

Does Google Use Click-Through Rates to Determine Generic Search Position?

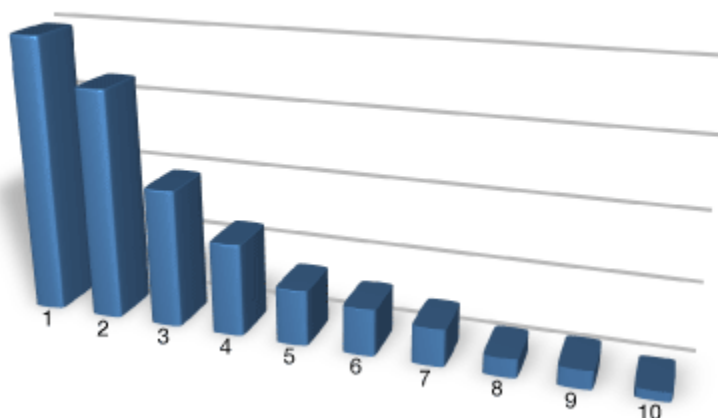
Google does use the click through rate (CTR) to rank the paid search results (PPC). The more clicks an ad gets, the higher it will be ranked in the search results. This begs another question. Does Google also use this method for the regular search results?

Why does it make sense to consider the CTR?

The top 10 search results all have similar click patterns. A certain percentage of web surfers click on the first result, fewer people click on the second result, even fewer people click on the third result, etc.

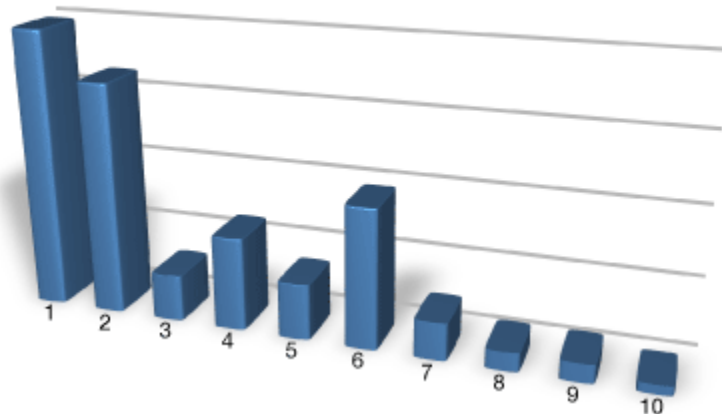
In general, the distribution of clicks on the different search results is similar for all keywords used to initiate a search. For example, the usual number of click-throughs on results 1 to 10 could be distributed like this:

Normal distribution of clicks (result 1 - 10)



If one web page in the search results received an unusually high number of clicks then Google could easily see that:

Result #6 has an unusual CTR



In this example, result number 6 has received more clicks than the average number 6 result received. It seems that result number 6 is appealing to many users for some reason.

Google wants to return the best and the most attractive search results. If many people click on a search result, Google could decide to give that page a higher ranking on the result pages. By doing so, Google would rank attractive web pages higher and searchers would be happier with the results. This is obviously good for Google's business.

What does this mean for your website?

It's not clear whether Google uses the click through rate to determine the ranking of web pages for the generic search results. It is certainly within their capability to use CTR to position websites and it also makes sense. Moreover, it always helps to use compelling web page titles and meta descriptions. A web page meta description is a "mini ad" delivered by Google when your site is displayed in the search results.

The more appealing your website title and description look to web surfers, the more people will click. Therefore, if Google does reward a site because of the CTR then that site is rewarded not only with a higher position but also with more click through traffic – one enhances the other. **Conclusion: write compelling meta descriptions and use compelling page titles.**