



Research Study: Significant Increase in Google Images Within SERPs

By Mitul Gandhi

With three confirmed algorithm updates this year alone, a recent, sizable deindexing bug, and numerous small tremors in the SERPs, there is never a dull moment for SEOs.

Yet, beyond these updates, actual SEO performance may be determined by the presence of another, hidden competitor – one that most SEOs still haven't paid as much attention to as they should.

It's Google's own universal rank types. News, Images, Videos, Local Listings and other specialized SERP units play a huge role in determining the performance of sites – especially those that are transactional in nature.

At seoClarity, we track and analyze the changes in Google and visibility for billions of pages across the globe. Looking only at the data in the U.S., we typically see over 20% of keywords containing images.

Imagine our surprise recently when our alerting systems started flashing red all at the same time. A major change in rankings occurred, but it *was not* due to an algorithm update – at least not in the traditional sense.

The chart below displays the count of keywords where Google Images was ranking in the Top 10 positions (across an analysis set of approximately 100K keywords).





This shows a huge jump in the number of keywords with Google Images in the Top 10 between April 12 and April 13 and another jump from April 13 to April 19.

All in all, images in the Top 10 leapt from an approximately 24% occurrence to a 34% occurrence. **More than one third of all keywords now contain Google Images!**

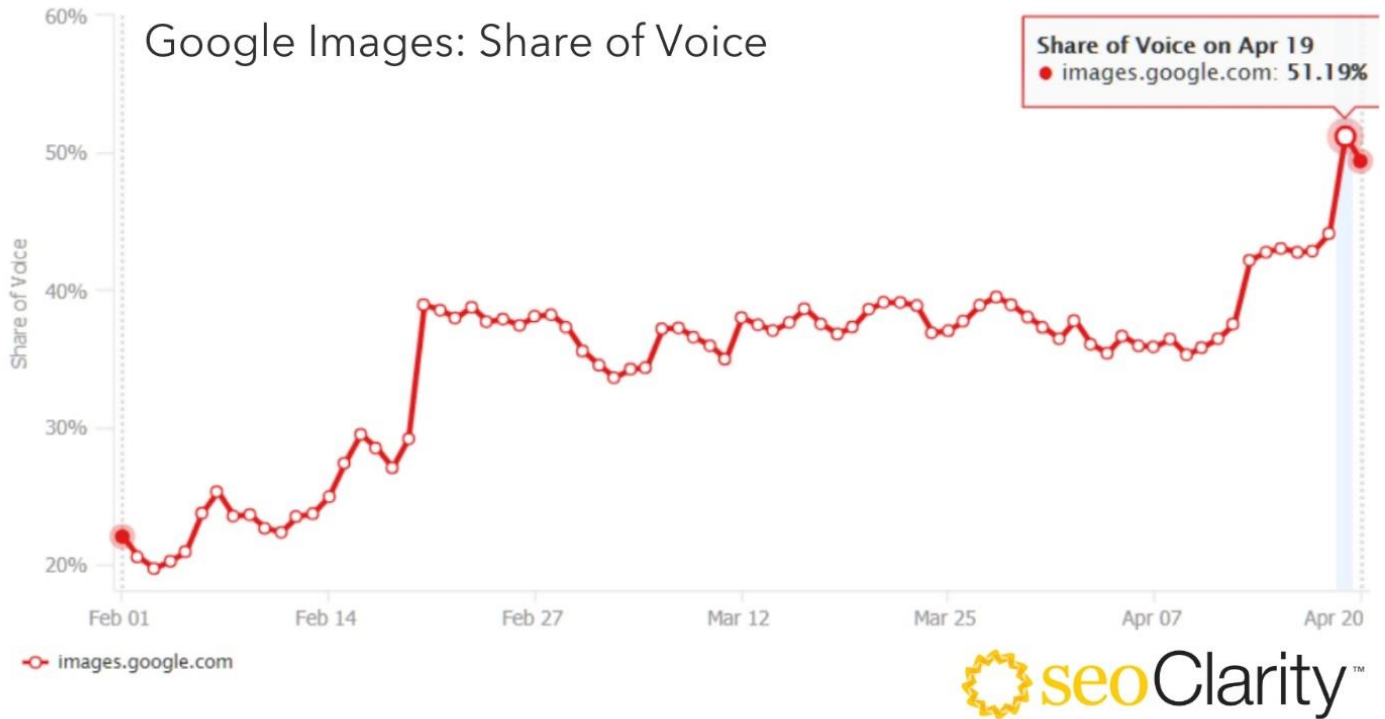
Here is another graph that shows the occurrence of images in the Top 3 positions. Looks similar to the above, right? With this display, however, it appears a jump in image rankings in the Top 3 positions occurred around February 20, again on April 13 and most recently on April 19.



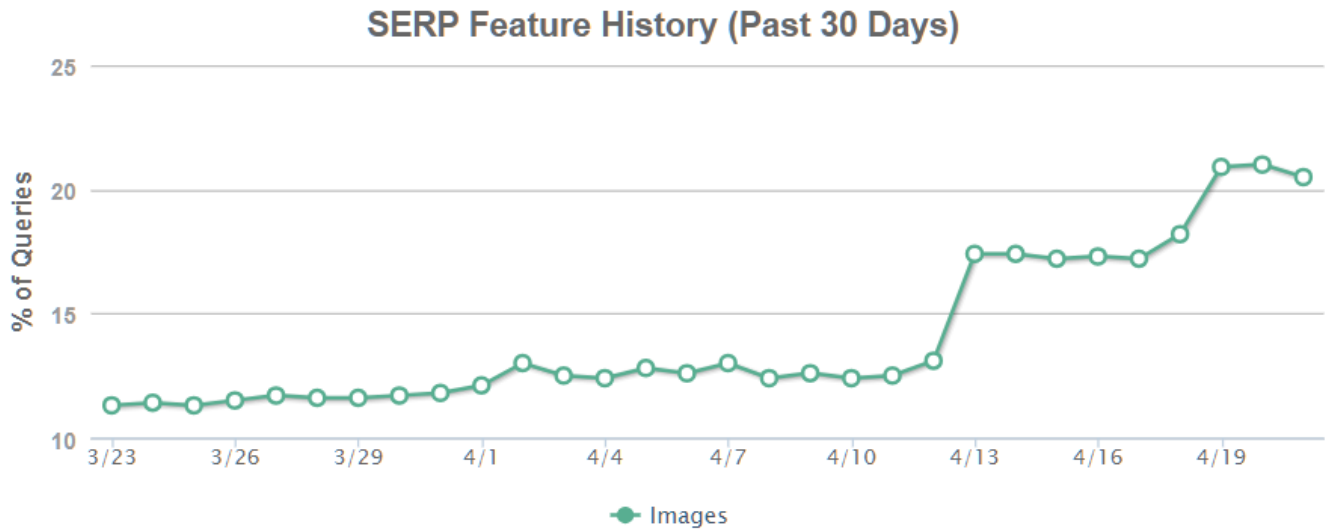
What is most amazing is that **nearly 50% of the time when images are in the Top 10, they are in the Top 3 rank positions!**



This prominence of Google Images results is clear when looking at the Share of Voice.



MozCast appears to support the same observation.



Source: <https://moz.com/mozcast/features>



What Does This Mean for SEOs?

Starting March 19, there was a MAJOR change to Google's algorithm for ranking the image carousel. The charts above clearly show that not only are images more frequently appearing in the Top 10, they are showing up HIGHER in the SERPs than ever before.

The result is a significant increase in the visibility for images and, consequently, a decline in the visibility for everyone that was previously in one of those Top 3 positions.

If you're tracking web rankings alone and are perplexed as to why your traffic has suddenly dropped, this may explain it.

Why Would Google Do This?

Matching [user intent](#) is a significant part of optimizing for keywords today and something Google does better than any other search engine. It is easy to attribute this change to Google's Rank Brain and various tests telling it that users prefer images over standard web results.

I wonder, however: is the *real truth* somewhat murkier? Google has been making significant moves in trying to create a path to monetize image searches. Introduction of stock information, prices and "Buy on Google" buttons in the mobile image search results are just some of the tests we've observed.

Just check out the difference in the SERP results for this keyword "hoodies". Here's the SERP on March 2, 2019 compared to a more recent SERP from April 21, 2019. There are three SERP features with Google Images as the first. (See next page)



Search: hoodies

Navigation: All Shopping Images News Maps More Settings Tools

March 2, 2019

About 1,490,000,000 results (0.53 seconds)

Hoodies & Sweatshirts | Zumiez
<https://www.zumiez.com/mens/hoodies.html>
 Shop guys hoodies and mens hoodies & sweatshirts at Zumiez. Huge selection of zip hoodies, pullover hoodies, crew neck sweatshirts, and solid hoodies from ...
 Sale Sweatshirts - Zip Up Hoodies | Zumiez - Vest Hoodies - Color Block Hoodies ...

Hoodies + Sweatshirts for Women | Urban Outfitters
<https://www.urbanoutfitters.com/sweatshirts-for-women>
 Shop Urban Outfitters for all your essential women's hoodies. Whether you want a cozy pullover or a trendy wrap, we have all the sweatshirt styles you need.
 Urban Outfitters - Hoodies ... - Black - Hoodies + Sweatshirts ... - Pagination Arrow

Hoodies & Sweatshirts for Men | American Eagle Outfitters
<https://www.ae.com/men-hoodies-sweatshirts/web/s-cat/90020>
 AE Color Block Fleece Pullover Hoodie. ... Tailgate Hoodies & Sweatshirts. ... At American Eagle Outfitters we make all kinds of men's hoodies so you can update your wardrobe with a fresh look.

Hoodies for Men & Men's Sweatshirts | Tillys
<https://www.tillys.com> - Men - Clothing
 Shop the latest Men's Sweatshirts & Hoodies at Tillys for lightweight or heavier Sweatshirts in a whole range of colors and styles you can't live without.
 Men's Pullover Hoodies - Crew Neck Sweatshirts for Men - Lightweight Hoodies

Hoodies and Sweatshirts | PacSun
<https://www.pacsun.com/mens/hoodies/>
 167 results - Find the best hoodies and sweatshirts in graphic, printed, and solid styles from leading brands including HUF, adidas, OBEY, and more. Shop Men's ...

Hoodies | Society6
<https://society6.com> - Apparel
 Shop hoodies both zip-up and pullover, designed by thousands of artists from around the world. Printed on premium quality apparel garments. Worldwide ...

Men's Hoodies & Men's Sweatshirts | Best Price Guarantee at DICK'S
<https://www.dickssportinggoods.com> - Apparel - Men's Apparel
 Get incredible deals on hoodies for men with DICK'S Best Price Guarantee. Find a better price? We'll match it! Browse men's hoodies from your favorite brands ...

Men's Hoodies & Sweatshirts | Men | Forever 21
<https://www.forever21.com/us/shop/catalog/category/21men/sweatshirts-hoodies>
 Shop the newest trends in men's hoodies + sweatshirts at Forever 21. Find comfy knits online now & check out the latest oversized fits to keep you looking fresh.

American Giant hoodie: This is the greatest sweatshirt known to man.
<https://slate.com/.../american-giant-hoodie-this-is-the-greatest-sweatshirt-known-to-man...>
 This is the Greatest Hoodie Ever Made. How American Giant created the best sweatshirt known to man. By Farhad Manjoo. Dec 04, 2012:53 ...

The History of the Hoodie - Rolling Stone
<https://www.rollingstone.com/culture/culture-news/the-history-of-the-hoodie-237791/>
 But in the weeks since Martin's tragic death, the hoodie has emerged as a symbol of support for those who believe justice has not been served.



Search: hoodies

Navigation: All Shopping Images News Videos More Settings Tools

April 21, 2019

About 1,790,000,000 results (0.77 seconds)

Hoodies & Sweatshirts | Zumiez
<https://www.zumiez.com/mens/hoodies.html>
 Champion Reverse Weave Allover Print C White Hoodie.
 Zip Up Sweatshirts - Vest Hoodies - Graphic Print Hoodies ... - 50 to \$100 Hoodies ...

Hoodies for Men & Men's Sweatshirts | Tillys
<https://www.tillys.com/men/clothing/sweatshirts-hoodies/>
 Shop the latest Men's Sweatshirts & Hoodies at Tillys for lightweight or heavier Sweatshirts in a whole range of colors and styles you can't live without.
 Men's Pullover Hoodies - Crew Neck Sweatshirts for Men - Lightweight Hoodies

Hoodies and Sweatshirts | PacSun
<https://www.pacsun.com/mens/hoodies/>
 149 results - Champion Reverse Weave Chainstitch Pullover Hoodie. ... Champion Reverse Weave Chenille Script Crew Neck Sweatshirt. ... Champion Reverse Weave Chenille Script Pullover Hoodie.

Images for hoodies



More images for hoodies

Report images

People also ask

- What makes a hoodie a hoodie? ▾
- Can a hoodie have a zipper? ▾
- How much is a hoodie? ▾
- What are some good hoodie brands? ▾

Feedback

Men's Hoodies & Sweatshirts | Men | Forever 21
<https://www.forever21.com/us/shop/catalog/category/21men/sweatshirts-hoodies>
 Shop the newest trends in men's hoodies + sweatshirts at Forever 21. Find comfy knits online now & check out the latest oversized fits to keep you looking fresh.
 Rose Print Drawstring Hoodie - French Terry Zip-Up Hoodie - Dog Graphic Hoodie

Hoodies | UNIQLO US
<https://www.uniqlo.com/us/en/men/sweatshirts-and-sweatpants/hoodies>
 Shop Uniqlo.com for hoodies and sweatshirts that you can dress up or down. Choose from full-zip, pullover, and sporty styles. UNIQLO US.

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Hoodies + Sweatshirts for Women | Urban Outfitters
<https://www.urbanoutfitters.com> - Women's - Tops
 Shop Urban Outfitters for all your essential women's hoodies. Whether you want a cozy pullover or a trendy wrap, we have all the sweatshirt styles you need.

Hoodies + Sweatshirts for Men | Urban Outfitters
<https://www.urbanoutfitters.com> - Men's - Tops
 Shop men's hoodies and sweatshirts at Urban Outfitters. Find embroidered, logo, pullover, and crew neck styles from brands like adidas, Stussy, Champion, and ...



Rating: 4.1 stars (10 reviews) - T-shirt Company
 Tulsa, OK - (918) 861-0772
 Closed - Opens 11AM Mon

Easter might affect these hours



Yet, images drive an incredibly low amount of real traffic to as our recent [U.S. Real Traffic Market Share Report](#) had shown. Providing more visibility to images may just be the kind of traffic boost to a Google Images search to drive eCommerce related queries to a more visual purchase path.

What do you think? Share your thoughts with us below.

What Can You Do About This?

SEO has evolved so far that the original term “Search Engine” Optimization fails to accurately describe it anymore. There are far more search engines through which your customers are seeking out your products and services, and, at the very least, Google itself is promoting and channeling your customers to specialized engines such as Google Images, News, Local Listings, and more.

No matter what Google’s true intentions are, winning in SEO involves developing a holistic approach to addressing and optimizing beyond just web pages. It involves building a strategy around *Search Experience Optimization* – an approach that is core to seoClarity and one around which **we’ve built a framework to help enterprise businesses operationalize.**

I look at the rise of Google Images as an incredible opportunity for smart enterprises to leap frog the competition that is singularly focused on web results. Similar to how smart hotel chains were able to leverage the rise of Google Local Pack by improving their management of Google My Business listings, the increase in images is a golden opportunity for the nimble enterprise to be able to capitalize on what is a blind spot for many.

If we assume that this is a permanent change (time will only tell) and not simply a test, this is one area to start including in your plans for 2019 and beyond.

For seoClarity Clients

seoClarity clients can easily compare the “Web” Rank of their domain (the rank calculated by counting only web pages) and compare it to their “True” rank, or the rank calculated by considering the position of both web pages AND Google’s own universal rank types. Using the powerful [Rank Intelligence](#) feature, they can instantly answer:

- whether ranking and traffic changes are correlated to a change for a traditional competitor or if it’s due to Google changing the visibility it provides its own universal rank types;
- how the visibility of each universal rank type is trending;
- how their own domain is performing WITHIN the Universal Rank types;

... and more.

Using Rank Intelligence, it’s extremely simple to identify the growth of universal rank types.



Rank Intelligence (v5.0)
Explore changes in your search visibility [Learn More](#)

1

Filter 02/01/2019 vs 04/20/2019 Apply

3

images.google.com x ll.google.com x video.google.com x news.google.com x

Rank Type 2

True Rank

Input Domain / Folder

Ranking Keywords (images.google.com) Rank Change (images.google.com)

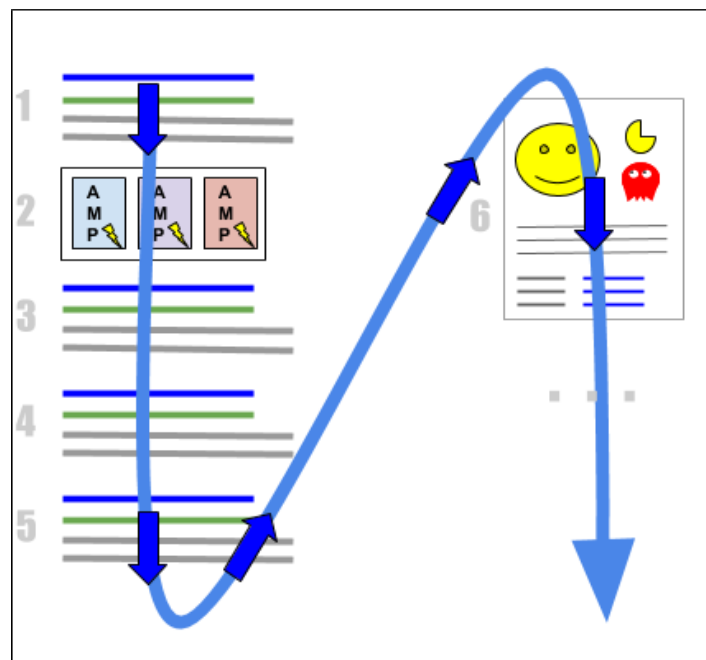
Step 1: Set the date range from February 1 to the current date.

Step 2: Switch Rank Intelligence to *True Rank*.

Step 3: Add *images.google.com*, *videos.google.com*, *ll.google.com* and *news.google.com* as the domains you'd like to analyze.

Step 4: Check out the graph!

Interesting Insight: seoClarity's True Rank relates most closely to how Google itself reports rank positions in Google Search Console (with only minor differences). Contact your Client Success Manager or check out the [Knowledge Base to learn more about True Rank](#).



Source: [Search Console Help](#)