Wrapping up 2021 with our top 10!

30-second summary:

- 12 months, several curveballs, and some masterstrokes
- If you missed out, today is a great day to look through the Search Engine Watch lens for the year gone by
- Key themes that were front of mind in 2021 – Google’s updates, cookie death counter-strategies, mastering customer experience elements, trust-building, and alternatives for search marketing and ranking

As the world, people, and of course businesses motored through a year of uncertainties – these crackers of articles gave your strategies an unfair advantage.

You asked, “What is Page Experience, anyway? Do we really need to have an overflowing to-do list?” – and we answered everything around this enigma. This piece touched upon every aspect, angle, and action point that SEOs needed to know.

The ad tech and search industry continued to remain precarious that Google will use the cookie deprecation as a new way to establish market dominance to feed its own interests. Google expert, Susan Dolan drew from her rich experience and detailed realities of the search scape. She also shared insights and predicted future key themes that rose out of the 3p cookie death.

As the industry bid farewell to BERT, Google’s Multitask Unified Model (MUM) update in June 2021 opened new search experience dimensions. The cranked-up competition for search visibility between businesses and advertisers – left SEO practitioners and agencies with yet another burning question, “How will we win MUM’s good graces?” Joe Dawson’s comprehensive guide left no stone unturned.

“Kill your darlings”, yes, we said it! Though it sounded outlandish, this piece held wise and valuable advice from best-selling author Joe Pulizzi on why this could be one of the best business decisions you could’ve made in 2021.

Everyone is obsessed with Google, but did you know Reddit is the seventh most popular website in the US while Quora has a DR of 91? This guide shone a light on how your search strategy could take advantage of these platforms with diversification, tap into great brand-building opportunities, and enhance your E-A-T standing.

The third-party cookie still stands at a crucial intersection between digital marketing, SEO, paid media, web design, and several business tangents. The industry needed to think hard and think differently for a contingency plan. SEO pioneer, serial entrepreneur, and best-selling author, Kris Jones

helped weave a tight SEO and search marketing strategy way ahead of 2022. Why? Because a stitch in time saves nine.

The internet continued zigging in a privacy-focused direction as a response to consumers' increasing demand for a transparent, responsible, and ethical outlook towards their data. First-party data became indispensable and consumer trust, invaluable. While the playing field inched closer to the great reset, we revealed some hidden first-party gems every business could use to redesign their search marketing strategies.

The story of SEO and UX began almost 20 years ago with both making a foray into the market in the 1990s. Since then, SEO practitioners saw seasons change and the Page Experience, paired with data analysis finally etched UX as a key ranking factor. Atul Jindal condensed years of his experience working with fortune 50 companies into this SEO guide to help you win at SEO and search experience.

The pandemic didn't let us forget that while every business is unique, budgets too took a hit, making allocation stringent. But why did so many businesses still stick to the "big guns" when allocating spending? Adzooma CEO Rob Wass and Cambridge University's Akanshaa Khare joined forces to challenge this notion. They produced some truly unique insights that would make stakeholders rethink their media spending habits.

Everyone remembers the chaos surrounding the Core Web Vitals in early 2021. SEO folks were keen to get ahead on optimizing their site and Twitter threads were full of speculation. Armed with information, we shared a 28-point checklist on action items to spot, optimize, and embrace the inevitable rollout of these new ranking factors.

Thank you for being valuable supporters throughout our journey. Team Search Engine Watch wishes everyone a happy year-end and an adventurous 2022!

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