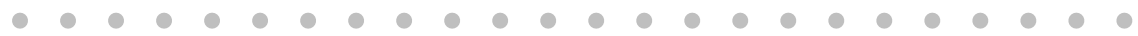


Research Study



**IF YOU DON'T RANK  
FIRST IN MOBILE  
YOU MAY AS WELL BE ON THE 2ND PAGE**



**HERE'S WHY.**



# A STUDY OF 2 BILLION IMPRESSIONS DOESN'T LIE... ...NOW IS THE TIME TO OPTIMIZE FOR MOBILE!

## Overview

This research study is part one of a three-part series conducted recently and released in September to our clients at "Clarity '14", our annual user conference, prior to SMX East.

Click through rate studies have been compiled by various researchers and companies since the advent of search marketing. They provide a very important foundation for marketers in forecasting results, projecting SEO return on investments and building models for estimating the market size and potential.

What makes seoClarity's study remarkably different from all other studies is the sheer volume of actual data analyzed. The team analyzed over 2 billion impressions and over 2.6 million clicks collected over a 90 day period from approximately 400 Google Webmaster Tools accounts. We arrived at a robust CTR model by device, by keyword type and by industry.

This **incredible data set** provides the **most up-to-date and reliable insights**

into the performance of organic search rankings **compared to any other study** done prior. In fact, based on comparison to existing studies, seoClarity's study is the largest study ever.

## Methodology

The methodology was quite simple. Since seoClarity already collects Google Webmaster Tools Data daily, we had ready access to all of the data in our databases (for clients who had agreed to share their data for research purposes)

going back over one year. What made it even more exciting was the fact that it was already broken down by Desktop vs. Mobile.

## So Why Another CTR Study?

When we looked at the landscape of available studies we realized the following:

- ***Most existing studies were already outdated due to the constantly evolving PPC landscape (which has the effect of significantly changing organic results visibility and thereby associated CTRs)***
- ***Across our clients who agreed to share data for research purposes we had a far more significant data set than leveraged ever before by anyone for such a study; The hypothesis was that a larger data set would provide more statistical confidence and ability to drill down & segment in different ways (such as keyword types, industry, device types, etc.)***
- ***No one had done a mobile CTR study - yet.***

As with any CTR study, there are a few caveats which we've listed at the end of this report. We advise readers to pay special heed to these before using the data or extrapolating their own conclusions from it.

We took this data and decided first to limit it to a 90 day period - spanning June through August. The reasons were:

- 1) To make sure it reflected the most current PPC landscape and that any recent changes that may have occurred in that space were reflected in organic CTRs.
- 2) We also wanted to avoid any seasonal impact on the CTR model. Click-through rates can shift dramatically during the busy 4th quarter and also during shopping periods such as Valentine's Day and Mother's Day. Summer was the most stable period of data to work with.

Next, since GWT data contains AVG positions that are decimals, we normalized the ranking positions to more rounded numbers by using standard rounding.

Positions 1.0 - 1.4 were grouped to 1, 1.5 - 2.4 were grouped to 2 and so on. (We tested other ways of grouping the average positions too, but found this to provide the most accurate clustering of CTR's by position.)

## The Data

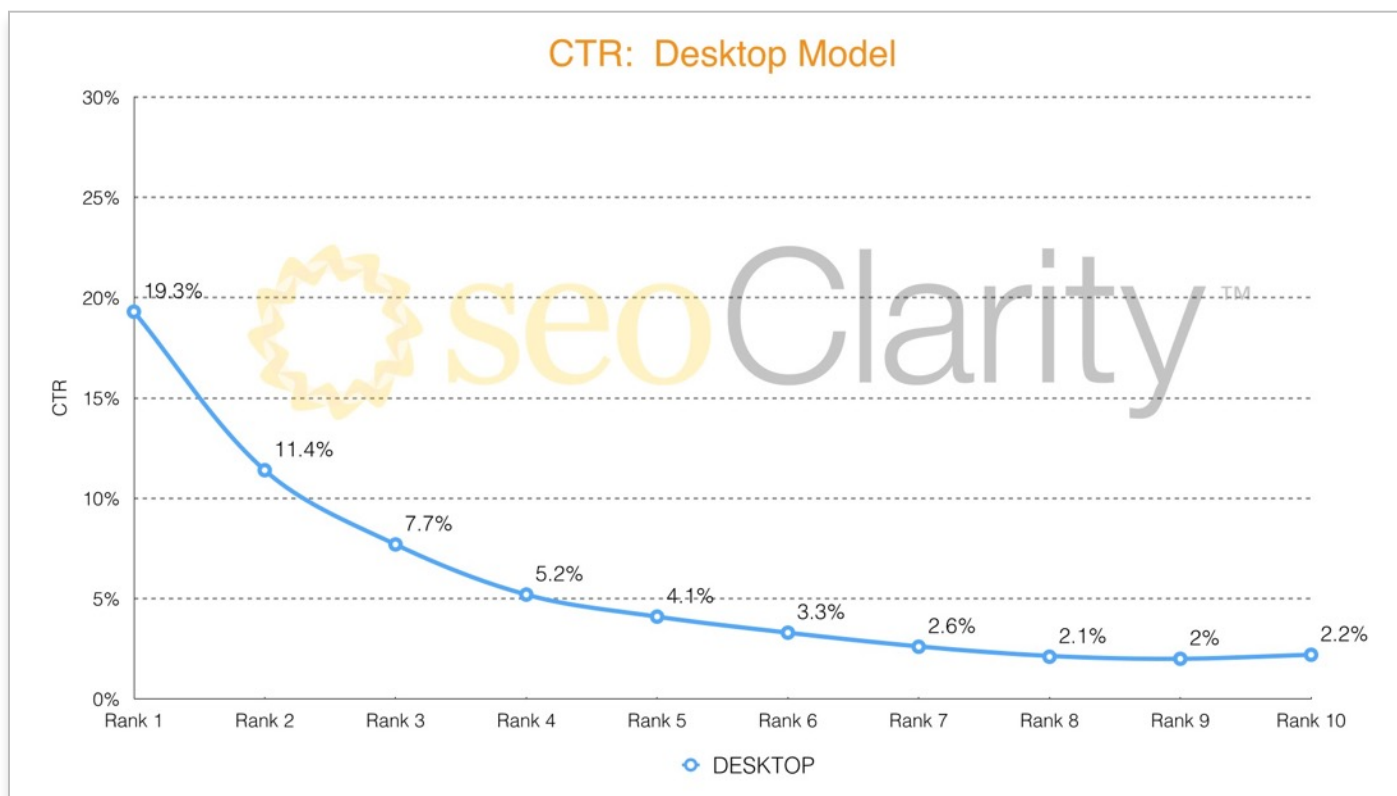
The numbers are the real differentiator between our study's model and previous studies. We studied over 2 billion impressions (2,083,535,220[!] to be exact). This translates to

a high level of statistical confidence for each and every rank position; In fact, there was a minimum of 35 million impressions per ranking position. From that, there were over 2.68 million clicks (268,173,670) broken down by over 2.2 million unique keywords (2,206,664).

## The Results

What follows is an examination of various models that demonstrate the fact that ranking first in the search results is more important than ever.

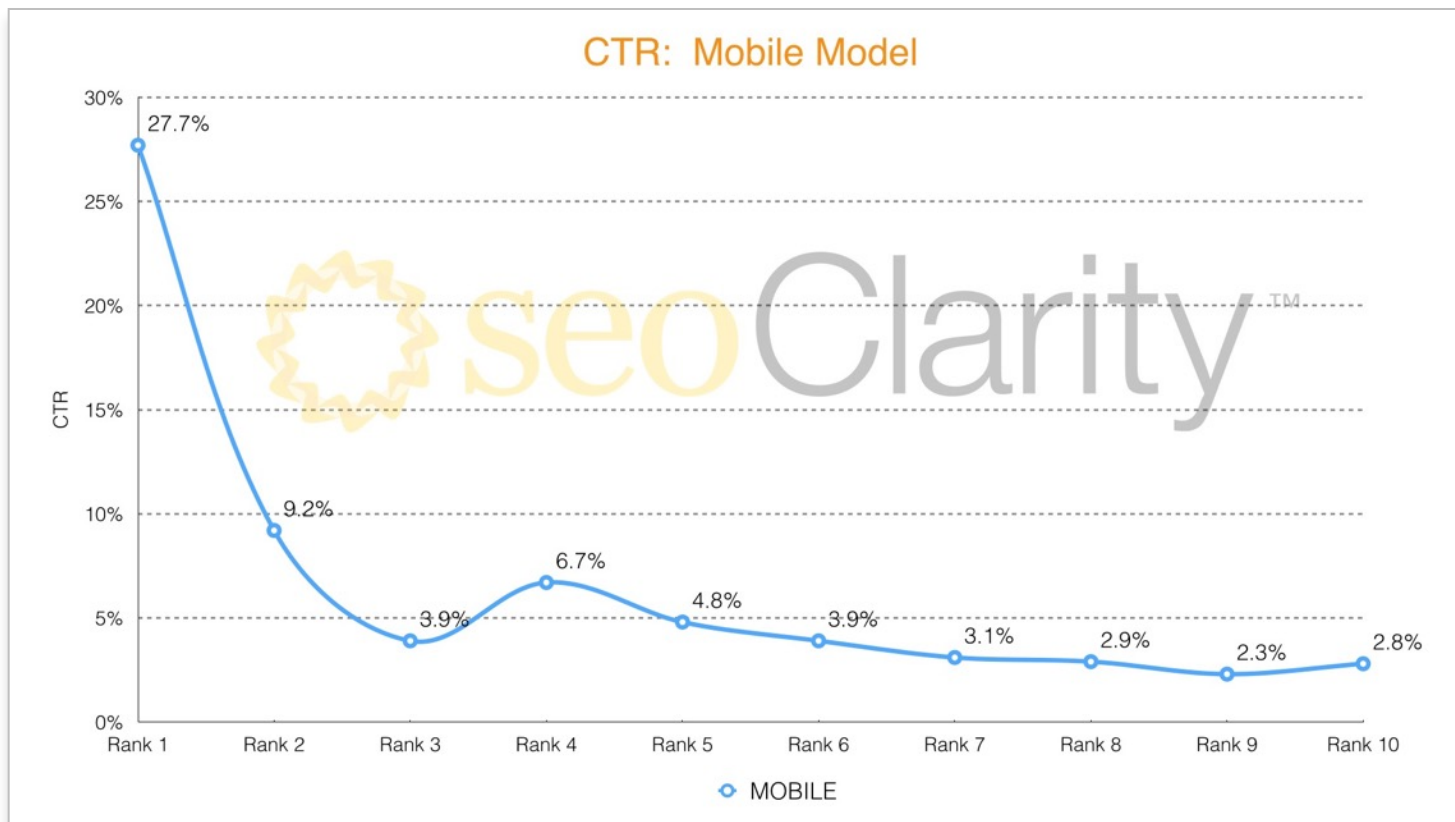
### The Desktop Model



*What we see in the data is a steady regression from position 1 at 19.3% to position 9 at 2%. It's interesting that the data shows position 10 with a higher click through rate than position 8 or 9.*

*Usability studies have shown this is primarily because many users scan the top few rankings & then scroll to the bottom of the page ([source](#)).*

## The Mobile Model

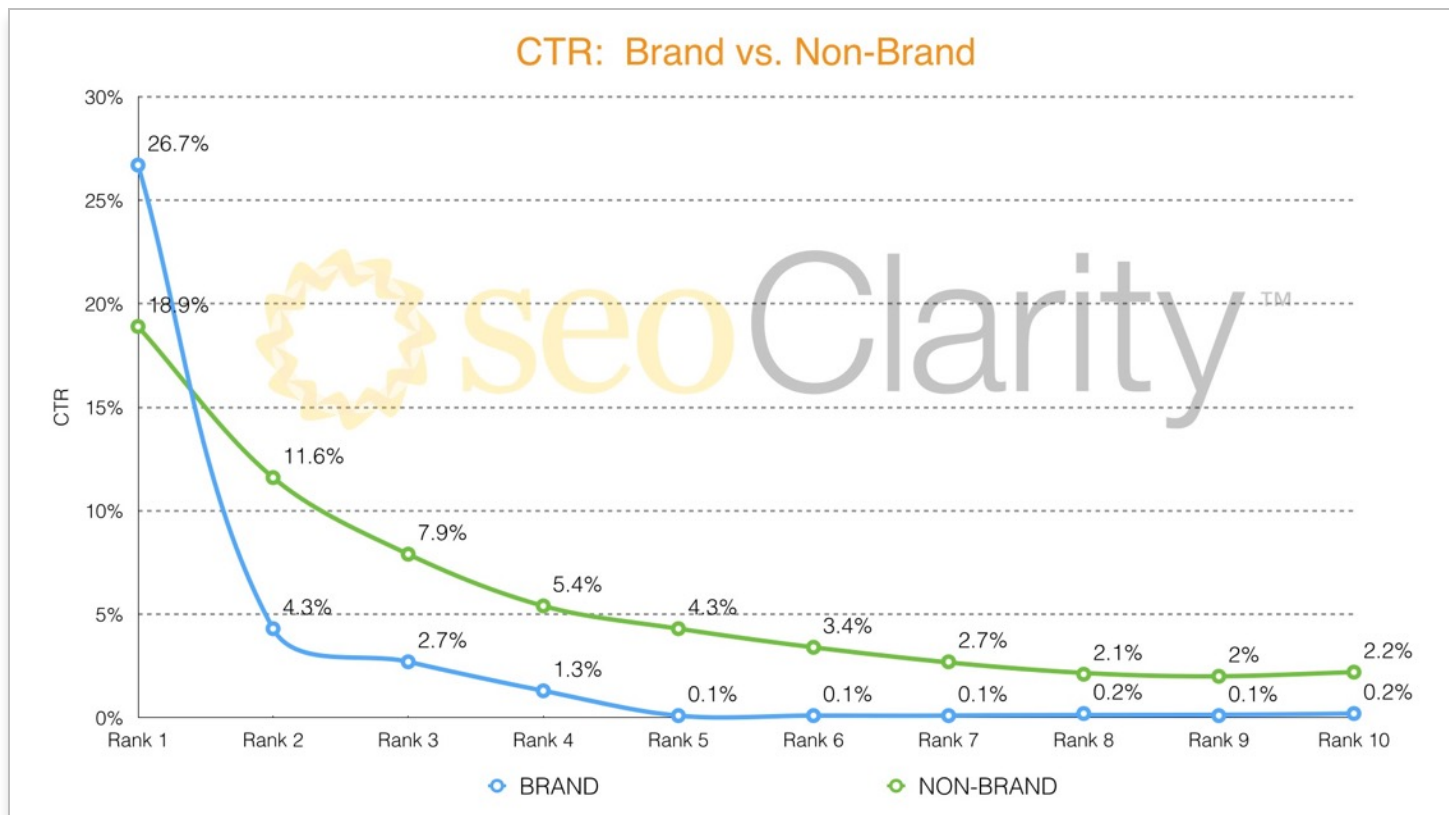


***Position 1 CTR for the desktop was just under 20%... so where does that put mobile? The Mobile model is the most interesting CTR model in this research study, as it's the first of its kind. It is the most comprehensive data set made up of purely mobile data. This is based exclusively on Webmaster Tools data. What we see is a large CTR for position 1 - nearly 28% - and then a significant drop-off to about 9% for position 2.***

***This means that ranking in position 1 for mobile is 3x more valuable than ranking in position 2. If that doesn't give you a reason to get on the mobile bandwagon, I don't know what will.***

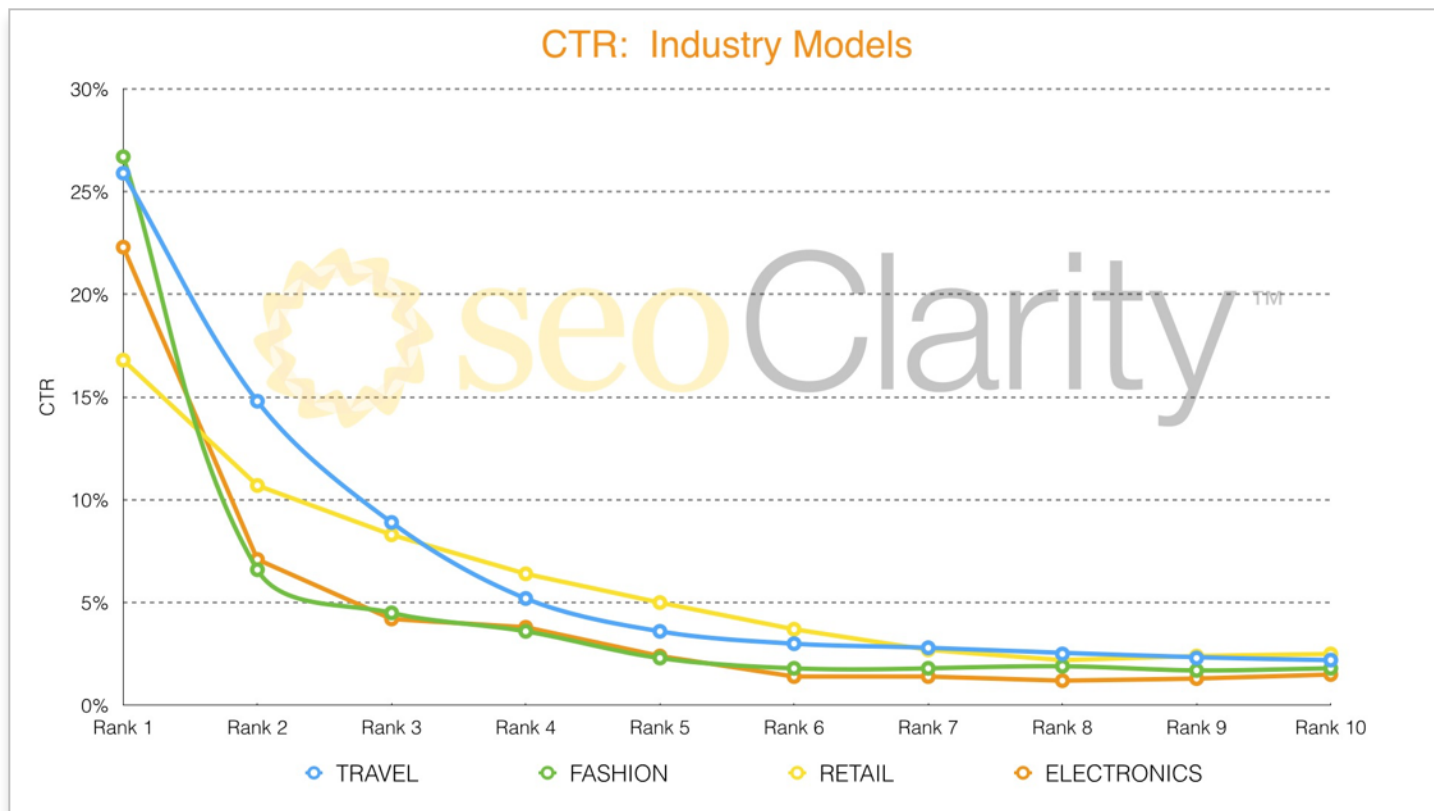
***Will Ferrell summed it up best as Ricky Bobby in Talladega Nights, "If you ain't first, you're last."***

## The Brand/Non-Brand Model (Desktop Only)



*In the third portion of the study, we put together a brand vs. non-brand model. As is to be expected, there is a much higher CTR for brand keywords at position 1 compared with non brand. Brand also sees a larger drop to from position 1 to position 2 and another drop from 3 to 4.*

## The Industry Models



***Our final CTR model examines 4 different industries - Retail, Fashion, Travel & Electronics. With any data set, some industries will see a deviation from our models. Not all industries keywords fit this lovely standard as every vertical is different, but as a high level piece, it can aid in your business case.***

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## Key Takeaways

Click through rates are near impossible to nail down. Every model that has been created in the past year will inevitably become invalid because of industry-wide SERP changes.

The issue with most CTR models is the lack of a large enough data set to make an actionable conclusion. So, why do we still care? Because it's still important for projecting potential marketing opportunities and forecasting returns. The greater the data that is retrieved, the better we can define a business case. In the end, it provides a data driven approach to organic search efforts.

## Next Steps

We intend to update the CTR study periodically using the same, exact data set and parameters (as far as possible) so we can share with the industry on how the numbers evolve.

## Caveats

It's important to keep in mind that every company is different. The conclusions we've drawn are likely not true for every industry, business size, country, language, or marketplace. Do the research on your own GWT data to understand your own CTR.

Most seoClarity clients are Enterprises with recognized brand names. There is certainly a brand impact on the CTR's due to brand recognition that there is no way to exclude that from here.

We based this study on a Google Webmaster Tools data set because it is the closest that we can get to real data on organic impressions and clicks.

*This research study was produced in September 2014 by seoClarity. All rights reserved.*



2800 S. River Road, Suite 290 Des Plaines, Illinois 60018 [www.seoClarity.net](http://www.seoClarity.net)  
Twitter: @seoClarity Phone: 773-831-4500 Email: [sales@seoClarity.net](mailto:sales@seoClarity.net)