

Page-one average ranking, 80k impressions and 7k AI-answer appearances

Research Thread helps researchers publish in high-impact journals. An authority content programme around journal rankings, Q1 publishing and submission requirements holds the site at an average position of 9.3 and has made it the most AI-cited property in this pack relative to its size.

9.3 Average position (page one)	80.1k Google impressions (3 months)	520 Organic clicks (3 months)	7.07k AI-answer impressions (3 months)
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Period: 17 Jul – 16 Oct 2026 (Web search). Indexing as of 12 Oct 2026; baseline read from the mid-July Page indexing chart.

Starting point

In mid-July 2026 only around 45 of ~265 known pages were indexed and impressions were close to zero. Academic publishing is dominated by large brands (Editage, Enago, Wiley Author Services), and researchers' questions are highly specific.

What we did

- Built an authority hub explaining the concepts researchers search for: what a Q1 journal is, HJRS journal categories (HEC Pakistan), Q1 vs Q2, journal impact factor, how to choose a Q1 journal, how to check whether a journal is HEC-recognised.
- Published practical submission guides: funding statements, manuscript formatting, responding to reviewers, AI disclosure policy for journal submission.
- Created service-aligned pages (iThenticate plagiarism check, journal publication services, Q1 journal publication).
- Grew the indexed set to 556 pages and added breadcrumb structured data.
- Used thecrawlbudget.com to prioritise crawl on the explainer cluster that earns the AI citations.

SEO results

- Average position 9.3 — on page one on average across 1,000+ queries.
- Indexed pages grew to 556, roughly 12x the ~45 indexed in mid-July.
- 80,100 impressions in 90 days, up from 64.8k in the previous reporting window; daily impressions reached ~3,800 at peak.
- Non-branded queries drive reach: “q1” (6,022 impressions), “q1 journal” (761), “ithenticate plagiarism checker” (515), “thread research” (480) and “hjrs” (348).
- 520 clicks at a 0.6% CTR — up 28% on the previous window.

Top queries (3 months)

Query	Clicks	Impressions
research thread	34	161
ithenticate plagiarism checker	6	515
hjrs	5	348
q1	4	6,022
q1 journal	2	761
what is q1 journal	2	360
hedan bai	2	169
hjrs journal	2	80
stephanie ness	2	38
thread research	1	480

AEO results — visibility in Google's AI answers

Research Thread's explainer content is used heavily in Google's AI answers — 7.07k impressions across 281 pages, up from 5.86k across 236 pages a quarter earlier. The report also shows long, conversational follow-up questions, a sign the pages are being cited inside multi-turn AI searches.

7.07k

Impressions in Google
generative AI features

281

Pages surfaced in
AI answers

~0 → ~200

Daily AI impressions
(Jul → Oct peak)

Top pages cited in AI answers (17 Jul - 16 Oct 2026)

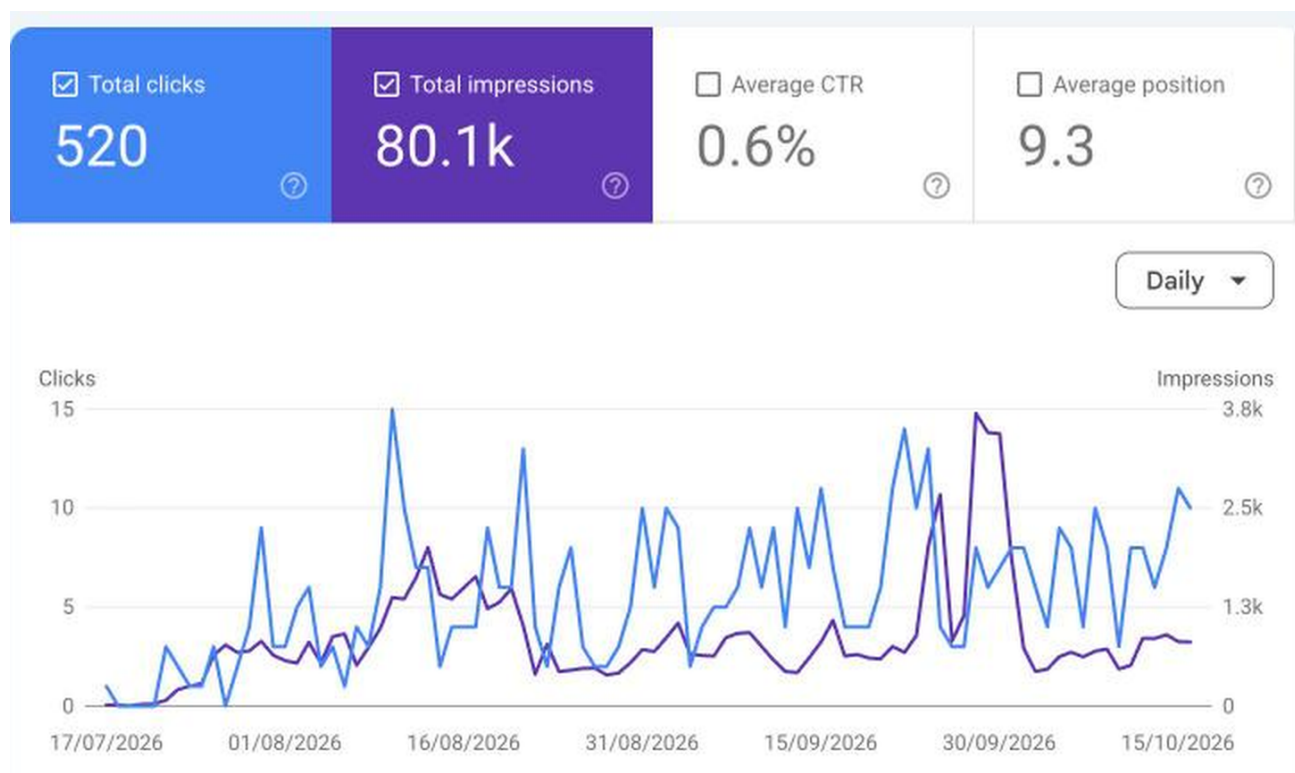
Page	AI impressions
/blog/ithenticate-plagiarism-check-guide	1,046
/hjrs-journal-categories-explained	708
/what-is-a-q1-journal	554
/blog/what-is-q1-journal	378
/blog/best-journals-for-computer-science	332
/q1-journal-publication	249
/blog/what-is-q1-journal-impact-factor	177
/blog/ai-disclosure-policy-journal-submission	141
Homepage	138
/how-to-check-if-a-journal-is-hec-recognised	129

Why it worked

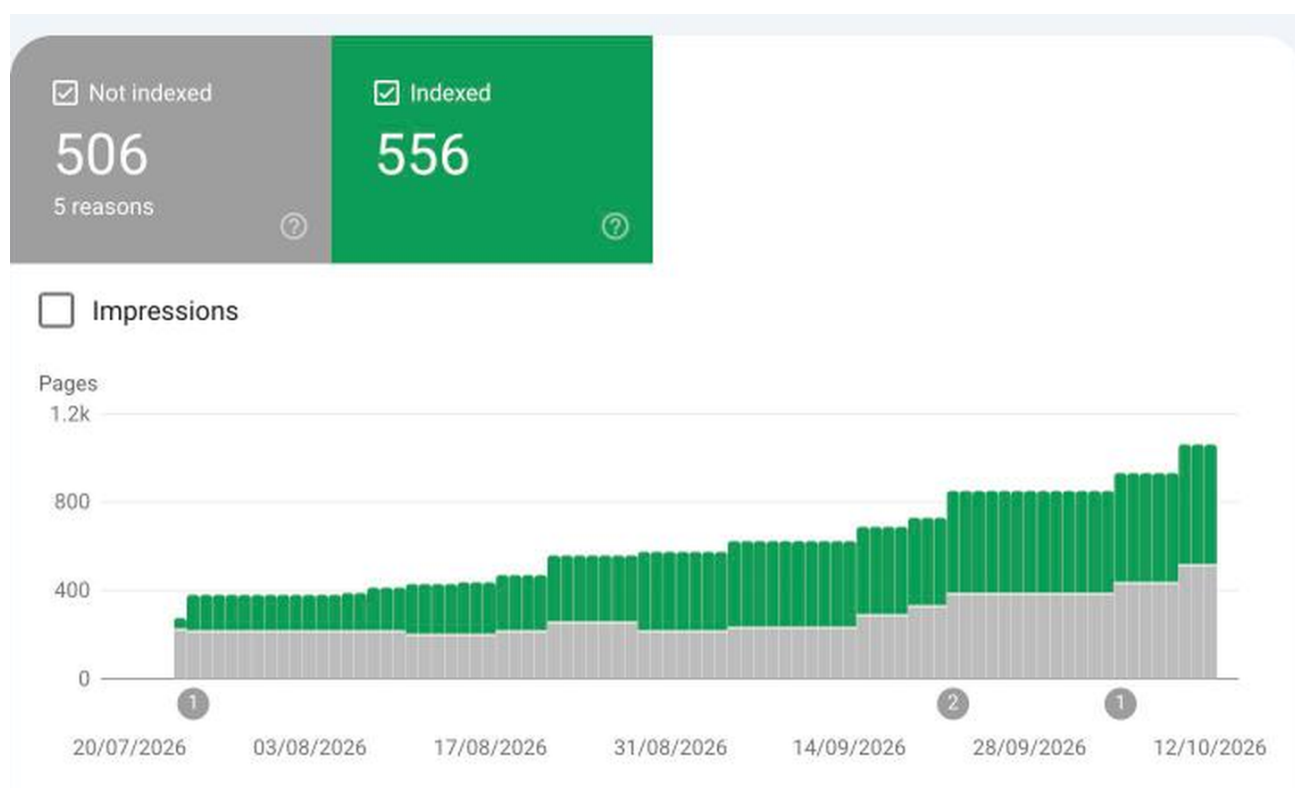
- Definition-style pages (“what is a Q1 journal”, “HJRS categories explained”) are the exact format AI answers quote.
- Topical depth around one cluster (journal ranking and publication) built authority quickly, holding average position on page one.
- A niche local angle (HEC HJRS categories for Pakistani researchers) faces little competition.
- Service pages sit inside the explainer cluster, so AI citations land next to the commercial offer rather than away from it.

Evidence

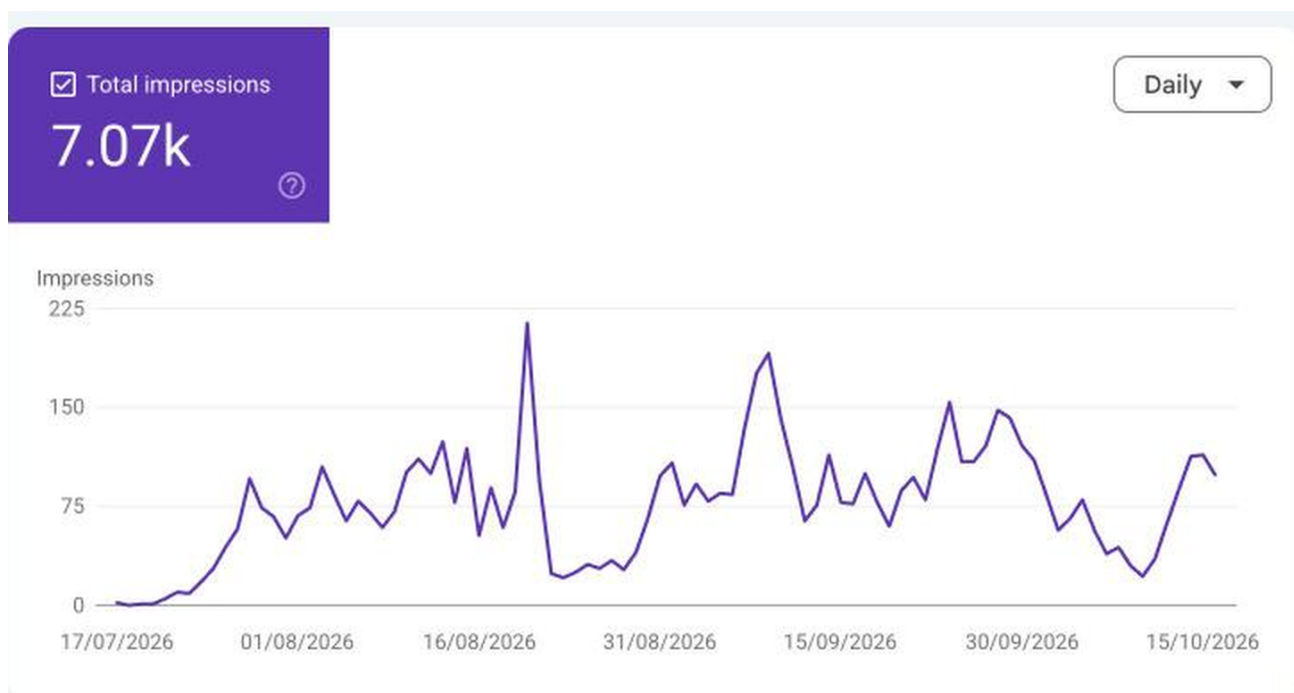
Verified results — Google Search Console



Google Search performance, last 3 months: 520 clicks, 80.1k impressions and an average position of 9.3.



Page indexing: indexed pages (green) grew to 556.



Google generative AI features: 7.07k impressions in three months.

All figures come directly from the client's Google Search Console account (search and AI data as of 16 Oct 2026; page indexing as of 12 Oct 2026). AI-answer impressions are from Search Console's Generative AI features report.