't converting, review your website's ability to close leads with the following questions:

The best way to measure growth is by **comparing traffic year over year**.

This helps businesses account for fluctuations in seasonality and provides an objective view of overall performance.

- How am I encouraging people to come to my business and purchase products/services?
- Are my phone numbers and call to actions prevalent on my website?
- Do my top ranking competitors have any specific emphasis or call to action on their landing page?
- Who is ranking around me?
- Is my competition offering special discounts or sales?
- Is there anything that stands out as to why my competition could be getting more leads?

To get yourself seen, you should be on the 1st page of Google. By improving the **quality of the traffic** visiting your site, the likelihood of traffic-to-lead conversion rates will increase. A well optimized website, courtesy of SEO, that brings in both quality traffic *and* encourages people to take action will lead to higher success for your business.

#### Sources

Organic Search Responsible for 53% of All Site Traffic [Study], BrightEdge, 2019 [1]

Here's What We Learned About Organic Click Through Rate, Backlinko, 2019 [2]

- Less than 1% of Google searches go to the second page

- This increased from 75-92% in 2014 (Moz) and 75% in 2014 (Hubspot)

How Much Data is Missing from Analytics, Moz, 2018 [3]

Understanding Searches Better Than Ever Before, Google, 2019 [4]

Business Case: The Digital Customer Experience Improvement Playbook, Forrester Group, 2016 [5]