NOVEMBER 2019

NEWSLETTER

Venerate Media Group

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1 GOOGLE ROLLS OUT NEW SEARCH ALGORITHM, BERT

After RankBrain, BERT is the biggest **update** by Google Search and is likely to impact 1 in 10 search queries. The previous major algorithm update, RankBrain was introduced by the company around 5 years ago.

BERT stands for Bidirectional Encoder Representations from Transformers. It is Google's neural network-based technique for natural language processing (NLP) pre-training.

BERT can help computers understand languages a bit more as humans do. In 2018, it was open-sourced by Google. Detailed information about BERT is provided in **the Google AI blog**.

The rolling out of BERT began earlier this week and it is likely to be fully live within a few more days. As of now, the feature is suitable for only English language queries, but shortly Google might try out other languages.

Google further revealed that BERT is being used globally in all languages in featured snippets.

Understanding the context of words in searches will help better match those queries with relevant results.

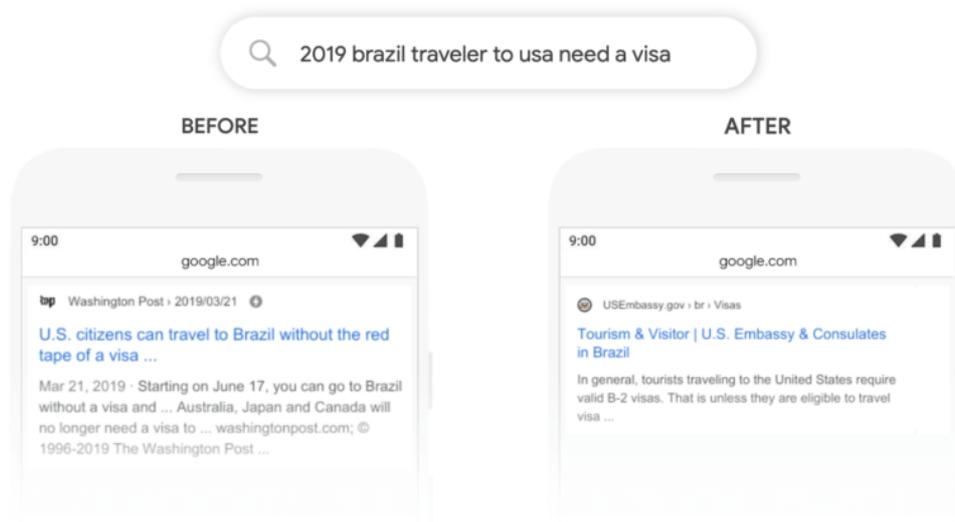Examples of Google Search before and after the release of BERT.

Image Source: https://blog.google/products/search/search-language-understanding-bert

In one example, Google said, with a search for "2019 brazil traveler to usa need a visa" the word "to" and its relationship to the other words in query are important for understanding the meaning. Earlier, Google did not understand this connection between words and would return with results about U.S. citizens traveling to Brazil. Google further explained, *"With BERT, Search is able to grasp this nuance and know that the very common word "to" actually matters a lot here, and we can provide a much more relevant result for this query."*
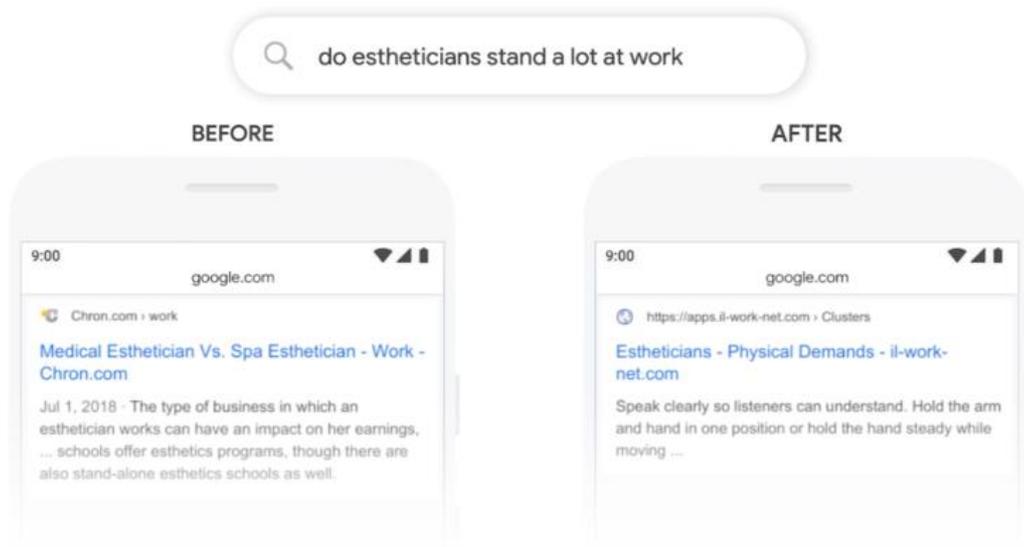
In yet another example, a search for "do estheticians stand a lot at work", Google said it previously would have matched the term "stand-alone" with the term "stand" used in the query. Google's BERT models can "understand that 'stand' is related to the concepts of the physical demands of the job, and displays a more useful response," Google said.

In the example below, Google can understand a query more like a human to show a more relevant result on a search for "Can you get medicine for someone pharmacy."
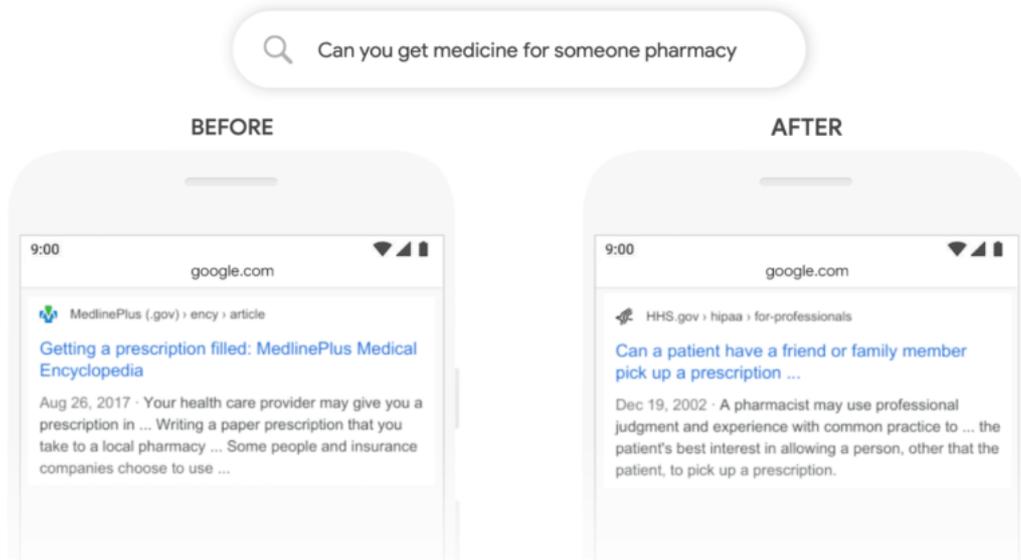
Here is an example of Google showing a more relevant featured snippet for the query "Parking on a hill with no curb". Previously a query like this would confuse Google. "We placed too much importance on the word "curb" and ignored the word "no", not understanding how critical that word was to appropriately respond to this query. So we'd return results for parking on a hill with a curb."
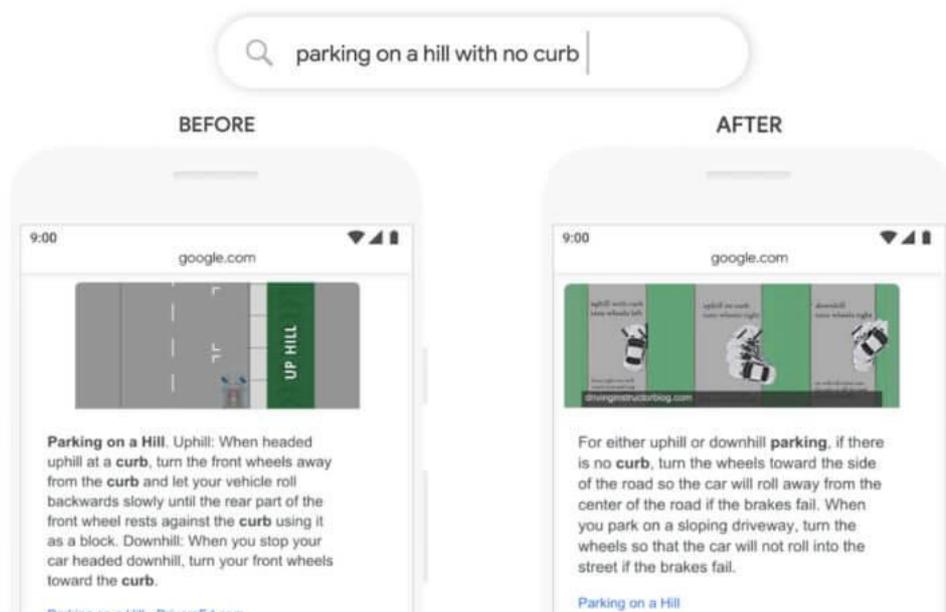
The first AI method for understanding queries, that Google introduced back in 2015, was **RankBrain**. To understand the meaning of the words, it looks at both - the queries and the content of web pages in Google's index. It's additive to Google's ranking system. BERT is not a replacement for RankBrain, but an addition to Google's methods for understanding content and queries. It will continue to be in use for some queries unless Google thinks a query can be better understood with the help of BERT. A single query can use multiple methods to understand the language including BERT.

Google utilizes a lot of ways to understand the language in your query and how it is relevant to the content on the web. In case you misspell something, Google's spelling systems will help you get the right word that you would be looking for. Also, if you use a synonym that is there in its relevant documents, Google will still return with appropriate search results.

Optimizing for BERT is unlikely! Google already **cleared** that optimizing for RankBrain cannot be done, which only means that Google is improving at understanding natural language. Users can continue to create digital content as they always do.

Google said this change is "representing the biggest leap forward in the past five years, and one of the biggest leap forward in the history of Search." This update has so far impacted 10% of all queries, which is a big change. However, after running reports for our clients, we have noticed that the rankings haven't been affected at all - which isn't surprising considering we do our basics well.

Final Takeaway

We recommend you to keep an eye on your search traffic changes sometime next week and check how much your site got impacted by the addition. If your search traffic seems to be affected, know which landing pages got impacted and by which query. And, if you need professional help - do get in touch with us for assistance.

According to a Yelp-commissioned **study** conducted by SurveyMonkey, almost all online adult users are ready to buy services or products from the local businesses that they discover on Yelp. The survey shows that around about 97% of adult users conduct some sort of transaction with the businesses they find on Yelp.

This survey of over 6,000 adults, is actually a follow up of the **study conducted by Nielsen** in 2012 and 2016. The figures derived from the 2016 study showed that:

- 92% of online adults conducted a transaction after visiting Yelp "at least sometimes, frequently or almost always".
- 42% of respondents claimed that they made a purchase within 24 hrs and 79% made a purchase within a week.

The 2019 Survey Shows High Purchase Intent

Image Source: https://blog.yelp.com/2019/10/study-shows-97-of-people-buy-from-local-businesses-they-discover-on-yelp
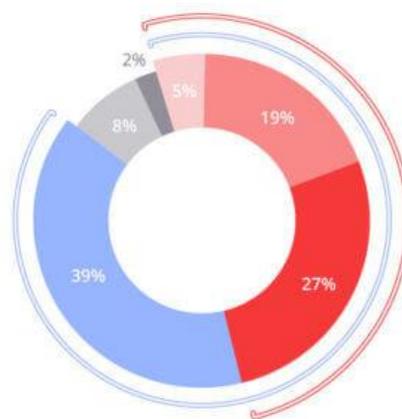
The figures found in the 2019 survey show considerable growth in Yelp's influence, as more than half i.e. 51% users claim to transact within 24 hours of visiting a site and close to 90% admit to doing so within a week. It also revealed that 93% of Yelp users compare businesses before making any buying decisions.

Yelp claims that both the 2016 and 2019 studies show that Yelp is the "most influential and trustworthy" site when it comes to finding local businesses as compared to "Google, Facebook, TripAdvisor and HomeAdvisor".

Users Look For More Than Reviews While Comparing Businesses

Although Google has more reviews than Facebook and Yelp, respondents appreciate the other factors, beyond reviews, that they can take into consideration when comparing and evaluating local businesses on Yelp.

- 75% cared about seeing a business or trade license that a business has
- 71% cared about the ability to request price estimates online
- 69% cared about seeing the pictures and costs of previously completed projects
- 58% cared about knowing the unique characteristics of a business like being open late or being family-owned

Final Takeaway

At the end of the day, even though the survey responses do give an indication of the user preferences, it may not be the actual user behavior. However, according to an individual study conducted by FreshChalk Yelp does appear in the top 5 results of 92% of the local business searches on Google. This makes Yelp a critical directory for ranking. The company is also set to roll out new products and features this year, in an effort to differentiate from Google and to diversify revenues.

3 SIMPLE WAYS TO MAKE THE MOST OF LONG-TAIL KEYWORDS

To improve your SEO it is essential to find and make the most of every opportunity. With digital marketers these days, the first thing they turn to is finding keywords that have a high search volume. However, doing so is not as beneficial as it seems.

Competing with large websites for high or medium volume keywords does not make a huge difference. Here are a few simple methods to rank higher, using more precise, long-tail keywords as primary keyword targets.

Although you might overlook these long-tail keywords as they get less attention than broad keywords that most people look for, they could be just what your SEO needs. With high volume keyword searches becoming more specific, the number of people searching for those terms is likely to decrease. As long-tail keywords have a lower search volume, the competition over them is naturally very less. Fortunately, concentrating on long-tail keywords enables most organizations to set realistic goals for SEO success.

1. Appeal to local searches

Most local businesses struggle to compete with large organizations for broad keywords, and here is where long-tail keywords come into play. Local business owners can get more out of making use of long-tail keywords as compared to broad keywords.

According to statistics, **almost half** of all Google searches are local searches, and **76% of people** will either call or visit the business within 24 hours after making a local business search on mobile. Hence, to give your business more visibility locally, going after local-intent keywords such as your city, zip code, or even state is best for your business. Focus and choose keywords that cater to your city and surrounding areas as they are more specific and the competition is less. This allows your business to become more visible in local searches leading to new customers and increased footfalls.

2. Focus on intent keywords

Be sure to include "Intent Keywords" when tailoring long-tail keyword research for your site's SEO content as they tend to represent the later stage of a sales funnel and are usually commercial.

Before buying anything online, we always tend to look-up on the internet before making a purchase decision. Online searchers go through the buyer's journey to get the information they need before they reach any final purchasing decision. During this time, people are inclined more towards long-tail keywords to get more definitive results for the product or service they're interested in. At first, people search for more general terms such as "black turtleneck" but eventually narrow down the search with specific long-tail keywords such as "ribbed" or "cashmere black turtleneck" to get down to the best, cheapest, or on-sale items.

Intent keywords, such as "best," "cheapest," and "discount" have a lower search volume, but the people searching for them can be worth more than a bigger, less interested audience. The search volume decreases as searches get more and more specific with intent keywords, but at the same time, these searches are more valuable.

Checking your organic traffic regularly in Google Analytics is a good practice and the factors that you must consider while analyzing this are as follows:
See which keywords drive more traffic to your site and to what pages specifically.
Check out the landing pages to find out what drove the users there.
Analyze the low-traffic web pages that you would want to rank higher and figure out how you can optimize them.
Make the most of what you have learned about intent keywords on high-traffic pages to fix up the pages that are deteriorating without traffic.

3. Use conversational language for long-tail keywords
As the use of voice searches increases drastically, may it be playing songs by commanding Alexa or searching for a local restaurant with Siri, it is now an essential part of our searches. Although voice searches have made our life easier, many in the world of SEO feel uneasy because of it. There is a fear that voice searches will take over consumer behavior and make the traditional practices obsolete, which is not the case.

To rank for voice searches, you will have to change your ways of choosing keywords as whatever people search for verbally will have different verbosity as compared to what they would have typed.

Start using long-tail keywords for you to compete in the long run. These keywords are more conversational; as if the person is asking a question to someone. Voice searches also include local searches, so prioritizing long-tail keywords considering verbal search is crucial. Keep in mind that the content you create must rank higher for not just voice searches but also traditional searches.

Conclusion
Long-tail keywords may not be a top priority for many, but when implemented with the right amount of work and efforts, they can be a source of easy and direct way of ranking higher on search engines. After all, long-tail keywords are a great example of the adage that not even the smallest things must be missed out when it comes to improving your SEO.

Customers love our SEO Audit reports. It helps them see the benefits of SEO faster. Some companies have have asked for different features in their SEO Audit report. As always, we have listened to their requests and after a lot of research and brainstorming, we have rolled out some awesome features to our SEO Audit report.

Top features you'd love!

- Do you know that more than 50% of all searches will be voice searches in 2020! So, is the website for your company/business ready? Our proprietary algorithm tests your local business for voice search readiness and shows how your information is picked up by Google Assistant in real-time.

- We've upgraded our SEO Audits to check your business for local visibility issues including NAP (Name, Address, Phone) consistency in Top 8 sites now instead of 4 in the earlier versions.
  (Top 8 sites include - Google, Bing, Yelp, Facebook, Merchant Circle, Tupalo, CitySquares and HotFrog)

- Learn what people are saying online about your business. We check your business reviews on Top 6 sites now instead of 3.
  (Top 6 sites include - Google, Facebook, Yelp, Merchant Circle, CitySquares, HotFrog)

Plus tons of changes under the hood to make our SEO Audit reports run faster and deliver more accurate results.

Feel free to test our new SEO Audit Report today. Don't hesitate to share your valuable feedback with us. You can also get in touch with our Support team to know more about the New SEO Audit Report.

5 PAY PER CLICK UPDATES FOR NOVEMBER 2019

Here are the latest pay per click updates we have curated for you this month.

- **With the holiday season coming up, Google rolls out holiday updates for merchants with some latest features**.
- Determine whether TrueView video discovery ads are the better option for your brand. **Click here to find out.**
- **Stay on top of your game by following these expert guidelines to Facebook Ad creatives**.
- **Ex-Googler brings to you** the ultimate guide on how to improve your Quality Score via **the landing page**.
- **Google Ads rolls out the App campaign asset updates**.
- **Have you started with your Google Shopping Campaigns for this holiday season? Here are Google holiday forecasts for each industry.**
- **In a new move, Google is replacing responsive display ads with legacy display ads in your Google Display Network campaigns.**
- **Microsoft Advertising redesigns its ads to help advertisers easily & intuitively manage ads and achieve more.**
- **Here are the early PPC results on what we have seen of YouTube for Action Lead Form Ads.**
- **3Q issues the key points from the IAB Internet Advertising Revenue Report on U.S. Digital Ad spend.**
- **Google Ads is testing a new way for businesses to capture customer information with lead form extensions.**
- **Google Ads rolls out conversions by time with 6 new columns to help you better understand conversions & the value the ads generate for your business.**
- **Facebook Ads releases new search results placements to help advertisers reach & connect with audiences shopping through the ads in the Facebook Search Results.**
- **To help advertisers reach their ideal customers, Google is soon rolling out two new segments: Affinity audiences & seasonal event segments for in-market audiences.**
- **The new forecasts in Google Ads Display Planner provide advertisers with access to better targeting options & ad formats.**
- **Use the new Facebook Inspect tool to boost your campaign performance.**
- **Google Ads now allows you to set conversation action at campaign level in Google Ads video campaigns too.**
- **Google releases machine learning technology – A privacy-safe approach to manage ad frequency.**
- **Now managing multiple accounts becomes easier with Microsoft Advertising launching manager accounts.**
- **Amazon introduces Sponsored Display Ads – A new self-service advertising solution helping businesses to reach relevant audiences.**