

# Optimizing For Voice Search

Voice search is a big trend today. It has significantly crossed the threshold of early adopters. This is because it's more convenient for users to speak with an assistant than to type. And the results of voice queries are faster.

Let's look at the recent statistics...

Over 41% of adults and 55% of teens use voice search daily.

Nearly 20% of all Google mobile searches are voice queries. Also, voice search has grown 35 times since 2008.

The statistics show that voice search isn't "the next big thing." It's already here. So, when and where are these users using voice search?

They use it on the go, with friends, family, and even in the bathroom. With the increasing use of digital assistants, optimizing for voice search is crucial to SEO success.

In this report, we'll look at how to optimize your website and content for this search trend.

## **Voice Search Technology and Trends**

The rapid innovations in the digital world seem to change how we all use the internet. And as voice search technology continues to grow, it's changing the way most of us search online.

Voice search accounts for nearly 25% of searches on the Windows 10 taskbar. Apple HomePod answered 52.3% of queries correctly. And Siri also falls in the same place by answering 52.3% of queries correctly. By 2020, 50% of all web searches will be voice-based. And 30% of these searches will be done using devices without a screen.

## **Emerging Trends in Voice Search Technology**

The voice search trend is a top-notch searching pattern and it is set to take over the traditional search type. Thus, voice search technology is here to stay, and it'll be challenging to adapt to the changes to remain in the market.

If you want to build a sustainable and successful business, you need to adopt these new voice search trends to face the competition in the market. Here are some popular voice search trends:

1. AI and Machine Learning

The increasing demand and dominance of AI devices and machine learning is causing changes to search algorithms to process machine learning. Changes in AI and machine learning are making a huge impact on the way we interact with smart devices and also the internet.

Google's RankBrain is a perfect example. It's designed to recognize words and phrases to learn and predict better outcomes. When RankBrain encounters a word or a phrase it has never heard before, it makes its best "guess" based on the searcher's intent and meaning, and it delivers appropriate matching answers. The ability to "think" makes AI such as RankBrain more efficient in handling unexpected search queries.

Nearly 75% of voice search results will rank in the top 3 positions for a certain question on a desktop search.

The increasing dominance of AI-powered devices means search algorithms must evolve to accommodate machine learning and the unique ways we use these devices in our lives daily.

## 2. Smart Speakers Drive Voice Search Adoption

Smart speakers are becoming popular in households across the globe. Initially, devices such as Alexa and Siri were merely entertaining because it was fun to ask Siri silly questions just to see how "she" would answer.

However, voice technology has now significantly improved, and new hardware such as Google Home and Apple HomePod are venturing into the market.

Smart speaker usage is projected to rise to a compound annual growth rate of over 48% to include over 76 million users by 2020. And as more consumers become accustomed to interacting with voice-responsive devices, smart speaker sales will continue to grow, and the use of voice search technology will increase accordingly.

As a result, voice technology will only become better and better.

## 3. Voice Used for Local and Hyperlocal Searches

More Internet users are searching for local results. And within the last year, over 58% of consumers have found local businesses using voice search. Not only is the number of voice searches growing, but the frequency of voice searches for local results also continues to increase. In fact, 46% of users repeatedly use voice search to find local businesses daily.

Thus, searches for "near me" businesses have drastically increased in the last few years. And this increase in local voice search is good news for local businesses.

Since 2015, mobile searches have exceeded desktop searches and the driving force behind this growth is the local search. This has forced marketers and retailers to tweak their efforts to capitalize on the rise of hyperlocal searches. Now, you can create ads that are more targeted at local search users by defining the geographical area to only a one-block radius.

#### 4. Voice Search Comes Mostly from Mobile Devices

It's astonishing how powerful Cortana, Alexa, Siri, and the rest of the gang have become. They have helped significantly in boosting voice search popularity.

However, it's crucial to note that mobile devices, especially smartphones, will remain as the main drivers of voice search. This is because unlike text-based search, we make most of the voice searches when we're on the go. And as early as 2016, Google reported that over 20% of searches on its Android apps were done through voice search.

This is probably the reason Google has been expanding the availability of voice search to most countries. Now, it's available in 119+ languages.

Another essential factor in the expansion of voice search technology is speech recognition technology. The core of voice search we're enjoying now is speech recognition.

Thanks to speech recognition innovations, Google's speech recognition is now at 95% accuracy.

#### 5. Voice-Enabled Chatbots Continue to Gain Popularity

At the time of writing, the average number of voice searches per month is 1 billion. And we do most queries via voice-enabled chatbots.

So, as voice recognition technology continues to become more accurate, vendors are setting up new applications. Therefore, many consumers are turning to voice engagement.

Today, over 50% of consumers are using voice search devices at least once a day. Voice-activated applications, in their stand-alone form, are paving the way in integrating digital and physical worlds. This form of integration offers related services to consumers and businesses.

Highly interactive and easily accessible, voice-enabled chatbots and related services offer great value to consumers and businesses.

Some benefits of voice-activated chatbots include:

- Voice artificial intelligence (AI) boosts customer insights
- Texting with no voice is monotonous
- Quick responses and zero wait time
- Improved two-way interaction
- Excellent customer experience
- Improved productivity through multitasking
- 24/7 availability
- Ability to detect fraud quickly and easily

So, if you want to scale your business, ensure you leverage how consumers use voice-enabled chatbots. And the best way to do this is by deploying voice-enabled chatbots in customer service.

## 6. Voice Search Technology Is Part of the Emerging Conversational AI

Voice search has disrupted the previously stable text-based search order. However, it's essential to note that voice search is only a part of the larger revolution known as conversational AI. This big innovation covers the technological innovation that allows people to receive the answers they need quickly.

Conversational AI is the force that's changing consumer behavior. And voice search plays a crucial in the larger scheme of getting answers as quickly as possible.

The core of conversational AI is natural language processing. This is the technology that powers voice search and if used correctly, it's astounding.

Today, many SEO marketers are turning to answer engine optimization (AEO) to engage better with search engines and offer answers that match searchers' queries. You can also leverage the possibilities that conversational AI and AEO offer to serve your customers' unceasing need for information.

Since voice searches have four to six words, this conversation span provides more necessary clues for understanding the searcher's intent.

While voice search offers the information, the "help" conversational AI offers gives a more substantial. And this level of help makes up the complete benefit voice technology aims to offer people.

So, what can you do with these trends?

These ways of doing voice searches offer many benefits to both consumers and businesses. The ongoing factor that favors voice technology is because humans are born to speak, not to type.

Most voice searches deliver inquiries for local businesses and they occur because of the rise in global mobility. So, it's essential to optimize your online presence and brand information to leverage these trends.

The best SEO strategy should be to embrace both text and voice search optimization. This way you'll experience the best of both worlds.

## **Why This Matters to Small Businesses and Entrepreneurs**

From Alexa to Google Assistant, consumers are now speaking instead of typing to search online more than ever.

Today, over 40% of adults use voice search daily and it's projected that over 50% of online searches will be voice based by 2020.

This makes sense because it's much easier to speak a question than to type it. And it allows you to multitask while cooking, walking, driving, or even while taking a shower.

Voice search isn't a fad or something you should ignore. If you want to get ahead and stay ahead of the competition, now is the time to optimize your website and content for voice search.

For a successful SEO strategy, be willing to put effective research into your keywords and adapt your SEO for the future. Researching your keywords effectively will help you target what your audience is looking for. And adapting your SEO strategy for the future is crucial because sometimes changes in Google's algorithms may make some strategies more effective or outdated. In other cases, it's the way people search for information that's changing. This is where voice search optimization comes in handy.

## **The Importance of Voice Search Optimization**

The continued use of voice search has paved the way for a remarkable technology. And it has led to the rise of mobile assistants such as Siri, Cortana, and Alexa, as well as smart speakers such as Amazon's Echo, Google's Home, and Apple's HomePod.

With more consumers using voice search, no other industry has gained from it more than small, local businesses. The surge of voice-search popularity has significantly affected how consumers interact with local businesses online.

Today, if you haven't optimized your business's website for voice search, you could be missing out on incremental web traffic, more brand awareness, and ultimately more customers.

If you're already familiar with voice search, then you know how easy it is to use. It's quicker than typing using your smart device keys, and you don't have to unlock your

smart device to get the answers you need. The voice search technology is so ever-present, most consumers don't even give it a second thought.

Voice search is essential for building brand awareness and generating more customers. The stats are amazing. Consider this:

- Over 58% of customers have used voice search to find local businesses in the past year
- 28% of voice search users search for local businesses weekly
- 76% of smart speaker users search for local businesses at least weekly

The largest segment of consumers using voice search to find the local business information in the last year are those between the ages of 18 to 34 (76%). And, the 35-54-year-old crowd isn't far behind. 64% of these consumers say they have used voice search in the past year. So, if your target audience is between the ages of 18-54, you have no option but to leverage voice search to provide your customers with what they need.

You can leverage voice search to offer answers that your customers are looking for; this will boost traffic to your landing pages. Today, online searchers are hungry for faster answers. Using voice search technology, you can serve this need, and it's an attractive alternative to the web search.

Thus, if you're looking for a new and better way to boost traffic on your site, it's time to leverage voice search. It'll improve your ranking on search engine result pages (SERPs) and it'll boost user experience. One of the major signals Google is emphasizing today for ranking is user experience.

When voice search users get the answers they need faster, this reduces negative signals such as bounce rates.

There are many ways you can leverage voice search to boost traffic to your website or even your restaurant. For instance, if you're a restaurant owner in New Orleans, give directions to your location and you'll be surprised to see more customers walking through the door.

Whatever you do, make sure you incorporate voice search in your SEO strategy. In doing so, you'll boost your ranking on SERPs and you'll attract more customers to your business.

## **Internet Users Are Turning to Voice for Efficiency**

The dominance of voice technology continues to expand. From HR to marketing to transport to finance, voice technology is being used extensively. Apart from reducing costs and streamlining business processes, it offers more efficiency.

When used correctly, voice search allows people to complete tasks quickly and easily. It's more helpful, highly efficient, and it helps get more tasks done.

Voice technology streamlines a user's life in ways never possible before. Voice technology has greatly simplified voice search.

On average, people can speak 125 to 150 words per minute; this is 3 times faster than the average typing speed. That's why leveraging inherent human ability is more beneficial.

Efficiency is one of the primary reasons people use voice search. Over 76% of people who use voice search regularly say it's more natural.

However, voice technology offers more than just efficiency. And as voice technology continues to advance, it's more likely to expand its important role in our daily activities.

Today, voice-enabled devices are must-haves alongside top productivity suite tools.

Here are tips on how to optimize for voice search.

## **Write in a Conversational Style**

If you're like most smartphone users, you use voice-powered functions to schedule appointments, send text messages and search for information online. Voice search is a key area to watch for entrepreneurs and business owners because according to Comscore, half of all online searches will be voice searches by 2020. This means that voice is the future of web search.

## **Think Conversationally When Optimizing Your Site for Voice Search**

Searching using the keyboard differs from when we talk out loud.

Voice searches mirror how we communicate in full thoughts with others because we aren't trained to speak robotically. The conversational style of speech is involuntary. For example, using voice search to ask a question seems like it would in a normal conversation:



Google

who is Matt mullenweg

All Images News Shopping Videos More Search tools

About 394,000 results (0.60 seconds)

**Matt Mullenweg**


**Matthew C. Mullenweg**

Alma mater	University of Houston
Occupation	Founder & CEO, CBBQTT Automattic Principal, Audrey Capital Lead Developer, WordPress Foundation
Known for	WordPress, Automattic
Website	ma.tt

2 more rows

[Matt Mullenweg - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Matt_Mullenweg)  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Matt\\_Mullenweg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Matt_Mullenweg)

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Compare this to the usual shorthand style of search that happens when typing on a keyboard. You'd type "Matt Mullenweg" as your search query.

Taking this logic further, if you were having a conversation, you wouldn't keep saying Matt Mullenweg's name, you'd start saying "he" or "his." Search engines are trying to achieve this form of contextual query refinement for voice. And they can infer the meaning of placeholder words such as he, she, it, or they based on your previous queries.

The result is a string of search phrases that look similar to this:

- "Who is Matt Mullenweg?"
- "What is he famous for?"
- "What did he do recently?"
- "What his net worth?"

Use these similar phrases as you create your content and optimize it for voice search.

Also, you can take the concept of conversational style to the next level by thinking how frequently your shorthand text search comes to a full question. Let face it, it all comes down to the five Ws:

- Who?
- What?
- Where?
- Why?
- When?

Thus, optimizing your content and website for voice search is as simple as asking a lot of these questions and answering them in your content.

## **How to Implement the Conversational Style**

There are no rules on how to optimize for conversational phrases; the best option is simply to include them in your content.

To get started, consider these tips:

- Brainstorm out loud. Think about some of the questions a reader may ask to land into the article you're writing. Add these questions and answer them within your article.
- Write FAQ-style summaries at the end of your article. This naturally integrates conversational-style questions and answers, which gives the search engines something specific to work with.

Think ahead to the future and create a whole voice-centric content strategy around the five Ws concept. Follow these four steps when building your content road map:

1. List the topics of your content.
2. Research what keywords you already rank for, using a tool like [Rank Tracker](#).
3. For each unique keyword, create a few questions using the five Ws.
4. Answer each of those questions in your blog post or landing page.

## **Focus on Long-Tail Search Queries**

When searching for information through the voice assistant, many people behave as if they're talking to a human. Many of us don't use short, choppy keywords. Instead, we ask questions and long phrases.

To optimize your content and website for voice search, use more conversational keywords and phrases that people use while speaking, not while typing. Essentially, these will be long-tail search queries but phrased the way people speak.

Using long-tail search queries is good for voice search optimization and traditional SEO.

Keywords containing more than two words face less competition and they offer more chances to rank at the top.

As mentioned earlier, successful marketers use questions for voice search together with long phrases.

For example, when typing a query, one is more likely to use more relevant keywords and write something like “restaurants in Chicago.”

However, voice search sounds more natural and conversational. So, when talking to your voice assistant, you will start with “Hey Alexa...,” or “OK, Google,” etc. These phrases will make you think you’re communicating with your device and you aren’t just conducting a keyword-based search. So when looking for a restaurant to eat breakfast, you’re more likely to ask: “Hey Alexa, which restaurants near me serve breakfast all day?”

Thus, if you want to spend less time and find the questions your target audience may ask, use tools such as [Answer the Public](#) or [Serpstat Search Questions](#).

When using Serpstat, for instance, type the word or a phrase that best describes the subject of your content. Then you’ll see how people search for that topic.

When writing your answer, make sure it answers the searcher’s questions.

After you decide which queries you’re writing about in your blog post, add them to the pages within your site. Also, create H2 headers from each query and write your answers in the body text. Answer each search query briefly and state the main idea concisely.

After answering the search query directly, cover other related search queries. This way you’ll rank for as many variations of questions as possible.

To keep your position in featured snippets, keep your content fresh and update it regularly.

## **Why Long-Tail Search Queries Are Important**

The reason long-tail search queries are important is the intent. This is because search engines find it hard to understand the intent of a single-word search query. Including long-tail search queries into your business’s content will help search engines deliver more accurate results. And local businesses and brands that serve content that answers intent-based queries will rise above the competition.

The growing popularity of voice search is making long-tail keywords more valuable. In the initial days of online search engines, it was easy to type one word and hit “search.” But today, with voice assistants in [one out of every six American homes](#), people are searching differently. Searchers are talking instead of typing.

And voice search queries are longer, with [seven or more words](#). In fact, people are more likely to speak long sentences than they are to type them.

So, as a business owner, you must continue to pay attention to important keywords in your industry. Also, you have to focus on how people are using these keywords to

search for services with their voice-enabled devices. If you realize searchers are using multiple words or certain phrases regularly, then it's important to optimize for that popular search query.

Remember, stuffing search queries into a blog feels unnatural. And, Google and your readers can tell it's forced. This is where long-tail keywords come in. It's much easier to create high-quality content around conversational phrases than single-word queries.

Also, long-tail search queries offer more specific answers, which means consumers can find their answers easily and quickly.

While focusing on long-tail search queries is essential for voice search optimization, there are certain places in the content where these queries will perform better. For example, incorporating strong long-tail search queries in headlines makes your content more shareable, and it makes it easier to find your content on search engines. Also, using keyword-rich headlines will make your content appear more frequently in voice search results.

Remember; Google cares more about its users' experience. It will therefore rank your content lower if it's littered with forced keywords, regardless of how long or short they are. So, keep your content organic and smooth without forcing in the long-tail search queries.

## **Ensure Your Website Loads Quickly**

The time it takes to load your site is crucial. It influences whether your site will appear in voice search results.

Searchers using voice search are usually on the go or in a hurry. So, to attract those searchers, website speed optimization must be a top priority.

Start by analyzing your current site speed with [PageSpeed Insights](#). This tool will help you know if your site's loading time is fast enough, and you'll also get suggestions on how to improve your loading time.

Also, remember that mobile speed is more important than desktop for voice search optimization. This goes for overall design too, so always make sure your site is mobile-friendly; most of the voice searches occur through mobile devices such as smartphones and tablets.

Voice assistants put a premium on expediency. For instance, Google Home generates results based on the time it takes for a website to load. Thus, the quicker the loading time, the more your site is favorable to voice-activated devices.

According to a [study by Backlinko](#), sites with simple, easy-to-digest content rank on the first page of SERPs. The study also found that Google and other search engines favor webpages with low loading times.

Also, faster website speed is crucial because it prevents the user's attention from drifting. The average voice search result page loads in 4.6 seconds.

So, your website pages need to load faster for voice assistants to deliver results quickly. Otherwise, they won't be able to deliver answers in time and readers will abandon your site and move to your competitors' sites.

Using WordPress, you can make sure your site has a performance-friendly base. Also, you can implement other performance-boosting techniques such as optimizing your website's images.

## **How to Make Sure Your Site Loads Quickly**

### **1. Minimize HTTP Requests**

Hypertext Transfer Protocol (HTTP) requests occur when a browser fetches a file, page, or an image from a web server.

According to [Yahoo](#), sometimes these requests take about 80% of a webpage's load time. And the browser limits requests between 4-8 simultaneous connections per domain; this means loading 30+ assets at once isn't an option. Consequently, the more HTTP requests a researcher needs to load, the longer it takes for the page to retrieve them all, which increases your website's load time.

You can reduce HTTP requests by using queries to load what's needed – for instance, if you only need to load certain images on the desktop or need to run a certain script on mobile-only. You can use conditional statements to load them, which is a great way to boost your site's load speed. This way the browser only loads scripts or images that are useful for certain devices or viewpoints.

Also, you can decrease HTTP requests by reducing the number of images you use. If some of your webpages are image-heavy, remove some of the images, especially those with large file sizes. This will not only reduce image HTTP requests, but it will also improve your UX by removing distracting images that add no value to your written content.

### **2. Use CDNs and Remove Unused Scripts or Files**

Most probably, most of your users won't be near your web server. And, you can't reduce this distance by spreading your content across many geographically dispersed servers; this is too complicated to implement.

However, this is where a content delivery network (CDN) comes into play. CDNs are perfect for static content or files which need not be touched once uploaded.

You can select servers based on the user's measure of network proximity. For instance, you can choose the server with the quickest response time or fewest network hops to make sure that voice assistants deliver answers quickly.

If you're a small company owner, you may find that owning a CDN is unnecessary or outside your budget. However, you can use websites such as [cdnjs](#) that have a library of CSS and JS files and frameworks. This will help you avoid hosting certain files while increasing your loading speed.

Using tools such as [UnCSS](#), you can also remove unused styles from your site and reduce the size of your CSS files, which can improve your loading speed.

### 3. Browser Caching

Browser caching allows you to download your site's assets to your hard drive once into a cache, or temporary storage space. Once those files are stored locally on your system, it allows subsequent pages to load quickly.

When visitors land to your site and see the first page is loading quickly, this motivates them to move through the rest of your webpages.

While images still take up most of your HTTP requests, optimizing them and other assets will ultimately reduce their size, which will boost your site's overall performance.

## Create Featured Snippets

Featured snippets are the information boxes that appear at the top of many search engine result pages. Instead of a website link, these featured snippets offer the answer on the search page.

According to [Backlinko](#), nearly 41% of Google Home voice search results come directly from Google featured snippets. Thus, optimizing your website for featured snippets will optimize it for voice search, too.

Featured snippets are essential because over [30% of 1.4 million](#) tested Google searches have them.

If the results have a featured snippet, the voice assistant is more likely to pull the answer from there. Therefore, if you want to rank in voice search results, make sure you focus on creating quality content that search engines can display in the featured snippet.

Usually, there are three types of snippets, depending on the query:

- List
- Paragraph
- Table

However, paragraph snippets are most common since they occupy 82% of the featured snippets. List snippets appear in 10.8% of the results and table snippets in 7.3%.

## **Why Featured Snippets Are Important for Voice Search Optimization**

Featured snippets are crucial in voice search optimization if you use them effectively.

### **1. Maximum Authority**

Gaining a featured snippet shows that Google chose your webpage among others as the most valuable to users' relevant queries.

### **2. Staying Ahead of the Competition**

When search engines choose your website to be the quick answer to certain queries, they display the results above the organic results. This means you have beat your competitors, including a site that ranks number one for that specific search result.

### **3. Boost Traffic**

Searchers like featured snippets because they offer quick answers to their queries. This is beneficial to your site because it means more traffic, which could be upwards of 20-30%.

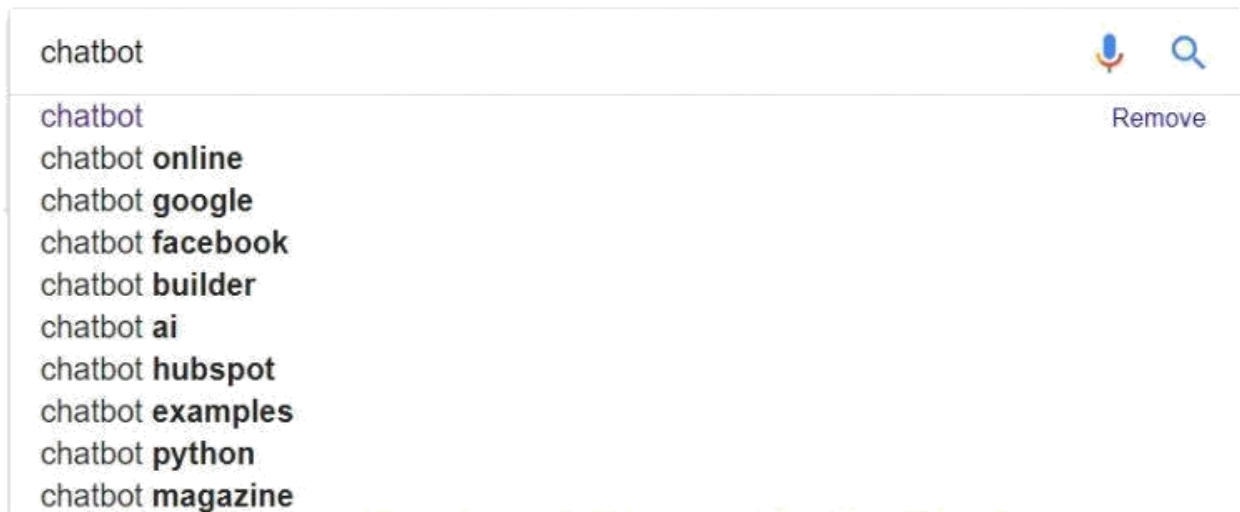
## **How to Create Featured Snippets**

Here are five simple steps that can help you create featured snippets and rank in the voice search results.

### **1. Identify Frequently Asked Questions about Your Business**

The best way to identify commonly asked user questions about your business is to speak directly to your customers. Also, you can talk to your sales or product marketing team to see the questions they get frequently.

Alternatively, you can use tools such as Google Autocomplete for any given query, as shown below:



Apart from the autocomplete box, Google has other sources of data. For example, you can look at what comes up in the “People Also Ask” section, to see if there is a query about your business.

To get more People Also Ask results shown by Google, click on some of them, and Google will add more. This way, you’ll get more options. Also, you can use Answer the Public to see frequently asked question variants on any topic.

## 2. Analyze Keyword Opportunities

Using the right tools, you can search for keywords to target. Look for the right keyword ideal for your site.

## 3. Create Content Targeted at Snippets

It’s a great idea to create new content with featured snippets in mind. However, make sure you create natural content that’s relevant to the searcher’s query. Always take into consideration the user experience and create content that makes sense to your target audience.

## 4. Use Question and Answer Formatting

Dedicate an entire page to a single query, if possible, and find ways to include FAQ into the content.

## 5. Make It Easier for Search Engines with Subheadings, Lists, Tables, etc.

Section your content with subheadings, lists, and tables. Well-structured page sections make it easier for search engines to figure out what content is most relevant to a specific search query. So, help search engines discover your content by using basic on-page optimization techniques.



The world of featured snippets and relevant answers is complex. However, rich and relevant answers offer a great opportunity to drive more traffic to your website. And in the realm of voice assistants, they're the only game in town.

Search engines use featured snippets to offer one definitive answer to a user's question. Since search engines are all about finding the best content for users, your main task is to create the best content.

Strive to create high-quality, relevant, and valuable content because the value of creating the best possible content will endure even if the concept of featured snippets evolves. The sooner you embrace this strategy, the better you'll be.

## **Final Thoughts**

Online searchers already use voice search widely and so its popularity will grow dramatically in the coming years.

So, if you adopt voice search optimization in your SEO strategy, it'll greatly boost your content visibility because voice search increasingly narrows results to only top pages.

Yes, it may seem unpromising now, but the future of voice search is strong.