

LONG BEACH POST



About Long Beach Post

The Long Beach Post is a daily, digital publication covering news, life, business, placemaking, food, sports, LGBT issues and more in the city of Long Beach, California. The Post continues to invest in expanded coverage of our city and its people, create new technologies to increase our readership, and remain nimble so changing reader demands are opportunities, not threats. The Long Beach Post was founded on February 13, 2007.

Overview

The Google Ads Revenue Accelerator is a partnership between the [Google News Initiative](#), [LION Publishers](#) and [10up](#) focused on developing a new standard for generating revenue in the hyperlocal news space. The pilot program kicked off in September, 2019 with several publishers from the [LION Publisher](#) organization and will continue throughout 2020.

AUTHORS:

- **Mike Bal**
Director of Audience & Revenue at 10up

Winning The Breaking News Battle With AMP and Google News

How AMP and Google News Sitemap work together to set a new baseline for top-performing stories for the Long Beach Post.

The Project:

The Revenue Accelerator worked with 10up to develop an initial tactical assessment that included known best practices and key data points for both the audience and revenue performance of our publisher's web platforms.

[Long Beach Post](#) is one of several publishers working with the accelerator who has seen exciting results from the first round of implemented strategies. Digital revenue strategy is a relative strength for the Long Beach Post. However, we found an opportunity to drive additional traffic to the site around breaking news. Historically, big breaking stories received the most traffic the day after breaking. And, unlike competitors who leverage AMP, Long Beach Post stories were being constantly excluded from mobile rich search results positions.

Knowing that delivering timely news is important for local communities, we moved forward with recommendations for:

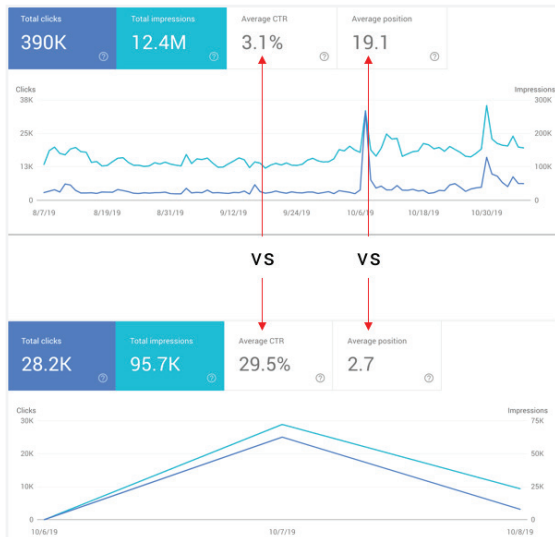
1. Implementing [AMP](#)
2. Implementation of [AMP Ads](#)
3. Submitting a Google News Sitemap

The Results:

- Immediately and consistently setting new records for visibility and traffic from breaking news.
- Extreme improvements in mobile search impressions, rankings and attributed traffic.
- New revenue stream channeled through new inventory in both direct-sold and programmatic as a back-fill; and boosted by new traffic.
- Over 10x growth of subscribers to web notifications, with these notifications driving additional site traffic.

On 10/7/19, Long Beach Post published a story on the lockdown at the CSULB campus that became their single best traffic-driving story ever from Google organic search. In an effort to better understand the impact that our implementations had highly focused on mWeb, we use 'mobile' as our experimental group.

This story received 92% more mobile organic traffic in a single day than their next best performing story in the site's history. Additionally, this story received a majority of its traffic on the day it broke while previous stories had received the most traffic the day after publishing.



Rich Results as an Extreme Advantage

To better understand the true benefits and drivers of our success, we narrowed in on mobile-specific results within Google Search Console.

THE SPECIFIC STORY HAD RECEIVED:

>10X Over 10x more rich results impressions than any other breaking news story they had previously published; an average Search position of 3.9 compared against a benchmark average position of 19;

26.6% > 3.1% An average click-through rate (CTR) of 26.6% for that article compared against an 3.1% CTR over the previous 3 months.

The combination of AMP opening up visibility in the Top Stories carousel, and a submitted Google News Sitemap, resulted in immediate and prominent visibility for the story – ensuring Long Beach Post was near the top of Search results when that information was most relevant to their readers.

Capitalizing on Success: Monetizing on Amp’s Success

As a sign of continued success, Long Beach Post had its second-highest search day on October 30th, 2019. Within the first 8 weeks of the study, Long Beach Post set new records for top-performing post measured by both organic traffic and revenue.

By this date, we had a standard implementation of ads live within the AMP pages, placing a unit under the header, above the footer and after two paragraphs into the article content. Since these ad placements were new to the site and hadn’t yet been sold directly, they were served via AdExchange programmatic demand.

The week of October 30th, AMP units alone accounted for roughly ¼ of their backfill/programmatic revenue for the week. By using AdExchange, Long Beach Post was able to fill 98% of their AMP ad inventory for the week, which is ultimately a new source of revenue.

Leveraging Breaking News to Build a New Audience

Early in the program we identified web notifications as a simple tactic worth testing based on the opportunity to build an “owned” audience the publishers wouldn’t need to pay to access — this channel also has the benefit of being a direct and immediate way to deliver timely content that doesn’t depend on the user to be on your site, reading your email, or using your app. A key benefit to this strategy is that opting in for a web notification is a lower commitment than submitting your email or personal information — making it easier for users to opt-in without too much consideration or deliberation.

FROM THE BREAKING STORY ON 10/7 - 11/11, LONG BEACH POST HAS SEEN CONSISTENT GROWTH IN THIS CHANNEL WEEK/WEEK:

>5K More than 5k sessions per week from the web notification platform alone, and a new baseline of weekly traffic for the Long Beach Post.

Prior to their first major breaking story in AMP, Long Beach post had been consistently gaining about 60 new subscribers in their web notification platform each week. Prior to this story breaking, Long Beach Post was sitting with a total web notification subscriber base of 461 users. Traffic from web notifications was minimal. By the end of the week Long Beach Post had more than doubled their subscriber base with an additional 593 subscribers and had received over 2800 sessions from that channel.

Read more on 10up.com: <https://10up.com/blog/2020/google-news-initiative-revenue-accelerator>