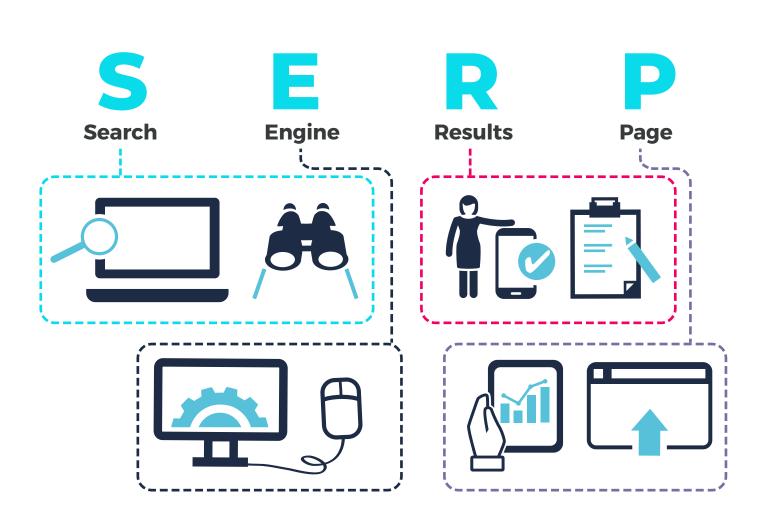


# Conducting a **SERP scan**

**Presented by Rachael Clark** 



# What is a SERP scan?



### A SERP (Search Engine Results Page) scan involves:

- Going into incognito mode on a browser
- Taking a search term/phrase you want to rank for
- Heading to Google
- Entering the term into the search bar
- Analysing the results to identify:
  - Opportunities
  - Challenges
  - Alternatives (keyword & channels)

### What is included in this guide?

In this guide, we have provided examples of the SERP based on a Top of Funnel, Middle of Funnel and Bottom of Funnel search term/phrase.

Within each example, we have provided analysis which includes:

- Key features of the SERP
- Opportunities to 'win' in the SERP
- Alternative strategies if the SERP is too competitive

#### **Key considerations:**

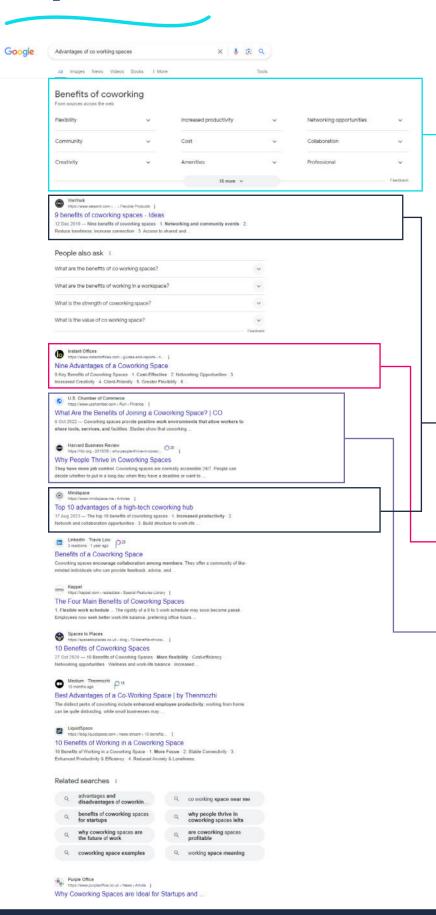
Quick wins are possible with SEO but depending on the search term there may be high competition.

For example, if you are a relatively new site or are light on content, it is likely your site has low authority. This means it will be harder to rank for terms relevant to your business.

As such, you should consider a longer-term SEO strategy as well as looking at how to use a multichannel approach to drive users to your key content.

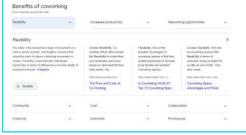


# Top of Funnel search example



### 'Sources across the web' feature

- This feature shows answers from several sites to a specific search in a 3x3 view with an option to view more
- This can be a great opportunity to gain visibility and organic traffic but is extremely competitive
- To try and gain visibility in this feature, your site needs to consistently offer valuable content to your users which includes following key E-E-A-T guidelines.



### Coworking/Office Space Provider

- These are a big player in the coworking space. Therefore, they are highly authoritative which will help them rank well for this topic
- High authority US Office Space sites are even outranking those of the UK

#### Office Space Aggregator

This website provides listings of office spaces to rent in a wide variety of locations. As a result, they will be seen as highly authoritative, helping them rank well for this term

#### **Large US Organisations**

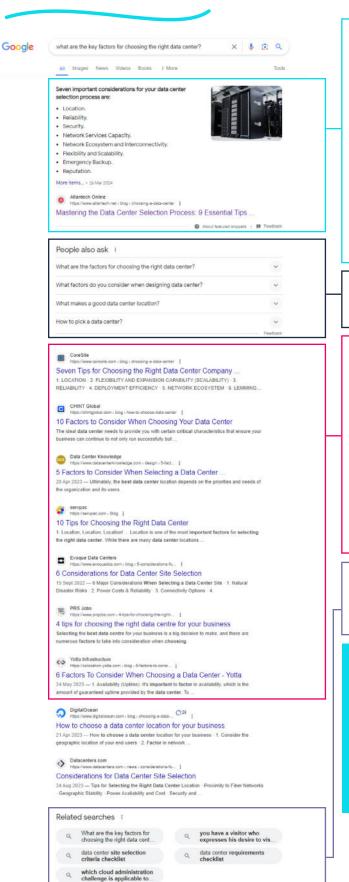
We see high-authority US sites appearing in this space. This is again an indicator that this is a very competitive space to try and rank for.

#### In summary...

- This is a highly competitive SERP with very authoritative sites appearing
- You should consider whether you can realistically compete for this term or look for alternatives such as:
  - Longer tail search terms
  - Lower funnel searches e.g. 'dogfriendly co-working space in Nottingham'
- That said, it's not all about SEO! If this is about sharing your unique take on the subject, then you may still want to create this content and drive to it from other channels (e.g. social, email, PPC etc)



# Middle of Funnel search example



#### 'Featured Snippets'

Atlantech have created a highly tailored page which has helped them gain the highly valuable 'featured snippet' position. The key elements they've used to help achieve this are to:

- Incorporate the number of tips in the SEO Title
- Add a Table of Contents. Google has scraped the table to provide the featured snippet
- Weave in highly relevant internal links to related pages
- Make the page easily scannable
- Add the author details to highlight expertise in this space
- Add links to related blog content e.g. '10 questions to ask before you buy data center services for your business'
- Incorporate related search terms throughout the content

#### 'People also ask'

Use this to identify content to include in your page or to inform topics for additional pages

#### **Tips, Tips, Tips**

Tips dominate this space and it is still a very competitive space. It is therefore worth considering:

- How authoritative your site is against those ranking top for these terms
- If you aren't as authoritative, then this means your content has to be even better than the top performing site and it may still take a long time to rank
- This may be okay if it's part of a longer-term content strategy, where you are working towards higher authority, but consider how you can use other channels to get eyeballs on the page if it is key for your organisation (e.g. signposting to it from other pages of the site, driving to it from other channels etc)

#### **Related Searches**

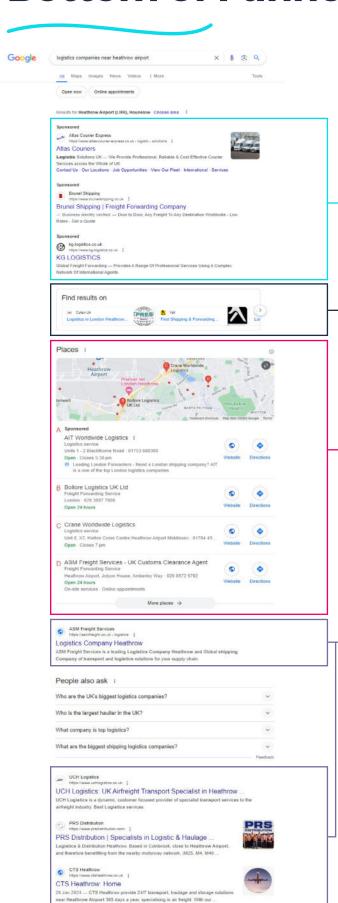
Look to the related searches to get ideas for related terms to include in your content or for ideas on new content to be created

#### In summary...

- Always view the SERP results to understand what types of content rank well for a given term
- In this example, it's listicles which means key features should always include:
  - A Table of Contents
  - · Strong internal linking
  - Related content on the topic
  - Related terms within the content (typically as H2s and H3s)



# **Bottom of Funnel search example**



#### Ads

- This space is heavily dominated by ads so you may well need to add some budget to highly relevant terms to maximise lead generation
- Consider dedicated PPC landing pages to maximise conversions

#### **Directories/Marketplaces**

Google is providing alternative locations to find relevant services through dedicated directories and marketplaces with Cylex and Yell

#### **Google Maps**

Local searches typically always bring up Google Maps. Within this there are key opportunities to gain presence through:

- Google Maps ads
- Your Google My Business listing

To maximise your visibility with your organic Google My Business listing, optimising the listing with imagery, reviews etc is vital

#### **Individual Organisations**

Those ranking top have woven in relevant search terms into their Title and Meta Description e.g.

- Heathrow is incorporated in the Title of the top two ranking sites
- The Meta Description uses terms such as "Leading" and "Global" to help encourage a higher CTR
- PRS have also incorporated the proximity to key motorways

#### In summary...

- You may need to consider a joint PPC and SEO strategy
- Google Business Profile presence is vital for local searches. Consider adding Google Maps Ads to your marketing mix if you are struggling to rank organically
- To help your main website page rank, look at who is ranking top and see what they are incorporating in order to improve and optimise your content accordingly. Do note that if they have higher overall authority, this may require a longer-term strategy or an alternative channel mix



# **In summary**

The SERP is a busy and ever changing space. Outside of normal website results, you may find a mix of the following:

- Ads
- Maps
- Featured Snippets
- People also ask
- Sources across the web
- Alternative directories
- Related searches

#### Therefore, it is vital to:

- Understand the landscape: Always look at the SERP to gain a full understanding of the opportunities and challenges for a given term
- Review the competition: If too competitive, you may need to consider alternative keywords to target and/or other channels to drive to the page
- Consider the Search Intent of the term: You may want to look at alternatives including longer-tail terms where competition is lower and intent is higher
- Look further than your website:
   Your Google Business Profile should be considered a key channel in your marketing mix for local searches

If you are looking for guidance on your digital strategy, including SEO, please do get in touch – we'd love to hear from you!

## Related articles you may find useful:

- Practical Tips for B2B SEO using Google's E-E-A-T guidelines
- How to use Google Search Console for B2B marketing
- Bard Bungles B2B -Bing Better











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