

HOW SEO HAS EVOLVED IN THE 2020S



Five core concepts that affect how we SEO

AGENDA



1. Introduction
2. The rise of the knowledge graph
3. From keywords to topics
4. Structured data as a complement to natural language processing
5. Accessibility and prioritizing core web vitals
6. A renewed interest in building trust
7. Discussion

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SEO FROM 2000-2015

SEO UNTIL 2015

1. SEO was more formulaic:
a certain number of words,
pages and keywords could
more or less guarantee
success.

The "Perfectly" Optimized Page

(for the example keyword phrase "chocolate donuts")

Page URL: <http://marysbakery.com/chocolate-donuts>

Page Title: Chocolate Donuts | Mary's Bakery

Meta Description: Mary's Bakery's chocolate donuts are possibly the most delicious, perfectly formed, flawlessly chocolately donuts ever made.

H1 Headline:
Chocolate Donuts from Mary's Bakery

Image Filename:
chocolate-donuts.jpg



Body Text: _____

_____chocolate donuts_____

_____donuts_____

_____chocolate donuts_____

_____donuts_____

chocolate_____

MARKETING | 4 MIN READ

How Often Should You (or Your Company) Blog? [New Data]

Written by Kayla Carmicheal



Starting a blog is tough. Thinking about what to post and how to promote it requires strategic planning. And will your content resonate with and delight your customers?

We haven't even covered how often companies should post — a factor that can make or break even the greatest of content.

[→ Download Now: 6 Free Blog Post Templates](#)

You might be surprised to know that even though there's a surplus of hard data about why blog posts are integral to marketing, there is not much on the frequency of posting. This is because, well, it depends.

If ambiguity gets your heart racing, fear not. Here, we'll offer suggestions and stats to help inform your decision.



How Often Should You Blog?

The frequency of blog posts depends on what's best for your company. Smaller businesses have found comfort and success posting one to four times a week, while larger companies can push out daily and, sometimes, multiple daily posts.

If you're a marketing team of one, don't feel the need to constantly pump out content. If you do, you'll probably find yourself getting burned out and releasing content that's not beneficial to you or your audience.

Keeping a schedule when blogging is important for two reasons. First, it builds organic traffic. Next, it helps with brand awareness. We'll get into why below.

Organic traffic

Blogging is important for SEO if you want to increase visits to your website. But, if you are already posting valuable content, it might benefit you to go back and update that content, especially if after a little while, you want to give certain posts a boost.

Blog post traffic is compounding, which means it gains organic results over time. This is why updating posts are important. This gives you more reads, more recognition, and possibly, more fans.

Knowledge Check

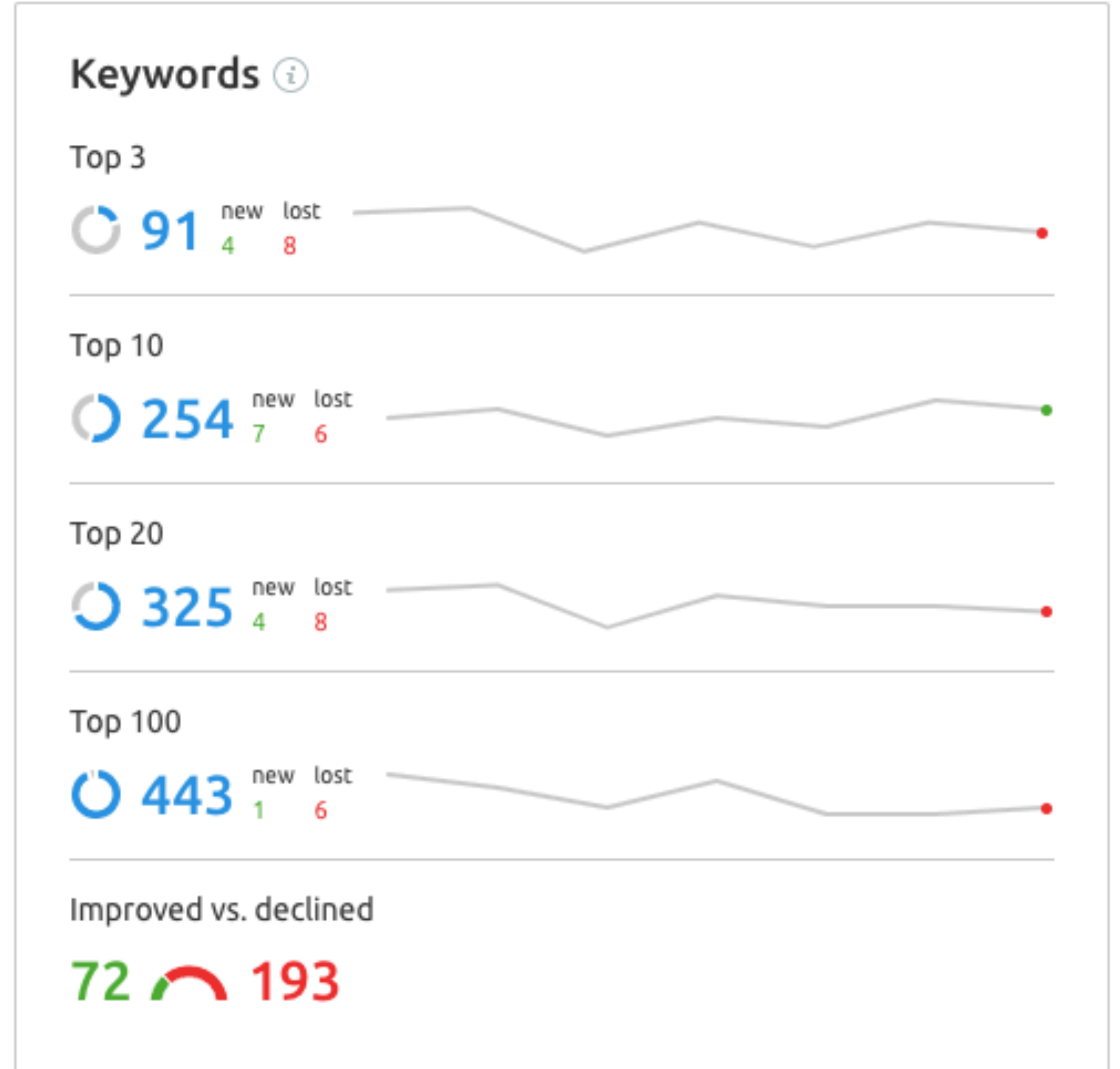


SEO UNTIL 2015

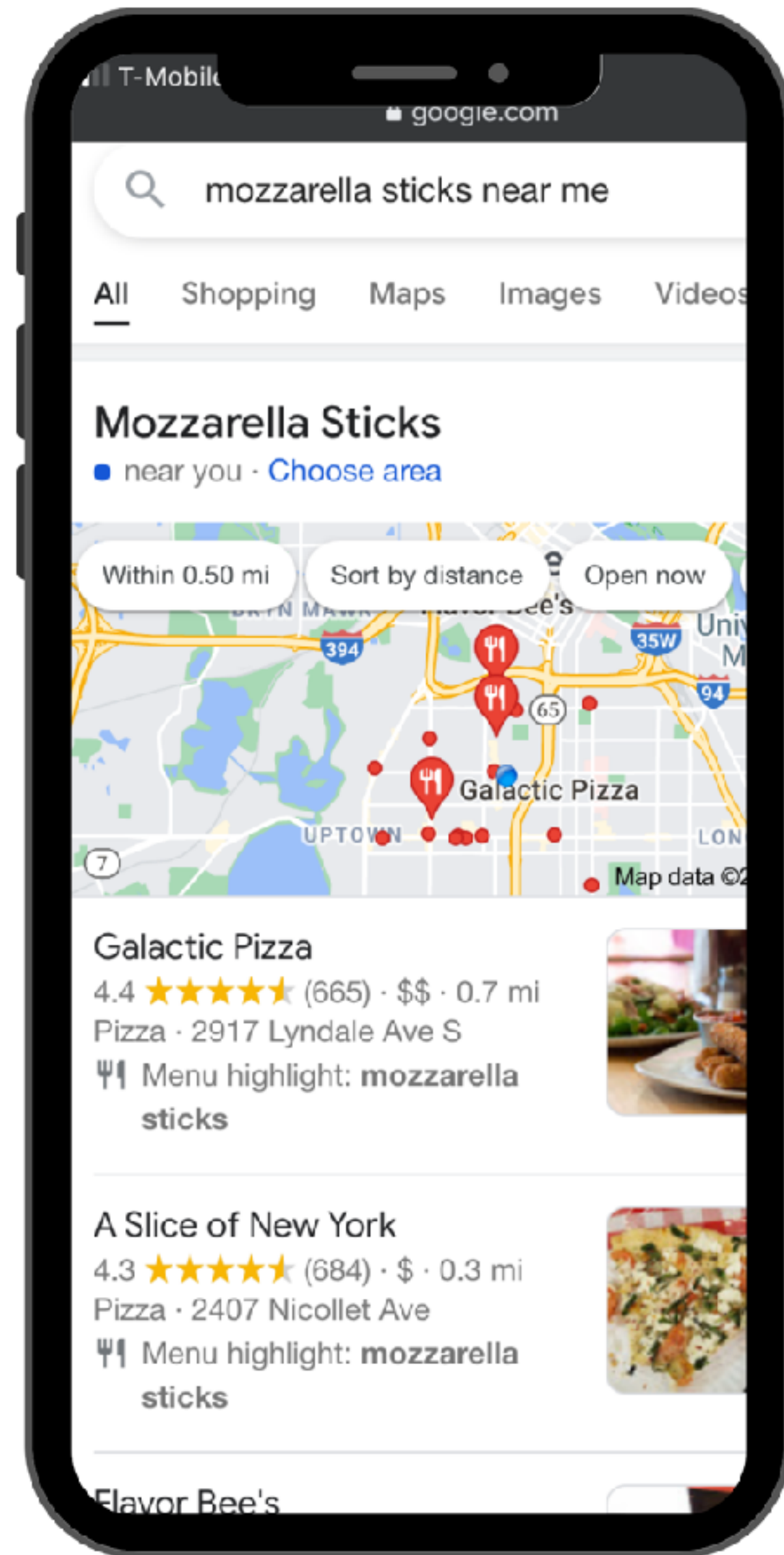
2. The "HubSpot model" brought brands success: Information architecture isn't as important as long-tail landing pages for major topics

SEO UNTIL 2015

3. Rank tracking was the major way brands/agencies tracked SEO progress.



SEO UNTIL 2015



4. Mobile SEO was pretty much nonexistent.

5. 2013: Hummingbird update + "not provided" data shifted optimization from keyword stuffing to better content



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THE END OF THE 2010S

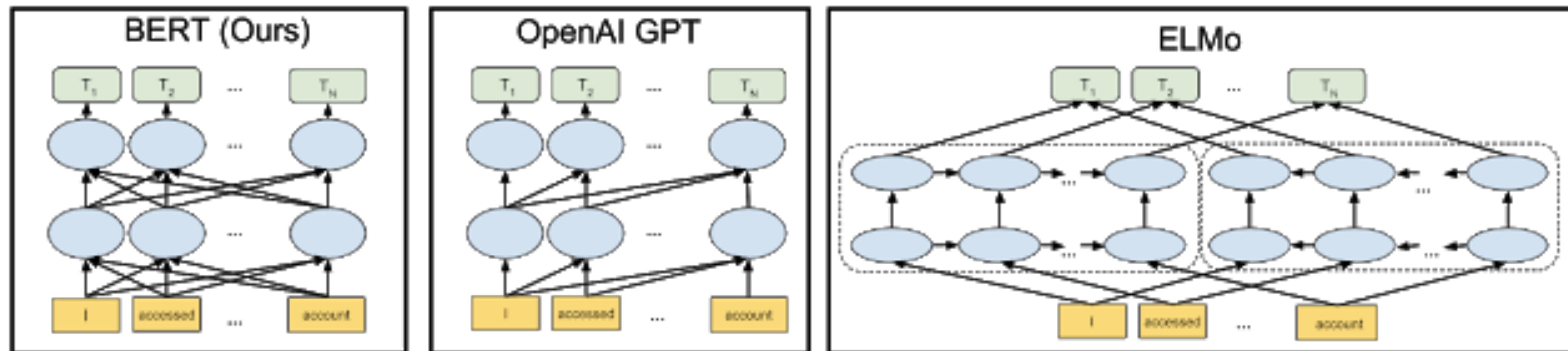
LATE 2010s SEO

Mobile SEO experiences became a major priority for search engines.



LATE 2010s SEO

Natural language processing techniques were quietly become more advanced.



IN

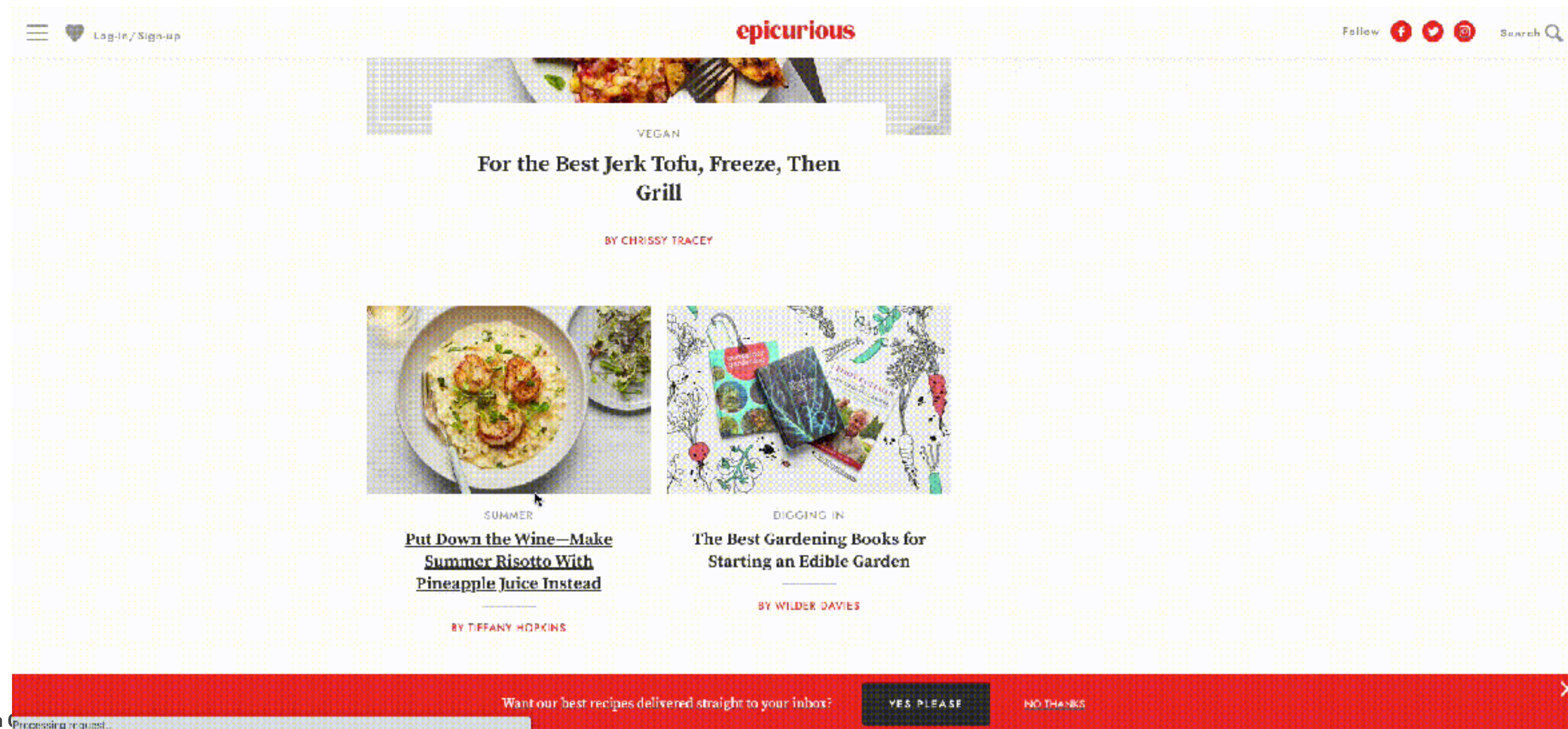
Expertise
Authority
Trust
YMYL

OUT

Doorway pages (too many
thin content pages)
Keyword stuffing

LATE 2010s SEO

Meanwhile, cookie-based display advertising grows \$\$
\$ for Google while user experience doesn't necessarily
keep up.



LATE 2010s SEO



Intent becomes
necessary to
understanding how to
optimize for a specific
query.

About 1,030,000,000 results (1.00 seconds)

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prince_\(musician\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prince_(musician))

Prince (musician) - Wikipedia

Prince Rogers Nelson (June 7, 1958 – April 21, 2016) was an American singer-songwriter, multi-instrumentalist, record producer, actor, and director. Widely ...

Other names: ; The Artist (Formerly Known as... Children: 1
Instruments: Vocals; guitar; keyboards; piano;... Years active: 1975–2016

[Unreleased Prince projects](#) · [Fantasy!](#) · [Manic Monday](#)


People also ask

- What ethnicity is Prince?
- Did Prince have a child?
- What is Prince's real name?
- Who did Prince date?

Feedback


<https://twitter.com/prince>

Prince (@prince) · Twitter



Prince wore these sequined gold shoes during his Welcome 2 America Tour in 2010-2011. [Preview](#) more of the shoes from the "Beautiful Collection" exhibit at @PaisleyPark, opening today, via @RollingStone. www.rollingstone.com/mu...


Twitter · 1 days ago



"WELCOME 2 AMERICA, WELCOME 2 THE SHOW..."

Follow along in the weeks ahead for a celebration of #Welcome2America—including more music from Prince's vault, new episodes of the Official Prince Podcast, and iconic imagery from this expressive era of Prince's career.

Twitter · Jul 5, 2021



Prince's longtime music director @MrMcristHayes stopped by @BBC6Music to share more details and stories behind #Welcome2America and the second single from the album, "Born 2 Die." Listen to the segment starting at 1:45:00. www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/pl... Photo: Brian Ash (July 2, 2011)

Twitter · Jul 2, 2021

Videos

- 

Prince - 1999 (Official Music Video)

YouTube · Prince
Jul 21, 2017
- 

Prince & The Revolution - When Doves Cry (Official Music Video)

YouTube · Prince
Jul 7, 2017
- 

Prince - Welcome 2 America

YouTube · Prince
Apr 8, 2021

Feedback

[View all](#)

<https://www.prince.com>

Prince | Official Website

The Prince Estate passionately presents Prince's life and work, and cultivates opportunities to further his legacy. We aim to immerse fans, old and new, ...

<https://www.facebook.com/...> · Musician/Band · Prince

Prince | Facebook

Prince. 23,805/6 likes · 661/2 talking about this. Official Account | Celebrating the Life & Legacy of Prince.

<https://www.biography.com/musician/prince>

Prince - Songs, Death & Life - Biography



Prince

American singer-songwriter

Available on

- YouTube
- Spotify
- Pandora

More music services

Prince Rogers Nelson was an American singer-songwriter, multi-instrumentalist, record producer, actor, and director. Widely regarded as one of the greatest musicians of the late 20th century, he often played most or all instruments on his recordings. [Wikipedia](#)

Born: June 7, 1958, Minneapolis, MN

Died: April 21, 2016, Paisley Park, Chanhassen, MN

Height: 5' 3"


Spouse: [Manuela Testolini](#) (m. 2001–2006), [Maya Garcia](#) (m. 1996–2000)


Songs


- When Doves Cry
Purple Rain · 1984
- Little Red Corvette
1999 · 1982
- Raspberry Beret
Around the World in a Day · 1985


View 25+ more

Albums

- 

Purple Rain · 1984
- 

1999 · 1982
- 

Prince · 1979
- 

Sign o' the Times · 1982

People also search for

- 

Freddie Mercury
Trending
- 

Manuela Testolini
- 

Zoey Deschanel
Trending
- 

Maya Garcia

Feedback

See results about

- 

Prince
Musical artist

LATE 2010s SEO

People also ask

Why does Brad Pitt eat in every movie?



What is the number 1 best movie of all time?



What is Brad Pitt best known for?



Feedback

Question-answer optimization becomes popular.

SEO UNTIL 2015

Digital activity diversifies to non-indexed social networks.



WHAT'S HAPPENED RECENTLY?



1. BERT and MUM updates highlight natural language processing in the role of search indexing.
2. Core Web Vitals update intensifies need for quality web user experiences.
3. Google is trying to work with news media to better incorporate publishers' needs (paywalls, news-first indexing) into search.
4. COVID-19 brought to light Google's ability to understand/control for misinformation.
5. Search is not the only place people find information, but it is where they go to confirm and understand new information.
6. Voice search and more diversity in search users means the long tail gets ever longer.

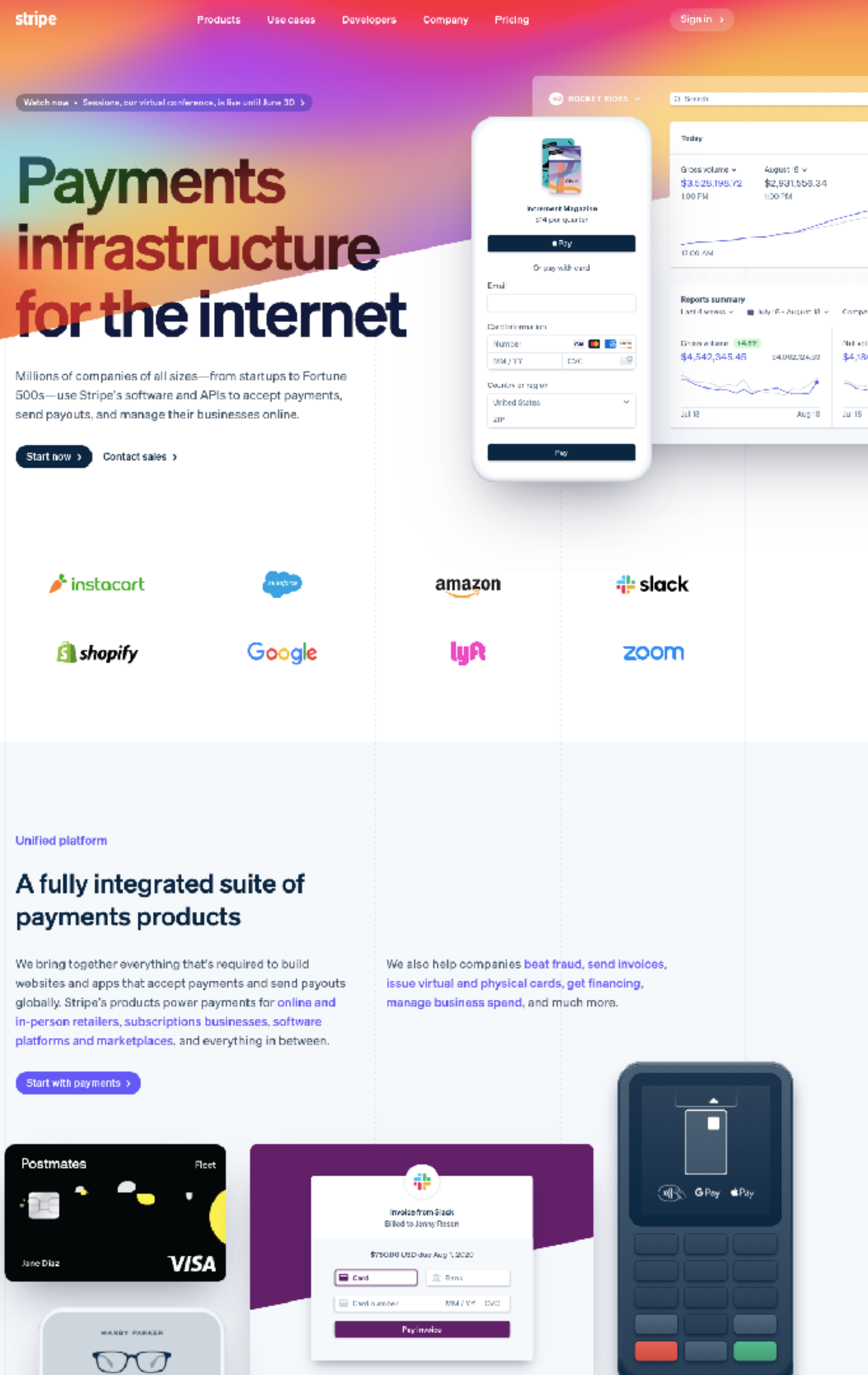
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FIVE BIG SEO CHANGES

FROM QUERIES TO ENTITIES

Search engines operate from topic graphs that link related terms based on most commonly used and associated words or topics.

Main topic	Subtopic 1	Subtopic 2	Subtopic 3
cake	icing	party	chocolate
soccer/football	player and club names	scores and statistics	places to play
your brand	location and hours	product reviews	brand values



YOUR WEBSITE IS YOUR ENTITY

As brands move from "drive traffic to the website" to more platform-specific social interactions, holistic, well-considered websites are the centralized home for in-depth brand and product information.

What this means for strategists:

Establishing a solid knowledge graph means aligning brand information architecture with audience needs from the beginning.


2. TOPICS TAKE PRIORITY

Question-answer based optimization was only an interim fix on the way to topic optimization.

+ Algorithm	250
+ Amazon	1
- Facebook	12,898
+ Algorithm	11,821
+ Bias	879
+ shadowbanning	197
+ (blank)	1
- Google	18,954
+ Algorithm	12,928
+ Bias	6,022
+ shadowbanning	4
+ Instagram	86,773

- Still relies on keyword research to determine audience needs
- Favors more comprehensive pages and web experiences
- Similar to "content pillars" strategy, where information about similar topics is linked and grouped together during optimization
- Understanding audience intent is crucial for selecting topics and core phrases.
- More chance of search visibility if topic experiences are clearly connected and mapped in website architecture early.
- Well-written, comprehensive pages and experiences get higher visibility in search because they rank for a number of long-tail terms.

TOPIC-FOCUSED OPTIMIZATION

- 
1. Review aggregate search volume whenever possible to determine topic priority. Google Trends and Q/A data (i.e., Answer the Public) is often informed by auto-complete predictive text and not reflective of how people actually search.
 2. Align how users search with brand goals rather than one-off lead generation initiatives.
 3. Run topic comparisons with competitors. What questions will your approach to a specific topic attract that your competitors do not?

CHOOSING QUALITY TOPICS/KEYWORDS



3. STRUCTURED DATA IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN EVER

BERT and MUM need a source of truth to draw meaning from unstructured data.

correctionsPolicy	CreativeWork or URL	For an Organization (e.g. NewsMediaOrganization), a statement describing (in news media, the newsroom's) disclosure and correction policy for errors.
department	Organization	A relationship between an organization and a department of that organization, also described as an organization (allowing different urls, logos, opening hours). For example: a store with a pharmacy, or a bakery with a cafe.
dissolutionDate	Date	The date that this organization was dissolved.
diversityPolicy	CreativeWork or URL	Statement on diversity policy by an Organization e.g. a NewsMediaOrganization . For a NewsMediaOrganization , a statement describing the newsroom's diversity policy on both staffing and sources, typically providing staffing data.
diversityStaffingReport	Article or URL	For an Organization (often but not necessarily a NewsMediaOrganization), a report on staffing diversity issues. In a news context this might be for example ASNE or RTDNA (US) reports, or self-reported.
duns	Text	The Dun & Bradstreet DUNS number for identifying an organization or business person.
email	Text	Email address

NLP=NATURAL LANGUAGE, PROCESSED

- Natural language processing algorithms like Google's BERT and (soon to come) MUM understand unstructured text and images better than ever.
- Search engines still need a defined source of truth to establish facts quickly: Google My Business and Schema structured data.
- Wikipedia and Wikidata are also used as independent sources of truth.
- **Recommendations for strategists:** Plan for schema markup as soon as possible; it'll help your sites perform better in search.



4. PRIORITIZING ACCESSIBILITY

Speed and alt text are only part of the equation.





LCP

largest contentful paint

FID

first input delay

CLS

cumulative layout shift

CORE WEB VITALS ARE DRIVING THE CHANGE



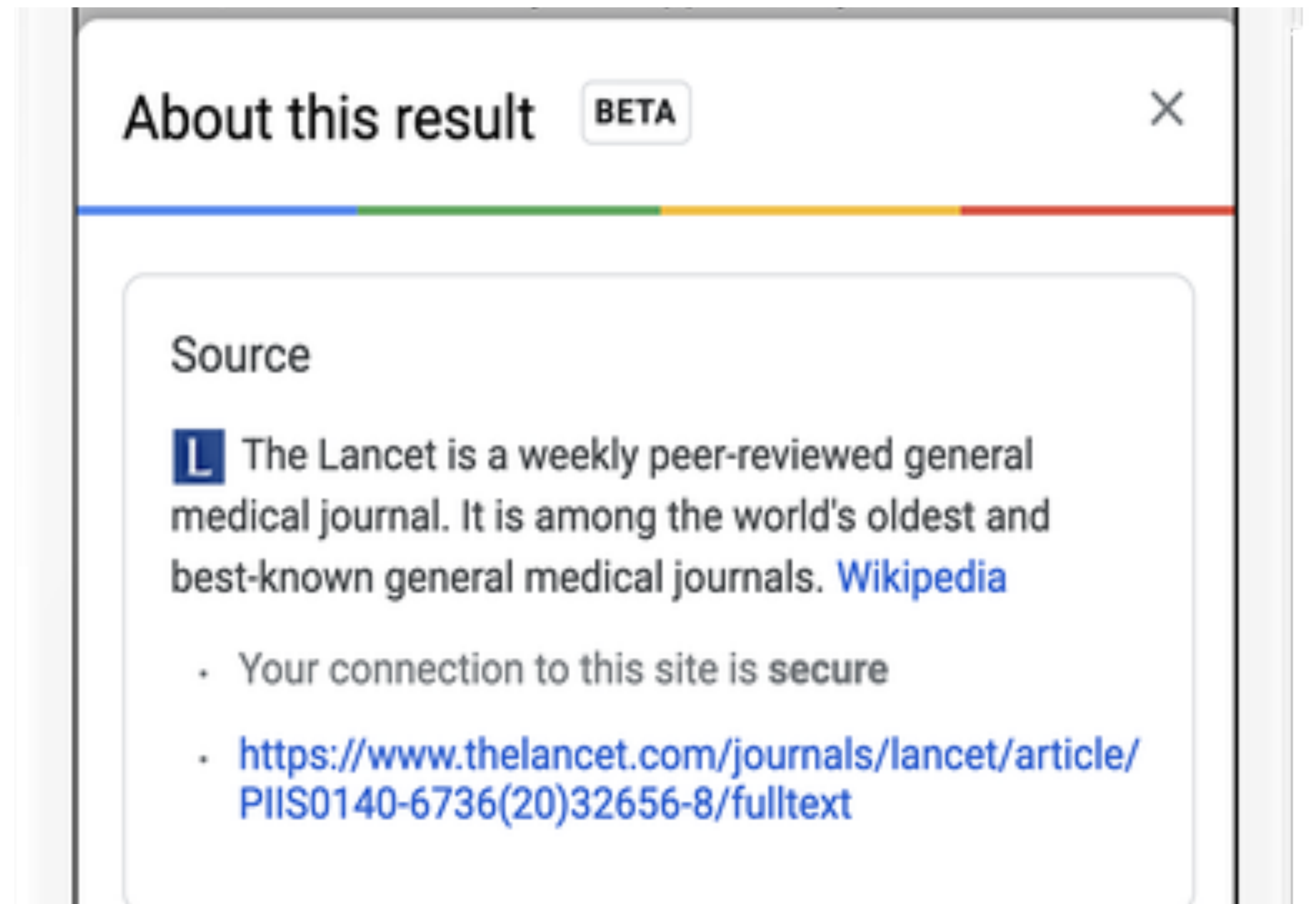
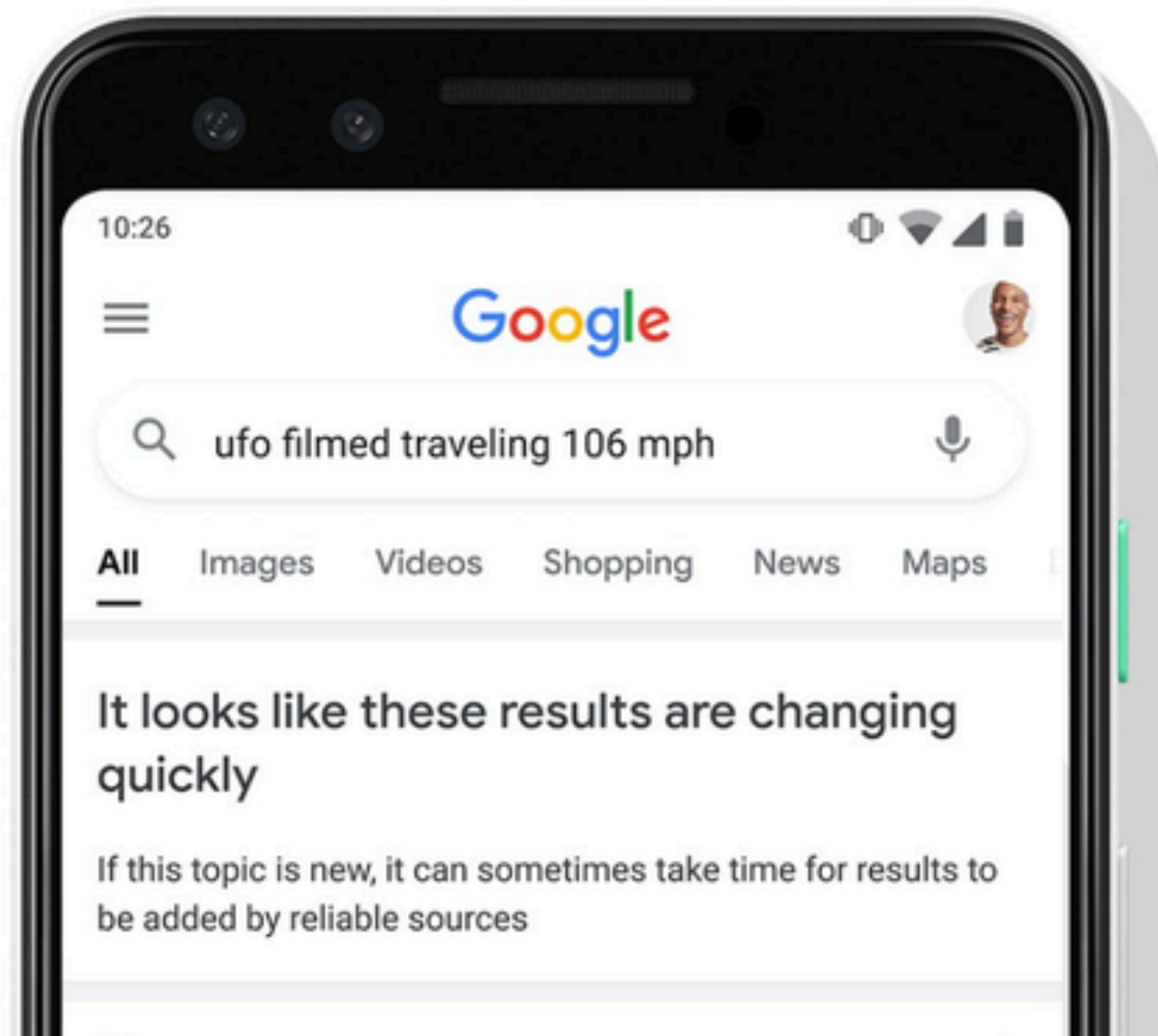
PLANNING FOR ACCESSIBILITY



- Ensure all buttons and content-rich images have descriptive, useful alt text.
- Keep core web vitals in mind -- especially for mobile experiences.
- Limit unnecessary/cosmetic javascript for business websites.
- Ensure address, phone number and contact information is easy to find, preferably in the site's footer and on a contact page.

5. ESTABLISHING TRUST SIGNALS

Expertise-Authority-Trust finally has some legs.



TRUTH MATTERS

- Authors and datelines are important (again).
- In-line affiliate links should be disclosed as advertising.
- Links to and from your site remain a sign of trust.
- Editorial or content policies have new Schema markup and are noted as important in Google's quality documentation.
- Content that supports brand trust -- product documentation, active help sections, regular website updates -- also supports SEO.

Editorial policies

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- [Research involving human embryos, gametes, and stem cells](#)
- [Sex and gender in research \(SAGER\)](#)
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QUESTIONS

- [Google's expanded developer SEO documentation](#)
- [schema.org](#)
- [Google's rich results checker](#)
- [Google Lighthouse check for Core Web Vitals](#)
- [Guide to CLS](#)
- [Moz's guide to javascript SEO](#)
- [Technical SEO tools](#), including Schema markup generator
- [Starting out with branded SEO](#) on The Content Technologist

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THANK YOU!

