

# NEWSLETTER

## JUNE 2016

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## LATEST HAPPENINGS IN THE WORLD OF LOCAL SEARCH FOR THE MONTH OF JUNE 2016

Let's jump start our once in a month conversion of what's the latest trends that are doing rounds in the Local Search Market for the month of June this year.

- If you wish to see how the local search listings are faring globally, Bright local's [free tool](#) is quite a useful tool for you. The Free local search result checker allows you to check the local SERP listings for almost any town in the world.
- Google and Yelp may consider themselves as the arch rivals but when it comes to business, they always keep their differences aside. Time and again, we have been seeing Yelp listings appear for searches pertaining to specific queries in Google's SERPs. And it wasn't any different this time with [specific Google searches displaying Yelp listings including the phone numbers](#).
- Google gives some credit back to the [local news service providers](#) for being the first to break the news story. Google acknowledged the effort of these local unsung heroes by rewarding their work with greater exposure in its local SERP section.
- This month Yelp released its [data report](#) claiming that it has grown its advertiser's strength which is currently over 120,000 at a healthy repeat rate of 76 percent with the company accounting for an average ROI of 269 percent on their ad investments. While the stats mentioned above may not go down well with some of its competitors (especially Google) but the company reportedly said to be making money through avenues such as commercial on-site transactions. Moreover, the company claims that its app has attracted installs on over 20 million devices through which it garnered around 70 percent of page views ten times more than it gets on desktops.
- On StreetFight Mag, Brandify provides valuable insights as to how the [local search marketing funnel really works](#) for different brands. The report rather takes a simple approach towards local brand building and in the process limiting the role of social media channels to only educating SMEs thereby completely excluding their role in engaging audiences.
- This month will see Google increasing its paid sources of advertising by introducing promoted pins on Google Maps. This form of advertising helps to promote the offline local businesses by prompting the nearby active users to personally visit the store location. According to media reports, Google's been testing with its ability to track the store visits which will be promoted as an added feature of these new ads. To get desired results, expect Google to conduct a major test for promoting paid pins on Google Maps as a supporting evidence to impress upon its advertisers.
- Businesses often lose out top search ranking slots to their competitors because they tend to underestimate the importance of optimizing their local signals. If you happen to be one of them, Greg Gifford's [Local SEO Tips](#) will be helpful to further educate yourself and set proper expectation in the local search results.

- Last month's Google's I/O conference threw light on a number of new futuristic projects. One of them was about a new cloud management tool that enables local businesses to deploy a beacon. In this way, the deployed beacon has a fairly good chance of being discovered by the consumers without actually annoying them. For more information on the Google Beacon Platform, kindly visit the link [here](#).
- Last Month Google went on to [update the Google My Business location API](#) that allowed businesses to provide more rich information for their business listings in addition to easily manage their multiple business accounts and listings. So, if you've still not updated your Google My Business location API then here's an opportunity for you to provide accurate information of each of your branch locations instead of using the same data for each of your business locations.
- After Google's AMP News Carousel went live in 12 countries, many media reports started to speculate that AMP will now be the new search ranking signal only to be denied by Google. Now, there's a new round of media speculation doing rounds with Jennifer Slegg, Search Engine Marketing Consultant predicting that Google might actually bring the AMP technology to power the Google local SERPs. From the looks of it, there's no official word coming out from Google on the matter but sooner or later it's going to show up in the Google local SERPs.
- Now, there's another dedicated mobile app called [ClipCall](#) which is making its foray into the home services sector. This is essentially a video based mobile app that allows home owners to have a real time communications with the prospective vendors. The company claims its services to be different from the rest of the service providers since they're offering money-back guarantee which can be availed by buyers if they are not satisfied with the services.
- Small businesses often tend to ignore branding. In doing so, they tend to lose out the benefit of boosting their ranks with local branding strategies. If you too think that way, don't miss Wesley Young's [advice](#) to local businesses about the importance of branding so as to boost the local search rankings.
- Have you recently noticed any changes in the number of clicks, impressions, and CTR values in the Google search analytics data report? If yes then blame it on Google. As Google's John Mueller [officially posted](#) that Google has made some changes as to how search console reports and takes account of clicks & impressions in search analytics data for local businesses. And in case if you need more information, just visit this [link](#).
- Often Businesses tend to shift their focus on marketing, when it comes to keeping business right on track. Amongst several forms of marketing, businesses often are confused about which one will best serve their business needs. Content Marketing is one such form of marketing which when leveraged well can do wonders to the company. Todd Renard shares some of his [content ideas](#) of how local businesses can benefit through sponsored content as part of their content marketing campaign.

## GOOGLE ROLLS OUT A BOOSTER UPDATE FOR MOBILE-FRIENDLY BUSINESSES



It's very rare for Google to not deliver on what it promises. As expected, Google recently rolled out a [booster update](#) for businesses that already have a [mobile-friendly presence](#). Many media reports claimed that since this is a mobile booster update it may not impact businesses as such. But contrary to the reports, there were quite a few businesses that were severely impacted because of the update. If you happened to miss out on the update completely then here's a lowdown on the salient features of the mobile booster update.

- The update was rolled out as page-by-page and not as a site-wide ranking signal
- The mobile booster update was rolled out globally, supporting all languages.
- This was an algorithm update, so if you've made any on-site modifications, they will go live when the Google bot next crawls your web pages.

In the wake of the mobile booster update, this is what Google had advised businesses without a smartphone-friendly online presence –

***“Remember, the intent of the search query is still a very strong signal -- so even if a page with high quality content is not mobile-friendly, it could still rank well if it has great, relevant content.”***

Businesses that recently lost out to their competitors in search rankings need to take this [mobile-friendly test](#) to check the quality of their mobile-friendly web pages and see if they are following the industry standards. Businesses who want to upgrade to a mobile-friendly online presence, can request our [FREE SEO AUDIT](#).

As they say, it's never too late for even the most stubborn businesses to take the call, especially with Google releasing stats that say **nearly one third of all mobile searches have local intent!** If your business thrives in the local market then upgrading your site with a responsive web design and getting a mobile-friendly tag may just do the trick for you.

This will not only better serve your purpose but also get you some mileage, especially with Google continuing to make the web world a more mobile-friendly one. A miss here may cost you in the long run.

If you're interested in getting a mobile friendly version for your website, do contact us and we will get started ASAP.

**Features of our Google Mobile Friendly Website:**

- Responsive website recognized by Google as mobile friendly.
- Click-to-Call, Click-to-Email and Click-to-Text features.
- Advanced mobile lead tracking and analytics.

## MOBILE PAGE SPEED MAY SOON IMPACT YOUR MOBILE RANKINGS, SAYS GOOGLE'S GARY ILLYES



At a recent search marketing summit, Gary Illyes revealed that Google's planning to update the page speed ranking factor in its mobile-friendly algorithm. This way, Google will get a better idea about the page speed of the mobile version of your site.

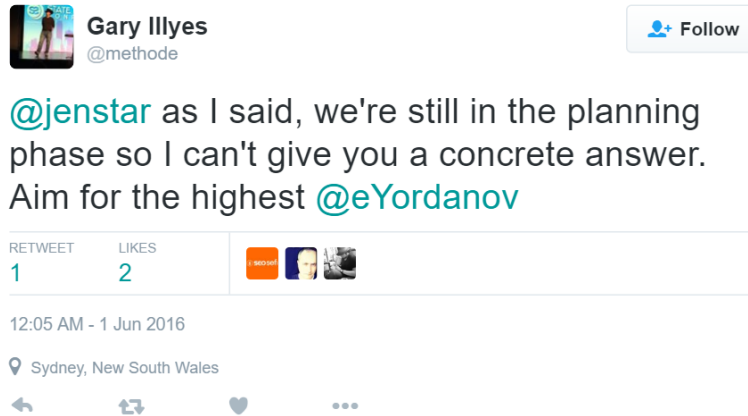
Jennifer Slegg, an SEM Consultant, who initially [reported](#) the matter, also points out that Google's Gary Illyes said that it's just months and not years away from happening in the real-time mobile algorithm.

As of now, most of the ranking signals that Google's mobile-friendly algorithm uses for mobile rankings are the ones that were specifically made for desktop web pages. If you're thinking that you can hide your slow mobile presence by having a much faster desktop version, without affecting your mobile search rankings, then beware; the situation may change in the near future.

You can expect Google to soon add the mobile specific page speed factor as a metric to its mobile-friendly algorithm, which will completely remove its desktop reliance.

It's worth noting that Google, in April, 2010, had [official confirmed reports](#) that it counts the page speed of a website as one of the ranking factors. Matt Cutts had then pointed out in June, 2013 that mobile sites may attract a penalty on account of the [slow loading speed](#). After that Google's Gary Illyes, in 2015, had confirmed reports by saying that they are indeed working on improving mobile page speed and the mobile-friendly algorithm. And now, recent reports claim that it's just months away from happening.

However, Gary Illyes recently revealed through his [twitter handle](#) that the project is still in the planning stages.



It does make some sense for the page speed and other ranking factors of a mobile site to be based on its mobile version and this is exactly what Google's trying to achieve.

If you don't want to be left behind, do give us a call or send us an email and our reps will be right in touch with you.



## HERE'S WHY YOU SHOULD START PAYING ATTENTION TO APPLE MAPS

Apple Maps was a disaster when it was launched way back in 2012. It seemed like a poor adaptation of Google Maps. The list of faults was pretty long, such as wrong directions, absence of public transit component and other mammoth bugs and errors. Due to this, it became a laughing stock and people started creating memes around it, such as:



So it came as no surprise when almost all Apple users ignored it and continued using Google Maps. But the winds turned when Apple launched the revamped version of their Maps for iOS 9. Everyone, including the tech experts were pretty impressed by the new features and major fixes. As a result, it came back onto the home screen instead of sitting idle in folders of unused apps.

Nowadays, the popularity of Apple Maps has touched a new high and many reputed media houses such as Huffington Post have stated that it is being used by Apple users more than the Google Maps.

That's what we call a solid comeback. However, it was not because of the pleasant look and the ease to operate that led to the rise of Apple Maps, people started using it again mostly because of below stated reasons:

- **Better public transportation directions than Google Maps**  
For most of the users, the mass-transit integration on the new Apple Maps is a boon. If you want to go from point A to point B, it not only shows multiple public transport options with accurate timings, but also provides specific walking directions.
- **You no longer have to type while driving and walking**  
When it comes to “intelligent personal assistant” no one can beat Siri. And now, as Siri has the data from Apple Maps itself, she can take actions better than ever. For drivers and walkers, it's not only convenient but life-saving as well!
- **Faster search features than Google**  
Now you don't have to block the sidewalk to search for nearby coffee shops. Because when you hit the search bar, it will automatically show nearby points of interest such as coffee shops, shopping, entertainment and more. Google Maps also offer an almost similar feature, but the Apple version is much easier and faster.

– **Turn-by-turn navigation on your lock screen**

Typing your password to see the directions every five minutes is not only annoying but also dangerous. So Apple did a great job of providing directions on the lock screen as well.

– **Gamifying your city views**

When they first launched Apple Maps, the only thing that was cool and unique was their 3D satellite view. It gives users a feeling that they are watching their city in video game mode. Plus, they can even zoom in to particular places. Apple not only retained that feature, but also improved it.

– **You can avoid traffic jams**

Just like Google crowd-sourced live traffic data to help you avoid traffic jams, Apple developed similar capabilities to help users avoid routes that will slow down their speed.

So these are the major reasons that made Apple Maps more popular among Apple users than Google Maps.

One of the best moves that Apple made to improve their maps is rolling out **the self-service data entry portal called Apple Maps Connect**. It allows business owners to manually add their company into the map. This is a win-win situation for everyone; Apple gets invaluable data to improve their maps and the business owners get more local customers at their doorsteps.

In case your company's location is already listed on the Maps and you want to edit or flesh out your listing, you can do it via Apple Maps Connect. You can also add your company's website URL & social media pages to your profile, using the same platform.

But if you don't have any existing listing, follow the 8 Steps given below:

**1. Visit: [www.mapsconnect.apple.com](http://www.mapsconnect.apple.com)**

Log in with your Apple ID. If you don't already have one, get one because there is no other way around it.

**2. Select your relation with the company**

After logging in, you will be directed to "Add a new business page". Here you can select "I am the owner" or "I'm authorized by the owner".

**3. Fill in the details**

Fill your business name, contact number and address.

**4. Verify your contact number**

Apple will call you on the given number and provide you with a PIN code. Enter the pin code and you are done.

**5. Confirm your location & category**

Identify the category in which your business falls. If you don't see a matching category, you can suggest one.

**6. Confirm your business hours**

Mark-off the hours from Apple's list of 7 days & you are set!

**7. Add your business's site & Social Media profiles**

Just copy-paste the URLs in the "Add more Details" section.

**8. Review your information**

After thoroughly reviewing everything, click "Ok" and you're done! Your listing will appear in Apple Maps within a week. In case additional verification is required, Apple will call you.

### **Connect Apple Maps to your Local SEO Strategy**

Listing accurate information about your business in Apple Maps will help you with your overall SEO strategy as well. You will not only get nearby customers to your doorsteps, but you can also rank higher in Google SERP by the accuracy and consistency of your listings on Apple Maps.

Also, it shows your business's Yelp rating & provides a link to the reviews; which can considerably raise your SEO game (that is, if you have good ratings on Yelp). So it is safe to say that, with hundreds of thousands of potential customers out there, focusing on SEO for Apple Maps is a vital business move.

In case you need any more information or assistance for the same, feel free to contact us.

## THE NEW #TWITTER140 HAS A LONG WAY TO GO...



Finally, Twitter is ready to tweak its #Trend of “**Tweet your mind within 140 characters**”. As per the latest update, users can now share their tweets in more than 140 characters. This official update from Twitter will almost put an end to the rumours circulating all over the world, about the removal 140 character limit from Tweets.

From a simple 140-character text message to a rich canvas for creative expression featuring photos, videos, hashtags, Vines, and more. If you look closely, you will notice that the changes that they've brought about are phenomenal and enough to make you say that the platform has come a long way. The implementation of **Polls and GIFs** is really impressive and on a higher priority as compared to the other minor changes. The extended amount of usage of polls and GIFs is proof that Tweepers are still busy enjoying it.

Twitter has stated that in upcoming months they'll make changes to simplify Tweets, including what will be counted in 140 characters. For example:- @names in replies and media attachments (like photos, GIFs, videos and polls) will no longer be considered as valuable characters.

### Here's what will change:

- **Replies:** When replying to a Tweet, @names will no longer be counted in the 140-character count.
- **Media attachments:** When you add attachments like photos, GIFs, videos, polls, or Quote Tweets, the media will no longer be counted as characters within your Tweets.
- **Retweet and Quote Tweet yourself:** Twitter will be enabling the Retweet button on your own Tweets, so you can easily Retweet or Quote Tweet yourself when you want to share a new reflection or feel like the good one went unnoticed.
- **Goodbye, .@:** This will help simplify the rules around Tweets that start with a username. New Tweets that begin with a username will reach all your followers. (That means, you'll no longer have to use “.@" convention, which is currently used to broadcast Tweets widely.) If you want a reply to be seen by all your followers, you will be able to Retweet it to signal that you intend for it to be viewed more broadly.

## ADWORDS NEW EXTRA HEADLINE: 7 WAYS TO MAKE THE MOST OF IT

Google announced expanded text ads at its recent Google Performance Summit.

During annual Google Performance Summit Keynote, they introduced a wide range of exciting new stuff. One of the most significant updates to AdWords since the invention of Quality Score.

Google is currently testing ads that have two 30-character headlines and one 80-character description line. These test ads also contain two customizable 15-character path fields that will be appended to your Display URLs automatically. Compared to your existing ads, its 45 extra characters in text, plus an additional URL path field.



Earlier this year, Google removed ads from the right-hand rail of results. That was to improve the search experience and make it consistent across devices. That newly-established consistency meant that ads no longer needed strict character limits to fit in that right rail, which paved the way for expanded text ads. In fact, expanded text ads are designed to fit beautifully on the screens of the most popular mobile devices.

This should be a big boon to performance. Based on early testing, some advertisers reported increases in click-through rates of up to 20 percent compared to current text ads.

Now, exactly how big a boon to performance this will end up being is still up in the air. Google is still learning about expanded text ads, so metrics like percent served and CTR will continue to change. Be patient when judging results, but take advantage of these new ads as soon as you can.

- Rethink your entire creative.
- Focus on your headlines.
- Craft messaging that focuses on user needs and benefits.
- Prioritize which ad groups to test by volume and impact.
- Adjust your ad rotation settings.
- Keep using ad extensions.
- Monitor lost impression share due to budget.

Be excited. Ads are being rebuilt to work better across devices for users, and your messaging will have the potential to be more meaningful. Expanded text ads are a big change to AdWords.