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The Geography of Storage Anxiety: A Cross-Source Analysis of Search Demand and Engagement Intensity for Mobile Storage Management Across 30 Countries

Cleanor Labs Research Team
Cleanor Research Labs · Correspondence: hello@cleanor.app

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ABSTRACT

The United States generates more than half of all searches for storage and cleanup help — but people in Malaysia, Indonesia, India and Brazil are **four to six times more likely to actually click through**. Where phones are cheaper and storage is tighter, a full device is not an annoyance — it is an urgent problem.

Keywords: phone storage searches by country, storage anxiety statistics, global phone storage data, emerging markets phone storage, storage search data 2026, most storage anxious country, phone storage searches per capita

KEY FINDINGS

- We mapped **117,319 Google searches** for storage and cleanup help across 90 days by country and device (Cleanor's full Search Console, Mar–Jun 2026).
- **The US is 52% of search volume**, followed by the UK (11%), Canada, India and Germany.
- **Emerging markets engage far more:** Malaysia (1.01% CTR), Indonesia (0.92%), India (0.67%) and Brazil (0.65%) click **4–6× more than the US (0.17%)** — budget phones with tight storage make the problem urgent.
- **The US leads on raw volume but not per head.** Cross-checked against Google's actual search-volume data (Keyword Planner, a fixed basket of storage queries across 30 countries), the demand map holds — it correlates with our own footprint very tightly (the statistician's r = 0.98, where 1.0 would be a perfect match). Yet per million internet users, **Australia (322), Singapore (275) and the UK (262) are more storage-anxious than the US (166)**.
- **68% of these searches happen on desktop, 31% on mobile** — but mobile searches rank nearly twice as well and earn more clicks, a sign people increasingly search from the phone that is actually full.

1. Why this matters

"Storage full" is one of the most quietly universal frustrations in modern computing, but it is not felt evenly. A flagship phone with 256 GB and an unlimited cloud plan treats a storage warning as a momentary nudge; a 32–64 GB budget Android on a metered connection (one where mobile data is capped and every megabyte counts) treats the same warning as a wall. Understanding *where* the pressure is greatest — and where people are most ready to act on it — tells us who actually needs an on-device, no-upload cleanup tool, and where the easy assumption ("the biggest market is the most desperate market") quietly breaks down.

This study separates two things that usually get conflated: **raw volume** (how many searches a country produces) and **intensity** (how much a given person searches, and how readily they click). Raw volume tracks population and language; intensity tracks lived constraint. Keeping them apart is the difference between "Americans search the most" (true, and unsurprising) and "the average Australian is more storage-anxious than the average American" (also true, and far more useful).

2. Where storage searches come from

Ranked by search volume (share of impressions):

Country	Share of search volume	Click-through rate
United States	52.0%	0.17%
United Kingdom	10.6%	0.31%
Canada	5.9%	0.41%
India	5.4%	0.67%
Germany	3.8%	0.43%
Australia	3.2%	0.42%
Philippines	2.3%	0.33%
Netherlands	1.9%	0.74%
Brazil	1.4%	0.65%

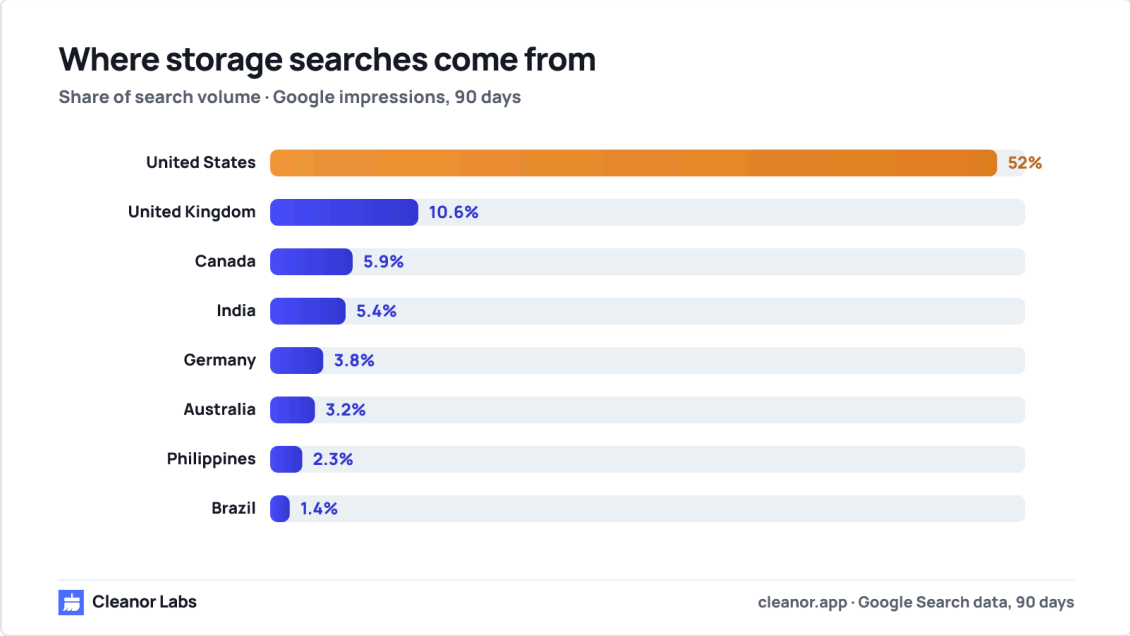

Figure 1. Country share of storage-help searches: United States 52%, United Kingdom 11%, Canada, India, Germany lead by volume.

English-speaking, high-income markets dominate raw volume — partly a reflection of where English-language guides surface. But volume only tells half the story.

3. The engagement gap: emerging markets click most

Look at click-through rate instead of volume and the map flips. People in markets where budget Android phones with 32–64 GB are the norm don't just search — they act on the result:

Market	Click-through rate	vs. United States
Malaysia	1.01%	5.9×
Indonesia	0.92%	5.4×
India	0.67%	3.9×
Brazil	0.65%	3.8×
United States	0.17%	1×

Figure 2. Click-through rate by market: Malaysia 1.01%, Indonesia 0.92%, India 0.67%, Brazil 0.65% — 4 to 6 times the US rate of 0.17%.

The pattern is consistent: where storage is scarce and devices are cheaper, "storage full" is a real blocker — not a minor irritation you scroll past. These users are the most motivated to find and use a fix.

Read this gap carefully. A low US CTR alongside enormous US volume does not mean Americans don't care. The most likely explanation is one of *search mix*: the US sends a huge number of broad, early-stage queries — people casually browsing rather than urgently fixing — so even a small clicking minority looks low as a percentage. A high Malaysian or Indonesian CTR on a smaller base probably means a larger fraction of those searchers are at the *acute* moment, with the device full now and the answer wanted now. We can't prove that intent directly from this dataset — CTR is a proxy for urgency, not a measurement of it — but the consistency of the pattern across budget-phone markets makes it the natural reading. Intensity, not just incidence, is what the engagement gap appears to capture.

4. Cross-checked against real search volume

Search Console impressions tell us where *our* guides appear — that is, it is **first-party data**: numbers measured on our own website, not bought from a third party or modelled. To test that against the wider market, we pulled Google's actual monthly search volume (Keyword Planner) for a fixed basket of 15 storage queries — "free up iPhone storage", "delete duplicate photos", "phone storage full" and similar — across 30 countries. The two datasets line up almost exactly: real search demand and our impression footprint correlate at **r = 0.98** (a correlation coefficient runs from 0 for "no relationship" to 1.0 for "move in perfect lockstep", so 0.98 is an extremely tight match). In plain terms, our content already surfaces in close proportion to where the world actually searches.

That correlation matters for trust. A first-party footprint could, in principle, just reflect *our own* ranking quirks — the countries where our pages happen to rank, rather than where demand truly is. The r = 0.98 agreement with an independent, query-level demand source (Keyword Planner) means the two are measuring substantially the same underlying thing: genuine storage-help demand. When two different instruments agree this closely across the same set of countries, the shared signal is far more credible than either alone.

By absolute volume the ranking is familiar — the United States dwarfs everyone at roughly **51,700 searches a month** for this basket, followed by the UK (17,300), India (8,900), Australia (8,100) and Canada (6,100). But raw size hides intensity. Normalise by the number of internet users in each country and a different leader emerges.

4.1 Who's most storage-anxious, per person

Country	Storage searches per million internet users
Australia	322
Singapore	275
United Kingdom	262
Canada	168
United States	166
Sweden	83
Malaysia	82
Netherlands	54

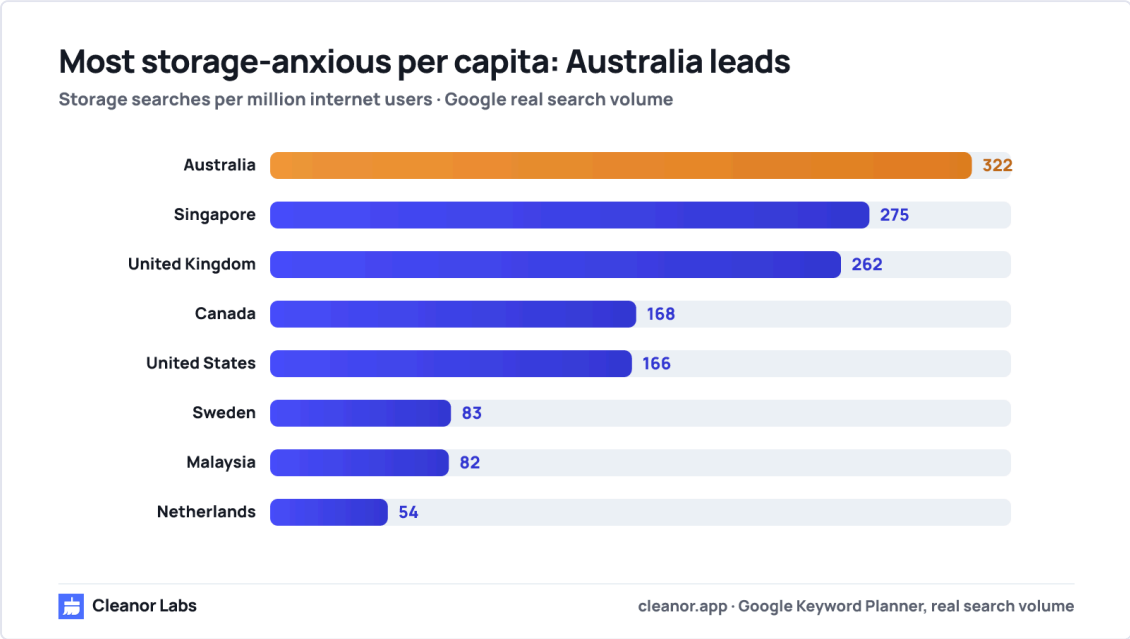

Figure 3. Storage searches per million internet users: Australia 322, Singapore 275, United Kingdom 262 all rank above the United States at 166 — the US leads on raw volume but not per head.

Per head of online population, **Australians search for storage help nearly twice as often as Americans**, with Singapore and the UK close behind. The US wins on raw scale because it has the most people online — not because the average American worries about storage more than the average Australian. (This basket is English-language, so the per-capita ranking favours countries where people search in English; it measures the English-speaking storage demand our guides can actually serve, not every local-language query.)

5. Desktop or the phone that's full?

Device	Share of searches	Click-through	Avg. position
Desktop	68%	0.37%	30.7
Mobile	31%	0.53%	16.7
Tablet	1%	0.32%	30.4

Two-thirds of searches still happen on a desktop — people researching a storage problem on a computer. But mobile searches **rank almost twice as high and click 40% more often**, which suggests the most valuable moment is when someone searches *from the full phone itself*, ready to act immediately. The average-position gap (16.7 on mobile vs. 30.7 on desktop) is itself part of the story. We can't see the queries behind each device from this data, but a plausible reading is that mobile storage searches tend to be more specific and more action-oriented, so our guides surface higher — and the searcher, already standing in front of the problem, is more likely to click.

6. What it means

Storage pressure is global, and it is sharpest exactly where on-device, no-upload cleanup matters most: budget phones, tight storage, and often slower or metered (data-capped) connections where uploading photos to "clean" them is not an option.

Cleanor is built for that reality — every scan and cleanup runs **on the device**, with no uploads, so it works on a full phone with a weak connection just as well as on a flagship. Free on the App Store; Android edition in review. (See also our breakdowns of what actually fills up phones and the apps people blame most, and the real cost of compressing photos.)

7. Methodology

7.1 Data sources

This study draws on two independent first-party datasets, deliberately combined so each checks the other:

1. **Google Search Console** for cleanor.app's storage and cleanup guides, covering **March 16 – June 14, 2026** (a 90-day window). This is our own property's measured search performance — the impressions and clicks Google recorded for our pages, broken out by country and by device.
2. **Google Ads Keyword Planner** historical metrics (12-month average monthly searches) for a fixed basket of 15 English storage queries across 30 countries — an independent, market-wide view of demand that does not depend on our own rankings.

7.2 What the metrics mean, in plain language

- **Impression** — one instance of our guide appearing in someone's search results. We treat impressions as a proxy for *demand*: how often people in a country ran a query that our storage content was eligible to answer. It is a stable relative signal, not a literal count of every storage search in the world.
- **CTR (click-through rate)** — clicks ÷ impressions. It measures how readily searchers who *saw* a result chose to click it — our proxy for intent and urgency. (To be precise, we measure clicks, not downstream conversions; when we say a market "engages more", we mean more of its searchers clicked.)
- **Share** — a country's (or device's) impressions as a percentage of the total. "The US is 52% of search volume" means 52% of all impressions in this dataset came from US searches.
- **Average position** — the mean ranking slot our guides occupied when they appeared; lower is better (position 1 is the top result).
- **Searches per million internet users** — Keyword-Planner monthly search volume for the basket, divided by each country's online population — our per-capita *intensity* measure, which strips out the effect of country size.

7.3 How the figures were derived

The country analysis covers **117,319 impressions** across the top reporting countries; the device split uses the full impression set. Country and device shares are each segment's impressions divided by the total; CTRs are that segment's clicks divided by its impressions. The "vs. United States" multipliers in the engagement table are each market's CTR divided by the US CTR (0.17%).

For the cross-check, we held a single fixed basket of 15 English storage queries (e.g. "free up iPhone storage", "delete duplicate photos", "phone storage full") and pulled Keyword Planner's 12-month average monthly search volume for that basket in each of 30 countries. Absolute volumes are the basket totals per country. Per-capita intensity normalises those totals by internet-user population (DataReportal / ITU 2024, approximate). The **r = 0.98** figure is the Pearson correlation — the standard measure of how tightly two sets of numbers track each other — between that real search volume and our Search Console impressions across the same set of countries.

7.4 Honest limitations

- **Impressions are a demand proxy, not a census.** They reflect how often *our* guides were eligible to appear, which depends on our rankings as well as on underlying demand. The r = 0.98 agreement with Keyword Planner is reassuring precisely because it tests this — but it does not eliminate the dependence.
- **First-party footprint.** The Search Console data is shaped by where Cleanor's own content surfaces. A country where we rank poorly will be under-represented relative to its true demand.
- **English-language bias.** Both the Search Console guides and the Keyword Planner basket are English. The per-capita ranking therefore favours countries where people search in English, and undercounts large non-English-speaking markets. This is a measure of the *English-speaking* storage demand we can actually serve — not of every local-language query worldwide.
- **Small-sample CTRs are noisier.** The lowest-volume markets carry fewer impressions, so a CTR like Malaysia's 1.01% or the Netherlands' 0.74% sits on a smaller base and can swing more than a high-volume figure. The 4–6× engagement gap is large enough to survive that noise, but the precise decimal for any single small market should be read as indicative rather than exact.
- **Approximate normalisation.** Per-capita figures depend on internet-user population estimates (2024, approximate); small differences between countries near the same value should not be over-interpreted.
- **Interpretation vs. measurement.** Some readings here — that low US CTR reflects broad browsing rather than acute need, or that mobile queries skew more action-oriented — are reasonable inferences from the share-and-position patterns, not query-level findings. The dataset has no intent or funnel-stage labels, so we flag these as interpretation.

7.5 Reproduce / data & methods

To repeat this approach in principle: (1) in Google Search Console, export a 90-day window for the relevant set of stor-

age/cleanup pages and read off the Countries and Devices reports — impressions, clicks, CTR and average position come straight from those tabs; compute shares and CTR ratios from the exported totals. (2) In Google Ads Keyword Planner, define one fixed basket of storage queries, request 12-month average monthly searches for each target country, then divide each country's basket total by its internet-user population (any standard 2024 source) to get per-capita intensity. (3) Correlate the per-country Keyword-Planner volumes against the per-country Search Console impressions across the overlapping set of countries to reproduce the r = 0.98 cross-check. Holding the query basket and the date window fixed is what makes the country-to-country comparison fair. Cite freely with a link to this page.

8. FAQ

8.1 Which country searches the most about phone storage?

In our data, the United States accounts for about 52% of searches for storage and cleanup help, followed by the United Kingdom (11%), Canada, India and Germany. However, this partly reflects English-language content; by click-through rate, emerging markets like Malaysia, Indonesia and India engage far more.

8.2 Which country is most storage-anxious per person?

Per million internet users, Australia tops the index at 322 storage-related searches a month, ahead of Singapore (275) and the United Kingdom (262) — all higher than the United States (166). The US generates the most searches in absolute terms only because it has the largest online population. This per-capita view uses Google Keyword Planner search volume for a fixed basket of English storage queries across 30 countries.

8.3 Why do people in emerging markets click more on storage guides?

Budget Android phones with 32–64 GB of storage are common in these markets, so a full device is a genuine, recurring blocker rather than a minor annoyance. Our data shows Malaysia, Indonesia, India and Brazil click 4–6× more often than the US on storage and cleanup results.

8.4 Do people search about storage on their phone or a computer?

About 68% of these searches happen on desktop and 31% on mobile in our data. But mobile searches rank nearly twice as well and click more often — the highest-intent moment is usually when someone searches directly from the phone that is out of space.

8.5 Why does the US have the lowest click-through rate but the highest volume?

The two measure different things. Volume tracks the size of a country's online population; CTR tracks how readily the people who see a result click it. The US produces a huge number of impressions, and the most likely explanation for its low 0.17% click rate is that many of those are broad, early-stage queries from people browsing rather than fixing — so even though raw demand is the largest, the clicking share is small. Markets where storage is genuinely scarce convert a larger share of their (smaller) impressions into clicks. We infer this search-mix difference from the data; the dataset itself does not label query intent.

8.6 How reliable is impression data as a measure of demand?

Impressions are a proxy, not a literal count of every storage search. They reflect how often our own guides were eligible to appear, which depends partly on our rankings. We test this by cross-checking against Google Keyword Planner's independent search-volume data: the two correlate at r = 0.98 across countries, which means our impression footprint closely tracks real demand rather than just our own ranking quirks.

8.7 How was this data collected?

From two sources: Cleanor's Google Search Console account (117,319 search impressions across the storage and cleanup guides on cleanor.app between March 16 and June 14, 2026, by country and device), and Google Ads Keyword Planner real search volume for a fixed basket of 15 storage queries across 30 countries.

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