

# SEO Trends 2018

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## MediaCom Trends - SEO

We predict important changes in SEO over the next few months, with UX, AMP, AI and voice all set to play a much bigger role. Here's what we're excited about...

### UX and SEO will be more closely aligned

Google has always said it wants to offer the best possible user experience. Delivering this is going to get harder. What constitutes a good user experience will become more complicated and more specific to each industry, brand and content objective. We will be moving further away from audit checklists to look deeper into what type of content engages and converts so that we can gain a deeper understanding of why it works.

Working collaboratively with UX teams will become increasingly critical and the UX of your website will be imperative to help keep users actively engaged with content. A big part of UX is website performance which is even more important since Google officially announced the 'Speed Update'. Starting in July 2018, page speed (how fast your website loads) will officially be a ranking factor for mobile searches.

## Accelerated Mobile Pages (AMP)

It's impossible to over-emphasise the importance of page load speed. Brands should be looking to utilise every go-faster opportunity to improve, including browser caching and image optimisation to boost content load speed on mobile and technical enhancements such as Accelerated Mobile Pages (AMP), which let you create web pages that load near instantaneously and help improve your mobile users' experience. AMP are HTML pages designed to be super lightweight and very fast loading. They are only available on mobile devices and they display within a carousel above the fold. AMP gives publishers and retailers the opportunity to be visible for users at the very top of the search engine result page. According to research by Forrester Consulting, the business case for speeding up your website with AMP is very compelling – in some cases you can expect payback within six months.

## POSITIVE IMPACTS INCLUDE:

- 20% increase in sales conversion rate
- AMP pages performing positively for e-commerce and news publishers who both said that there was a 60% increase in visitors, and those people spent twice as long on the site

## Position Zero Is the new no.1

Google launched the machine-learning component of their algorithm in 2015 and, as it keeps getting smarter, search results and ranking factors will keep evolving. Google's decision to choose an AI chief as the new Head of Search indicates their direction. As they

work towards their long-term goal of providing the 'One True Answer', we will see more Featured Snippets, Answer Boxes, Knowledge Graph Panels and other extended search result page features that try to answer queries within the page. These extended features significantly impact the CTRs of traditional organic search results below them which means the SEO challenge this year will increasingly be about getting above position 1, into the Featured Snippets, Answer Boxes, Knowledge Panels and into what's being called 'Position Zero'.

Amazon and marketplace optimisation will become essential for retailers. Retailers selling online in 2018 should consider e-commerce and marketplace optimisation across Amazon and other vertical marketplaces to improve their visibility and performance. Amazon is increasingly becoming the first stop for retail search. Approximately 90% of consumers will check Amazon, even if they find a product they want on another retailer's website (Bloomreach – State of Amazon 2016 – 2,000 U.S. consumers) or in store.

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