



Guide

12 Trends in SEO Part 1



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Search Engine Optimization: don't be fooled, Google knows!

Keeping your site search-friendly is a pretty obvious priority. For years, Search Engine Optimization (SEO) was one of the very best online marketing activities, generating top returns.

You want your content to get the highest possible rankings on the relevant search engine results. That means you are dealing with Google. The search engine giant held an 88.89% market share for desktops, 98.7% for smart phones and 97.53% for tablets.

Building an effective SEO strategy is a challenge that requires useful, compelling and valuable content, user-friendly design, and fast, safe and trusted technology. The days of mediocre content and simple tricks are over for your website. Google can detect them thanks to machine learning algorithms which can outsmart any ruses.

6 trends that will affect your website's ranking in the search engines

1. The basics of Search Engine Optimization: remember to

- Make sure your website complies with the Google Guidelines for Webmasters
- Optimize each page for mobile search
- Make sure the web pages load fast enough (preferably within 1.5 seconds)
- Check that your content is relevant, targeted and simple to read
- Make sure to have keywords in the URL (your website address), the title and the first 100 words of your text
- Use keywords only when relevant and logical for the reader

- Write meta tags for each page: a short paragraph placed in the HTML of a webpage that describes its content
- Make sure outbound links refer to high quality content
- Make sure backlinks come from relevant and high quality sources
- Optimize images and videos for Google
- Check spelling and grammar

2. Natural everyday language

Most searching is optimized for generic high-volume key words or combinations of two search terms. Artificial intelligence helps search engines to better understand the context behind a query. The shift to mobile first and voice search make it increasingly important for search engines to give short and relevant answers, which we call featured snippets. These are explained under trend 3.

In 2016 one in five searches were through speech. Experts predict this figure to grow even higher, up to 50% by 2020. Besides smartphones and tablets, people have more and more smart devices in their homes. Think of Amazon's Echo products and Google Home speakers for example, which are voice-controlled.



Voice search queries are longer and different. On a keyboard, you would typically type key words only when doing a search. With voice search, the search is most often a question or an

entire sentence. A voice search would generally involve more words than a traditional text search. As a result, when performing a regular text search query, rather than just typing keywords, people are now also typing entire sentences.

To keep up with this new trend, SEO needs to adapt. Where previously, you would optimize for keywords, you now increasingly need to optimize for long tail keyword combinations. Optimization needs to address how people perform searches, using daily language and sometimes formulating entire questions and their answers. Google's response to this is featured snippets.

3. Featured Snippets

Google has announced it's new mission: no longer to be just a search engine, but a personal assistant. For any search query, Google's aim is to come up with the answer as fast as possible. If you optimize your content so that Google can recognize it as an answer to the query, your content will rank for Google's featured snippet. A featured snippet is a summary of an answer to a user's query, which is displayed on top of Google search results. The snippet consists of the answer to the query, the page title and its URL. In order to get a snippet, search words and phrases need to be everyday language. Ideally, a page should provide answers to all the queries made by the person searching on the same topic. It's like an FAQ for the content that's on your website. Featured snippets increase the chances of scoring a top rank in Google relatively fast.

Approximately 30 percent of Google results for search queries show featured snippets. In marketing and related fields, optimizing for featured snippets already takes place on a large

scale.

Tip: make your content as natural as possible, as if you were talking. This is a foolproof way to phrase the answers people are looking for. Making an FAQ can really help to optimize for voice search. Just provide answers to questions people would have if they consulted your company.

4. Visual search

Visual search technology is on the rise. Until recently, Google could only understand images by looking at associated text, added by the webmaster. Examples are image file names, alt tags and title attributes.

As the Internet becomes increasingly visual, search engines like Google and Bing and social media networks like Pinterest and Instagram increasingly need to "read" and understand visual content. Earlier this year, Pinterest introduced the Pinterest Lens and AliExpress uses the same app to search for items by images. Tech companies like these invest a great deal in creating and improving their visual search engines.



EXAMPLE OF VISUAL SEARCH

[Link Youtube movie](#)

5. Link building remains vital

From the start SEO, was driven by link building. The difference is that it relies mostly on high quality backlinks for positive influence. In order for a backlink profile to look as natural as possible, it should contain both relevant and irrelevant backlinks. Not all backlinks will actually bear relevance to the topic of your website. Also, there are many different types of backlinks, such as text links, image links and branding links.

Tip: Think of ways to build long-term relationships inside and outside of your network. You may want to approach less relevant parties (which you are working with) for online cooperation. Take a catering or cleaning company, or the printing house. This is how you get an organic and balanced backlink profile.

6. Website usability will always be key

Search engines such as Google like websites that are user-friendly. Search results need to show a website that offers the requested information, is easy to navigate and easy to use. In order to establish whether a site is user-friendly or not, Google takes into account following factors: the speed of the website, whether its content is valuable or not, and how visitors behave. The behavior of visitors to websites is an important indicator for Google of how valuable that website is. Take a SEO metric like bounce rate, for example. Users need to be able to use all devices flawlessly and the website should tune in to the search query. Google excels at interpreting visitors' behavior on websites and their behavior will increasingly account for ranking search results.

Tip: Look into Google Analytics and list the problems you encounter by focusing on where visitors get stuck or leave. Check what happens when they get to their destination URL.



a climbing guide to success

Conclusion

SEO trends may not be brand new but they are definitely becoming the norm.

Current practices will have an enormous impact on the way we search the Internet in the future.

In Part 2 of Trends in SEO, we will talk about artificial intelligence, domain authority and video optimization.

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