

CH.5

TRACKING RESULTS

AND

MEASURING SUCCESS

Introduction

- Generating sales
 - Obtaining sales
 - Generating ad dollars
 - Getting people to read specific articles
-

- Total site traffic
- Traffic to your most popular pages
- Keywords driving the traffic
- Keywords driving conversions
- Pages receiving the search traffic

Why measuring success is essential to the SEO process

It helps in.....

- Identifying search traffic by search engine and keyword
- Measuring baseline of the major keywords
- Measuring what sections are getting the current traffic
- Identifying poorly performing pages
- Identifying the best performing pages
- Tracking search engine crawler activity on site
- Finding KPIs(Key Performance Indicators)

The Tracking Cycle: Produce, launch, measure, refine

1. Define an SEO campaign and set goals
2. Discuss your strategy
3. Establish a baseline (recording current states before beginning)
4. Proceed with your project (implement new pages, site changes, link-building campaign)
5. Collect data
6. Compare the baseline data to the new data
7. Refine your campaign

Measuring search traffic

- Measuring **search traffic** means tracking and analyzing the visitors that come to your website through search engines like Google, Bing, or Yahoo.
- It helps you understand
 - how visible your site is in search results
 - what users are searching for
 - how much of your total traffic is organic (unpaid).

Types of Search Traffic

- **Organic search traffic** – Users who find your site through unpaid search results.
- **Paid search traffic** – Visitors from ads (like Google Ads).

Note: Most SEO analysis focuses on **organic search traffic**.

Key Metrics to Measure

- **Impressions** – How many times your website pages appeared in search results.
- **Clicks** – How many users actually clicked on your link.
- **Click-Through Rate (CTR)** – % of impressions that turned into clicks.
- **Average Position** – Where your site ranks in search results.
- **Sessions/Users** – How many visits came from search engines.
- **Bounce Rate & Engagement** – Whether users stay or leave quickly after visiting.
- **Conversions** – How much search traffic is generating business goals (sales, signups, leads).

Tools for Measuring Search Traffic

- **Google Search Console** – Shows queries, clicks, impressions, CTR, and ranking position.
- **Google Analytics** – Tracks how much traffic comes from organic search and what users do afterward.
- **SEO Tools (SEMrush, Ahrefs, Moz)** – Provide keyword rankings, estimated traffic, and competitor comparisons.

Steps to Measure

- **Set up Google Analytics & Search Console** for your website.
- **Identify organic traffic sources** (Google, Bing, etc.).
- **Analyze search queries** – What keywords bring visitors.
- **Track performance trends** – Is traffic growing, stable, or declining?
- **Check engagement and conversions** – Are search visitors valuable?

Common analytics mistakes

- Making decisions based on too small sample size
- Not recognizing when you have enough data
- Working with biased data

Tying SEO to conversion and ROI

- Sales
- Email/blog/newsletter subscriptions
- Sign-ups
- Downloads
- Contact forms and phone calls
- Visitors who share

Cont.....

Tying SEO to conversion and ROI

Attribution (credit)

- Search -> purchase on next day from site
- Search -> purchase from store
- Sees TV ad -> purchase from organic search result (your website)
- 6.5% to 30% of transactions – after 1 to 3 days after customer's initial visit

Cont.....

Tying SEO to conversion and ROI

- Setting up analytics software to track conversions
- Segmenting campaigns and SEO efforts by conversion rate
 - Conversions by keyword
 - Conversions by referrer
 - Conversions by web page
 - Conversions by initial entry page
- Increasing conversions

Competitive and diagnostic search metrics

(They help answer: “*What is working or broken inside our site?*”)

1. Click-Through Rate (CTR)
2. Impressions
3. Average positioning
4. Bounce rate / Dwell rate
5. Index coverage
6. Crawl statistics

Competitive and diagnostic search metrics

7. Link building, link – based metrics

- Ahrefs
- SEMrush
- Moz Link Explorer
- Majestic SEO

Cont.....

Competitive and diagnostic search metrics

- Measuring the value of a link
 - Where does the linking page rank for the term you want to rank for?
 - Where does the linking page rank for one to two important terms in the title tag?
 - Where does content on the linking domain generally rank for competitive terms?
 - How many keyword phrases do the linking domain and page rank in the top 20 results for?
 - When was the last time Google crawled the page?

Cont.....

Competitive and diagnostic search metrics

Ranking

- Ranking data can be helpful in few scenarios:
 - When there is a sudden significant change
 - Where a long-term trend can be established
 - Where you can measure a site's overall activity and popularity

Note: Google Search Console provides rankings data directly

Other tools : SEMrush, Ahref, Moz Pro

Competitive and diagnostic search metrics

Search Engine Robot Traffic Analysis

- Analysis of search robot behavior involves 3 main goals:
 - Ensuring that all of your important pages are found by robots
 - Preventing page rank from being diluted by duplicate content problems
 - Enabling rapid indexation of time-sensitive content

Competitive and diagnostic search metrics

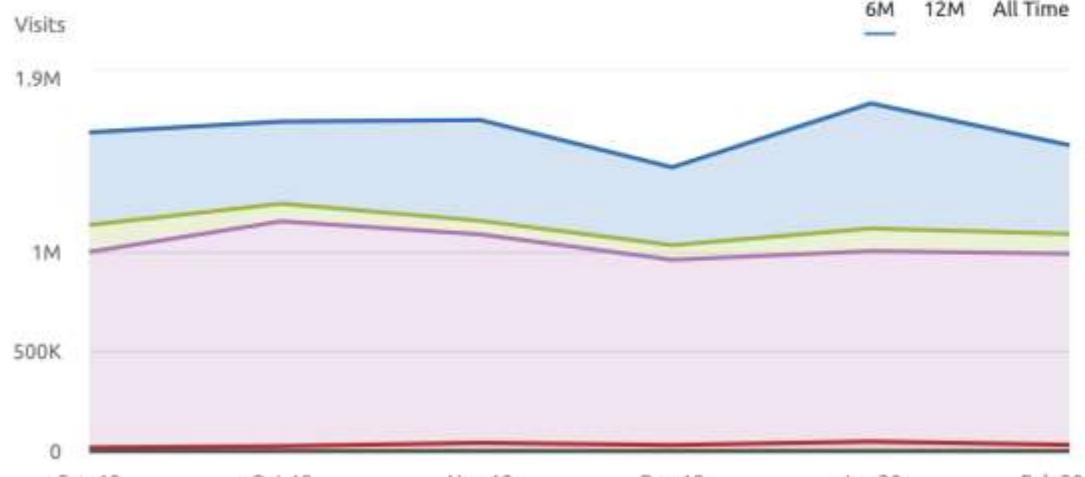
Web Traffic Comparison

- Google console
- Quantcast

Traffic Sources Overview

[Export to PNG](#)

All devices



1.5M

All devices | Feb 2020

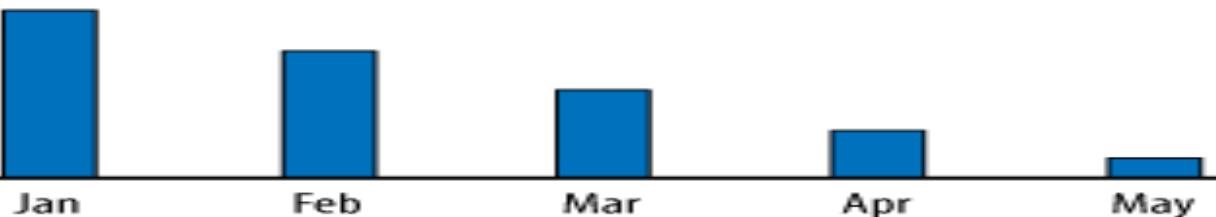
Direct	29.00%	447.2K
Referral	6.48%	99.9K
Search	62.42%	962.6K
Social	2.09%	32.3K
Paid + Google Ads	0%	0

Competitive and diagnostic search metrics

Temporal Link Growth Measurements

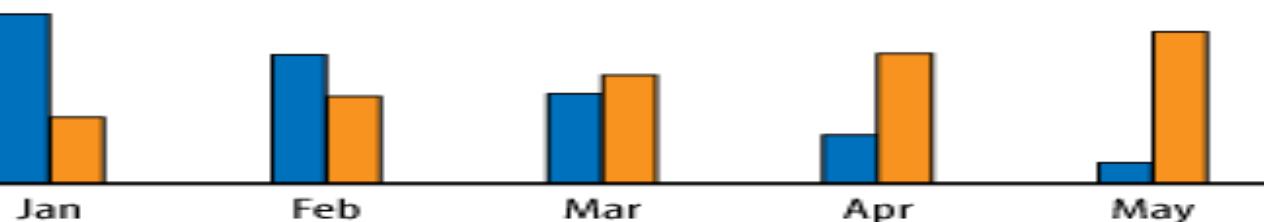
- Search engines try to measure patterns:
 - Content growth pattern
 - Content update pattern
 - Link growth pattern

■ Number of new links



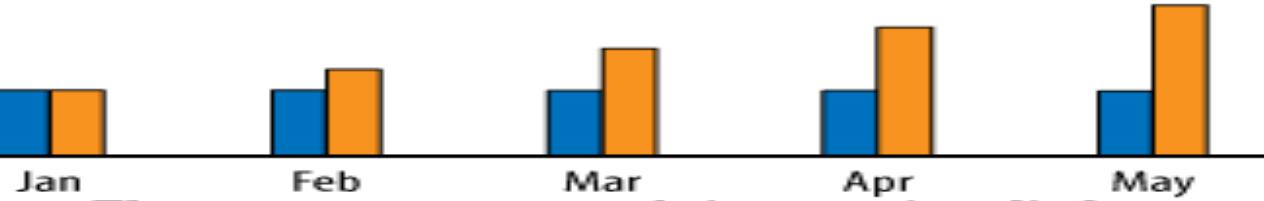
A site that's becoming less relevant, interesting or worthwhile?

■ Number of new links
■ Number of new pages

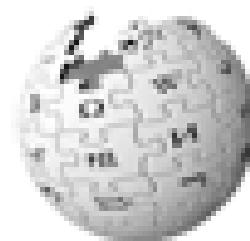
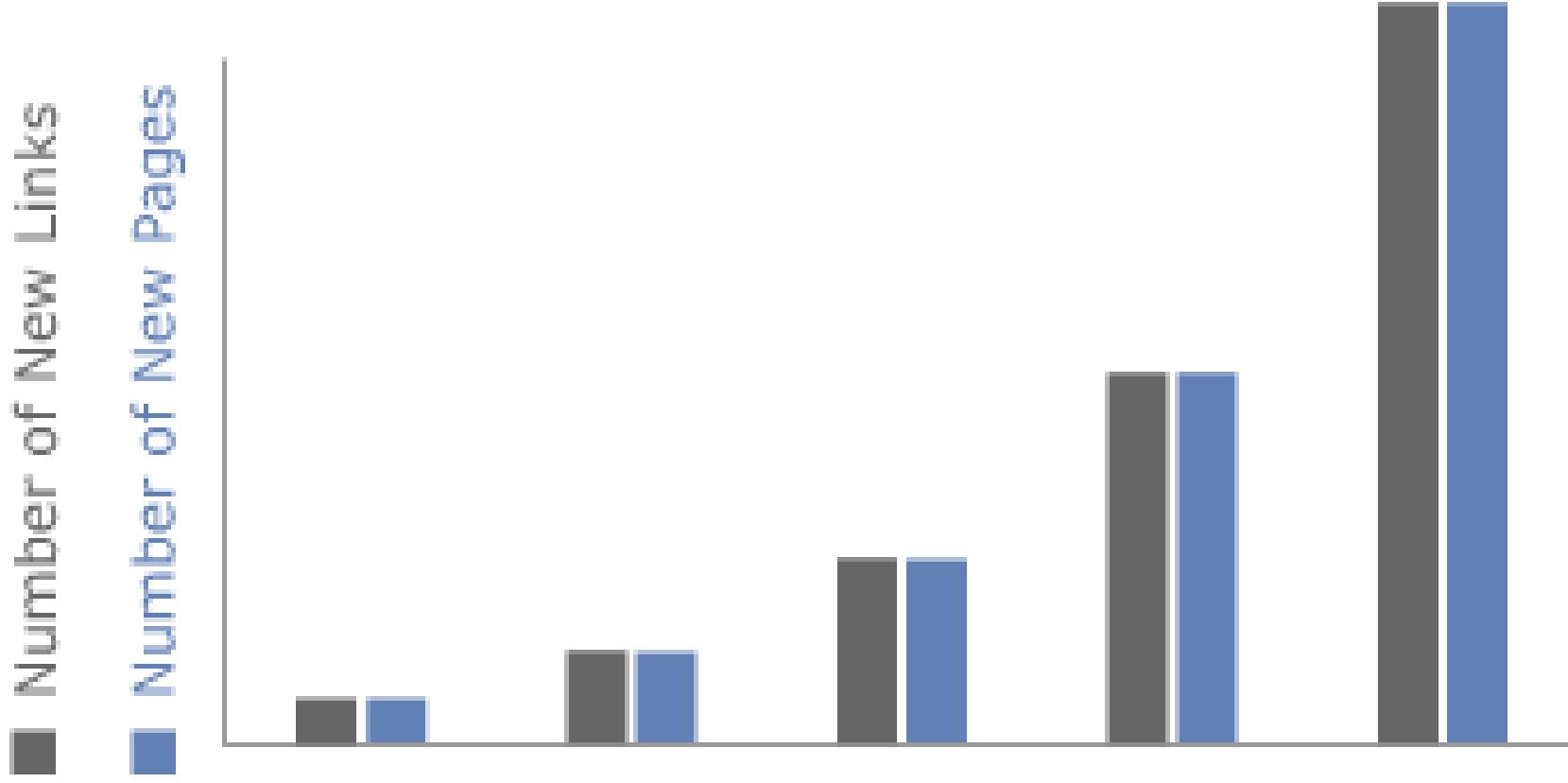


Despite more content, relevance or appeal may be declining

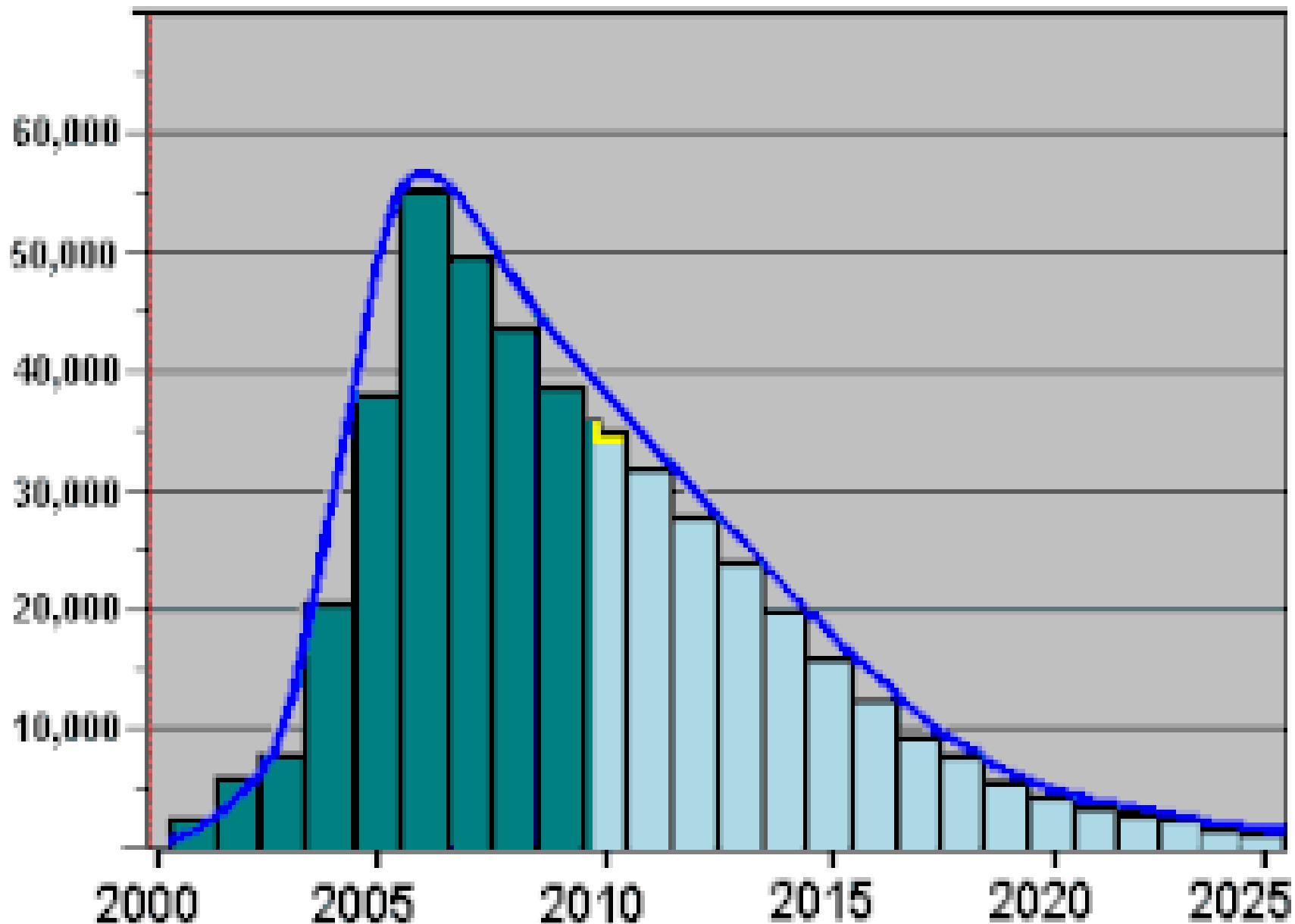
■ Number of new links
■ Number of new pages



The new pages aren't increasing link numbers, a potential sign of staleness



Wikipedia



(KPI)Key performance indicators for Long-tail SEO

- Branded to nonbranded ratio
- Unique crawled URLs
- Search visitors per contributing page
- Keywords per page
- Search visitors per keyword

Other third party tools

- Google search console
- SEMrush
- Ahref
- Moz pro
- SpyFu

An evolving art form :
The future of SEO

The ongoing evolution of search

- The growth of search complexity
 - Google processes **over 8.5 billion searches per day** (2023).
 - AI-driven models like **BERT (2019)** and **MUM (2021)** understand natural language better than ever.
 - Search expanded beyond text → **voice, images, video, and multimodal queries.**

The ongoing evolution of search

- Milestones
 - **2015** → RankBrain introduced AI into search ranking.
 - **2019** → BERT enabled contextual understanding of language.
 - **2021** → MUM (Multitask Unified Model) enabled multimodal search (text + images).
 - **2023-24** → Generative AI (Google SGE, Bing Chat) started shaping conversational search.
 - **Zero-click results** now dominate, with snippets and AI answers directly on SERPs.

The ongoing evolution of search

- In 2008, Danny Sullivan summarized this entire evolution into four phases:
 - Search 1.0 : keywords and text
 - Search 2.0 : link analysis
 - Search 3.0 : Integration of vertical results
 - Search 4.0 : Personalization
 - Search 5.0 : AI-driven intent understanding
 - Search 6.0 : Generative AI and conversational search

More searchable content and content types

- Engines continue to improve crawling and indexing
 - Google now fully renders **JavaScript-heavy sites** (React, Angular etc)
 - AI-driven crawling predicts user intent and prioritizes high-value pages.
- Engines are getting new content sources
 - Digitized and scanned archives (books, legal docs, research papers).
 - Social media content, short-form videos, and user-generated reviews.

More searchable content and content types

- Multimedia is becoming indexable
 - **Images:** Indexed with AI-powered **computer vision & alt-text automation.**
 - **Video:** Automatic **transcripts, chapters, and key moments** now searchable.
 - **Podcasts:** Speech-to-text indexing makes audio discoverable in search.

Personalization, localization and user Influence on search

- Determining user intent
- User interactions
- Location awareness
- Emerging Search Patterns & Cloud Influence

The increasing importance of Local, mobile and voice recognition search

- Local search
 - Users often search for services, stores, or events “near me.”
- Mobile search
 - Mobile-friendly websites and fast-loading pages improve visibility in search results.
- Voice recognition search
 - Voice assistants (like Siri, Google Assistant, Alexa) are driving natural language queries.

Increased market saturation and competition

- More Websites Competing for Keywords
 - As more businesses move online, multiple websites target the same keywords.
- Higher Cost for Paid Search Campaigns (PPC)
 - Increased competition raises bidding costs for paid search ads.
- Content Saturation
 - More businesses create similar blog posts, articles, and landing pages.

Increased market saturation and competition

- Importance of Technical SEO
 - With many competitors, sites must have optimized site speed, mobile responsiveness, and structured data.
- Greater Need for Backlinks and Authority
 - Competitors acquiring backlinks and building domain authority makes it harder for new or smaller sites to rank.

SEO as enduring(continuing) art form

- Objectives:
 - Make content accessible to crawlers
 - Find the keywords that are used by searchers
 - Build content that user will find useful
 - Create web pages that allow users to find what they want extremely quickly
- To be an artist, SEO practitioner needs to see following possibilities
 - Social media optimization expertise
 - Local search expertise
 - Video optimization
 - Understanding what is coming in mobile search

Benchmarking Current Indexing Status

- Crawlability Check
 - Ensure search engines can crawl your website without restrictions.
- Sitemap Evaluation
 - Verify if your **XML sitemap** is up-to-date and submitted to search engines.
- Duplicate & Thin Content
 - Detect duplicate content that may prevent proper indexing.
- Indexation Ratio
 - Measure the **percentage of pages indexed vs. total pages** on your site.

Benchmarking current rankings

- **Keyword Ranking Analysis**
 - Identify which keywords your website currently ranks for.
- **Top Performing Pages**
 - Highlight pages that bring the most traffic from organic search.
- **Competitor Ranking Comparison**
 - Compare your rankings with competitors for target keywords.
- **Traffic Metrics**
 - Understand which high-ranking pages are actually driving traffic.

Benchmarking Current Traffic Sources and Volume

- **Organic Search Traffic**
 - Measure visitors arriving via search engines.
- **Direct Traffic**
 - Visitors who enter your URL directly or via bookmarks.
- **Referral Traffic**
 - Traffic coming from **other websites linking to your site**.
- **Social Traffic**
 - Visitors coming from **social media platforms**
- **Paid vs. Organic Comparison**
 - Compare traffic from **paid campaigns (PPC) vs. organic SEO**.

Ch. 5

Over



Syllabus over