5PM Eastern Wednesdays

03.26.14 Open Training on EC Platform

04.02.14 Taking Customer Engagement to the Next Level

04.09.14 The CHERP Community Home Energy Retrofit Phenomenon w/Devon Hartman

04.16.14 5 Ways to Simplifying Video Production

04.23.14 Pay-per-Click & Call Rail Tracking: How adding a campaign can rock your world

Survival Guide to the Google+ Local Merge PRO

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By Will - February 20th, 2014

The Google Local world is one of the most important marketing channels for small businesses like yours. It's also one of the most confusing. This can make it extremely difficult for time-strapped folks trying to run a business to "do the right thing" in the eyes of Google. This post is intended to help you figure out what your next steps should be, whether you're a seasoned internet marketer trying to stay on top of the latest updates, or you haven't claimed your listing yet and are just getting started.
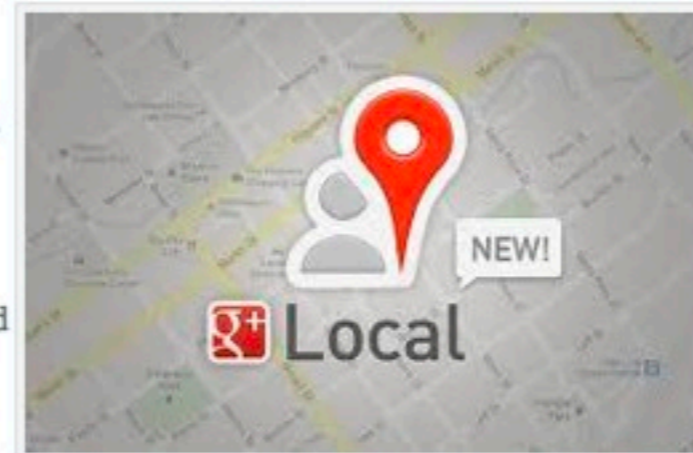
In this post we'll be discussing a few terms frequently and we'll clear up what they mean here: when we say "Google+ Business Page" we're referring to Google Plus pages that have been created in Google Plus and that aren't categorized as "Local." When we say "Google+ Local page," we mean pages that were brought over from Google Places (that had been creating using Google Places rather than Google Plus), or pages that were created through Google Plus but were from the beginning categorized as "Local."

The screenshot down to the left shows the difference. (When you create a page on Google+, you can categorize it as either a "product or brand," "company, institution or organization," "local business or place," "arts, entertainment or sports," or "other." Only Local Business or Place pages are considered "Google+ Local" pages, and we refer to the rest as Google+ Business pages. Remember that a Google+ Local page can also be one that was created in the Google Places for Business dashboard and that's been upgraded or "merged" into Google Plus.

Got that? Phew.
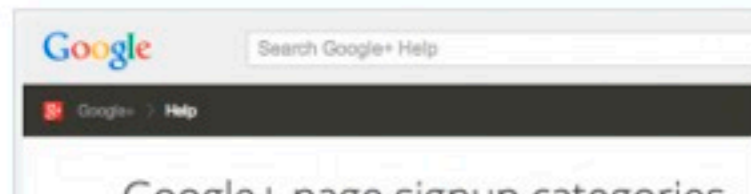
Here's an update on the state of things, and some guidance about the best steps for you to take if you're in any of the following situations:

Energy Circle > Browse > News & Trends > Google+ Local Update: Dealing with the "Forced March to Social"

Google+ Local Update: Dealing with the "Forced March to Social" PRO

COMMENT

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By Will - March 6th, 2014

In our recent post about how to deal with the Google Places -> Google+ merge, we mentioned something called the "forced march to social." We didn't coin the term, but it's a good way to describe the challenge that local business owners trying to market their businesses on Google face.

Essentially, the problem is this: Google wants to push Google+ as a social platform (arguably to compete with Facebook), and they're using their local search results to force businesses into using Google+ Local as a social platform.

Back in August Google started automatically upgrading some Google+ pages for local that had either been newly claimed with the new dashboard or converted from the old dashboard. The upgrade entailed a move from basic Places-like functionality (business info, photos, reviews), to the full social functionality of Google Plus (a "Posts" tab for sharing content, the ability to put people and other pages into circles, etc.). They also started linking directly to a company's Google+ page directly from the local search results in some cases. (See the screenshot below).
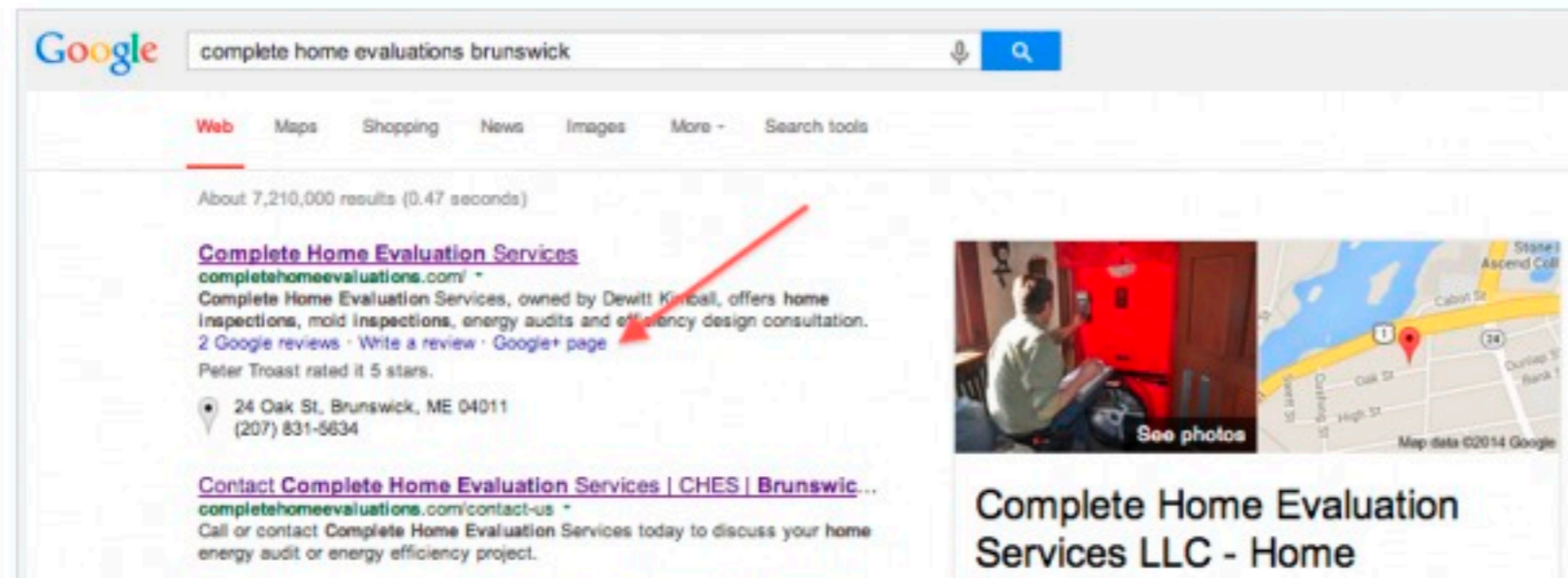
Why Energy Circle PRO?

- Get to market faster
- Keep upfront costs down
- Increase your visibility
- Access best-in-class consumer content
- Take advantage of social media
- Drive qualified inbound leads
- Access a growing array of services

Energy Circle > Browse > News & Trends > 9 Ways to Beat Google's Location Bias While Avoiding the Pitfalls of "Thin Content"

9 Ways to Beat Google's Location Bias While Avoiding the Pitfalls of "Thin Content" PRO
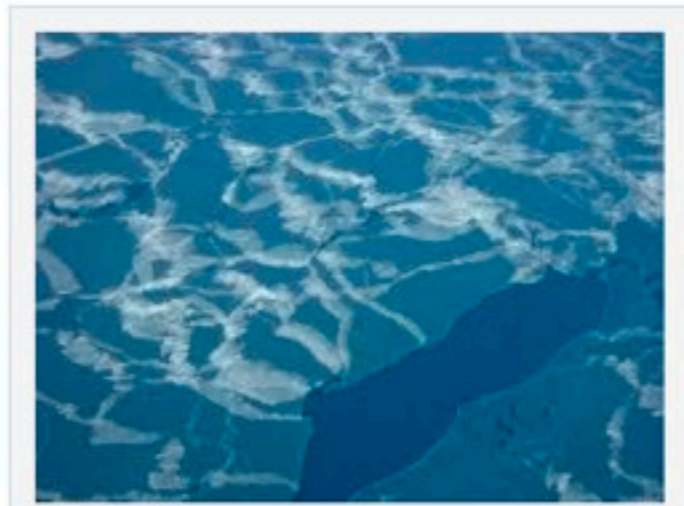
COMMENT
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By Peter Troast - March 13th, 2014

As we've said before, a strong local SEO presence is critical for home performance businesses. Local SEO, as a reminder, applies to almost all the relevant terms in our industry (such as "insulation" or "air conditioning" or "energy audit") that the search engine algorithms detect as being local in nature.

For home energy contractors that work in a service area, and all service area businesses (SAB's) for that matter, there's an obvious problem: a company that serves multiple cities tends to have trouble ranking for cities and towns other than the one in which their business is physically located. This is particularly troublesome for businesses whose office location is outside of the metro area where they do most of their business. The root problem is Google's bias towards a business' physical locations, and there's not an easy answer.

If your website has content that's classified as "thin," you may be skating on thin ice in search engines.

For example, say you're based in Newton, Massachusetts, but your target market is Boston. Google is biased towards the physical address on your website and in directories. It's likely that you are getting beaten in search results by companies that have a Boston address.

Of course, this is a far cry from fair, but the question becomes how to address this problem without violating Google guidelines and risking further damage. Many companies resort to using city pages--"insulation, boston" or "insulation, newton" for example. But these pages run the risk of what Google refers to as "thin content with little or no added value." These solutions can actually do more harm than good.

What is Thin Content?

Engaging Customers Through Social Media

with Jeremy Begley of Nat'l Heating & Air
Energy Circle PRO Webinar Series
March 19th, 2014

Welcome Jeremy Begley

- National Heating & Air
- Cinci Energy
- Credentials out his ....
- Social media maven
- Bengals freak

Major Trends Across All Social Media

Increasingly

...Visual

...Mobile

...Short

...about Storytelling

The Big 5

Platform	Purpose	Strategy	Priority
Facebook	Consumer Awareness/ Conversion	Steady stream of interesting visual content, engagement boosting posts with paid	High
Google+	Places Rank, Link Value	Regular posting for links, reviews	High
Twitter	Peer to peer; local engagement*	Post through FB, helps keep FB mobile friendly; serves dual purpose	Optional
LinkedIn	Peer to peer; B2B relationship bldg, new publishing plat.	Group Engagement and Targeting	Medium
Pinterest	Consumer Awareness/ Highly Dependent on Visuals	Beauty Shots	Optional*

Some Thoughts on Facebook

Visual Performs Better

Photo posts 93% more engaging

Get 53% more likes

104% more comments

84% more click throughs

Homeowner Demographic Very Solid

Expectation Should Be: Awareness First,
Conversion Second

Best Practice for Managing: Someone on
Your Team

Thursday, April 10, 2014

EdgeRank--How it Works

- Affinity Score: Who is engaging? How close they are to you? When the action was taken?

- Edge Weight: Every action a user takes creates an edge (shares, likes, etc.) Each edge has a different weight (i.e. shares are more valuable than likes)

- Time: EdgeRank is a running score - not a one-time score. The older the post is, the less points it receives.

Tracking EdgeRank Changes

CONTENT TYPE REACH CHANGE
MEDIAN ORGANIC REACH / FAN : BEFORE & AFTER JAN 21, 2014
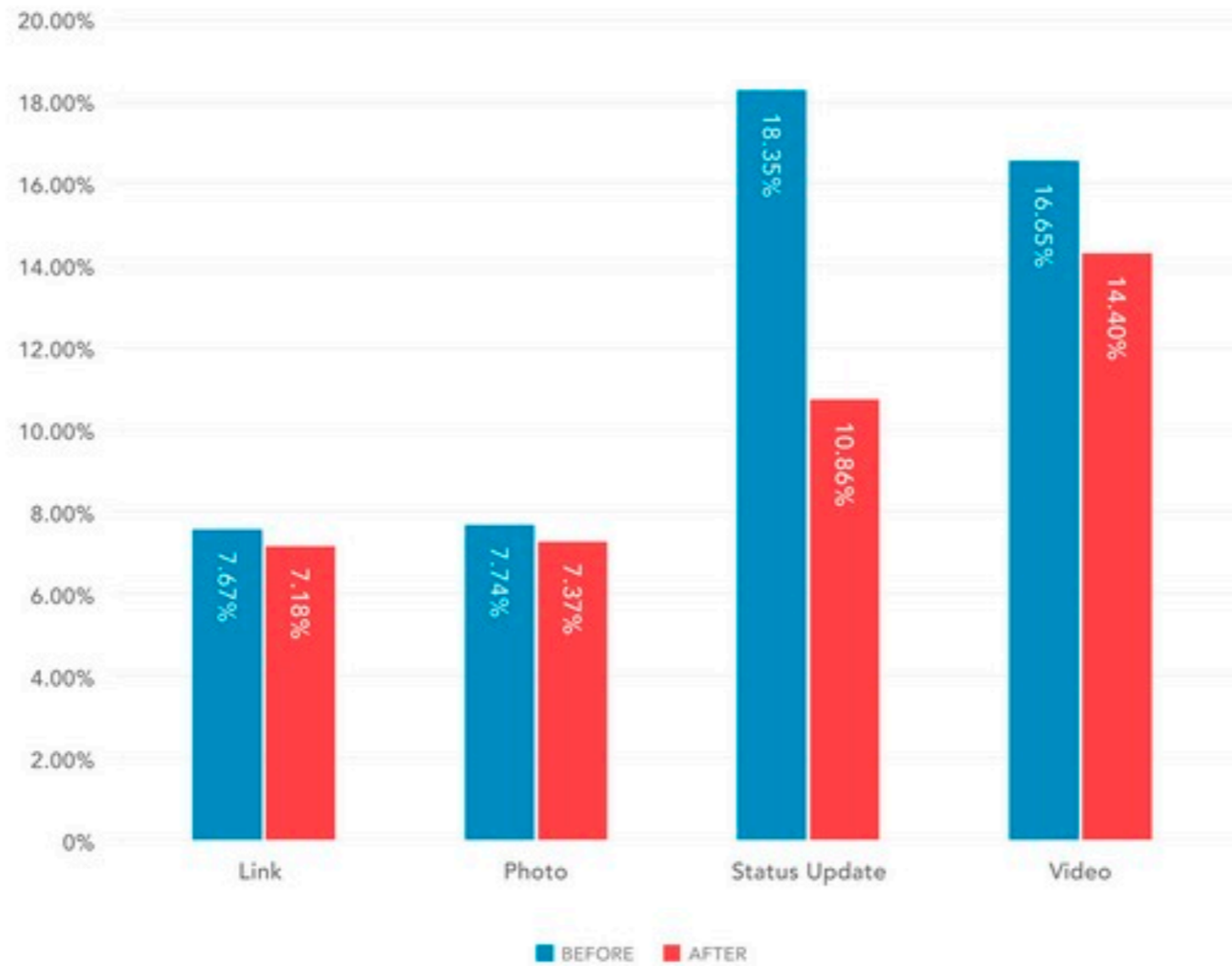
EDGERANKCHECKER.COM

Thursday, April 10, 2014

Managing EdgeRank

- Generate your OWN content (FB values content creators)
- Study, analyze, and understand why your fans engage with your content
- Avoid frequent CTA's - JAB!
- Focus on getting users to ENGAGE with your content
- Post content that has greater reach (video, photos)
- Increase post frequency
- Consider paying to "boost" posts that you see fans are engaging with. This can increase your overall fanbase / reach for future posts.

Facebookers Doing It Right!

Google+

Even More Visual Than Facebook
Forced March to Social
Value of Links
Critical Importance of Reviews
The Data is More Important Than the Page

Thursday, April 10, 2014

Google+'ers Doing it Right

energy circle
PRO

Thursday, April 10, 2014