



Understanding Search Intent

How to Unlock the Secrets of the SERPS



Search Intent

Why is your audience making a search? What are they hoping to learn, doing, receive from the search query? If we look at intent, there's a number of ways that we can define this from a marketing standpoint. Below are four high-level intents we can use to better understand the expectations of our target audience.

Informational Query

An informational query is when somebody is looking to gain general knowledge on a topic. This is like, how do I get more traffic? They just want a larger idea, or maybe finding a number of ideas on how they can achieve that goal, but they're really not committed to it yet, they're just looking at ideas.

Navigational Query

The next would be a navigational query. This is where they know what they're looking for to an extent. For example, maybe we've got an on-page SEO guide, which we do, and they might say SMA marketing on-page SEO guide. They know what they're looking for, they know in kind of the direction they want to go, or at least the business or the website that might have that information.

Commercial Intent

The next type would be a commercial intent. This is where somebody is looking to maybe make a purchase. They want to get more information on products they'd buy, best keyword research tool, best smartphone for 2021, top screen recording software. Those are all different types of queries that people could use in order to do some investigation.

Transactional

Lastly, we have a transactional. Now, this is when somebody's ready to make a purchase and they want to know what the price of a specific query is. This could be the pricing for SMA marketing. How much does it cost to get started with you? What's the best or the cheapest price for a smartphone? A transactional query is where somebody is trying to actually purchase a product.

Understand the Context of Intent

Now, something that's really important to understand is that intent can shift. One term can mean one thing for one person, and it can mean something completely different for another person.

We have to understand the context. Context is really set at an emotional level. Whether you're marketing to engineers or whether you're marketing to creative people, emotions are going to drive their purchase behavior.

Six Different Types of Emotional Search Intent

Surprise Me Search is fun and entertaining. It is extensive with many unique iterations.	Thrill Me Search is a quick adventure to find new things. It is brief, with just a few words and minimal back-button use.	Impress Me Search is about influencing and winning. It is laser focused, using specific phrases.
Educate Me Search is about competence and control. It is thorough: reviews, ratings, comparisons, etc.	Reassure Me Search is about simplicity, comfort, and trust. It is uncomplicated and more likely to include questions.	Help Me Search is about connecting and practicality. It is to-the-point, and more likely to mention family or location.

These are six different types of emotional search intent that Google has surfaced in some of their articles on Think with Google. Using these emotional filters can help you better understand the intent of your audience so you can create compelling content that attracts them.

Search Intent Exercise

One of the biggest mistakes people make is never looking at the search engines. They can give us a ton of information about what both our target audience as well as Google expects.

Step 1: Make a broad search query within the Google Search Engine.

Step 2: Scan the search results and see what type of content is ranking. Check any that apply

- Articles
- Audio
- Blog Posts
- Product Pages
- Offers
- Images
- Video

Step 3: What style of content is ranking? Check any that apply

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lists | <input type="checkbox"/> Opinions and Rants |
| <input type="checkbox"/> How-To | <input type="checkbox"/> Predictions |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Questions & Answers (Q&A) | <input type="checkbox"/> Research |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Case Studies | <input type="checkbox"/> Facts and Stats |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Testimonials | <input type="checkbox"/> Guides |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Interviews | <input type="checkbox"/> Worksheets |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Demos | <input type="checkbox"/> Checklists |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Product Review | <input type="checkbox"/> Templates |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Comparisons | <input type="checkbox"/> E-Books |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Industry News | <input type="checkbox"/> Infographics |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Round-Up | <input type="checkbox"/> Diagrams |

Search Intent Exercise

What SERP features are ranking?

- Knowledge Card
- Knowledge Panel
- News Box
- Reviews
- Shopping Results
- Sitelinks
- Featured Snippet
- Image Pack
- Video
- Podcast
- People Also Asked
- FAQ
- Local Pack
- How-to

What is a SERP feature?

A SERP feature is any result on a Google Search Engine Results Page (SERP) that is not a traditional organic result. Some of the most common are:

1. Rich Snippets which add a visual layer to an existing result (e.g., review stars for product ratings)
2. Paid Results that are bought by bidding on keywords (e.g., AdWords or Google Shopping)
3. Universal Results that appear in addition to organic results (e.g., image results, new results, featured snippets)
4. Knowledge Graph data which appears as panels or boxes (e.g., weather, Celebrity Knowledge Panel)

Base on the information above, what is the intent of the query?

- Informational - They are looking to gain general knowledge on a topic.
- Navigational - They are looking to get to a specific site.
- Commercial - They are researching for information on products.
- Transactional - They are looking to buy something.

Based on what you know now, what type of content do you need to create in order to match intent?