New Google **Search Console**
Guide for Beginners + Tips

Google recently renew the Search Console UI and exclude many old features. The new UI is quite different compared to the old Google Search Console. In this Google Search Console guide, I will try to add all the existing features and keep this post updated if Google introduces them in the future.

I have been using Google Search Console for quite some time for my personal projects as well as helping clients in fixing SEO problems.

Most of my clients are misinformed about the power of Google Search Console. Unfortunately, many people buy expensive SEO tools to gather speculative data. This is perhaps the most accurate search performance data that you can get and for completely free.

So, in this guide, I will introduce all the current Google Search Console features that are available from both old and new Search Console interfaces.
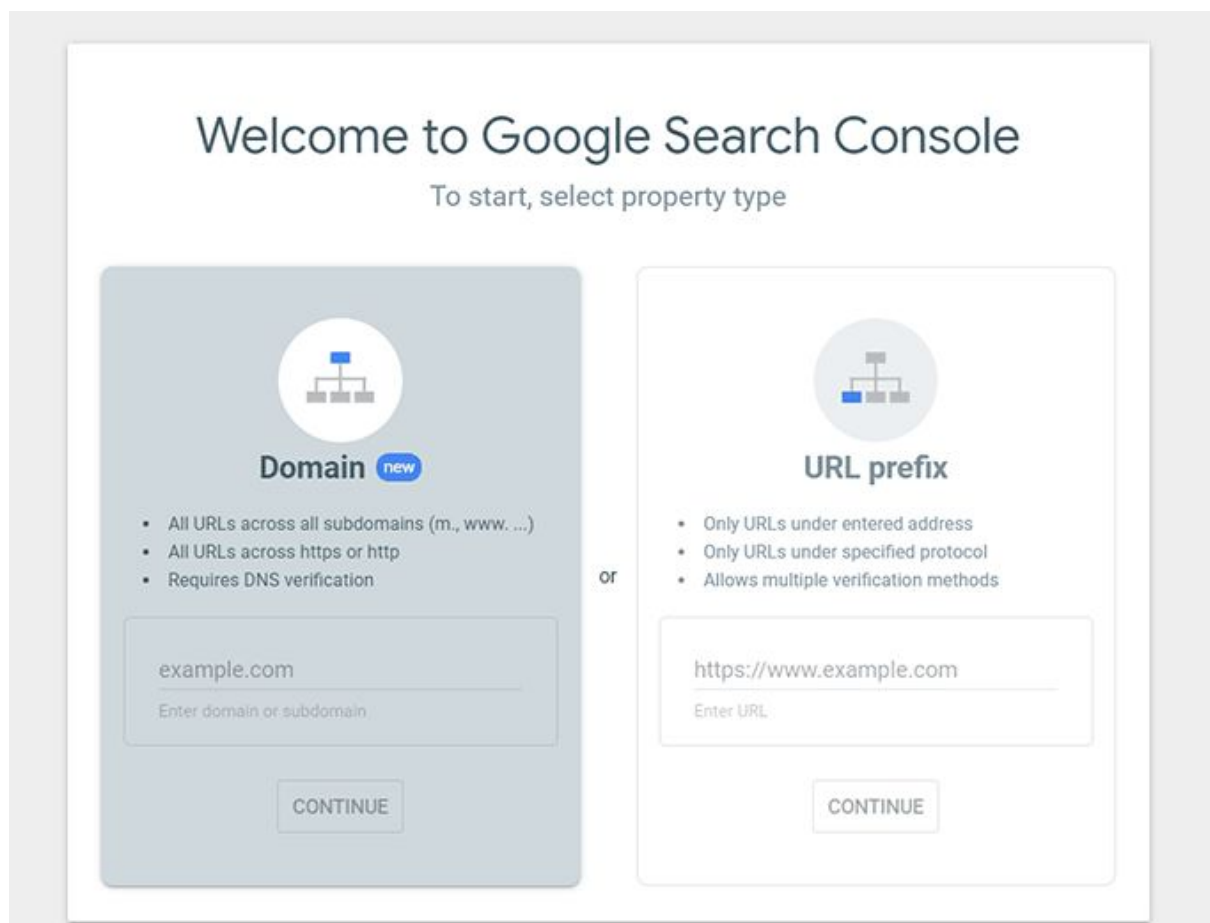
Set up New Google Search Console

In this section, I will tell you how to set up your Google Search Console property, verify ownership, and understand user permissions.

Properties that you can add:

You can add a portion of your site as a property (example.com/deals). Or an entire domain and all its subdirectories (example.com).

Google Search Console offers 2 different types of properties.

You can either add a domain property or a URL-prefix property.

Domain Property

Domain Property included every variation of your site's URL such as protocols that you use (HTTP or HTTPS) and (WWW or Non-WWW). If you

use a domain property then Google Search Console will manage all of your URL variations. You don't need to add separate properties if you use a different protocol or a subdomain.

URL-prefix Property

if you use a URL-prefix property then you need to add different variations of URLs that you use, such as (HTTP/HTTPS) or (WWW and non-WWW) versions.

Now, let's see how to add different types of properties:

How to add a URL-prefix property?

1. Click on the URL-Prefix section
2. Enter your website URL including the ending slash / (https://example.com/)
3. Click on the **Continue** button

Note: You need to add all the variations of the [sub-domains](#) individually if you use URL-prefix property.

How to add a domain property?

1. Click on the domain property section
2. Enter the URL without adding protocols (example.com)
3. Click on the **Continue** button.

Note: You don't need to add protocols and other URL variations as separate property.

Verify Your Site Ownership

Now let's see how we can easily verify each of the property types:

How to verify a domain property?

There's only one method which you can use to verify a domain property. It is via adding a DNS record to your hosting. Since there are hundreds of hosting services, it would be difficult for me to give you step by step instructions.

However, Google has given pretty clear instructions for all the major hosting users about how to verify their domain property using a DNS record.

[Please follow this link](#) to find your hosting service, and follow the instructions.

Once your DNS record is added, return to your Google Search Console property and click on the **VERIFY** button.

How to verify a URL-prefix property?

You can verify a URL-prefix property in several different ways. You can either upload an HTML file given by the Search Console to your website root directory.

Similarly, you can add a meta tag given by Search Console, and add to your website's HTML head section.

You need to repeat the process to add multiple URL variations or if you want to create multiple properties for each directory of your site.

Manage Users and Permissions

You can [add multiple people to your Search Console property](#). For example, if you hire an SEO professional then you can add them as a Full user.

If you want to share your Search Console property for the viewing only then you can add as a restricted user.

You can also add someone as a restricted user but they can only view some reports without making changes.

In the given table, I have specified features that can be used by different user types.

FEATURE	OWNER	FULL USER	RESTRICTED USER
Property settings	✔	✔	View only
URL Parameters	✔	✔	View only
Change of Address	✔	View only	View only
User administration	✔	View only	See below
Index Coverage	✔	✔	View only
Blocked URLs	✔	✔	✔

URL Inspection	✔	✔	Fetch only
Performance	✔	✔	✔
Links	✔	✔	✔
Remove URLs	✔	✔	View only
Rich result status reports	✔	✔	✔
Receive messages	✔	✔	✔
Reconsideration request	✔	✔	
Disavow links	✔	✔	

Link Google Analytics account	✔	
Add/remove property owners	✔	
Data Highlighter	✔	✔
Verify fixes	✔	✔
Share report links	✔	✔

How to Use the New Search Console

Most users only need new Search Console features to get site performance reports. In this section, I will explain different reports that can be found in the new Google Search Console.

Overview page
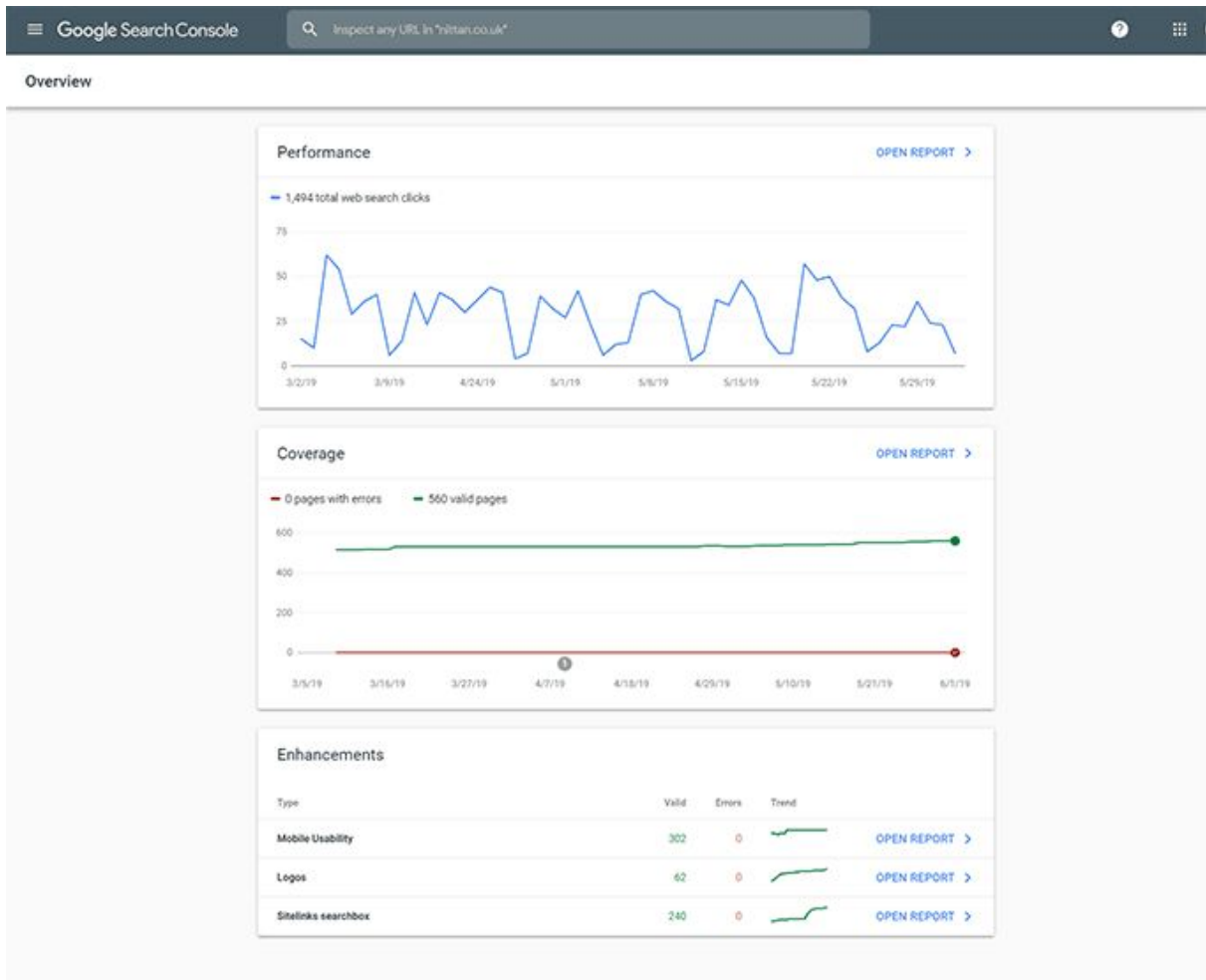
As the name suggests, the overview page shows a summary of your property's important reports such as manual actions, performance, errors, and security issues.

If you don't have time to check each report in your property then overview page could provide you basic information about your property's health.

Performance Report

The Google Search Console Performance report provides essential data that you need to improve the site's performance in Google Search.

This is perhaps the top-most important feature of the Google Search Console that I use regularly to check client's site's performance, create reports, find out keywords, compare different metrics and dimensions.
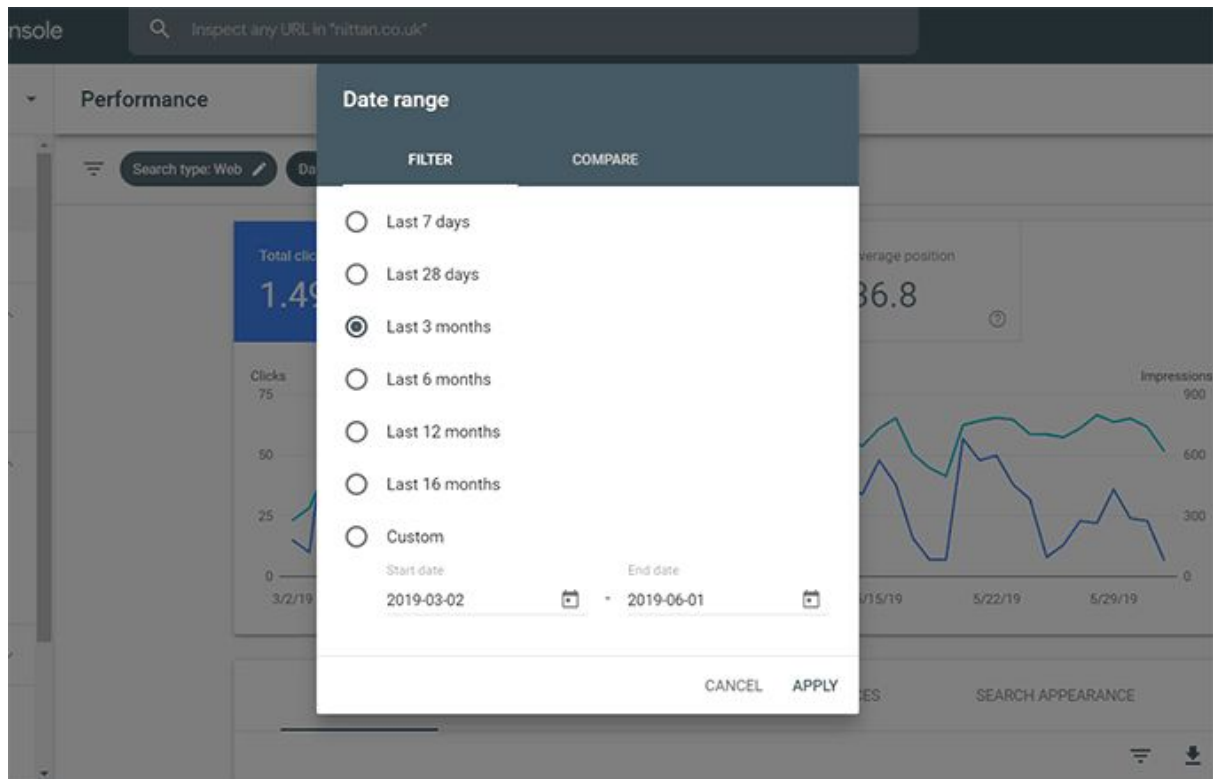
FILTERS

Search Type Filter
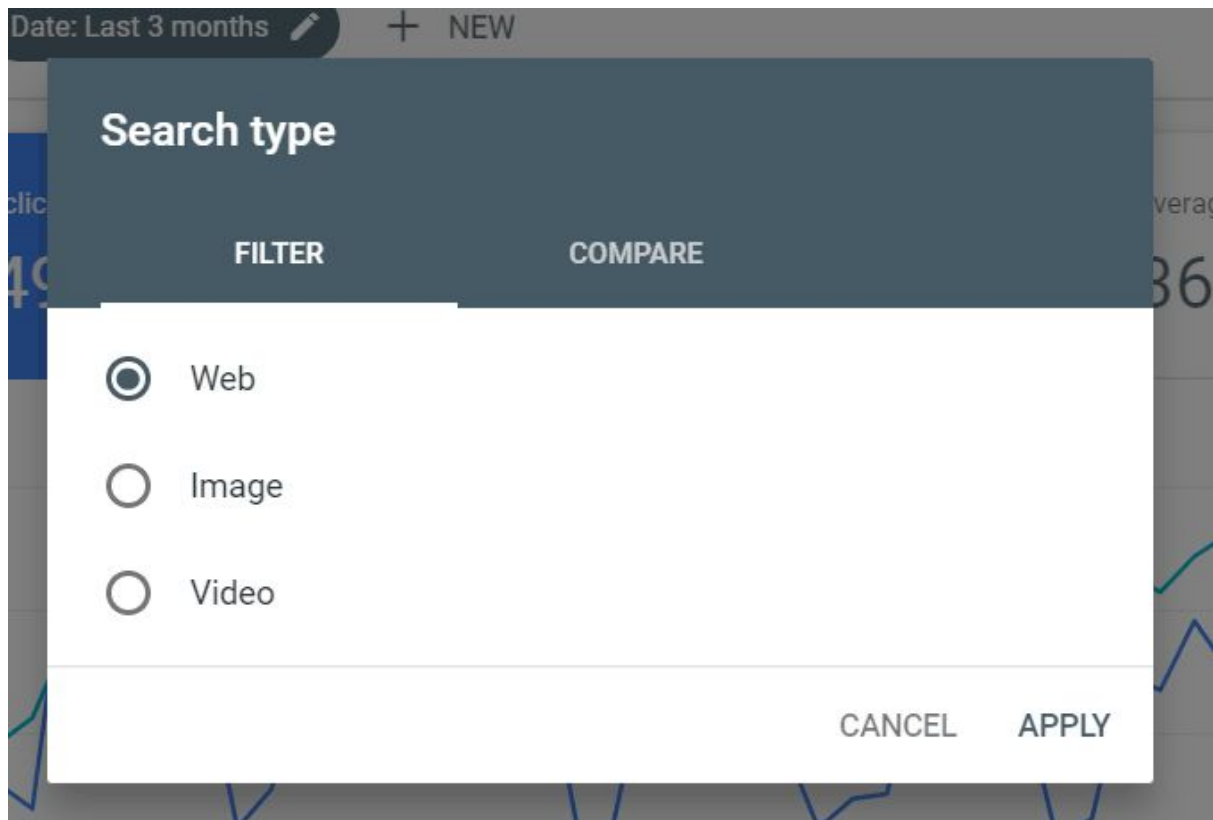
You can see 3 different types of search results in Google Search Console.

- Web: Typical search results that display your site pages
- Image: Clicks on the site images from Google image search.
- Video: Clicks from the video search results.

Search Type Compare

You can use this data to compare *image vs web* or *web vs video* results. It will help you understand a lot about how people reaching your site.

Date Range Filter

You can filter data now up to 16 months in the new Google Search Console. Date range filter could provide you pre-defined filters such as 7 days, 28 days, 3 months, 6 months, etc... Similarly, you can add any custom date range to see the data between the last 16 months.

Date Range Compare

In the next tab of the date range filter, you can find an option to compare. With this filter, you can compare different periods of search performance data. For example, you can check site performance from last 30 days to previous 30 days or any custom date range.

Additional Filters

You can filter out data according to your needs and goals. You can use the **+New**button at the top to use different filters and compare them.

QUERIES	PAGES	COUNTRIES	DEVICES	SEARCH APPEARANCE

Query	↓ Clicks	Impressions	CTR	Position
	148	254	58.3%	1.1
	126	175	72%	1
	115	232	49.6%	2.1
	18	57	31.6%	1
	17	52	32.7%	3
	13	221	5.9%	14.5
	11	56	19.6%	5

Clicks

When a user clicks on your site from a Google search, it shows up on your Google Analytics as a session, and Google Search Console record it as a click.

Impressions

When a user searches something and your [website shows up on Google](#) on a search results page, this would count as an impression.

It doesn't matter if the user clicks or even visit your link. As long as it appears on the search page that user visits, Google will count it as an impression.

Average CTR

Click Through Rate or in short CTR is an average between clicks divided by impressions. For example, if your page impressions are 1000 and 2 users click on the page then we can divide clicks/impressions and get 0.002%. That would be your average CTR. Of course, you don't need to manually calculate that, Search Console will report it.

Average Position

It is an average position that your website has been shown up when people type keywords that display your page. Since this is an average of the position, it is not always accurate.

DIMENSIONS

Queries

Keywords that people search for when your page gets an impression or a click. This Report is quite important as it will help you find the keywords that people searching for when your site was shown up.

For example, you can find keywords that are bringing you traffic and their search position. If let's suppose that your keyword is ranking on the 5th position and getting on an average 5 clicks a day, you can optimize this particular keyword on your page and get more backlinks to get to the 1st position.

Also, you can find higher impressions and low CTR keywords then optimizing their meta title might bring you extra clicks. There are a lot of things that you can do with queries.

Pages

This dimension report will report your site pages that are getting clicks and impressions.

It can be a helpful tool to find out pages which are currently ranking for keywords mentioned in the Queries tab.

Countries

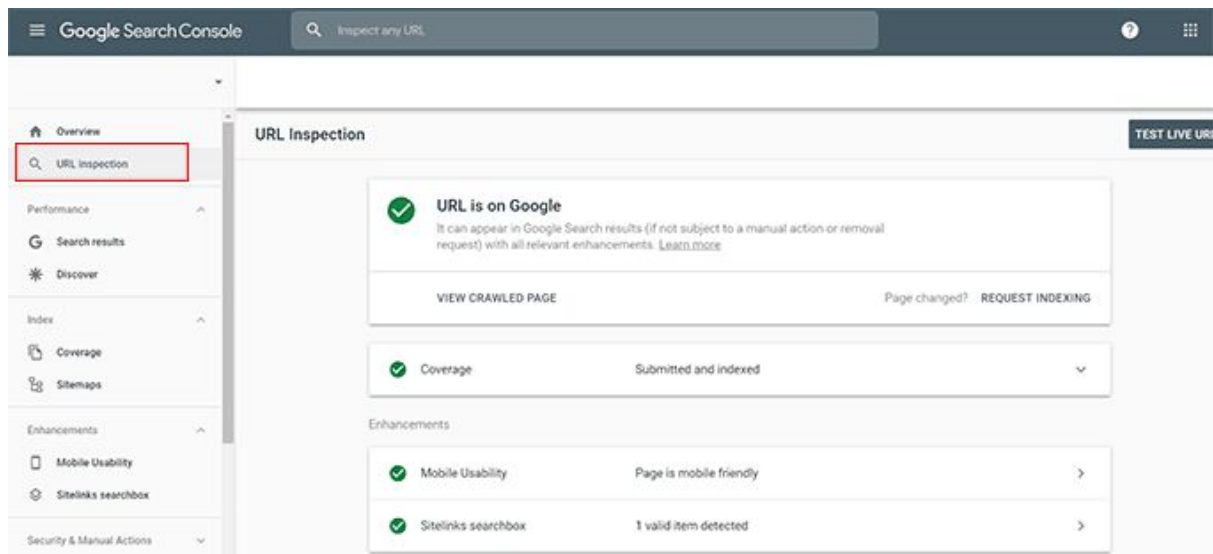Country of the users that landed on your site.

Devices

3 different types of devices can be shown in the devices section. Desktop, tablet, or mobile.

It could help you understand the device people use to visit your site.

Search Appearance

This dimension in Search Console shows AMP results, web light results, [rich results](#), etc…
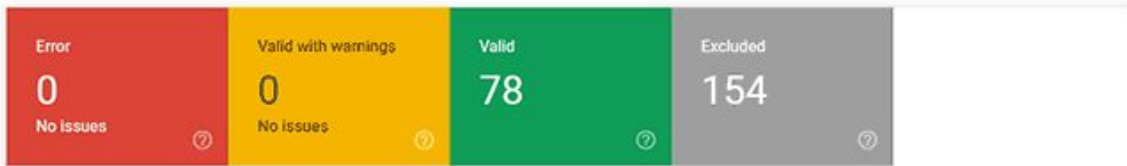
URL Inspection Tool

By using URL inspection tool you can troubleshoot crawling issues, test a live page, usability issues, rendering errors and canonical selected for a page.

At the top of your Search Console property, you can enter any URL containing your domain name to check how Google crawls that particular page.

If the page is not indexed then you can request indexing from your URL Inspection Tool. You can read more about Google indexing and crawling in this post.

Coverage Report

Status	Type	Validation ↑	Trend	Pages
Error	No issues			0
Valid with warnings	No issues			0
Valid				78
Excluded				154

☑ Impressions

Status	Type	Validation ↑	Trend	Pages
Excluded	Excluded by 'noindex' tag	N/A		81
Excluded	Crawl anomaly	N/A		26
Excluded	Duplicate without user-selected canonical	N/A		17
Excluded	Page with redirect	N/A		16
Excluded	Crawled - currently not indexed	N/A		9
Excluded	Alternate page with proper canonical tag	N/A		2
Excluded	Not found (404)	N/A		1
Excluded	Discovered - currently not indexed	N/A		1
Excluded	Blocked by robots.txt	N/A		1
Excluded	Duplicate, submitted URL not selected as canonical	N/A		0

Rows per page: 10 ▾   1-10 of 12   ‹ ›

How many pages of your website got indexed if not then what problems they are facing. You can use Index coverage report to find out all the indexing issues that Google find when crawling and indexing pages.

If this report shows you an error then you should consider fixing them quickly. Also, you can check 'Excluded pages' and look for what pages are not included in the Google Index.

Most content management platforms create feed pages and multiple [duplicate pages](#)which you can check in the Excluded pages. If you find any important page here then you should troubleshoot further.

It sounds complicated but when you get the hang of it, you will definitely find it useful.

Mobile Usability Report

If your website is not mobile-friendly then you might find mobile usability issues in this report.

You can fix those mobile usability issues by making your site responsive and following the [best mobile SEO practices.](#)

AMP Report

If you are using AMP on your site then this report will show you AMP-specific errors and how to fix them.

After fixing AMP issues reported by Search Console, you can notify Google through this report.

Rich Result Status Reports

Troubleshoot rich result related issues with the help of this report. You can see which rich result types were detected on your site in the Enhancements section of your dashboard.

Here are some rich results which are reported in Status Reports:

- Event
- FAQ
- Fact Check
- How-to
- Job posting
- Logo
- Product
- Q&A page
- Recipe
- Sitelinks searchbox

Manual Actions Report

If pages on your website are not compliant with Google's webmaster guidelines then Google could issue a manual action.

When a human reviewer at Google has determined that a site is tricking their way to rank higher, a manual action [Google penalty](#) shown in this report.

Normally, you don't see a manual action in this report. However, if you use [black hat SEO practices](#) or have been [affected by negative SEO attack](#) then you might see a notice in this report.

Security Issues Report

If your website is hacked, or using phishing techniques, or infected by malware then you will see a notice in the security issues report.

The Search Console will provide you instructions on how to fix that particular security issue and how to file for a reconsideration request.

Links Report

In this report, you will find [internal link](reports) reports and external link reports. Both of these reports are useful to understand how your content is linked.

EXTERNAL LINKS

In the first half section of the links report, you will find all the external link reports:

- Top linked pages
- Top linking sites
- Top linking text

Top linked pages

These are the top pages within your website that were linked by external sources. Such as if you have a [restaurant website](link) then you might get a review from a food blogger.

This will only tell you about the pages which are popular and getting links from external sources. It might help you [improve your content strategy](link).

Top linking sites

You can find out the top sites that are frequently linking your site pages.

In this report, you will find top websites that are linking back to you. You can find out the URL of any site that has linked to your page and actually visits the page to see how they linked your content.

It might help you get an idea which websites are linking and how you can improve your backlinks strategy.

Also, you might want to [fix negative backlinks](link) so you can do that with the help of linking sites report.

Top linking text

This is the anchor text that all the sites used to link to yours. Only links from outside your property are counted.

INTERNAL LINKS

This is the second half section of the links report, here you will only find one report by the name "Top Linked pages".

These are the pages that are mostly linked throughout your website from one page to another.

Google counts all the links on a page and reports it in this report. By using this report you can understand how your content is linked together

AMP Test Tool

If you are planning to use AMP on your site then you might want to check out this AMP testing tool.

Once you have applied AMP according to Google's AMP guidelines, this is how you should check for AMP-specific errors.

The AMP test tool is easier to use. Simply type the URL of a page that you want to test.

Mobile-Friendly Test Tool

Similar to the AMP Test Tool, you can use a Mobile-friendly test tool to test a page.

Google rank mobile-friendly pages higher than others. This is why it is important that you should focus on mobile SEO.

With the help of Mobile-friendly Test Tool, you could review how Googlebot actually views your site.

By simply typing the URL of any page, it will render the page and show you a screenshot of how the page looks to Google on mobile.

## Old Search Console Features Still Working:

Remove URLs Tool

The URL removal Tool enables you to temporarily remove pages from Google search results for sites that you own.

You can also use this tool to remove your website from Google completely.

The URL Removal tool will help you remove snippets, specific content and even whole pages. However, this tool will only remove pages temporarily. If you want to remove a website permanently from Google, you should use other methods such as using noindex meta tag, protect pages with a password, etc...

Crawl Stats
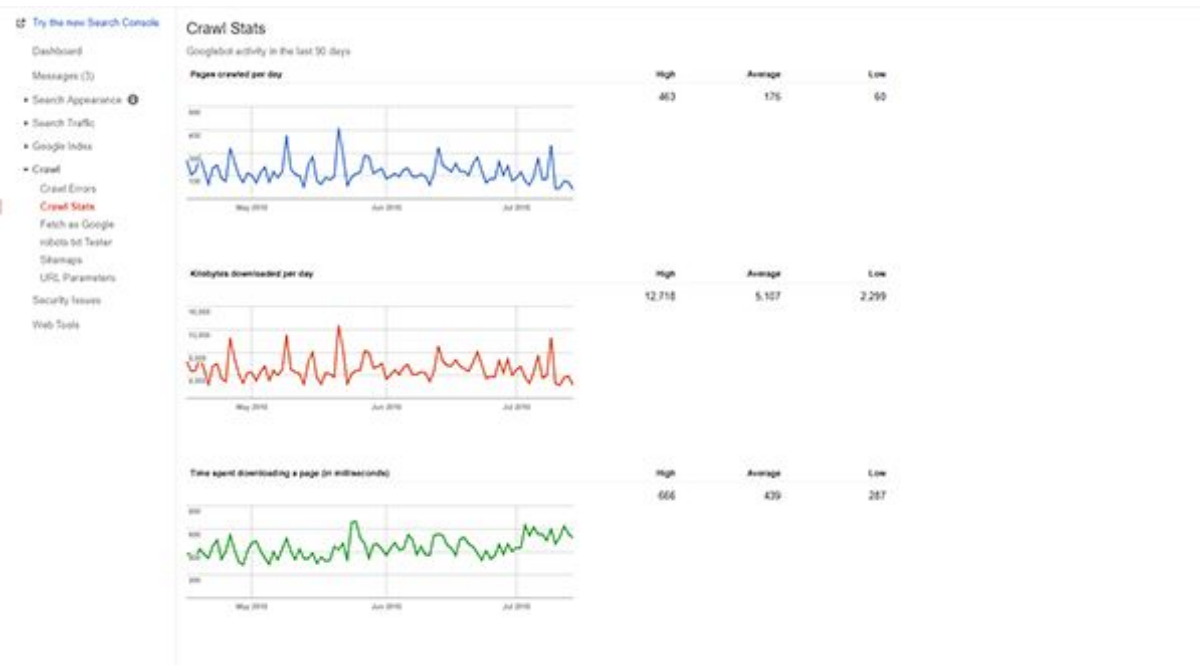
The Crawl Stats report provides information on Googlebot activity on your site for the last 90 days.

Having blocked resources or broken HTML could result in a decrease in crawl rate. By updating your site more frequently you can increase the crawl rate.

Crawl rate depends on how fast and search-friendly your site is, it is a good indicator of website accessibility by search crawlers.
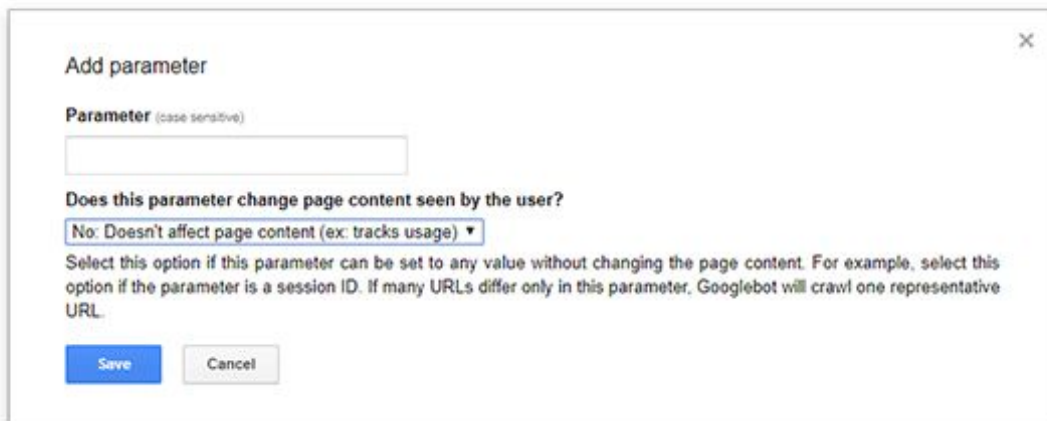
Robots.txt Tester

[The robots.txt file](#) is located at the root folder of your website. The purpose of this file is to block pages getting crawled by search crawlers including Googlebot and others.

The Robots.txt file provides instructions to web crawlers on how to crawl particular pages on your website. Most search engines such as Google, Bing, and Yahoo bots respect those instructions.

However, robots.txt can only give instructions but a page can get indexed in other ways. You should not use a robots.txt file to hide pages. To hide a page from Googlebot you should use a noindex meta tag or protect the page with a password.

URL Parameters Tool

When you have duplicate pages on a website and you want Google to identify and treat them right, you should consider using this URL parameter tool.

So when should you use this tool exactly?

If you are using session IDs, tracking codes within the URLs of the page or having similar pages with identical content.

By using this tool, you can tell Googlebot how to treat identical content on your website.

International Targeting
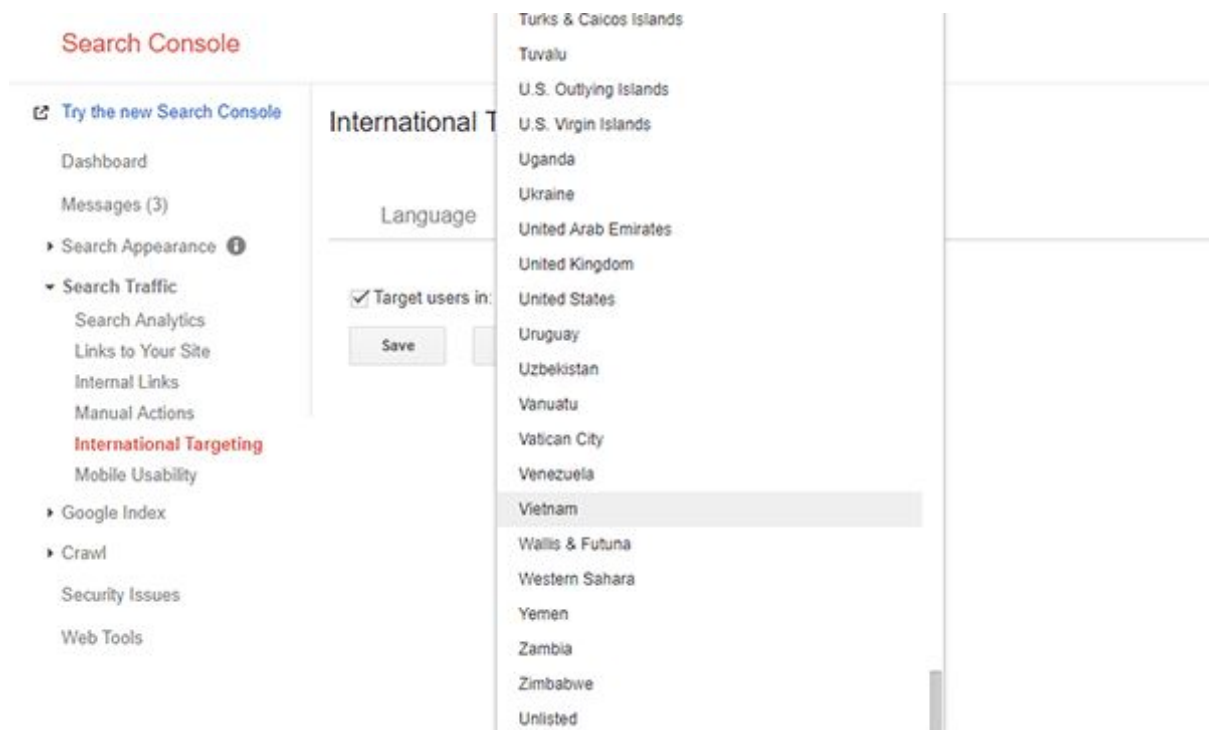
The International Targeting reports within Google Search Console helps webmasters debug common issues with their [implementation of href-lang](#).

The markup enables Google and other search engines to serve the correct language or regional version of a page to users.

The International Targeting Report helps webmasters identify two of the most common issues with hreflang annotations. One of them is missing return links in which the annotations must be confirmed to the pages they are pointing to, otherwise, the annotations may be interpreted incorrectly.

The other problem is incorrect hreflang values in which the value of the hreflang attribute must either be a language code or a combination of language and country codes.

If Google's indexing system detects language or country codes that are not in the right format, Google will provide example URLs to help you fix them.

Data Highlighter Tool
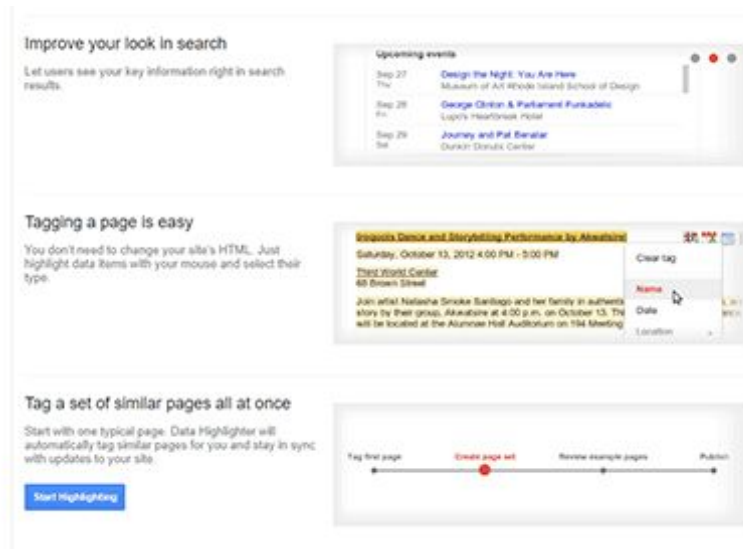
It is a helpful tool to highlight structured data, so Google can understand how your page is structured and on the next crawl index those new changes.

You can easily use this tool to highlight structured data on your page. Once all the information is highlighted, you can press the publish button.

You can do it for a single page or create a data set, which is basically a collection of pages.

Google will take some time to index those new changes. After a while, you will start seeing new data in the Data Highlighter report.

Structured Data Markup Helper

If you have trouble using structured data markup, this tool will help you easily markup important pages on your website with structured data.

In a few simple steps, you can markup important data on your site. Google uses that data to display rich results.

I hope you found this Search Console guide useful. If you have any questions regarding SEO or Search Console then please feel free to [send me a message](#).