

Study finds the most essential ranking factors behind voice searches

More keyboards will be ditched in favour of microphones as voice assistants are expected to dominate online searches

An in depth study to find out which are the most essential ranking factors behind internet voice searches has found 80% of answers delivered by Google's voice assistant came from the top three results in search engine results pages, according to online trends data provider SEMrush.

The in-depth analysis studied more than 50,000 queries and also found 70% of answers are likely to be returned for a voice query if it's contained in a Search Engine Results Pages (SERP) feature, with 60% of those returning a Featured Snippet result.

In addition to correlating voice results with SERP, SEMrush found a common link between answer length, backlinks anchors and page speed.

"As marketers consider how to make the most of the increase in voice searches, the data is important for SEOs to understand as it suggests the key to performance is high SERP placement, site speed, content readability and high-quality backlinks," said Olga Andrienko, head of global marketing for SEMrush. "The good news for digital marketers is SEOs are already optimising for those factors."

The analysis found several key findings that were either consistent across the devices, or clearly defined the differences between using voice search through a speaker or using voice search through an Android smartphone.

A summary of key findings from the research is:

1. Close to 80% of the answers returned were from the top three organic results (for Android Phones, 72%).
2. 70% of all answers returned from voice searches occupied a SERP feature (with 60% of those returning a Featured Snippet result).
3. When analysing backlinks, Page Score and Trust Score were slightly higher for answers' URLs regardless of the device.
4. Backlink anchors and keywords within a title matching the voice search query are present in over half of answer URLs for Google Home and Home Mini.
5. Text length of the answers returned was nearly the same for every device (around 41 words on average).
6. Text complexity needs to be simple and understandable for the average reader (ranking around 8 on the Flesch Kincaid Grade or is at a level understandable to a 15-year-old).
7. Page speed is very important for all devices — for a majority of questions, the answer chosen by Google loads faster than the average page speed for all other results in the same SERP.
8. Well-linked pages (internally and externally) are favoured within Google Home and Home Mini searches.
9. Over a third of the answers do not use schema. Different schemas are used, with Article and Organization being the most popular, with low percentages. In non-answers, the use of schema is more prominent, but still no single type dominates.
10. HTTPS and URL depth seem to be irrelevant for Google Assistant's selection (because there was no tangible variance between answers and non-answers).

To find out more about the study, visit [here](#).

Methodology

The findings are the product of an in-depth analysis of over 50,000 questions asked to three devices combined. Using queries pulled from SEMrush's API (as well as a series of automated voice queries), SEMrush recorded the SERPs from each query and then analysed several different factors including the readability, page speed, number of backlinks, and SERP features (amongst others) to determine which factors are the most influential when it comes to ranking for voice search queries.

The same process and analysis were then carried out on three separate devices (Google Home, Google Home Mini and the Xiaomi Redmi 6) using Google Assistant; with all three set to the same location to get a conclusive answer. You can view full details on the methods behind the study in the Methodology report. You can find this by clicking [here](#).

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