



# SEO IN 2020

## SEVEN THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW

Everything you need to know about the latest trends for success in organic search (SEO) – inside knowledge from our rankings-obsessed, award-winning experts.



# 2020



# 1

## ZERO-CLICK SEARCHES COULD BECOME THE NORM

One of the things that businesses and brands should be wary of is that there is an increased need to think about their copy and make it engaging enough to get them to click through to the site. It has been written that more than half of all searches are now 'zero-click searches,' meaning that the user's query is answered on the search engine results pages (SERPs) itself, without them having to click away anywhere.

This has become commonplace thanks to featured snippets, Google's Local Packs, knowledge graphs etc. Brands need to look at this traffic and decide whether or not it has a business impact. If users are just searching for contact details then it is likely that they will still convert as they are almost certain to call. The best thing for businesses to do is to invest more in their keyword research and better understand their rankings.

# 2

## POSITION ONE IS OLD NEWS

Ever since search engine optimisation (SEO) became a ‘thing’, those working in the industry have been telling businesses that the most important item on their ‘to-do’ list is to get their websites displaying on page one of the search engine results pages (SERPs)

This is important because the positions on this page are those that offer the best answer, according to Google, to solve a particular user query. If you are visible here then it is fair to assume that your site is optimised well enough to fulfil the question, and offer the best possible user experience (UX).

It, therefore, makes sense when those professionals working in the industry inform you that you not only need to be on page one but in position one. We know that there are plenty of theories surrounding the impact of your position on page one and that there is a direct correlation between occupying one of the top three positions and being the market leader for your keywords.

Making sure that your content appears in position zero however, can be very difficult, but it could be the new ‘have to have’ position. Often called Rich Results, in order to give yourself the best chance of getting them you have to think about optimisation.

The below points, if implemented correctly should give you the best possible chance at success.

- Provide simple, consistent HTML code that makes it easy for users to add content optimised for featured snippets to any blog post or webpage

- Limit paragraph snippets to 50 words or less, and keep the sentences in list snippets short

- Ensure any headers (specifically H2s and H3s) used in posts (and especially list posts) contain clean formatting
- If possible, use `<li>` formatting for the items in a list post as opposed to headers
- Include the keyword you are optimising for within the answer part of the featured snippet code. You can check if your schema supports rich results [here](#).



# 3

## THINK ABOUT INFLUENCERS

Sponsorships and endorsements are nothing new and the idea that you can pay someone to promote your products and influence new or existing audiences is a tried and trusted marketing strategy.

There are some people who think that the sole purpose of marketing is to get the customer to buy a product. This couldn't be further from the truth. The goal of getting consumers to buy is obviously how a business makes their money and how they review their marketing performance, but in truth every stage of the buyer's journey is an opportunity to build the relationship and this is why marketing budgets are now distributed more evenly.

Influencer targeting shares a lot in common with keyword research. In fact it should really stem directly from it. Across your site, you will be targeting specific industry keywords with product and service descriptions, blogs or other forms of content, headers, meta descriptions and so on. If all is well, you should therefore have some kind of keyword strategy document – a list of what keywords you're targeting and for what part of the site, product or service.

This list – while unwieldy – with editing and prioritisation can serve as a fantastic resource for influencer targeting. The reason for this is that the appropriate influencer is likely to be targeting the same set of important keywords as your brand, and happily, there are plenty of tools that allow you to search specifically for those keywords prior to approaching your ideal candidates.

Though, obviously, as an expert in your industry, there may be key industry influencers that you would add to your dream team for brand promotion – and we would certainly encourage you to approach them. However, the better known the influencer, the more likely they will be to have been inundated with requests similar to your own.



# 4

## LET'S DO MACHINE LEARNING AND AI

AI is not going to take over the world or replace human intelligence, even at its most powerful. Instead, it's helping us to live our lives better, achieve more and, as marketers, to create dramatically improved customer experiences.

That was the main message to come from Ellie England's Benchmark presentation last year. She explained that our life is changed by AI because this technology is used in a wide area of day-to-day services, and integrated into how we live, work, and communicate in the world. But she emphasised that the technology is only a tool – it's not about what technology can do, but what you can do with it. AI empowers us.

The enormity of AI can be overwhelming. We're talking unfathomable amounts of data that needs to be harnessed.

A recent IBM study indicates that we create 2.5 quintillion bytes of data every day – and 90% of the world's data has been created in the last two years.

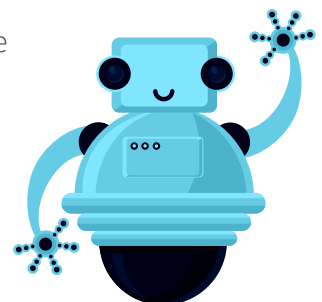
We have deep learning and analytics – essential everyday tools that help make sense of the data in real-time for actionable results. And artificial intelligence is augmenting our ability to make sense and reason over this breadth of data.

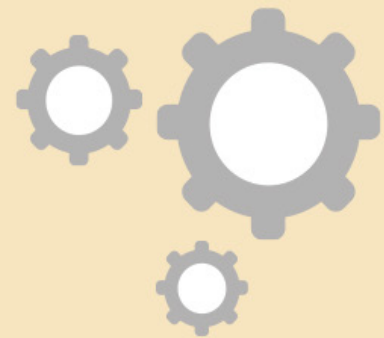
We are in the middle of an industry revolution. What AI offers is really a breakthrough: an opportunity to move to a very different world in which software is created by the machines being taught how to solve problems, rather than being programmed how to solve them.

The growth of the amount of data available, the ability to bring software and hardware together and with advancement in the cloud, and milestones in vision, speech recognition, and reading comprehension, AI delivers marketing personalisation, automation and operational efficiencies that free up marketers to focus more on creativity.

A key way that AI can automate marketing is through programmatic advertising – technology takes care of buying, selling, and optimising digital ads on your behalf.

Marketers can also mine huge data volumes and use machine learning to unlock insights and find predictive signals, taking the guesswork out of keyword bidding, ad testing and optimisation, and even email campaign creation.





# 5

## BERT IS THE FUTURE

The BERT update was announced at the end of October 2019 and was created so that Google can better understand the intent of a query. It's their job to fathom what the user is asking and provide the best articles on the web that can give them an accurate answer, "no matter how you spell or combine the words in your query". In their article, Google admitted that they still don't get this right and it's one of the reasons they've worked so hard to improve the language understanding capabilities.

BERT stands for Bidirectional Encoder Representations from Transformers. In simple terms, this refers to the way in which the system interprets sentences. This will be vital in 2020 and you should continue to create good quality content, not necessarily because a search engine wants you to but because your users will find it beneficial. There's less pressure to write for an algorithm. Instead, focus all of your efforts in writing excellent content for real people with legitimate problems or queries. If you're writing for authentic users, you're already 'optimising' for BERT and therefore future-proofing your content.





# 6

## ARE WE FINALLY READY FOR VOICE SEARCH?

Our Senior Marketing and Content Executive, John Warner, correctly predicted that 2018 wouldn't be the year of voice search and again in 2019, but now he appears ready to put his weight behind it - not as something coming in 2020, but as something to carefully keep an eye on.

There is a real battle going on at the moment between several major tech companies for dominance in the digital assistant market (specifically in smart speakers) with everyone from Amazon to Yandex having a speaker on the market. While Alexa rules the roost at the moment, Google has, for the first time, succeeded in outselling Amazon with its Google Home since it went to market.

I find it odd that people believe that Google, Microsoft, Amazon, and many other brands would compete so intensely for an automated Spotify player – especially as Google's CEO Sundar Pichai has explicitly stated that we are entering the age of assistance. Yes, the technology isn't perfect, and the age of assistance may take a little longer to begin impacting brands' bottom lines, but it is definitely approaching.

John has said that voice search is a technology in its infancy that relies heavily on other technologies in their infancy and that nobody buys using voice search, but this is all changing so make sure you are properly prepared. Knowing how to optimise your website for voice can help you generate more organic traffic especially if you understand and implement conversational searches into your SEO strategy.

# 7

## UNDERSTAND YOUR TOUCHPOINTS

Today's consumers are not only savvy but they are time starved and as such, they want what they want instantly; this means that the need to fill this demand is huge. User experience (UX) is one of the areas that businesses are focusing on to ensure that they not only offer the products and services but that their customers stick around or return.

Essentially user experience or UX is the practice of making sure that you are offering the best possible online service to your sites visitors. This is vital if you are to retain existing business and win new customers.

A customer touchpoint is the part of your site or marketing activity that engages with the user and whereby they connect with your brand. They are your brand's points of customer contact, from start to finish. This could be in the form of a sale or an enquiry and this will depend on where they are in the sales funnel. The main difference with a touchpoint is that it is the place of an interaction and not the channel in which they have found you.

You can separate touchpoints out into three distinct groups:

- Marketing channels (email, phone, social media, blogs, vlogs, podcasts, etc).
- Research channels (website, consumer forums, customer services – chatbots, etc).
- Order fulfilment (delivery, payment, returns, etc).

The relationship between SEO and UX has never been bigger, largely because it is the 'end point' of most consumer journeys. Good SEO, in terms of ranking highly (visibility) and ranking for the correct or relevant keywords (optimisation) means that you have the best chance of being chosen by the user. Once this user becomes a visitor to your site, it is the UX that bridges the gap between a visit and a conversion.





# GET IN TOUCH WITH US TODAY

## ABOUT US

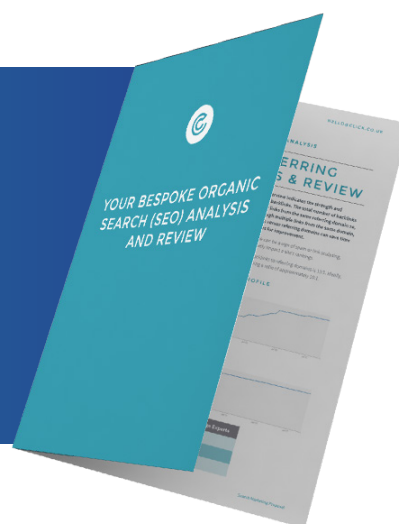
Click Consult is a multi award-winning digital and search marketing agency with a focus on organic (SEO) and paid search (PPC). Part of global consumer brand business Ceuta Group, we have a team of 70-plus specialists and a portfolio of more than 60 clients worldwide.

Our complementary services include content marketing, outreach, social media, conversion rate optimisation (CRO) and international/multilingual search marketing. We can also offer training and consultation to support your teams or existing strategy.

Click was named SEO Agency of the Year 2019, adding to our long list of other awards and accolades, and also ranks within Econsultancy's 'Top 100 Digital Agencies', and Prolific North's 'Top 50 Digital Agencies'. We're also a Google Premier Partner, a Bing Select Partner and feature in The Drum Recommends.

## YOUR BESPOKE ORGANIC SEARCH (SEO) ANALYSIS AND REVIEW

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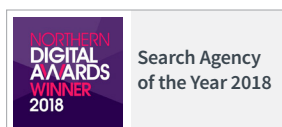
## OUR ACCREDITATIONS



## OUR AWARDS



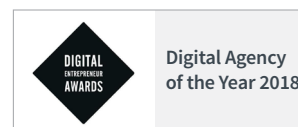
SEO Agency of the Year 2019



Search Agency of the Year 2018



Most Effective Agency 2018



Digital Agency of the Year 2018

## OUR TECHNOLOGIES

monitor **TRAX** rank **TRAX** feed **TRAX** link **TRAX** pro **TRAX** page **TRAX**