

SEO Ranking Factors In 2017: What's Important, What's Not

How to put these findings into action

Herndon Hasty, The Container Store



S M X
SEARCH
MARKETING
EXPO

#SMX #11A

@herndon

Herndon Hasty



- **Digital Marketing Manager, The Container Store**
 - SEO + Digital Consultant
- **9 years, SEO XYZ at iProspect**
- **15+ years in digital marketing**
- **12+ years in SEO for retail / lead gen / int'l / etc.**



How I'm going to help

Taking the awesome data these folks just shared with you, and giving you some actionable, take-home items.

(also, some points on Google's SERP changes, because adjusting to the way SERPs are changing is a WHOLE other beast.)

1. SITE SPEED



Key Area :: Site Speed


- Long-standing factor
- More mobile = more important
- GTMetrix.com
- Main areas to address
 - Cache more
 - Combine external files
 - Vendor tags – remove, update

PageSpeed	YSlow	Waterfall	Timings	Video	History
RECOMMENDATION					GRADE
▼ Minimize redirects					F (0) ▼
▼ Combine images using CSS sprites					F (0) ▼
▼ Leverage browser caching					F (0) ▼
▼ Defer parsing of JavaScript					F (19) ▼
▼ Enable gzip compression					D (62) ▼
▼ Minimize request size					C (77) ▼
▼ Serve resources from a consistent URL					C (79) ▼
▼ Specify a cache validator					B (81) ▼
▼ Specify image dimensions					B (86) ▼
▼ Optimize images					A (91) ▲

Scaling images

The following images are resized in HTML or CSS. Serving scaled images could save 96.3KiB (80% reduction).

What's this mean?

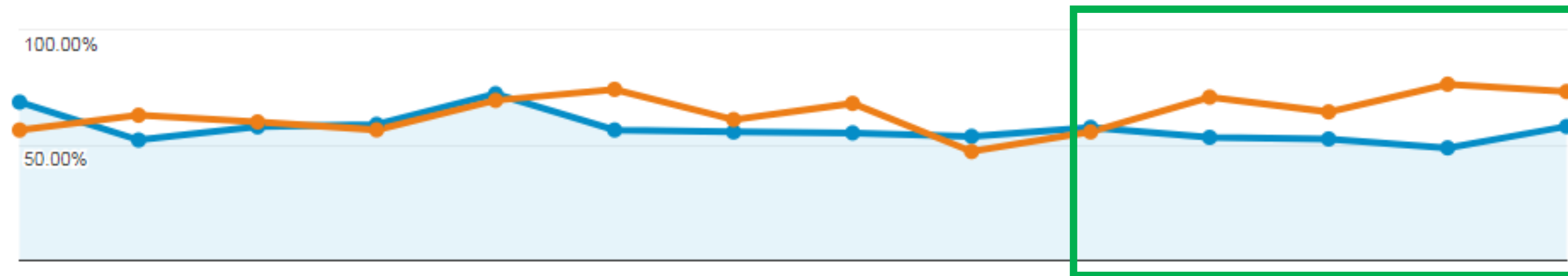
-  is resized in HTML or CSS from 312x312 to 70x312. Serving a scaled image could save 50.2KiB (77% reduction).

SIZE YOUR IMAGES CORRECTLY

- Usually being done for zoom options, retina
 - Products (zoom vs. on-screen)
 - Small repeated elements
 - Logos



Case study – image size reduction



- Product images reduced 25-75%
- Bounce rates for all entrances on product pages went from +4% YOY to -30% YOY.
- Pages per session: From +3% to +96%
- Natural entrances: From +10% to +75%



2. HTTPS

Key Area :: HTTPS

Google Webmaster Central Blog

Official news on crawling and indexing sites for the Google index

HTTPS as a ranking signal

Wednesday, August 06, 2014

Google Is Requiring HTTPS for Secure Data in Chrome

Google Starts Giving A Ranking Boost To Secure HTTPS/SSL Sites

Google Will Soon Shame All Websites That Are Unencrypted

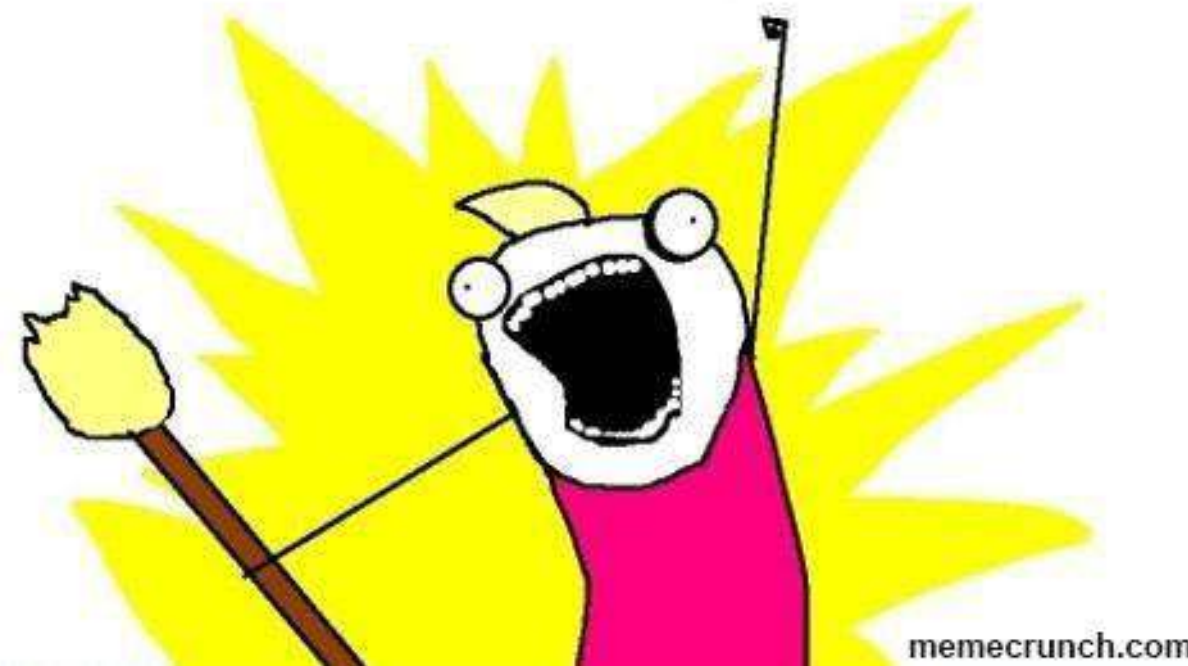
- Google 2014 announcement
- Still waiting for other shoe to drop as a requirement
- Balance issue with site speed



HTTPS Transition Pitfalls

- All of the challenges of a re-design, with fewer of the immediate, visceral benefits.
 - Package it with wider URL changes.
- Re-direct old pages.
- **Update your canonicals from HTTP to HTTPS**

UPDATE ALL THE THINGS



Why update your canonicals?

Canonical Wrong

-5 pts

WOW

Canonical Right

+7 pts

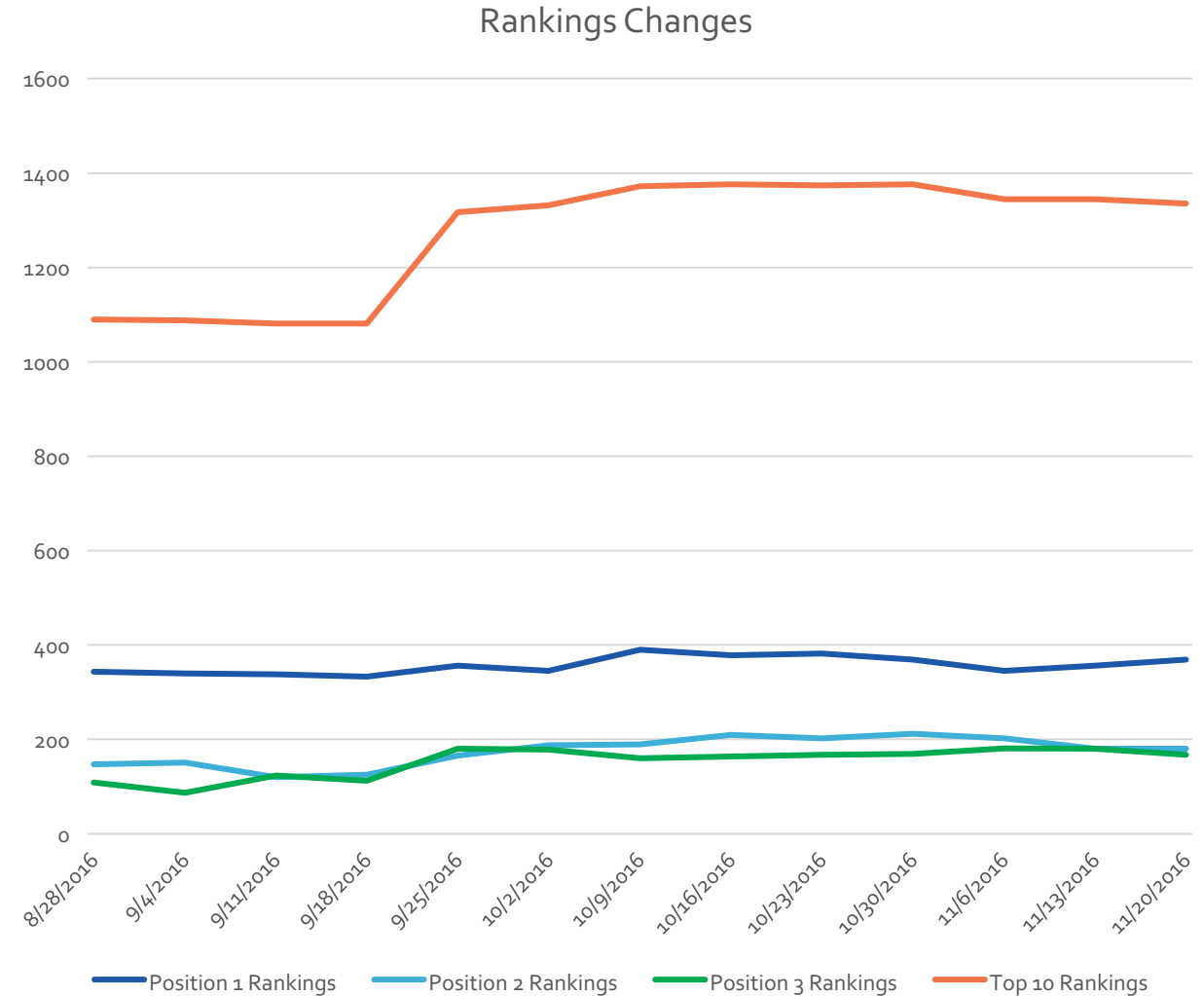
WOW



3. META DATA

Key Area :: Meta Data

- Titles CAN make a difference...may be a question of where you start from? **AGGRESSIVE.**
- Meta descriptions, of course, don't, but can affect clickthrough rate.



What works in meta descriptions?

- Keywords
- Free shipping
- Free returns
- Big Brands That Everyone Knows
- ‘Official site’ (if you’re a BBTEK, have retail partners, etc.)
- % off, \$ off and any promotions

YOUR RESULTS MAY VARY!

- Whatever you test and find works – different from vertical to vertical, site to site, audience to audience
- Use Adwords ads to find winners

Price point experimentation

- Added 'from \$XYZ' in title tags, descriptions
- Category CTR on pages, product pages
- Titles = no effect...not even negative?
- Meta descriptions = 5-15% lift in CTR on categories, nothing on products

Get free shipping on all purchases over \$75 & free in-store pickup on Makeup Organizers, Cosmetics Storage, Nail Polish Racks and more at The Container Store.



Get free shipping on all purchases over \$75 & free in-store pickup on Makeup Organizers, Cosmetics Storage, & Nail Polish Racks **from \$3.99** at The Container Store.

Food Storage: Food Containers, Airtight Storage & Mason Jars | The Container Store



Food Storage: Food Containers, Airtight Storage & Mason Jars **from \$4.99** | The Container Store



4a. SERP CHANGES

(A quick primer on how much things have changed and the effects)



Natural traffic is harder to come by

Mobile vs Desktop Traffic Share & Average Clickthrough Rate (CTR)

	2010	Early 2015	Mid 2015	Early 2016	Mid 2016	Early 2017	Mid 2017
Mobile % of searches	10-20%	48%	50%	53%	58%	58%	60%
Mobile CTR	n/a	27.75%	26.41%	24.98%	23.86%	25.12%	23.2%
Desktop CTR	n/a	28.09%	30.35%	28.55%	29.81%	29.32%	27.9%
Shopping intent - Desktop	n/a	31.0%	25.8%	25.6%	28.5%	26.6%	26.8%
Shopping intent - Mobile	n/a	36.3%	26.7%	27.0%	25.0%	26.5%	24.5%

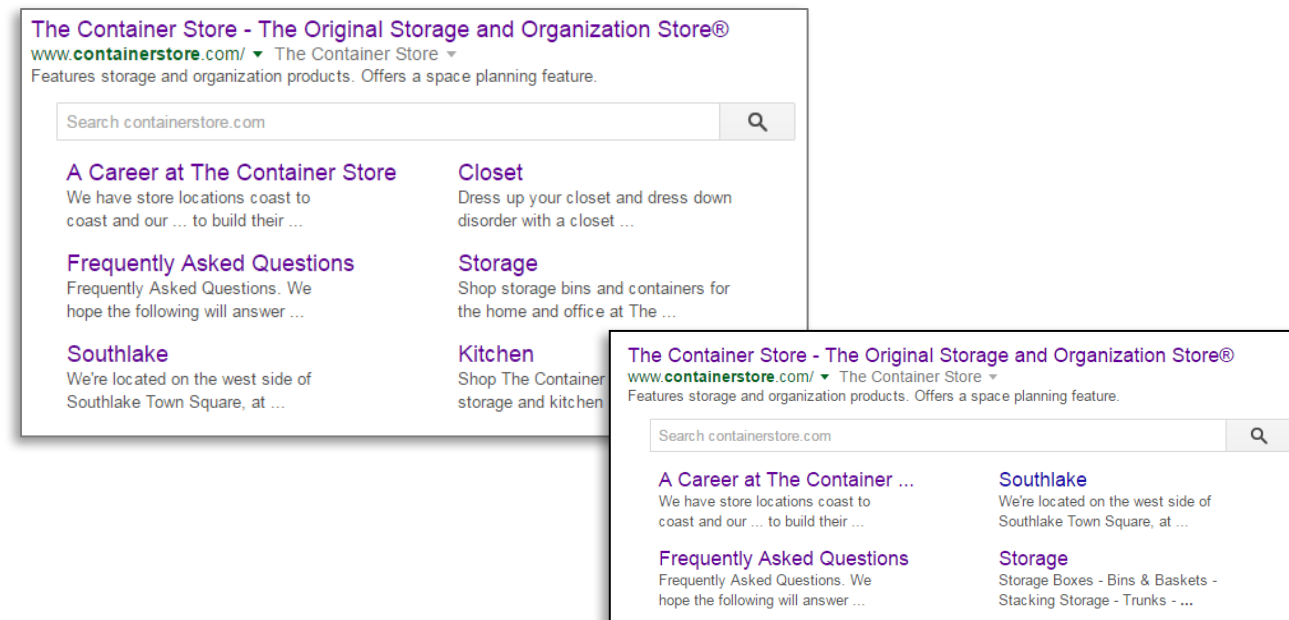
With more search coming through mobile devices rather than desktop, and both seeing lower clickthrough rates as a result of busier results pages, SEO doesn't drive the same traffic today as it did just six months ago, let alone two years ago. **Device changes alone mean a 10% drop in natural clicks for a # ranking vs. 2015.**

Source: AWS Clickthrough rate study data – CTRs are for #1 position

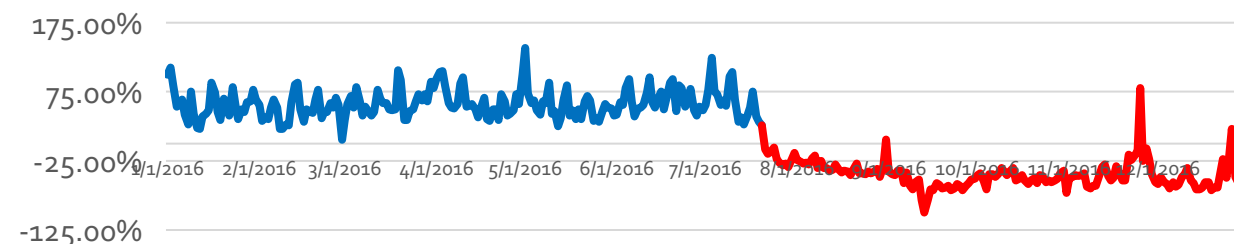
Changes to SERPs

Changes to SERPs drive down clickthrough rates

- 40% of all searches (57% of mobile) do not result in a click!¹
- More / larger rich snippets
- PLAs, ads from righthand rail
- Etc.



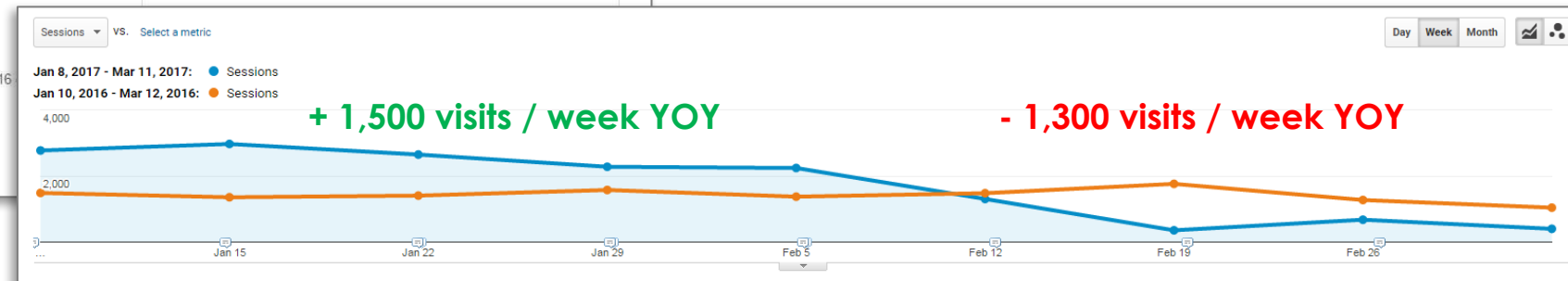
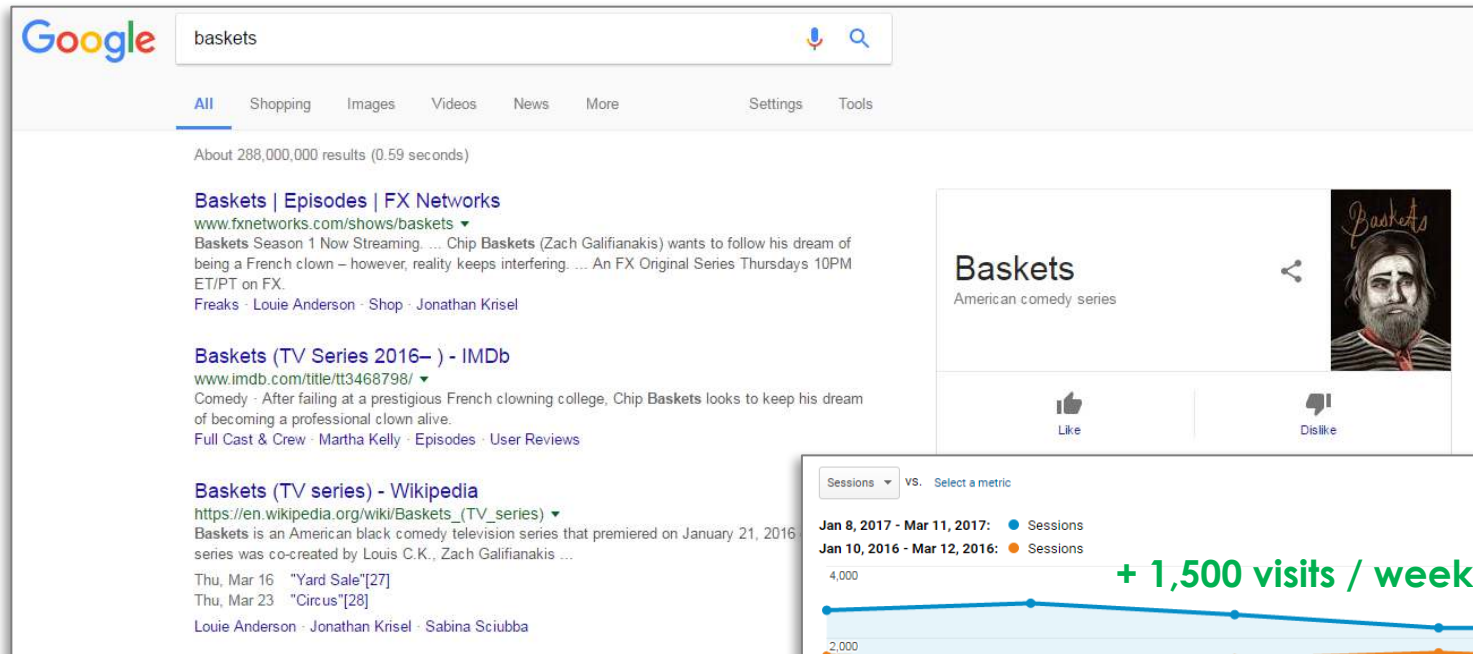
Unnamed Department page natural search YOY growth rate – 2016 vs 2015



1. Source: Moz

Super-relevance ≠ your friend

Even Google's relevance efforts can hurt – dropping from #1 to #30 for *baskets* when the TV show's new season started.



4b. SERP CHANGES

(Things you can do to combat them.)




Instant Answers

kitchen storage

All Shopping Images Books News More Settings Tools

About 210,000,000 results (0.88 seconds)

Create efficient **kitchen storage** with our drawer organizers, pot racks, cabinet organizers, rolling carts and refrigerator bins. **Kitchen** organization is easy with spice racks, undershelf baskets, stacking canisters and stemware holders that utilize every inch of your.



[Kitchen Storage & Kitchen Organization Supplies | The Container Store](https://www.containerstore.com/s/kitchen/1)
<https://www.containerstore.com/s/kitchen/1>

About this result Feedback

[Kitchen Storage & Kitchen Organization Supplies | The Container Store](https://www.containerstore.com/s/kitchen/1)
<https://www.containerstore.com/s/kitchen/1>

Create efficient **kitchen storage** with our drawer organizers, pot racks, cabinet organizers, rolling carts and refrigerator bins. **Kitchen** organization is easy with spice racks, undershelf baskets, stacking canisters and stemware holders that utilize every inch of your.

[Food Storage](#) · [Cabinet Organizers](#) · [Pantry Organizers](#) · [Our Kitchen Starter Kits](#)

[Kitchen Storage & Organization You'll Love - Wayfair.com](https://www.wayfair.com/kitchen-tabletop/cat/kitchen-storage-c246761.html)
<https://www.wayfair.com/kitchen-tabletop/cat/kitchen-storage-c246761.html>

Kitchen storage is a must have in order to keep your cabinets, drawers, and pantry in order. A messy **kitchen** is a **kitchen** that no one can enjoy! ... **Kitchen** cabinet **storage** with all enclosed shelves will give you more room to store dry goods or cookware.

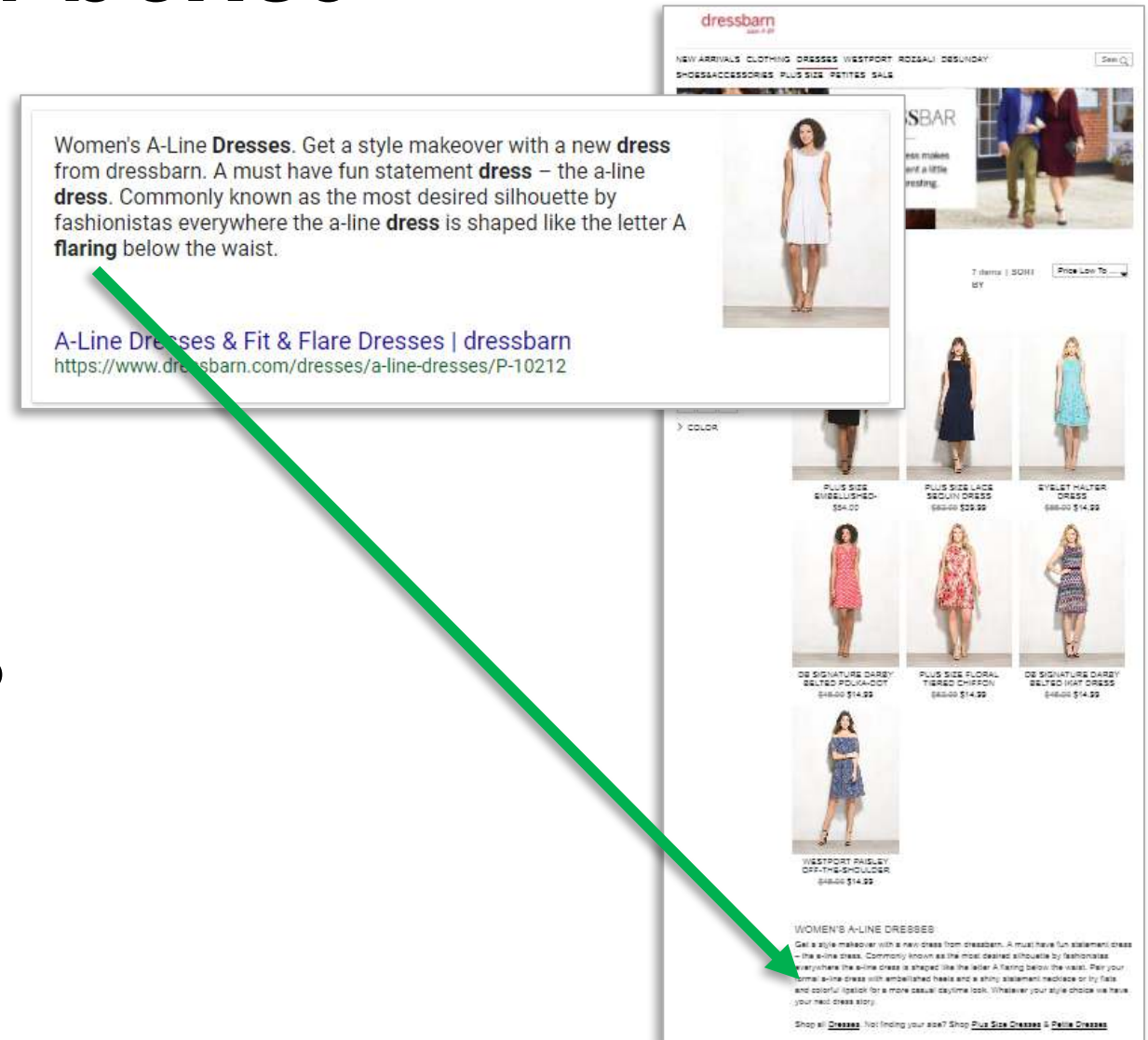
[Kitchen Canisters & Jars](#) · [Kitchen Shelving](#) · [Pantry Cabinets](#) · [Food Storage](#)

Instant answer boxes are part of the dropping CTR trend, but at least one that can work in your favor.

- Expanding from questions to generics
- 15-30% CTR, 15-90% of SERP above the fold
- Source for digital assistants' responses

Winning instant answer boxes

- Look for terms that already have quick answers
- High-ranking result (not necessarily #1)
- Content block
 - Top? Bottom? Doesn't seem to matter
 - Sub-heads / bullets
 - More words, the better.



Other ways to play to the SERP

Front page Schema.org

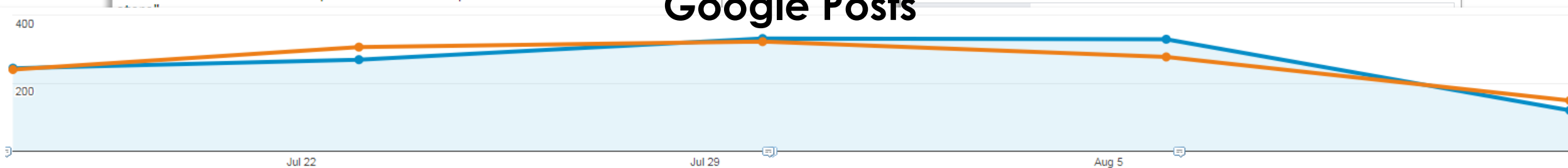
```
<script type="application/ld+json">
{
  "@context": "http://schema.org",
  "@type": "WebSite",
  "url": "http://www.containerstore.com/",
  "potentialAction": {
    "@type": "SearchAction",
    "target": "https://www.containerstore.com/s?source=form&q={search_term}&submit=",
    "query-input": "required name=search_term"
  }
}
</script>
<script type="application/ld+json">
{
  "@context": "http://schema.org",
  "@type": "Organization",
  "name": "The Container Store",
  "url": "http://www.containerstore.com",
  "logo":
    "https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:ContainerStoreLogo.svg",
  "sameAs": [
    "https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Container_Store",
    "https://www.pinterest.com/containerstore",
    "https://www.facebook.com/containerstore",
    "https://twitter.com/containerstore",
    "https://instagram.com/thecontainerstore",
    "https://www.youtube.com/containerstore",
    "https://www.houzz.com/pro/containerstore/the-contain"
  ]
}
```



Wikidata

Statements		
instance of	business enterprise	edit
	0 references	+ add reference
		+ add
industry	fashion	edit
	0 references	+ add reference
		+ add
	retail	edit
	0 references	+ add reference
	clothing	edit
	0 references	+ add reference
		+ add
image	Neimanmarcus.JPG	edit
	0 references	+ add reference
		+ add

Google Posts



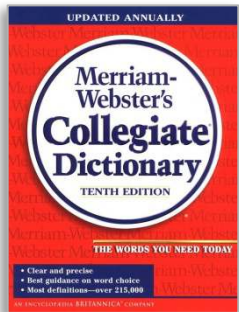
- Calls out important information to search engines.
 - Names
 - Prices, reviews
 - Calories, length, distance
 - Availability
 - Address and phone number
 - Actions?
- ~~Markup~~ Meta data – MUCH easier to implement

Source: Moz.com

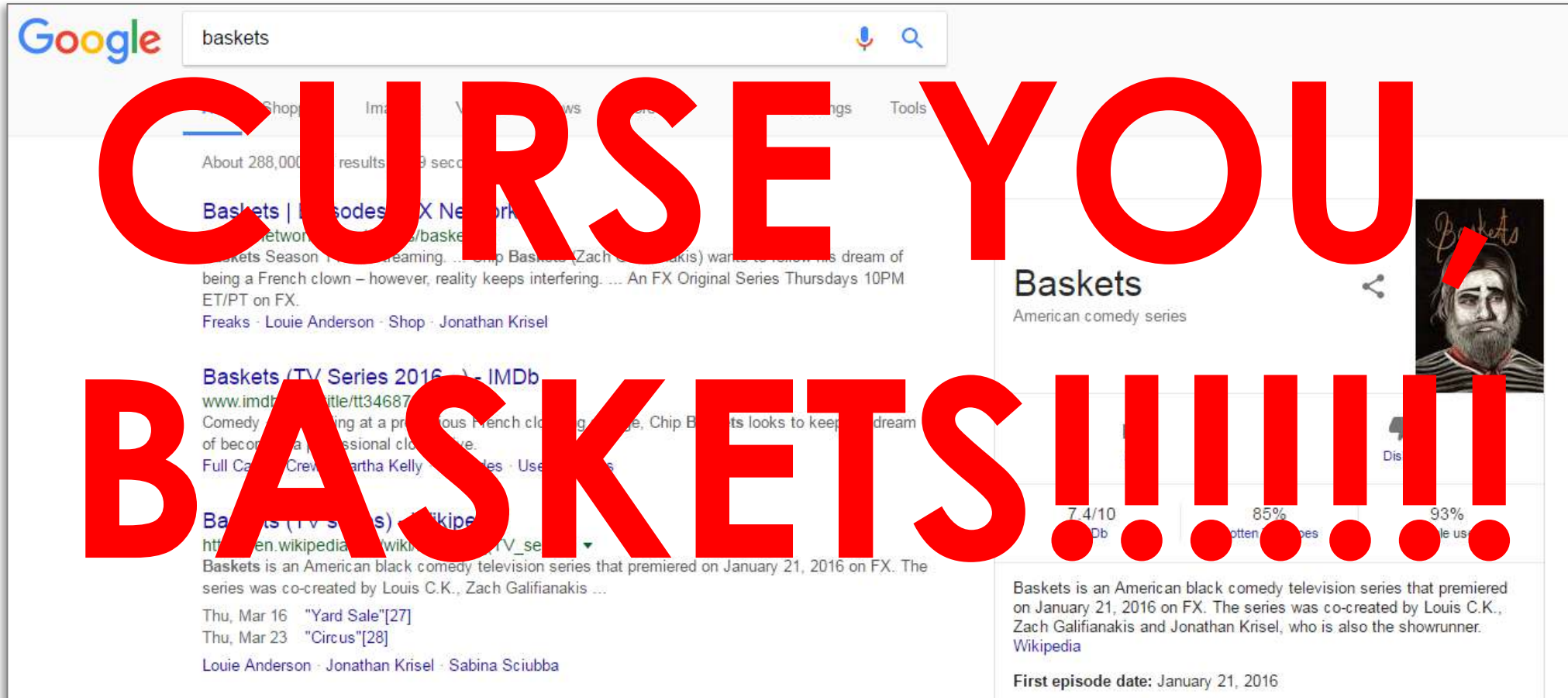


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Fish



Sound a little familiar?



Tomorrow's algorithm to beat

The Container Store®

Pet Supplies Plus - petsuppliesplus.com
Ad www.petsuppliesplus.com/ -
Your Maspeth Neighborhood Pet Specialty Store
74-17 Grand Ave, New York, NY

Pet Fish for Sale: Tropical and Freshwater Fish | PetSmart
www.petsmart.com/live-pet/live-fish/cat-36-catid-700002 - PetSmart -
Save on Aqueon® filters with store pickup. Shop filters - Featured Shops ... Buy 2,
Get 1 Free small pet bedding - Featured Shops ... Home - Live Pet; Live Fish ...

Aquarium Live Fish & Rock - Small Pet Fish and ... - Petco
www.petco.com/LiveFish.aspx - Petco -
Provide your small pet fish with shelter while decorating your aquarium with ... Betta
Shop ... and range in sizes to appropriately house large and small pet fish.

That Pet Place: Pet Supplies and Fish Supplies at That Fish ...
www.thatpetplace.com/ -
Discount Pet Supplies & Fish Supplies up to 60% off every day at That Fish Place -
That Pet Place.

Petco Animal Supplies
www.petco.com

860 Broadway
New York, NY

Shop for fish pet stores on Google

Sponsored

Fish Hotel Fish Bowl White
\$34.25
High Fashion...

As Seen On TV My Fun Fish C...
\$14.99
Kmart
In store

Umbra Fish Hotel
\$34.99
Wag.com

My Fun Fish Tank
\$12.99
Toys R Us
★★★★★ (22)

Map for fish pet stores

Monday – 9 AM at home

Great Seafood Restaurant - Chart-House.com
Ad www.chart-house.com/Weehawken -
Waterfront View of New York. Call Now For Your Reservation.
Menus - Reserve a Table - Hours - Private Events

seafood restaurants

Rating - Price - Hours - More -

The Sea Fire Grill
4.9 ★★★★★ 80 reviews - \$\$\$ - Seafood
E 48th St - High-end surf 'n' turf restaurant
Zagat - Best Restaurants in the East 40s

Avra Estiatorio
4.2 ★★★★★ 123 reviews - \$\$\$ - Greek
E 48th St - Atmospheric Greek seafood restaurant
Zagat - Best Greek Restaurants in NYC

the sea grill
4.2 ★★★★★ 69 reviews - \$\$\$ - Grill
W 49th St - Seafood with views of Rock Center
Opens at 5:00 pm

[More seafood restaurants](#)

New York » Restaurants » Seafood - Yelp
www.yelp.com/c/nyc/seafood - Yelp -
The Best Seafood in New York on Yelp. Read about places like: BlackSea Fish &

Red Lobster Seafood Trios
www.redlobster.com/SeafoodTrios -
4.8 ★★★★★ rating for redlobster.com
They are finally here! Join Us For Seafood Trios - 3 Entrees, 1 Plate.
5 Times Square, New York, NY
(212) 730-6706

Seafood Restaurant
www.limaniseafoodcatering.com/ -
Looking For A Seafood Restaurant? Superior Cuisine For 7+ Years.

Seafood Restaurant Near Me
www.webcrawler.com/ -
Search multiple engines for seafood restaurant near me

Local Seafood Restaurants
newyorkcity.local.com/ -
Looking For A Seafood Restaurant? Search Local.com To Find One!

Nearest Seafood Restaurant
about.com/Nearest+Seafood+Restaurant -
3.6 ★★★★★ rating for about.com
Search for Nearest Seafood Restaurant. Find Expert Advice on About.com.

[List of Seafood Restaurants](#)

Wednesday – 4 PM at work

Find Fishing Locations - TakeMeFishing.org
Ad www.takemefishing.org/ -
Find Fishing Locations in Any State on Interactive Fishing Map.
Take Me Fishing has 1,507 followers on Google+

Best Fishing Spots - Want To Know Hotspots For Fishing
Ad www.recycledfish.org/Fishing_Places -
We Can Help. Learn More!

Places to Boat and Fish Map - Take Me Fishing
takemefishing.org/community/places-to-boat-and-fish/ - Takemefishing.org -
Our fishing map shows you the best places to fish in any area. Find bodies of water and get local insight from member hot spots. Catch fish today!

Top 10 Places to Catch a Fish in New York City - World ...
www.worldfishingnetwork.com/.../top-10-places-to-catch-a-fish-in-new-... -
Nov 3, 2010 - Last week, we examined the fishing in Central Park's bodies of water - this week, we present the rest of the places to catch a fish in New York ...

Places to Fish - NYS Dept. of Environmental Conservation
www.dec.ny.gov - New York State Department of Environmental Conser... -
Fishing information on numerous great fishing spots located around the state, including PDFs of lake contour maps and Publish Fishing rights maps.
East-Central NY Fishing - Central NY Fishing - Southeastern NY Fishing

I FISH NY Saltwater Fishing Guide for New York City Area ...
www.dec.ny.gov - New York State Department of Environmental Conser... -
DEC has published a complete saltwater fishing guide that has information on how to get started and where fishing access sites are available around the New ...

Friday – 4 PM at a bar



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Schema tomorrow



5. WRAPPING UP

Takeaways & To-Do's

1. Site speed – GTMetrix, especially look for anything to do with images.
2. HTTPS – Do it, re-direct it, fix your canonicals
3. Meta data DOES still work – be aggressive, test
4. Mitigate SERP changes with Instant Answers and Schema.org

PS: Get organized! Buy some elfa custom closets & shelving! Go Frogs!



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