

Top eight SEO trends for 2020

As new businesses spring up each day, the competition for the reader's attention heightens. Staying on top of the latest SEO trends will enable you to meet specific requirements that search engines use to rank websites.

Google makes hundreds of changes to its search algorithms every year. While most changes are minor, they could affect your search ranking. These are some of the SEO trends I expect to see in 2020.

1. Voice search: People search how they speak

"Google, can you find the nearest taco place near me?"

There were 33 million voice search queries in 2017 alone. Data from March 2019 shows that 20% of mobile queries are voice searches.

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As voice search becomes increasingly popular, more people will type search queries the same way they speak.

Notice that most of these search queries are long-tail and very specific? Users want an accurate answer to the exact question they asked.

Users who search long-tail keywords are in the consideration stage and are more likely to convert than someone in the awareness stage.

Bullet lists Increase your chances of ranking for voice queries, and most voice queries are local. Hence, optimize your website for local SEO.

2. Featured snippets will continue to dominate search results

A featured snippet is a summary of an answer to a search query. Google displays it at the top of the SERP result, above paid and organic ads.

They've been around for a few years and have led to significant changes in Google's search engine result page. Almost half of all searches result in no clicks because users get the answers they need directly from SERPs. In fact, an Ahref study of 2 million featured snippets revealed that featured snippet gets more traffic than the first organic search result.

Aim for question-based search queries and keywords. Use questions from the "people also ask" section as it offers insight on related questions for a more in-depth answer.

3. More marketers will leverage influencers for SEO

17% of businesses spent over half of their entire marketing budget on influencers. The statistics highlight the importance of influencer marketing for companies, especially those in fashion, beauty, ecommerce, travel, and lifestyle.

Online users are overwhelmed with ads. They are looking for authentic information they can trust. Most times, the source

of that information are reviews from influencers. They are more likely to trust information from an influencer than an ad.

So, what's the relationship between influencer marketing and SEO? Working with an influencer helps you generate traffic, increase your online visibility and amplify your content reach.

Many companies do not see the return on their investment in influencer marketing because they don't plan or execute their sponsored content properly. Your marketing fails if it doesn't align with the needs of your audience.

To get the most bang for your buck, partner with influencers in your niche who already engage with your target audience. The backlinks you gain from influencer sites also show authority to Google and enhances your SEO efforts.

4. BERT is here to stay

BERT (Bidirectional Encoder Representations from Transformers) enables anyone to train their own question answering system. This is the first major change Google has made to its search algorithm since RankBrain in 2014.

BERT will impact one in ten queries. SEO marketers who apply BERT models increase their chances of ranking on the first page for featured snippets in Google SERP.

BERT will have the most impact on conversational queries where prepositions like "to" and "for" matter to the meaning of the search query.

Just to clarify, you can't optimize for BERT. Google uses BERT to improve its understanding of natural language.

But you can optimize for the intent behind search queries because intent matching is crucial to creating successful

content.

Before writing copy, analyze the top ten content ranking on the first page of SERP for that specific keyword. Is the result informational, transactional or navigational? Create content that matches the user's intent based on your analysis.

5. People will want digital experiences

44% of companies have moved to a digital-first approach to improve customer experience. Whereas, 56% of CEOs said the improvements led to revenue growth.

Page load speed is an important ranking factor. Great content means nothing if your web page doesn't load quickly or you have a complex user interface.

Successful businesses understand that building a long-term relationship with customers hinges on customer experience, and customer experience invariably affects search ranking because only users who have a good user experience will spend time on your website.

Focus your user experience on helping customers find the information they need. Make it easy for visitors to proceed to the next step.

To provide the best user experience, you'll need to wear the visitor's shoes to identify roadblocks that cause poor experiences. Do not use complex words they do not understand. Lack of clarity in your messaging also increases the bounce rate and negatively impacts your site's SEO.

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6. Video will be the new king of content

Google loves video. It's a crucial part of your SEO strategy and digital marketing efforts. According to a Forrester Research, video is 50 times more likely to show up on the first page of SERP than a web page with plain text. Also, 62% of Google universal searches include video.

Create helpful YouTube videos that support existing content on your website. It's not a guarantee for first page results but you'll enjoy higher traffic when Google indexes your video.

Embed videos on your website to get more traffic. Remember to optimize your video to your blog's width. Add copy on the page to help Google understand what your video content is about.

7. Content length will determine search rankings

Only high-quality content can help you beat the competition to page 1 ranking. But you will also have to consider quantity alongside quality.

There's a lot of arguments around the ideal length of a blog post. Research shows that the average length of the top 10 results is at least 2,000 words. That's because web pages with long-form, high-quality content enjoy more visibility.

However, your content must comprehensively answer the question the user asked as well as questions related to the main search query.

Lengthy articles increase dwell time, which tells Google that

users enjoy your content. You build authority and Google increases your ranking for the search query.

8. Mobile search will continue to take over

87% of internet users are on mobile phones and 40% of transactions occur on mobile. Google moved to mobile-first indexing on the 1st of July 2019 to improve the mobile search experience.

You can't get far on search engine results if you haven't optimized for mobile. Think beyond responsive designs to rich snippets.

If you've optimized for voice search, you've also optimized for mobile. Besides incorporating long-tail keywords for on-page SEO, modify the content structure and representation for technical SEO.

Conclusion

Just when you think you fully understand SEO, algorithm updates happen. Today's SEO is a holistic process that requires both offline and online marketing strategies to succeed. Invest in SEO as a long-term strategy for lead generation and stay on top of the latest SEO trends to avoid getting left behind.

Would you like to add to this list of SEO trends in 2020? Drop them in the comments.

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