

A man and a woman, likely a dentist and a patient, are smiling and looking at a tablet together in a dental office. The image is overlaid with a blue tint.

You're Not #1 On Google

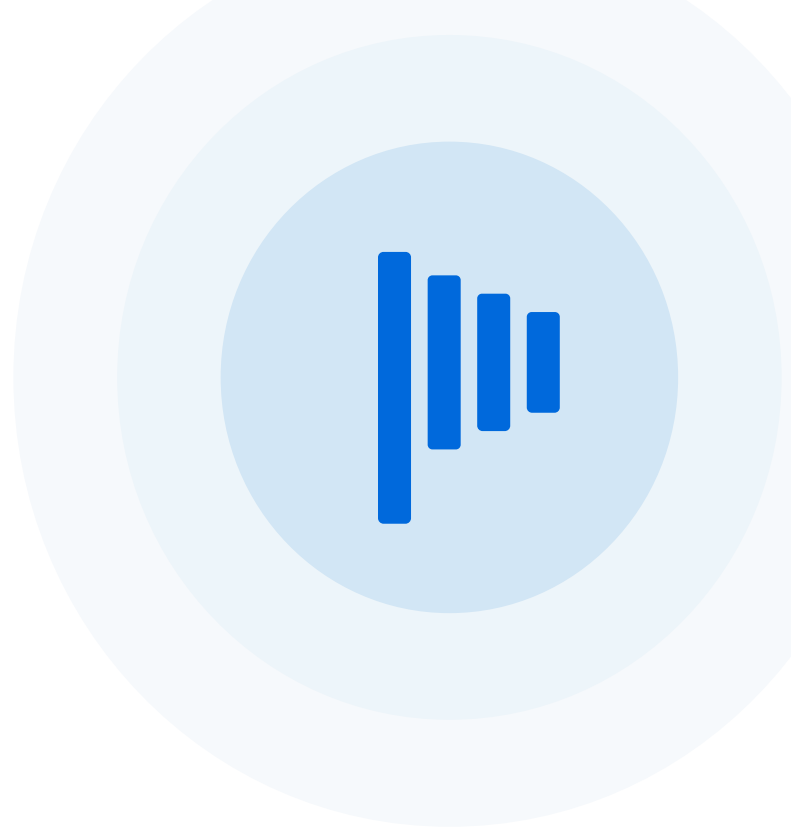
And What To Do About It

 planet
DDS

 Legwork

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Introduction

You're not #1 on Google. And What To Do About It.

After nearly two decades of dental marketing experience, we have come to accept the following two truths:

- 1 Every dentist wishes to be #1 on geo-local searches.
- 2 It's no longer possible—at least not in the same way you were taught to think.

Because of truth #2, Legwork powered by Planet DDS has decided it's time to start informing dentists of the hard truth in the hopes to set their analytical minds free, which is ... it's no longer possible to manipulate your rankings for local search.

The truth is, Google has moved to a pay-to-play game.

Have you actually looked at local search results lately?

Let's take a look at some local examples.

Example 1

Search "Dentist Chicago"

ADVERTISEMENTS



What do you notice? Depending on the competition for the area, you will see as many as four advertisements for any local search term.

Ad · www.buskfamilydentistry.com/ ▼ (509) 761-6075

Get Dental Implants | Busk Family Dentistry

At Busk Family **Dentistry**, our patients are always our priority. Contact us today for appt. Trusted, Local, Reliable. We're Wenatchee's restorative **dentistry** experts. Call us today. Types: Family **Dentistry**, Cosmetic **Dentistry**, Restorative **Dentistry**.

[Invisalign](#) · [Cosmetic Dentistry](#) · [Teeth Whitening](#) · [Restorative Dentistry](#)

Ad · www.petersonparkdental1.com/ ▼ (773) 649-3733

Dentist In Chicago Illinois | Northside. New Patient Special

\$49 - Complete Exam & X-rays. Our Reviews speak for Themselves! Call us today! Root Canal Treatment. Cosmetic **Dentistry**. Insurance Accepted. Payment Plans. Porcelain Veneers. Crowns & Bridgework. Oral Cancer Screenings. Tooth Extractions.

[New Patient Special](#) · [Teeth Whitening](#) · [Teeth Cleanings](#) · [Dental Implants](#) · [Orthodontics](#)

Ad · www.jeffersonparkdental.com/ ▼

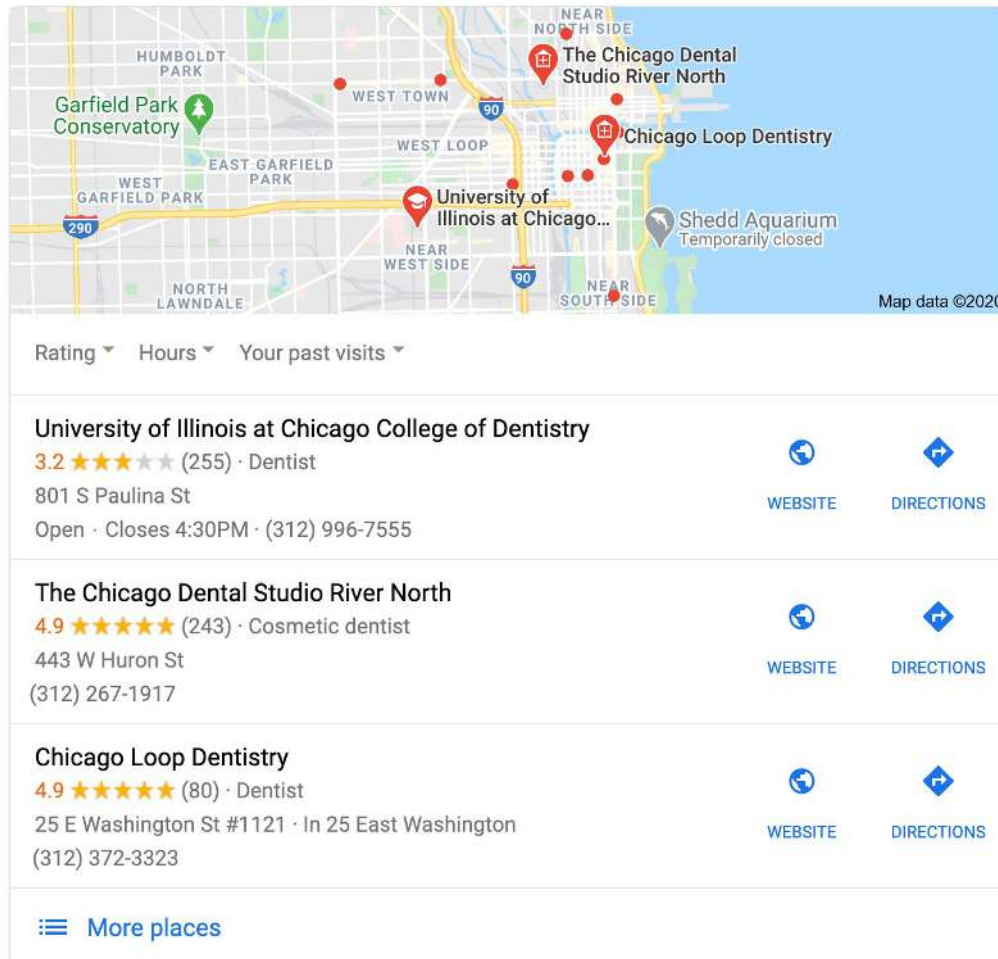
Dentist Chicago

Get The Smile You've Dreamed Of Call Our Caring **Dentist** Today!

📍 [4920 N Central Ave, Chicago, IL](#) - (773) 877-3449 - Hours & services may vary

MAPS

You might ask, can we optimize for top placement on the maps?
Not exactly...



In the words of Google, local search results are now based primarily on **relevance, distance,** and **prominence.** In Google's words, these factors are combined to help users find the best match for their local search. Google also states that the algorithms **might decide** that a business that is farther away from your locations is more likely to have what you're looking for than a business that's closer, and therefore, will rank higher in local results. However, in other documentation we have researched, Google eludes to the fact that as much as 95% of the algorithmic decision is based on location. They close with the following statement:

There's no way to request or pay for a better local ranking on Google. We do our best to keep the details of the algorithm confidential to make the ranking system as fair as possible for everyone.

ORGANIC SEARCH RESULTS

What's after the Maps results? Finally, more than half way down the first page, we see the coveted organic search results.

www.yelp.com › Chicago, IL › Health & Medical ▼

THE BEST 10 Dentists in Chicago, IL - Last Updated April ...

Best Dentists in Chicago, IL - Chicago Dental Studio, Dentologie, Lee Dental Clinic, Downtown Dental, Northside **Dental, Chicago** Smiles, White Dental Studio, ...

www.yelp.com › search › find_loc=Chicago,+IL ▼

Best Dentist Chicago, IL - Last Updated April 2020 - Yelp

Reviews on Best Dentist in Chicago, IL - Chicago Dental Studio, Downtown **Dental, Chicago** Smiles, Smile On Dental Salon & Sleep Apnea Center, Water Tower ...

Not a single independent dental brand page shows up until we get over half way down the page. The first two results are controlled by big brands like Yelp in this particular example. Often you will see other major brands but what you don't see is an independent dental practice until the third or fourth organic search result.

The 10th position on the 1st page is often the top organic ranking you can hope to achieve.

Let's also not forget that local search results are more likely to be ranked based on the users' location at the time of search. In other words, two people could be standing shoulder-to-shoulder, search for the same thing, and see different results. And, if one of them steps two or three blocks in any direction, the result changes for that user. So, not only is the organic result more than halfway down the page, we no longer can determine where we even rank in local search results because every search result is specific to each user. Ultimately, Google has a ton of data and they plan to use it. The smarter Google gets, the more they can deliver specific results to each individual user and the less control we will have on search rankings.

Example 2

Search "Invisalign®"

Okay, let's not give up, yet! Let's try searching for a specific service; and this time, let's not search a city because we want to research the best Invisalign® dentist without any "local" restriction on the search:



Ad · www.invisalign.com/ ▾

Invisalign® Official Site | Take Our Smile Assessment

Unleash Your Smile With The World's Most Advanced Aligner System! Types: SmartTrack® Material, Doctor-led Care, Customized Treatment.

Find a Doctor Today

Find an Invisalign Trained Dentist
Start Your Smile Transformation

Invisalign® Treatment

Most Advanced Clear Aligner System
with SmartTrack® Material

Free Smile Assessment

Start Your Smile Transformation
Most Advanced Clear Aligner System

Speak with our Smile Team

Our Invisalign® New Patient Team
Can Help You Get Answers

Ad · www.smiledirectclub.com/ ▾ (800) 679-0681

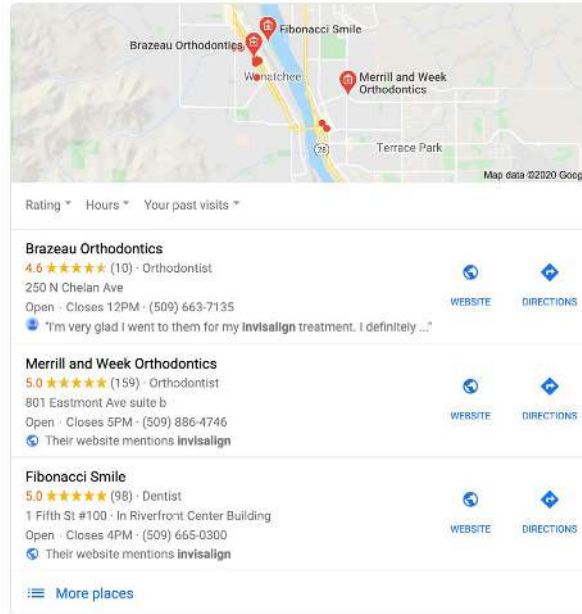
Teeth Straightening So Easy | You Can Do It While You Sleep

Introducing the First-Ever Nighttime Clear Aligners™ From SmileDirectClub™. Get The Smile You've Always Dreamed Of, While You're Dreaming. See If You're A Candidate! Insurance-Compatible. Doctor-Directed Treatment. Licensed in All 50 States.

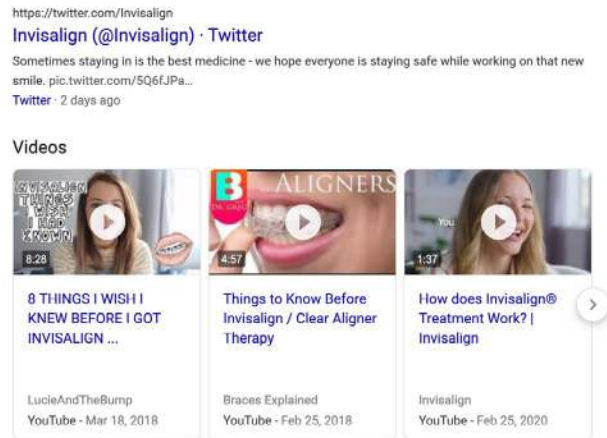
★★★★★ Rating for smiledirectclub.com: 4.9 - 22,488 reviews

[Take Our Smile Assessment](#) · [Aligners: Get The Facts](#) · [Aligners: How It Works](#)

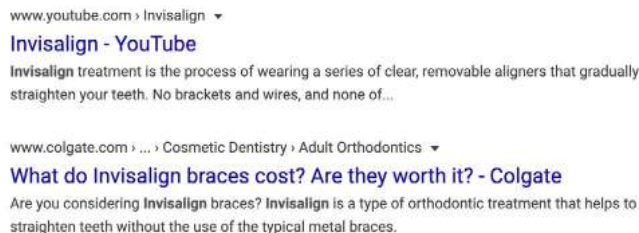
No. It still brings up Google maps even though there was no local designation in the search term:



Next is a video search gallery and then an RSS Twitter feed:



And big brands dominate the first organic results once again:



What does this all mean for dentists?

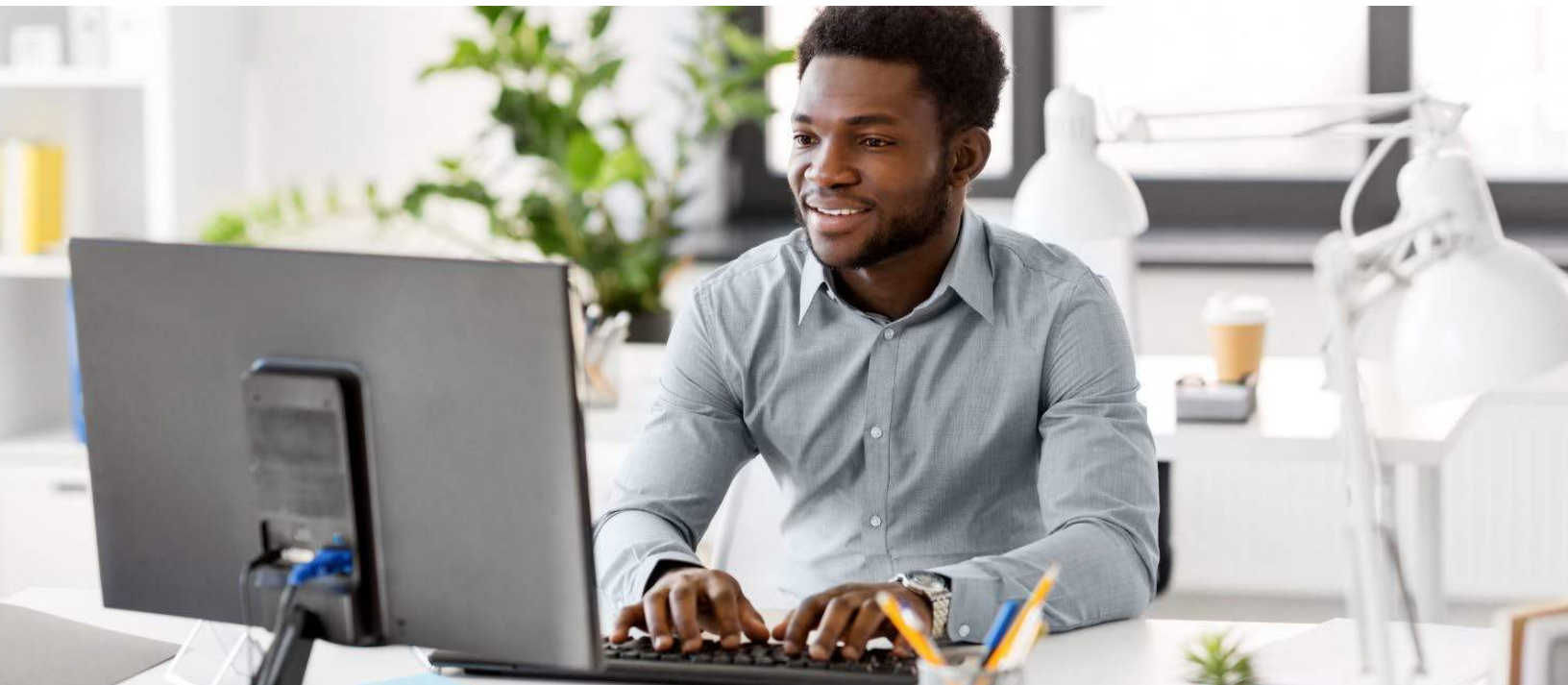
What is going on with local and service type searches and SEO?

It's a combination of several significant changes that Google has made in an effort to improve search results for each individual user with location as the primary factor. In simple terms, if you're looking for a restaurant, Google assumes that you want to see restaurants closest to your proximity first. And while they do consider other factors such as past search history, we can all assume that your location has a lot to do with the search results.

More importantly, and likely the main culprit, is that we have moved to a pay-to-play era with Google due to increased competition for ad dollars.

Facebook led the way with their own efforts, making it very difficult for business pages to get totally free exposure. They squeezed the businesses ability to reach even their own fans through organic posts and introduced "boost posts" and a complex set of advertising tools. And the advertising market responded in a big way. Google has responded in order maintain their tight grip as the dominant player in search advertising.

Does this mean SEO is dead?



SEO is in no way dead

As long as people are searching the internet, SEO will never die.

Let's recap with what we just learned, before diving into how we can adapt to these changes. Geo-local searches like "dentist near me" and searches for services like "Invisalign®" will:

- ✓ Show up to four advertisements in the search results
- ✓ Display Google Maps immediately under the ads, which you cannot control your ranking on
- ✓ Likely show the first 1 to 3 organic search results as big brands which cannot be outranked by private practices
- ✓ Show 95% of results based on the location of the user at the time they search
- ✓ Display direct results to individual users; in other words, you cannot search for yourself and determine your ranking

It's time to seriously reevaluate the landscape, and rediscover how SEO is intended to benefit your website and marketing efforts.

Next, let's discuss how to get back to #1 on Google.



You Can Be #1 On Google

And Here's How

Introducing Dental Advertisement

Don't underestimate the power of advertising on Google, especially for local search.

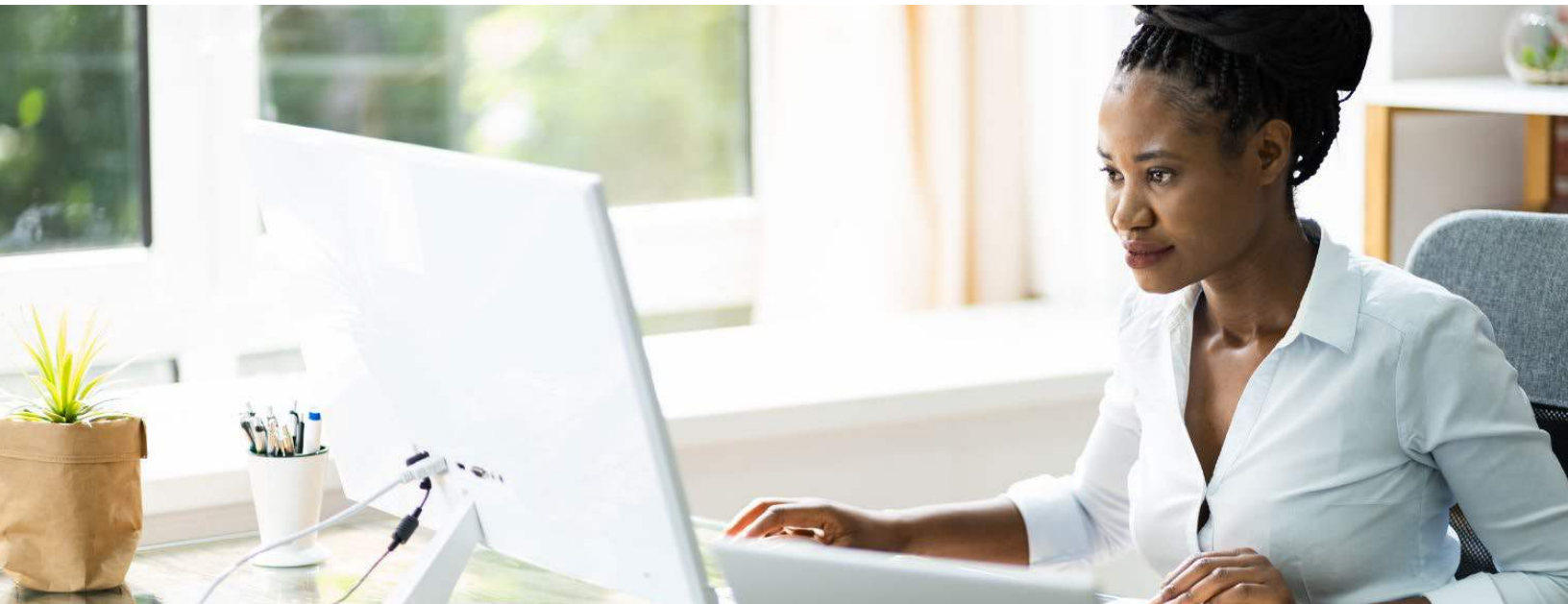
Contrary to popular belief, as we've talked about in this eBook, consumers *do* click on those ads. Otherwise, Google would not be a multi-billion dollar business. According to search statistics, 54% of total page clicks occur within the maps or above in the ad listings. That's worthy of your investment in order to gain your fair share of the local traffic. And dollar for dollar, it's much less expensive than traditional advertising and targets users with intent.

AREA-SPECIFIC SEARCH IS HERE, AND THE GAME HAS CHANGED

No amount of SEO trickery can bring your "Google My Business" listing to the top of Google Maps or regional search rankings. That's where we come in.

Get your dental ads placed at the top of Google Maps and local search results, so you're top of mind for prospective patients.

Your local ads will be served at the top of the search page results and will appear in the 3-Pack Map results, on the left side of the Map results as well as in Promoted Pins (pins on the full map that are a different color) on the Map itself. The categories targeted will be service-specific and geo-specific or include "near me."



Bringing It All Together

As Google gets more intelligent, your digital marketing must follow suit. This means adapting to when Google makes changes and using them to your advantage.

Improve your dental SEO strategy and get more patients!



**Get More Dental Patients Through
SMART Digital Advertisement**

SCHEDULE A DEMO



Planet DDS is the leading provider of cloud-enabled dental software solutions serving over 10,000 practices in North America with over 60,000 users. The company delivers a complete platform of solutions for dental practices including Denticon Practice Management, Apteryx XVWeb Cloud Imaging, and Legwork Patient Relationship Management. Planet DDS is committed to creating value for its dental practice clients by solving the most urgent challenges facing today's dental practices in North America.