



How to Optimally Equip Online Stores for Voice Search

Voice search has already become indispensable in today's world, establishing itself as an integral part of everyday life. Whether consumers are interacting via mobile devices or networked speakers such as Amazon's Dot or Google Home, one thing is clear: Users like simple and uncomplicated processes. The tedious task of typing a search query into a browser is no longer necessary. Instead, a linguistically sophisticated request can be made directly using voice search. Online shops need to adapt to this new reality, implementing changes as quickly as possible to avoid losing ground.

Impact of voice search on digital commerce

In the future, many more voice-controlled assistant systems will be available. As a result, companies will have the advantage of being able to advise users individually on products. Client service will also improve as a result. There will no longer be a need for long hold periods on telephone help lines, and clients will be served more efficiently. Voice-controlled assistants, instead of telephone operators, will be responsible for answering simple questions. In this context, the mobile use of assistants via smartphone app is becoming increasingly important. In parallel, the browser will be increasingly relegated to the background. This trend can already be seen in action in Asia.

The current state of online shops

Current examples support simpler chat functionalities. They can help clients find stores, for instance, or check their opening times. Much more is possible, however. A great deal of current activity is still in the test phase. Arvato Systems already connects the relevant systems to voice-controlled assistants such as Alexa. This allows the assistant to answer user questions regarding issues such as the status of an order or where to find a light-blue t-shirt from a certain brand.

»Consumers in particular will benefit from voice search. The result? There will no longer be a need for long hold periods on telephone help lines, and service will become more efficient.«



Online stores need to connect voice-controlled assistants

Online retailers must prepare for the increased prevalence of consumers who will search for offers using voice technology in the future. Applications that once required users to search solely by typing will become much more user-friendly. The user can then pose questions in complete sentences, further clarifying their search target. On the technical side, of course, the prerequisite for this is a semantic understanding of user questions. This will probably be a bigger hurdle than the purely acoustic, phonetic understanding of speech input. Online stores can prepare for changing search behavior by connecting their eCommerce systems to the corresponding voice-based assistance systems. Regardless of whether you integrate Alexa, Google Home, or Watson, creators of popular online shopping systems will be offering relevant plug-ins sooner or later. In any case, it is advisable to use an IT services provider with a certain amount of experience in this field for this integration task.

Product descriptions must be adapted accordingly

To start, product descriptions are independent of the voice search. However, each product must also have characteristics attributed to it that are capable of being supported by a voice-based search as well. This is because, unlike with text input, no autocomplete function can be used to define the precise search terms. Consequently, product keywords need to be more detailed and accurate. Further, when using voice control users search with complete sentences, resulting in more complex queries. This is advantageous for the user, of course, because they can communicate what they want even more precisely. For a complex search via voice assistant to work, however, a better definition of the product's attributes is required. There will still be a search engine working in the background to ensure the concrete product is found. One thing is certain: The future belongs to voice-based search, and the eCommerce field is no exception. Online store operators need to be prepared for this.

»Online retailers must prepare for the increased prevalence of consumers who will search for offers using voice technology in the future. The primary challenge for successful implementation will be the semantic understanding of user requests.«



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You have questions, need information or a contact?
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