LEVERAGING DIGITAL MARKETING STRATEGIES TO INCREASE VISITOR ENGAGEMENT AND WEB VISITORS FOR LOCAL TOURISM SME

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Abstract*: Jengka Wonderland, located in Jengka Central City, is one of the first water theme parks between the Temerloh and Jerantut districts in the Maran district. This study aims to establish the online presence of Jengka Wonderland through the development of Local Tourism Digital Marketing Frameworks. The elements of the framework consist of a Business Website, Google Business Profile, Search Engine Optimization (SEO), and Google Ads that aim to provide a platform for marketing strategies and information dissemination through search engines to increase the number of visitors to the website thus boost up the ticket sales growth and strengthen the brand of Jengka Wonderland. The study obtains information on the number and characteristics of visitors, such as location, age, and gender, by providing a visitor tracking system on the website using Google products, which are Google Analytics and Google Search Console. The analysis shows that the number of visitors to Jengka Wonderland's website based on the target search keywords in the search engine after incorporating the framework has significantly increased.*

Keywords*: Online Marketing, Eco-Tourism, Digital Tourism, Business Advertising, Digital Tour Marketing*

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Introduction

Jengka Wonderland offers various attractions and main facilities to its water theme park visitors, such as a large swimming pool, adult and children's water slides, a man-made river, a children's swimming pool, paddleboats, tables and chairs, prayer rooms, and changing rooms. Several paid and rental facilities exist, such as a Gazebo, Hobbit House, floats, and storage lockers. With the provision and development of Jengka Wonderland incurring high costs, Jengka Wonderland management expects a return on investment and equivalent profits. Therefore, Jengka Wonderland management needs to plan and think about marketing methods and brand introduction to attract more visitors to Jengka Wonderland.

Marketing, advertising, and brand introduction are essential in a business. Studies have shown effective corporate brand management and strong brand recognition by customers and stakeholders (John, 2010; Sandra, 2014; Iglesias, Landgraf, Ind, Markovic, & Koporcic, 2020; Angelo et al., 2021). Business owners should not only plan for capital provision to supply products and facilities but also align with strategic marketing and advertising planning to attract buyers and visitors (Angelo et al., 2021; Lacarcel & Huete, 2023; Purnomo, 2023). For the Jengka Wonderland business, the development of the theme park and facilities is already in place; however, it was found that there is no 'presence' or existence of the Jengka Wonderland brand in the online or digital world, which is generally the place where visitors search. Therefore, it is proposed that Jengka Wonderland be highlighted by developing a digital marketing toolkit, such as an official website, Google Business Profile, search engine optimization (SEO), and Google Ads.

This research paper enables the researchers to assist in developing the official website, analyzing visitor search keywords for advertising processes, optimizing the Google Business Profile to increase the number of visitors to the website, and subsequently boosting ticket sales and visitor attendance at Jengka Wonderland. In addition, the provision of the above digital facilities will help visitors obtain accurate information regarding the services provided by Jengka Wonderland, such as current ticket prices, available facilities, and theme park images, and visitors will be able to directly contact Jengka Wonderland staff through the Chat section provided on the website. These digital facilities will indirectly make it easier for visitors to plan and choose Jengka Wonderland as a family recreational destination. Other objectives of developing this digital marketing kit for companies in the local tourism sector are as follows:

1. Ensuring the presence of the Jengka Wonderland brand online and on the internet network (online presence).
2. Increasing the number of visitors to the website, thereby boosting ticket sales and visitor attendance at Jengka Wonderland. Increasing the number of visitors to the website subsequently boosts ticket sales and the attendance of visitors to Jengka Wonderland.

The above objectives are expected to impact customer access to business information and products being widely communicated to customers. The company's website will also be easily visible in user searches for the local tourism sector (Google Search). It will enhance business credibility and make the product brand appear more professional.

Literature Review

A literature review related to the topic and title of the study has been conducted to ensure that the researcher's paper is appropriate and based on previous literature to enable improvements to be made.

Digital Marketing Framework

Recent studies related to the digital marketing framework have focused on various aspects and fields of business. The study by Gryshchenko (2023) emphasizes the importance of digital marketing as a marketing communication tool and its role in meeting the needs of online customers. This is supplemented by the study by Samee et al. (2018), which analyzes the characteristics of research on digital marketing, including the most studied themes, the methods used, and data collection and analysis techniques. Busca and Bertrandias (2020) provide an integration framework for research in digital marketing, highlighting disciplinary fragmentation and proposing a cultural framework to understand the dynamics of the digital landscape. Papageorgiou et al. (2023) propose a digital marketing competency profile that integrates the latest technological advancements and industry requirements, providing a framework for businesses to assess and enhance their performance. These studies contribute to the understanding and development of the digital marketing framework and enable the researchers of this paper to make improvements.

Methods to Increase Website Visitors

Various methods are used to increase visitors to business websites, and researchers from business, information technology, and computer engineering have conducted several studies. One study found that the top part of the website layout is the best for attracting visitors' attention, indicating that prioritizing content in this area can attract more visitors and increase profits (Yan et al., 2019; Britchenko, Diachuk & Bezpartochnyi, 2019). Another study compared different dimensions of interactivity on websites and found that games and reciprocal communication are the most prominent predictors of website popularity (Kuanchin, 2004; Shim, 2014; Abou-Shouk & Soliman, 2021). Additionally, the use of Long Short-Term Memory (LSTM) methods in predicting website visitors shows better mean squared error results than the Backpropagation Neural Network or Recurrent Neural Network methods (Putu et al., 2021). Furthermore, qualitative research has been used to explore the engagement process and dimensions of user experience on the website, such as highlighting the importance of providing clear information to benefit visitors (Shim, 2014). Finally, analyzing server file logs has proven to be a valuable tool for understanding user behavior on the website and improving to increase hits and clicks (Neha, 2015; Husin, 2021). The results of the above studies have provided ideas for developing a digital marketing framework to attract visitors to the website of the studied water theme park business.

Digital Marketing in the Local Tourism Sector

Several recent studies have focused on digital marketing in the local tourism sector. One of the studies explores the potential of the Digital Local Tourism Management System (DLTMS) to support sustainable local tourism development (Pongsuppat, 2023). Another study investigates how the tourism sector can use digital marketing tools to increase business revenue, using social networks as the primary platform for promoting businesses (Rojas, 2023). This is supported by a study on the digitalization of tourism that reveals the use of various digital media and tourist destinations in market competition, highlighting the need for essential policies to enhance market structure (Antonius Budisusila & Victoria Sundari Handoko, 2023). Additionally, a study using web analytics and big data to develop digital marketing strategies for the tourism

sector emphasizes the importance of user-engaging content (Sakas, Reklitis, Terzi, & Vassilakis, 2022; Stylos, Zwiegelaar, & Buhalis, 2021). Finally, one study highlights the importance of digital marketing techniques, such as websites and videos, in promoting tourism products and services, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic (Constantinos Halkiopoulos, Hera Antonopoulou, & Giotopoulos, 2023).

Based on the overall literature review above, it was found that there is a research gap in the context of digital marketing to increase visitors to the websites of water theme park businesses, specifically with a lack of studies that integrate various digital marketing tools in detail and assess the impact of this combination of strategies on website traffic growth. Previous studies focus too intensely on individual and specific digital marketing tools. Therefore, there is a need to investigate combined strategies that may have a more significant impact, such as the Digital Marketing Tool Integration Effect, by examining the extent to which the integration of various digital marketing tools like social media, Search Engine Optimization (SEO), paid advertising, and email affects traffic growth to water theme park websites. It can also look at the most effective strategy combinations in that context. Therefore, this study will explain and apply the integration of various digital marketing methods to increase the number of visitors to water theme park websites.

Research Methodology

Developing a digital marketing kit to establish an online presence for the Jengka Wonderland brand includes several key elements such as an Official Website, Google Business Profile, Google Ads, and Search Engine Optimization (SEO). With all the above digital marketing kits, visitors can obtain information about Jengka Wonderland through the Google search engine, purchase tickets, and visit Jengka Wonderland. Based on the above proposal, the researcher has developed a Digital Marketing Kit framework for Jengka Wonderland Water Theme Park, as shown in Figure 1.
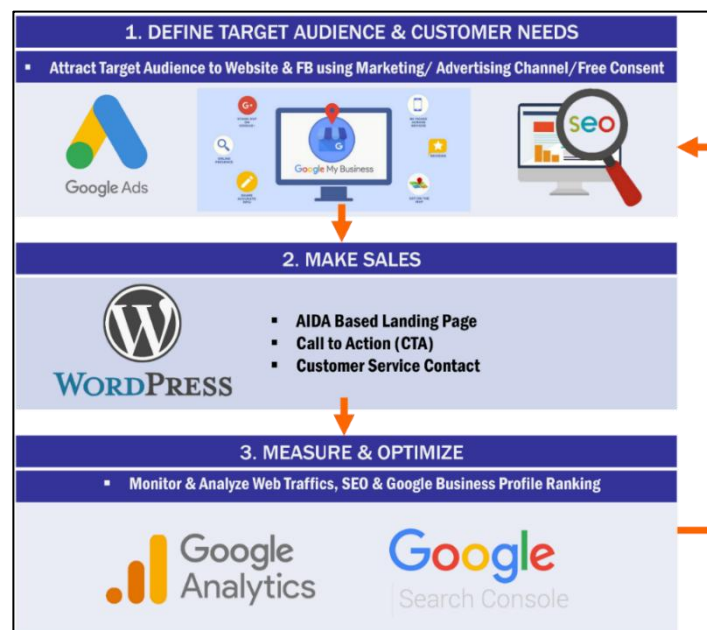
Figure 1: Digital Marketing Framework for Jengka Wonderland Theme Park Development of the Official Jengka Wonderland Website

Developing an official website involves several key steps, including identifying and purchasing an appropriate domain name and hosting package to store the website files. Next, the relevant programming languages and software are selected to develop the website. This process is followed by designing the layout and determining the proper content and images to be included. A study of competitor websites was also conducted to understand additional features that could enhance the website's competitiveness. The development of this website took about 4-5 months, ending with the installation of Google Analytics to monitor and analyze visitor traffic. Purchasing the domain name JengkaWonderland.com based on the theme park's name allows the business owner to ensure that no one else can use that name. The researchers chose to develop the Jengka Wonderland website using WordPress software because its capabilities assist in designing it and provide necessary security features. The development of the website includes layout design, external design, selection of images, writing and content creation, installation, and configuration, which took up to 4 months.

Configuration & Optimization Google Business Profile (GBP)

After the website is completed and accessible on the Internet. The website has been updated and placed in the Website section within the Google Business Profile (GBP), as shown in Figure 2. Google Business Profile is a service provided by Google that allows merchants and companies to place information related to their business on the Google.com.my search engine. Among the information that can be placed are the website, phone number, address, operating hours, messages, and customer reviews. This service allows users to directly obtain information related to the keywords searched on the search engine to the relevant businesses.
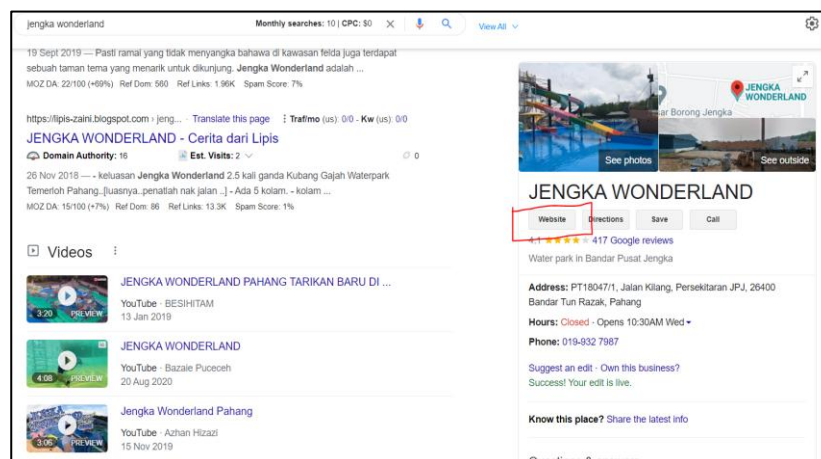

**Figure 2: Jengka Wonderland Google Business Profile**
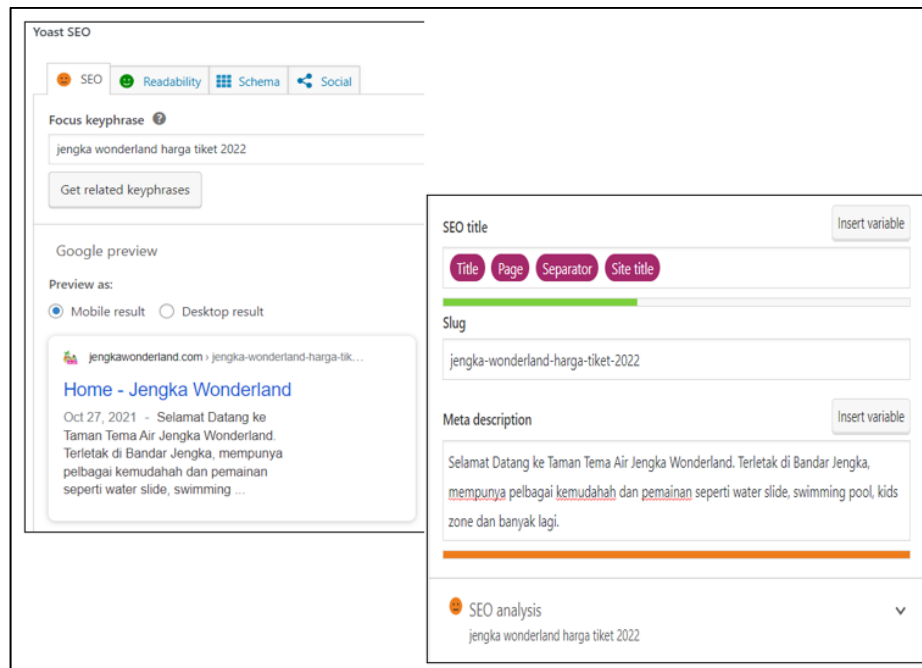
KEYWORD		TREND	VOLUME
jengka wonderland bandar jengka bandar tun razak pahang			140
jengka wonderland harga tiket 2021			70
jengka wonderland harga tiket 2022			70
jengka wonderland photos			70
jengka wonderland hotel			50
jengka wonderland ticket			40
jengka wonderland tiket			40

Figure 3: Keyword Analysis

Search Engine Optimization Configuration (SEO)

Search Engine Optimization (SEO) is one of the techniques commonly used by web developers and digital marketing experts to elevate the ranking of their developed websites to the highest position (first page) on the Google.com search engine. SEO employs techniques by ensuring that the keywords searched by users match the keywords on their websites to ensure that Google's search engine algorithm elevates their website to the first page of Google.com. For example, if a user searches for the term Jengka Wonderland, then the term Jengka Wonderland should be present on the first page of the JengkaWonderland.com website and be the main title of the website. Here is the process used by the researchers to improve the ranking of the JengkaWonderland.com website on the Google.com search engine.

i. Keyword analysis using the UberSuggest software, as shown in Figure 3. This study aims to identify the keywords most frequently searched by users related to the Jengka Wonderland theme park. This information will be the primary keywords in the subsequent SEO preparation. (Volume: Number of Searches).

ii. SEO Setup / Keyword Configuration for Jengka Wonderland was obtained from UberSuggest on the website. SEO Setup / Configuration of Jengka Wonderland Keywords obtained from UberSuggest into the website. SEO setup using the 'Yoast SEO' plugin available in the WordPress function. Among the SEO configurations that need to be done for the Jengka Wonderland website are Focus Keyphrase, Page Title, Slug, and Meta Description, which must include the primary keyword as provided by UberSuggest, namely 'Jengka Wonderland ticket prices 2022'. The overall configuration is shown in Figure 4 below.

iii. SiteMap Submission is a technique to inform the Google search engine that the link to the JengkaWonderland.com website already exists and needs to be indexed into Google.com.SiteMap Submission is a technique to inform the Google search engine that the link to the JengkaWonderland.com website already exists and needs to be indexed into Google.com. The software used is Atrracta.com, as shown in Figure 5. The Sitemap Submission configuration that needs to be done for the Jengka Wonderland website consists of 4 processes: Sitemap Submission, Blacklist Check (by Google), Link Building, and Listing Verification.
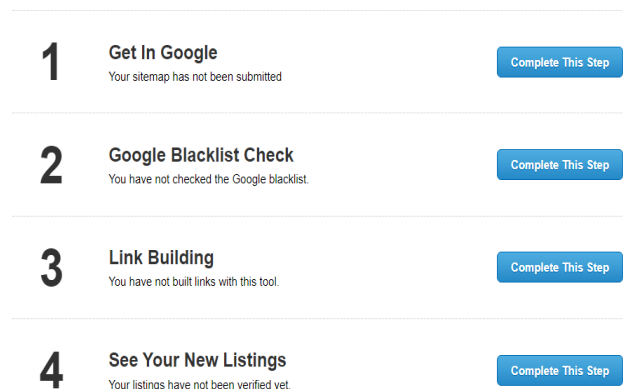
Figure 4: SEO Keywords Insertion

Figure 5: Sitemap Submission

Advertisers on Google (Google Ads Search Engine Marketing)

Google Advertising or Google Ads is used to increase visitors to the Jengka Wonderland website and boost ticket purchases and user visits. Google Ads is a paid advertising service provided by Google Inc. It allows advertisers or merchants to design advertising and promotional phrases and elevate them to positions 1-4 in search results on the Google.com search engine. Unlike SEO, which can elevate a website's position to the first page of the Google.com search engine for free, the Google Ads service charges a fee to allow merchants to promote their ads on Google. Figure 6 shows that the researcher has created several ads on Google Ads between March 1, 2022, and December 30, 2023, involving minimal costs as follows.
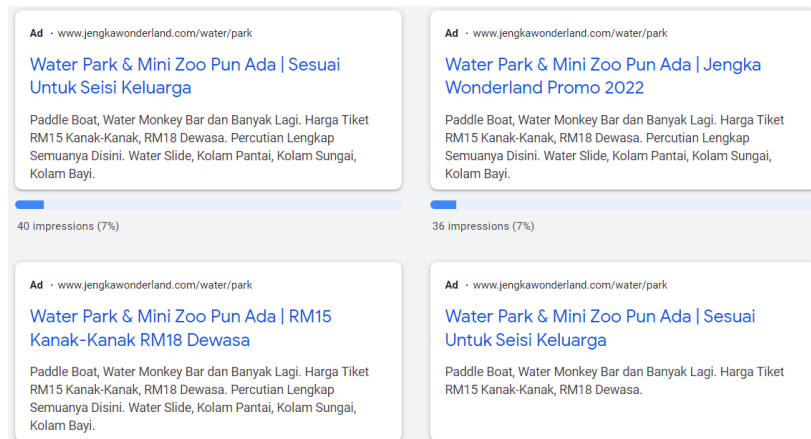
Figure 6: Google Ads Created for Jengka Wonderland

Result and Discussion

The problem with the Jengka Wonderland theme park business is the absence of the Jengka Wonderland brand in the virtual world and on the Internet, preventing visitors from obtaining related information. Therefore, the researcher has developed a digital marketing framework to address the issue. Overall, the researchers have successfully developed a digital marketing framework for the Jengka Wonderland business, which consists of four main elements: website development, Google Business Profile setup and configuration, website SEO setup and configuration based on user keywords, and advertising using Google Ads. This framework is aimed at helping to promote and market the theme park's products according to the objectives discussed earlier.

Objective 1 Result: Ensuring the existence of the Jengka Wonderland brand online and on the internet network (online presence).

The development and existence of the Jengka Wonderland website, along with the Google Business Profile and SEO, have established the Jengka Wonderland brand and website at the top of Google search engine results. The difference between before the project began and after the researchers developed the website along with SEO and GBP is as shown in the following Figure 7:
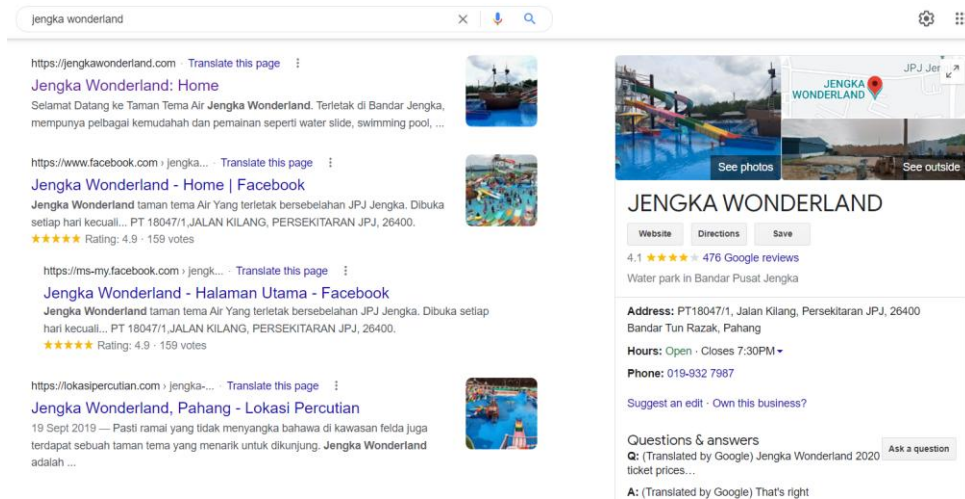

Figure 7: The search results for the keyword Jengka Wonderland indicate the existence or 'Online Presence'

Search results for the keyword "jengka wonderland" from April 2021 to June 2022 found no results indicating the existence of an official Jengka Wonderland website like its competitors. The search results only display the Jengka Wonderland Facebook page, a social media platform, not the official business website. Figure 8 shows the latest search results for the keyword "jengka wonderland". The results of the Google Business Profile and SEO optimization configuration show an increase in the website's ranking to the first position on Google, subsequently allowing potential visitors to click and visit the website. Website visitors are essential in generating sales revenue and company profits. If users do not find our website on Google, obtaining information and purchasing tickets for this theme park will be difficult.

Objective 2 Outcome: Increase the number of visitors to the website, thereby boosting ticket sales and visitor attendance at Jengka Wonderland.

The result of the website development, the website's ranking in the first position on Google and Google Business Profile, has increased visitors to the official Jengka Wonderland website. This allows researchers and the company to obtain detailed information about the number of visitors and visitor characteristics such as location, age, gender, communication devices used, and much more. This is because the researchers have installed a visitor tracking system on the website using Google Analytics and Google Search Console, which belong to Google itself. The analysis of the number of visitors to the Jengka Wonderland website after implementing SEO and GBP techniques is as follows.

The figures below illustrate the growth in website impressions and clicks over twelve months before and after implementing the SEO and GBP strategies. As shown in Figure 8, the number of impressions in 2022 can reach up to 45,900, while clicks have reached only 3840 during the same period. After applying the digital marketing strategies discussed in the research methods section, the impression increased to 175,000, and the number of clicks reached 13,700 in 2023, as per Figure 9.
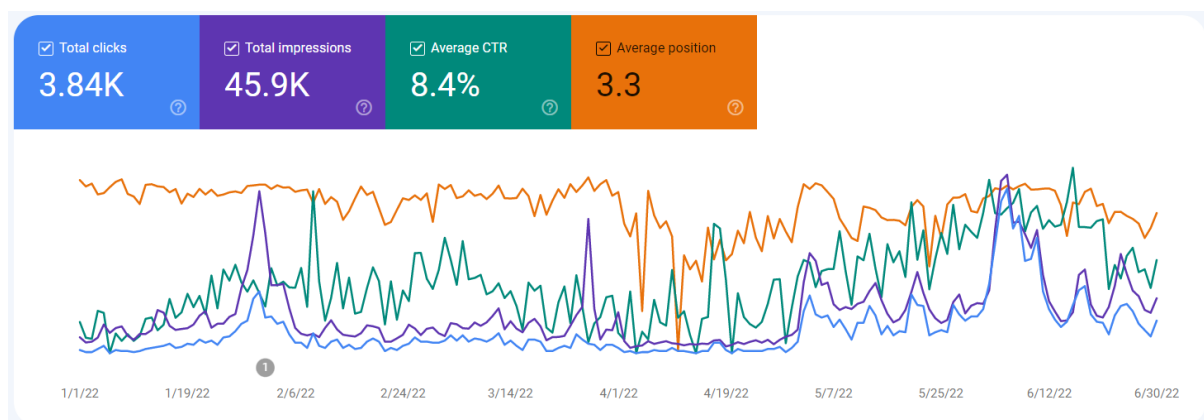

Figure 8. Number of Visitors to the Jengka Wonderland Website before Adapting SEO and GBP in 2022

Figure 9 below shows the number of user visitors to the Jengka Wonderland website, which was analyzed using the Google Search Console software. Visitors will use the Google search engine to search for the keyword "jengka wonderland" and click on the link JengkaWonderland.com, which is ranked first on Google. A total of 13,700 clicks from visitors to the website from January 1, 2023, to December 30, 2023, which is the visitor count for the first year of 2023. The number of views or the frequency of search engine results or search

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results on Google was 175,000 times in the first year of 2023, which is the highest recorded view count. This shows that many visitors are searching for the Jengka Wonderland brand on the Google search engine, which is ranked 1-6 on average.
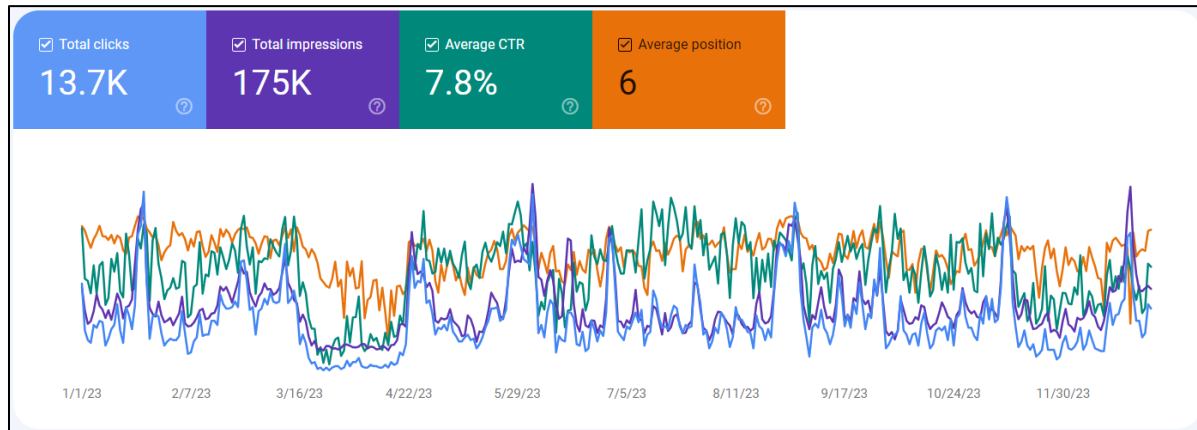

Figure 9. Analysis of Visitors to the Jengka Wonderland Website after Adapting SEO and GBP in 2023

Both objective accesses are essential as they relate to searches and visitors to the Jengka Wonderland website, which shows an upward trend and is estimated to continue rising from July to December 2024, coinciding with the school holiday season. With this, it can be concluded that the study of developing the official website along with the applied SEO and GBP techniques has led to success in helping the company promote and provide information to potential visitors to the website and subsequently visit the Jengka Wonderland theme park to generate revenue for the company. Suppose this website development and SEO project is not carried out, and the company and the Jengka Wonderland brand will lose visitors. They may be unable to find the official website and obtain accurate information about Jengka Wonderland.

Conclusion

Marketing strategy is crucial for the survival of a business. Traders and company entrepreneurs must understand the importance of marketing before starting a business. Marketing techniques have also shifted towards digital marketing, where a company needs to develop many digital elements and facilities. Researchers have developed critical processes or techniques in digital marketing by creating a digital marketing framework for Jengka Wonderland. This framework aims to ensure that the Jengka Wonderland brand exists and remains in the online world through search results on the Google search engine. Among the main components in this digital marketing framework are the development of an official website that follows current trends, optimization of the Google Business Profile, Search Engine Optimization (SEO), and Google Ads advertising. The fourth method and configuration – the place of this technique has been discussed in depth in the Research Methodology section. Applying this framework method reveals that the Jengka Wonderland brand is ranked first on the Google.com search engine with the keyword 'Jengka Wonderland.' This means that the online presence of the Jengka Wonderland brand has been established and will remain there without competition. Secondly, the number of visitors to the Jengka Wonderland website using SEO techniques has increased to 13,700 visits from January 1, 2023, to December 30, 2023, with 175,000 search impressions on Google.com. This demonstrates the effectiveness of the techniques, as shown in the Google Business Profile and SEO.

Acknowledgements

Authors Contribution

Zulazeze Sahri led the research, wrote the manuscript, and set up the digital marketing framework. Zulkifli Halim conducted the literature review, while Roslan Sadjirin contributed to the literature review and managed the website. Roger Canda designed the research methods and developed the website. Juhaida Ismail worked on the introduction section, handled public relations, and created graphics. All authors provided critical feedback and helped shape the research, analysis, and manuscript.

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