

UNSCRIPTED SEO PODCAST

Ranking #1 Isn't the #1 Click Anymore

Bootstrapped SaaS, AI Overviews & the new rules of link building

Christopher Gimmer — Snappa & GoodMetrics

A companion guide · with host Jeremy Rivera



THE CONVERSATION

Ideas worth stealing from Christopher Gimmer

Christopher Gimmer has spent a decade building bootstrapped SaaS — Snappa, the graphic-design tool for non-designers, and more recently GoodMetrics, a cookieless alternative to Google Analytics. Because he has been in the trenches that long, his story is a rare before-and-after of what has happened to organic search. This companion guide distills the episode into the ideas most worth stealing.

“Even if you’re ranking number one, the AI Overviews are answering some of those things — and so we’re losing out on some of those clicks.”

— Christopher Gimmer

IDEA #1

Distribution beats the product at launch

Snappa's early growth was not a growth-hacking masterclass — it was inherited distribution. Years before Snappa existed, Christopher wrote a post about where to find free stock photos, right as the Unsplash / Pexels / CCo movement was taking off. It went viral on StumbleUpon and ranked #1 in Google, and he parlayed that into his own free stock photo site, StockSnap.

So when Snappa launched in 2015, the audience already existed. Roughly 95% of early signups came from that one post and StockSnap — about \$2–4K MRR in month one and \$10K MRR within six months. The lesson: build distribution before you build the product. The post was the moat.

IDEA #2

A #1 ranking is no longer the #1 click

A decade of domain authority hasn't stopped the bleed. AI Overviews now answer many queries directly, and on commercial terms four paid links can sit above the fold — pushing a #1 organic result to the fifth link on the page (eighth if you rank third). The rank didn't change; the value of the rank did.

Report the click and the conversion, not the raw position. If you show a client a rank without the context of how many paid units, AI Overviews, and SERP features stack above it, you're telling a story that's technically true and practically misleading.

IDEA #3

Snappa's AI-first pivot

When the tool you built for a decade suddenly competes with a prompt box, you rebuild. New image models finally handle text and complex, multi-layer graphics, so Snappa is moving from a drag-and-drop editor to an AI-first design tool — keeping the classic editor as a legacy option and staying model-agnostic (GPT is best today, but they can swap). Protect your existing customers and build the new thing in parallel.

IDEA #4

GoodMetrics: simpler, cookieless analytics

Born from GA4 frustration, GoodMetrics keeps one concept — the “event,” with an optional value or property — instead of events, conversions, and goals. It’s cookieless: an anonymized IP + user-agent “visitor signature” recognizes returning visitors without a single consent banner. A new API and MCP server even let you query your analytics through Claude or ChatGPT.

“People are more willing and likely to link out to a really good tool that actually solves a problem versus yet another blog post with a wall of text.”

— Christopher Gimmer

IDEA #5

Agent traffic — the robots have wallets

The most provocative thread: what counts as a visitor now? If you tell your agent to read every article on a site and summarize it, is that a bot to filter out or a visitor to count? For twenty years the instinct was to scrub bots. But agent-to-agent commerce is already happening in the hundreds-of-thousands-of-dollars range and climbing.

“Ten years ago I didn’t want to know what the bots were doing. But now that these robots might be walking around with wallets, now I’m interested.”

— Jeremy Rivera

Cookieless analytics with an MCP server puts GoodMetrics in a strong position to surface that layer instead of hiding it.

IDEA #6

Being a real product is an authority signal

“Distance to seed” describes Google trusting sites by how few hops they sit from recognized authority seeds in a niche — Kevin Bacon for backlinks. The working hypothesis: a long-standing SaaS product is itself a seed. Pure content sites got hit hard over the last couple of years while real products held up — arguably what the Helpful Content Update was reaching for all along. If you sell something real, your information carries more trust.

THE PLAYBOOK IS BREAKING

So what still works?

- Comprehensive docs and landing pages so LLMs can cite you accurately
- Free, interactive tools over the blogging treadmill
- IRL and podcast-centric link building — co-marketing over cold email
- Building your own audience and community — Google isn't giving traffic away

RECAP

Five things to steal

- Build distribution before you build the product.
- Report the click and conversion, not the raw rank.
- Ship tools people use, not just posts they read.
- Be a product, not a content site — it's an authority signal.
- Start surfacing agent traffic — the bots have wallets now.

CONNECT

Links & resources

Listen to the full episode:

unscriptedseo.com/christopher-gimmer-bootstrapped-saas-ai-overviews

Snappa — AI-first graphic design · snappa.com

GoodMetrics — cookieless analytics · goodmetrics.io

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