

HOW SEARCH INTENT IS REDEFINING THE MARKETING FUNNEL



FORGET EVERYTHING YOU KNOW ABOUT THE MARKETING FUNNEL. TODAY, PEOPLE ARE NO LONGER FOLLOWING A LINEAR PATH FROM AWARENESS TO CONSIDERATION TO PURCHASE.

They are narrowing and broadening their consideration set in unique and unpredictable moments. People turn to their devices to get immediate answers. And every time they do, they are expressing intent and reshaping the traditional marketing funnel along the way.

So how has the marketing funnel changed exactly? In the last six months, Google looked at thousands of users' clickstream data as part of an opt-in panel. And we found that no two customer journeys are exactly alike. In fact, even within the same category, journeys take multiple shapes.

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Placing a real value on influencers' contribution

Brands on their part must refrain from passing them off as 'content creators'

With influencer collaborations and digital marketing a big part of a brand's ad budget, some recurring questions remain unanswered. Are brands misusing influencers? Or why they keep insisting on referring to these influencers as "content creators"?

With the rise of bloggers, being credible was their main asset. Blogging was still accepted as a new form of journalism as it involved writing the whole "truth" — and nothing but — about a product the blogger had received and tried.

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YouTube driving global consumption of music

Video as a whole accounted for 52% of the time we spent streaming music

If you are listening to music, chances are you're on YouTube. A music consumer report by the industry's global body IFPI published on Tuesday found that 86 per cent of us listen to music through on-demand streaming.

And nearly half that time, 47 per cent is spent on YouTube.

Video as a whole accounted for 52 per cent of the time we spent streaming music, posing challenges to such subscription services as Spotify and SoundCloud. But while Spotify's estimated annual revenue per user was \$20 (Dh73.46; 17.5 euros), YouTube's was less than a dollar.

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What is Content as a Service, and how does it work?

We now have a proliferation of channels that brands can use to reach their customers, from websites and apps to social media, email, push notifications, chatbots, voice assistants, and more.

On top of this, we have more devices than ever that consumers can use to access brand content — desktops, laptops, smartphones and smart watches, each with their own specifications and restrictions — with yet more looming on the horizon.

How can brands and marketers create bespoke content for each one of these formats and channels, all while making sure that this content is future-proofed for any new media that might develop in the future? Creating dedicated pieces of content for each individual medium becomes labour-intensive to the point of being unworkable.

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Three smart content strategies for boosting search performance without creating fresh content

We all know that search engines reward sites with valuable content that most effectively answers searchers' questions. But that doesn't always mean you have to create NEW content.

Here are three ways you can boost your website's search visibility by working with the content that's already there.

1. Content specialisation

Websites that are very strongly focused around a single theme or topic tend to perform better in search. Which is why content specialisation is on the rise as a way of increasing search performance. Probably the most high profile example of the benefits of this trend is About.com. In its prime, About.com was a huge repository for information on virtually any topic you could be curious about. For many years it was one of the biggest sites on the internet.

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Big Tech gets an acquired taste for old media



The news that Salesforce chief Marc Benioff and his wife Lynne, will buy celebrated US news magazine "Time" for \$190 million followed on the heels of the acquisition earlier of the prestigious "Washington Post" by another big boss of the tech industry, Amazon's Jeff Bezos.

The spending spree of Silicon Valley billionaires to acquire trophy media assets is a paradox given the fact that their empires have been built on fibre optics and not the typewriters of vintage news rooms.

Yet, it could also easily stand as a real-life testimony that they may have more faith in legacy print media than the previous proprietors and workers in the print media themselves.

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Staying well away from unfit digital content

Advertisers can rope in a bit of artificial intelligence to make it easier

Brand safety, digital ad fraud and viewability continue to challenge digital marketers. The stakes are high as advertisers demand clarity in the content and quality of the online platforms they invest in.

With the wrong ad placement, brand identity can take a hit. You need advertising that's brand-safe and it's up to you to protect your brand. Internet giants are tapping technologies such as A.I., deep learning and computer vision to avoid ad misplacements next to inappropriate or disturbing content.

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Facebook's video ad revelations prove that marketers must think like consumers

"Pivot to video" was the buzz-phrase of the mid-2010s: the shorthand for a series of sweeping changes made by digital publishers to shift their content strategy away from text towards the shiny, attractive medium of video.

The "pivot to video" was carried out under the sincere belief that video advertising was an untapped goldmine that could save publishers struggling for revenue in the digital age. Wave after wave of qualified journalists were let go as publishers replaced them with video producers.

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Can marketers 'prove' ROI? It depends on who's asking

Possibly one of the most frequently, and most frustrating, demands of marketers these days is to 'prove' return on investment (ROI). But, is it even possible to do so?

The too-quick answer to this question goes something like this: "Of course. We know how much we spend on marketing and can measure the effects it has on growth, and from those figures we can see what return the business receives for its investment." Thinking about the issue for more than a few seconds, though, reveals that proving marketing ROI is not quite that simple.

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