

Optimize Your Dermatology Website for Voice Search



Voice search is not a passing trend. Learn how to make it work for your practice.

BY NAREN ARULRAJAH

>> There is always something new in the world of technology. Sometimes it is just an overhyped fad. Sometimes it is the beginning of a new era. Voice search is the latter. If you have not incorporated it into your dermatology SEO website yet, now is the time to start.

About one-third of Americans use voice search, according to Oberlo. That number is expected to grow, for one simple reason: it is convenient. Whether lounging in bed on a lazy weekend morning or multi-tasking on a busy workday, you can check the weather or research a topic without touching a device. Plus, talking is easier and more natural than typing.

HOW VOICE TECH CHANGES SEARCH BEHAVIOR

We do not speak like we type. There are inherent differences between written (or typed) and spoken language. Typing feels tedious and time consuming, so we tend to use as few words as possible. When talking, we naturally add more words and are more likely to use complete sentences. Additionally, we use different types of words and phrases.

Review the last few emails and text messages that you sent. Read them aloud. Do the words sound natural, like something you would say in an actual conversation? Probably not.

Voice search is interactive. Even when talking to an electronic device, people tend to speak in a conversational manner. The searcher asks a question, and the device answers. Thanks to advanced algorithms, the device even factors in context, search history, and the person's current location when choosing an answer. The interaction is designed to mimic a human conversation. That means searchers not only use different words, but they also have different expectations.

Typing in the search box feels like looking up a topic. People expect to scan the search results and choose the most relevant one. It is akin to visiting a library, choosing the right shelf, and reviewing the selection of available reference books. Voice search is more like asking the librarian to recommend a book. It is faster and simpler, but it restricts the variety of options. People using voice search tend to be specific in their queries.

STRATEGIES FOR VOICE SEARCH OPTIMIZATION

Choose the right keywords. When optimizing for voice search, forget the short and simple keywords. Instead of searching for CoolSculpting downtime, someone might search, "Will I need to take time off work after CoolSculpting?" The best keywords for voice search are longtail (multi-word), phrased as questions, and use of natural language.

Understand search intent. As you probably already know, the days when Google results were restricted to exact matches are long gone. The algorithm recognizes synonyms and variations of words. It also detects natural language patterns, enabling it to decipher the searcher's intent. This is especially important in voice search because many queries are unique. A lot of people might be asking the question, but each one will word it a little differently.

Ask questions. Most searches with voice technology are phrased as questions. It might be impossible to predict the exact wording, but Google's smart algorithm is good at understanding the meaning of the question. It is also good at finding similar questions on webpages. When optimizing for voice search, use questions for article titles, subtitles, and picture or video descriptions. For example, instead of titling your page "Symptoms of acne," try "What are the symptoms of acne?"

Give direct answers. You might remember the old days of keyword stuffing. Websites would include words purely for SEO, even if the content were not relevant to those terms. Of course, Google quickly caught on to this tactic, and learned to identify relevancy. The same principle applies to questions. If a title to subheading is phrased as a question, make sure the following content answers it.

Voice search technology favors short, succinct answers. Therefore, it is good practice to summarize your point, providing a simple, direct answer immediately after the question. Then, go on to explain in greater detail.

Use FAQ pages. FAQ (frequently asked questions) pages are popular because they are a convenient way to convey important facts and provide website viewers with a go-to

place to look for information. With the rise of voice technology, they are more important than ever. Most FAQ pages are naturally optimized for voice search.

Write in conversational tone. Whether you create your own content or hire professionals, odds are your articles have a polished and formal feel. They are written to be read. When optimizing for voice search, you want content that is written to be spoken. Use a friendly tone and write as if you are speaking directly to the reader. Opt for first and second person writing, avoiding third person. Use short sentences, avoiding pretentious words and overly formal language.

FINAL THOUGHTS: THE MORE THINGS CHANGE, THE MORE THEY STAY THE SAME

SEO is a moving target. From minor algorithm updates (which happen on a near-daily basis) to major milestones such as voice search, something is always changing. While it is important to keep up, it is equally important to remember that the core best practices essentially stay the same.

Google strives to deliver quality results, which means you should strive for a quality website. Fast loading times, user-friendly navigation, valuable content, and an error-free website will always be important. Do not lose sight of the fact that it is not all about Google. Your website is the virtual face of your dermatology practice, and you want to make a great impression on visitors.

Naren Arulrajah, President and CEO of Ekwa Marketing, has been a leader in medical marketing for over a decade. Ekwa provides comprehensive marketing solutions for busy dermatologists, with a team of more than 180 full time professionals, providing web design, hosting, content creation, social media, reputation management, SEO, and more. If you're looking for ways to boost your marketing results, call 855-598-3320 for a free strategy session with Naren.

VIDEO: BOOST PATIENT REVIEWS

VALUE AND ACTUAL CONTENT BEHIND REVIEWS.

- Poor interpersonal relationships
- Little to no communication
- Failure to establish a relationship and, in turn, trust
- Inappropriate feedback or demeanor, bedside manner if you will
- Long wait times, without explanation or acknowledgment of the wait
- Disorganization!

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