How voice queries are showing up in search data

The rise of voice search is no secret, and many companies are still wondering how to address it. When it comes to search data, how can we monitor which queries are from voice? In this article, Jason Tabeling shows how he finds insights into voice search from his own company's data.

Alpine.AI estimates that there will be more than 1 billion voice searches completed in 2018.

At this point I'm sure that everyone has seen or done a voice search, even if you just saw an example in a Google Home or Amazon Alexa ad. The power of what can be completed with a voice command is growing by the day. This trend is already having a massive impact on consumer behavior and therefore needs to be a consideration when monitoring or optimizing our search accounts.

Right now Google doesn't provide specific information on how a search was started. For example, was it a Google home search, from the app, done via typing or voice.

However, I wanted to take a recent dive into our own search data from our company, BrandMuscle. I used Google Ads client data across all verticals, comparing the first nine months of last year with this year, dates 1/1/17-9/30/17 versus 1/1/18 – 9/30/18.

The data revealed some interesting trends that give insight into how voice searches might be showing up in the data we currently have available.

Looking at the length and type of queries

To start, I looked at the length of search queries. The

thought is with voice search consumers are using a more natural language. So instead of searching for “car insurance” consumers might search for “cheapest car insurance for Toyota Camry.” Our data shows the average number of words in each query has increased for both mobile and desktop queries year over year. Desktop queries are up 7% year over year to 4.3 words per query. Mobile has increased 9% year over year to 4.14 words per query. With mobile increasing more rapidly I think this shows the impact voice is having, as well as larger devices enabling consumers to input longer queries.

The other area I wanted to dig into was what types of search queries are consumers using. I think voice search has brought an increase of consumers asking questions in a more natural language. Therefore I looked into question modifiers like who, what, where, when, why, and how. The use of these terms indicate more conversational tones. Our data has shown an increase in these terms of 118%, and a majority of that change coming on mobile phones which is up 178%.

So what actions should you take with the increase in voice search? Here are 3 considerations:

1. Build experiences for question based queries

One of the reasons why search is such a great marketing tactic is consumers are giving you specific clues as to what they want. This is even more true when a question modifier is included. For example the implications behind what type of information a consumer is looking for when they are searching for “Where” + Running Shoes vs. “What” + Running Shoes is very important. “Where” would indicate the consumer wants map or location information, where “what” indicates more research based content is needed. Having ad copy and landing page experiences that meet these specific demands will help increase conversion rates.

2. Monitor your search query data

Some of you might be reading these and questioning if this data matches your own search accounts. I bet it’s directionally correct, but might vary significantly. The only way to know is to dig into your own data. See what insights you can derive. Are any queries that your ad appeared where it should not have? This should be a part of regular account maintenance as you update match types and negatives.

3. Test voice queries that are important to your business

Putting yourself into the shoes of one of your customers is still a very helpful lens for account managers. We often take our eyes off what the consumer experience is considering how

much focus and attention we put into the details of a good search program. However, sometimes it’s just as simple as seeing what the search query results look like as a consumer. Try a search on Google Home. Does it provide an answer? Is it an answer that was taken from your organic listing? What opportunities can you uncover with this information?

Voice search is having a major impact on our lives as consumers and marketers. This change is happening quickly and will continue to evolve as the technology continuously gets better and better. Following a few of these quick tips to keep an eye on your data will be very helpful to staying ahead of this trend.

https://searchenginewatch.com/how-voice-queries-show-up-search-data