Rich Results and Structured Data: The Future of Digital Marketing

Doctor Digital is here to amaze and astonish with a journey into the mysteries of yet another news article about quirks and qualities in Google search features!

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Welcome back intrepid readers and searchers of the arcane secrets of SEO wizardry! Doctor Digital is here to amaze, astound and astonish with a journey into the mysteries of yet another news article about quirks and qualities in Google search features!

One of the fundamental principles behind what Doctor Digital and the Google Girls do at Results Driven Marketing is we ensure that the techniques and technology RDM uses in digital marketing campaigns are the best they can be. We're talking top level entities taking on the titans of AI themselves. From deciphering Rankbrain to Enhancing Google My Business, RDM stays on top of it all. And this month we tackle Rich Cards.

And we're here to elucidate and pontificate not a moment too soon, true believers! With the speed that the internet changes, keeping ahead of these trends takes dedication. It seems that once every year everything changes and what once drove your online presence to its peak is now dragging you down. A great example of this is that just a few years ago not having a mobile-friendly website wasn't a big deal. Today that would be considered
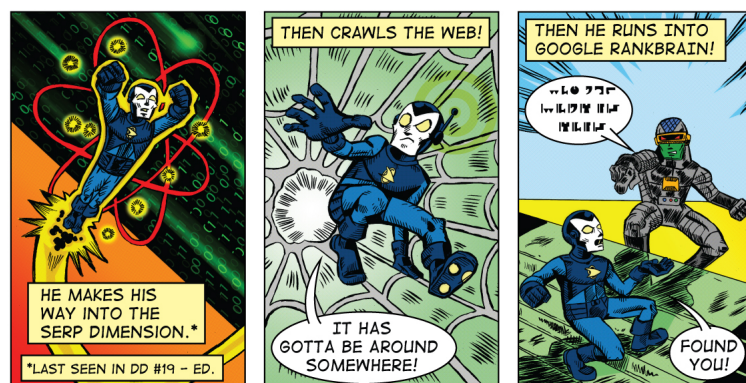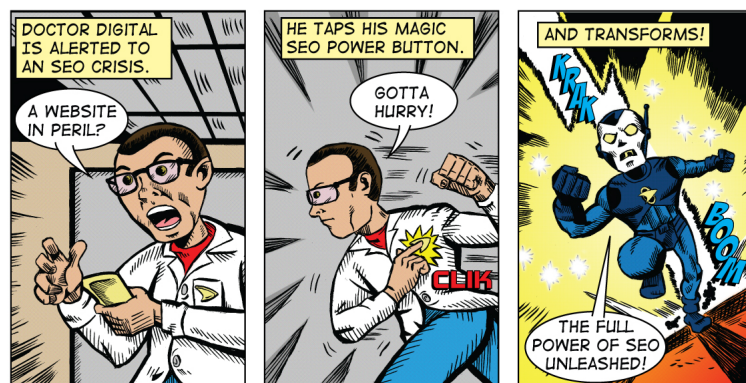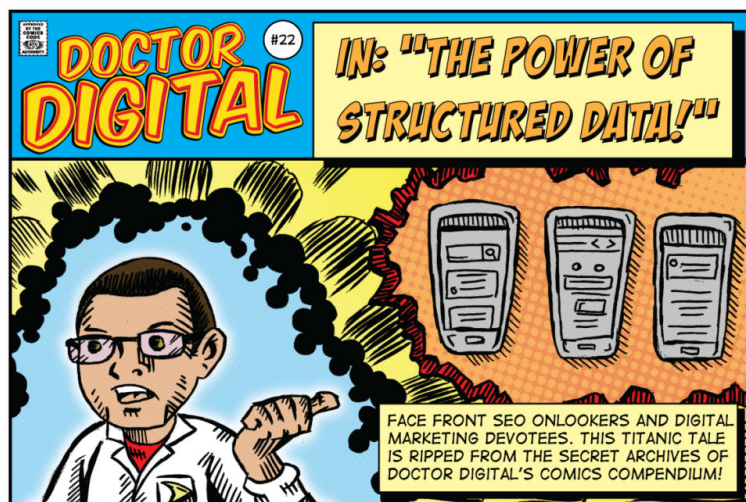
the death knell for your internet marketing campaign. Google will penalize your site in their Google search results for not taking a mobile presence, mobile speed, and mobile search into account.

It is in this vein that we shift our focus to the world of structured data and its little brother rich results.
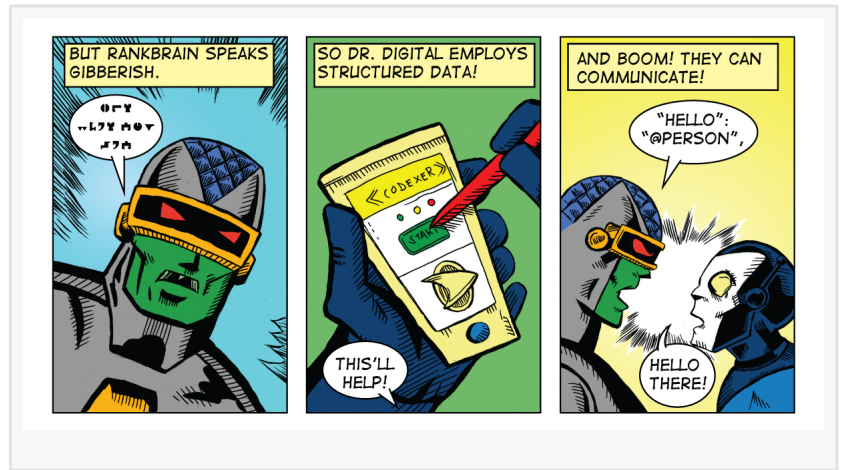
Everyone who has been involved in a conversation about web marketing or SEO – from SERPS obsessive SEOs to Local Business Owners to Site Owners to Google Webmasters – has probably seen or heard something about Google's new Rich Results Testing Tool.

Google announced the new tool in conjunction with its decision to group all of their terms, such as rich snippets and enhanced results under the umbrella of rich results.

Since its debut in 2018, there has been a deluge of information surrounding this new initiative by Google to bring the visual format of their SEO interpretation to the next level. Please join Doctor Digital as he delves into this new tool and the implications it will have for your business and online marketing presence.

Rich Results: What is Structured Data?

Like any good yarn worthy of spinning for eager listeners, we must start at the beginning. For those out there who are still in the prehistoric keywords can be stuffed onto a page era of SEO, here is a quick crash course in structured data markup.

This isn't a technical white paper that focuses on machine language, markup languages, relational databases, business intelligence data structures, or relational database management systems. Doctor Digital is your SEO Super Hero and we're here to focus on the keys to your online marketing, like customer behavior and easy to understand data management.

Structured data are snippets of metadata information that are encoded into a web page's back end. But this far more intricate than just a basic meta description. These snippets of information, which can be created via JSON-LD, Microdata, or RDFa types, are designed to enable search engines like Google to better classify web pages for both desktop and mobile search results pages.

The best way to think about it is to imagine that your web page is an object that you are trying to describe to someone who has no frame of reference. For instance, if you were to explain to a blind person what a bicycle is you would start with the basic structure. Explaining that it consisted of wheels, handlebars, and a seat would be things that would help give a better context to establish that frame.

The same thing is true of a website and each page's content. Structuring your data to give the object of your website specific types of clearly defined characteristics that potential customers may be looking for. A great example that has been used by many is a web page that contains a recipe. By giving that web page structured data that defines that recipes ingredients allow for that page to return not only for the recipe name but a new search result format that showcases its ingredients or cooking time.

The best place to learn more about structured data and schema markup is schema.org. Their homepage gives you the full rundown on what structured data is. They provide excellent examples of semantic web data sources and then provide large volumes of structured data examples to teach you how to code them.

Rich Results: What is a Rich Card?

Now that we've gone over the basics of what structured data is, let's turn our attention to what Google calls rich cards.

These all began as rich snippets that showed authorship and star ratings next to books that got reviewed on Google. Users reacted favorably to these previews of their content on Google search pages and now new rich cards have exploded in variety, including accelerated mobile pages that display news articles differently in search, recipes that showcase recipe cards on search, and even job openings being displayed in their own area of Google search results.

A rich card is just another way of customizing your Google search result to further stand out from the pack. When you type a search into Google and the first page of results are returned you will most likely notice that there is a result pinned directly to the top of the page that is enclosed into a raised box.

This feature allows your result to stand out regardless of the platform your clients choose to search from. If you are viewing this on your laptop or desktop computer it will probably resemble a 3×5 index card. When viewed on a mobile device, the rich cards appear as stylized tiles, especially when the results are an amp page.

In addition to giving a more appealing visual to your results in the search window, structuring your data with a rich card in mind will also allow you to target your potential client base with greater precision. Using structured data as the backbone, rich cards will allow you to market directly to customers in the search results window. Embedded images and star ratings will make your website outshine the rest without the stigma that has become attached to pay-per-click advertisements.

Rich Results: What is the Testing Tool?

The success of Rich Snippets has sent ripples through the digital marketing industry. Hopefully, our discussion thus far has gotten you interested in diving into the cutting edge world of rich results for your Internet presence. Now that we've gotten your feet wet with an introduction to the hows and whys of rich results we turn our attention to the newly released Rich Results Testing Tool.

Google has long been steeped in search analytics, and data report driven marketing tactics. From Google new Search Console to Google AdWords Keyword reports, Google has committed to real-time performance monitoring across its channels. Testing and providing developer documentation for the structured markup of Google Rich Cards was no different, and Google created its new testing tool.

This is not to be confused with the tried and true Structured Data Testing Tool – one of Doctor Digital's favorite tools in the whole wide universe of SEO.

Nay, the purpose of this new tool is different. The Rich Results Testing tool exists to allow companies like yours an easy and intuitive way to determine if their website is optimized with Rich Results in mind.

This new tool is the next step in the evolution of Google's search engine algorithm. It functions as a sidekick to the structured data testing tool. It's Robin to the SDTT's Batman.

So while the structured data testing tool is useful mostly for determining issues with code samples of the website, the rich results testing tool is to be used for a quick assessment of whether your website supports rich results in the first place. The information that this provides will enable you to make increasingly accurate decisions on where your marketing dollars are best focused.

The interface came out of closed beta in a limited format, and only supported testing for recipes, jobs, moves, and online courses. But it was paramount in connecting the dots throughout Google's other channels as it worked in conjunction with Google Search Console and its Search Console Rich Cards Report.

Rich Results: What are the Next Steps?

Like Google, RDM is constantly searching and exploring. We look to "boldly go where no one has gone before" with our marketing efforts and discover what's next.

Too many things change in this industry too quickly for us to stay in one place. You'll note that our entire exploration of Google Rich Snippets and Rich Cards was focused on search engine results from Google. This is because they are the leader in search as well as the types of rich snippets and featured snippets that are displayed on search engine results pages. However, all major search engines are involved and following Google's lead, including Bing, Yahoo, and Yandex.

We here at Results Driven Marketing pride ourselves by not only tracking the marketplace but getting out in front of those innovations like this that will provide the most value to our clients. We understand that with trends moving faster every day, the importance of remaining current becomes secondary to leading the charge. While other companies are content to simply follow the current standards for things like search engine optimization, we are always striving to innovate the next big thing – like voice search. So if you're tired of simply chasing the puck, why not give our Google girls and guys a call at 215-393-8700 and let us get you out in front.

Have any questions? Then contact us on our social media spaces like Facebook or Twitter. Ask us anything, be it how to code a span itemprop, what script type do we recommend for your structured data, is unstructured data harmful, what's the best WordPress plugin for schemas, or do you even think structured data is a ranking factor that can affect clickthrough rate and SERP features? Doctor Digital is ready to heed the call!

We guarantee there is no better feeling than being ahead of the curve when the rest of the industry catches up.

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About Results Driven Marketing, LLC:
Results Driven Marketing, LLC is located at 300 E Lancaster Ave, Suite 202, Wynnewood, PA 19096 and can be reached by phone at 215-393-8700. Founded by Janeene High in 2013, High is a twelve-year veteran of the industry. She has been a leader in the Greater Philadelphia Area in the retention of clients and forecasting new opportunities for her client using highly advanced digital marketing strategies for her firm's clientele. For a complimentary review of your website, SEO or marketing strategy, book a 45-minute review session with Janeene today!

This release was drafted by Results Driven Marketing, LLC: a full-service digital marketing, public relations, advertising, and content marketing firm located at 300 E. Lancaster Ave., Wynnewood, PA 19096

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