Google: BERT now used on almost every English query

BERT powers almost every single English based query done on Google Search, the company said during its virtual Search on 2020 event Thursday. That's up from just 10% of English queries when Google first announced the use of the BERT algorithm in Search last October.

In December 2019, Google expanded the use of BERT to over 70 languages.

Note, this wouldn't impact a site's ranking exactly. SEOs cannot optimize for BERT per se. Instead, BERT is designed to improve the relevancy of search results by better understanding the content on web pages.

To learn more about how the algorithm works, see our deep dive on Google BERT.

Google also explained that it has improved results on "specific searches" by 7%. Google did this through different AI and machine learning techniques. Google said it is also improving search results and answers on more "broader searches."

More search updates. Here is a quick summary of what Google announced:

- New advancements in language understanding with AI include a new spelling algorithm, the ability to index specific individual passages from web pages and new techniques to help people find a wider range of results.
- Google Maps updates include an expansion of live 'busyness' information and details about business' COVID-19 related health and safety precautions. In the near future, users will be able to find information

about a restaurant, store or business in Live View using AR.

- Users can use the mic icon in the Google search bar or the Assistant to ask “what’s this song?” or “search a song.” Then they can start humming for 10-15 seconds to get results for the song.
- New Lens and AR features in Google Search to discover (and even style) products as users browse online. With augmented reality, Google is enabling users to feel experience retail showrooms virtually.
- Finally, Duplex technology is now calling businesses to automatically update handy details like store hours and takeout options on Search and Maps. This year, Google said, Duplex has been used to make more than 3 million updates to businesses like pharmacies, restaurants and grocery stores that have been seen over 20 billion times in Maps and Search.

Read our deeper analysis of the key updates:

How Google indexes passages of a page and what it means for SEO

Google Search gets deeper into the ‘real-world’ with Busyness, Duplex and AR in Maps

Here are some tweets explaining some of these updates.

> *From helping you with the right spelling in milliseconds to finding that exact passage in a webpage or moment in a video, Google Search uses AI to get just what you’re looking for. #SearchOn pic.twitter.com/gbYYMrIggM*
>
> *— Google (@Google) October 15, 2020*

> *1 in 10 search queries are misspelled in Google Searches. Soon, a new change will help us at Google make a greater improvement in detecting & dealing with spelling mistakes*

> *than we've been able to do over the past five years. #SearchOn pic.twitter.com/5Lq4frWh8Y*
>
> *— Danny Sullivan (@dannysullivan) October 15, 2020*

> *Search On 2020: Whoa. Google can index passages of a webpage vs. the whole page. New algo can zoom into a passage that answers a question and ignores the rest of the page. Starting next month. pic.twitter.com/oRwBS7DOIm*
>
> *— Glenn Gabe (@glenngabe) October 15, 2020*

Google also showed off the "in this video" feature and how it will be expanded:

> *Using AI, we're better able to detect key parts of videos and help people jump directly into the right moments without creators having to manually tag them. By the end of the year, 10% of Google Searches will use this technology. #SearchOn pic.twitter.com/Kf3pyxYMz7*
>
> *— Danny Sullivan (@dannysullivan) October 15, 2020*

Google also added the ability to "hum to search" so you can find that song stuck in your head. Google said people search 100 million times per month to detect a song.

Here is the full announcement and also the video to watch the event.

[embedded content]

Why we care. Here are some things you, as SEOs and marketers, can work on to get more relevant traffic to your site. Some of these new features may drive more traffic to your site. Some you need to optimize for, and some you just might benefit from without doing anything to your site.

For the searcher, these mostly seem like big wins.

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