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What can we learn from voice search in 2018?

A study by HigherVisibility on voice search over the past few years has revealed some interesting trends in the industry.

Dubbed *How Popular Is Voice Search?*, the 2018 study is a follow up to the first one that was done the previous year.

According to the study, the number of mobile users who trusted the accuracy of voice search dropped from 87% in 2017 to 82% in 2018.

Additionally, while up to 53% of the respondents admitted to using voice search while driving in 2017, that number dropped to 35% in 2018.

These are just some of the many surprising findings by the study that suggests a declining use of voice search, loss of trust in voice assistants, increasing adoption of voice search by the older generations and a lot more.

While certain studies (especially those done with more accuracy) might show a rather depressing look of the industry, at the end of the day there is a guaranteed silver lining: We get a better understanding of voice search usage.

2018 gave us a lot of lessons that can be applied going forward to ensure you make smarter marketing decisions.

Here are three valuable lessons from voice search in 2018:

1. ## Very often, voice search is local

An April 2018 study done by Brightlocal revealed that often when people use voice search, the searches are local. In the survey, of the 1,012 US customers who participated, 58% had used voice search on a smartphone to find information about a local business in the previous 12 months. Of the voice search users, 46% said they searched local business information on a daily basis.

This frequent application of voice search in finding local business information shows how important this trend can be for a brick-and-mortar business. At every point in their journey,

the buyer needs access to information that can help them make quicker and more sound decisions. It’s important to improve your business standing in the local search environment by providing relevant information when the buyer needs it most.

As you make the content relevant for the user, remember also to brush up on your SEO so search engines can find it. Apart from making sure the content on your website is relevant and optimized for the search queries you want to rank for, manage your online reputation by making sure people are saying positive things about your business and all concerns are addressed.

2. Domain authority trumps page authority

Domain authority is a hint to search engines as to how trusted your website is as a source of information. It also determines how high you rank for certain keywords, making it an important part of SEO.

When doing a text search on their mobile or PC, users are presented with a list of results, complete with snippets so they can quickly filter through the list. This makes getting traffic from the SERP much easier than on voice search.

With voice search, the user doesn’t get to scroll. They ask a complete question like “where can I get a plumber near me?” and get an answer as opposed to text search where the query would probably be like “best plumber Lagos.”

As Backlinko points out, “Google needs to be *extremely* confident that they are giving you accurate information.” Therefore, domain authority becomes a strong signal for reliable information.

According to Backlinko, the average Domain Rating for a voice search result is 76.8. This is quite a high bar.

3. Mobile voice search losing ground to smart speaker search

It wasn’t too long ago when mobile voice search was as shiny as voice-controlled smart speakers are. Google Assistant, Siri and Cortana received localized queries like “Siri, show me an Indian restaurant near me” and they gave answers to the best of their ability.

Brands were kept on alert about this new way of searching and they started preparing to serve those consumers who wanted their answers right when they needed them – “in the moment searches.” The future of voice search was going to be mobile and local.

But since 2016 when Google’s Sundar Pichai gave the statement that 20% of all searches “made on Google app and on Android” “in the US” were voice queries, the search giant has kept mum on the mobile voice search statistics. This leads to a common concern: Is the mobile voice search fire still burning?

Verto Analytics released data that indicates mobile voice search is losing ground to smart-speaker search. According to the data, usage and engagement with Siri declined between 2016 and 2017, the same period during which Alexa’s usage skyrocketed.

However, this isn’t to say mobile voice search is too low to optimize for. Mobile search has advantages that smart-speaker search can’t easily cover for right away. For instance, while smart speakers are conveniently located in specific rooms, smartphones are everywhere inside and out, increasing the chances of mobile voice search. The mentioned Brightlocal study shows not just the influence of voice search on local businesses but also the dominance of mobile voice search.

Conclusion

There is no doubt that the use of voice search will only become more popular over time. Many experts and studies predict a significant increase in adoption by as early as 2020. Aside from the expert predictions, the convenience if voice search is enough to make me root for the technology.

By knowing who’s using voice technology and how they are using it, smart marketers can allocate more appropriate portions of their budget to voice search optimization. These lessons show exactly that.

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The post What can we learn from voice search in 2018? appeared first on Search Engine Watch.

https://searchenginewatch.com/what-we-can-learn-from-voice-search-2018/2019/02/25/119934/

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