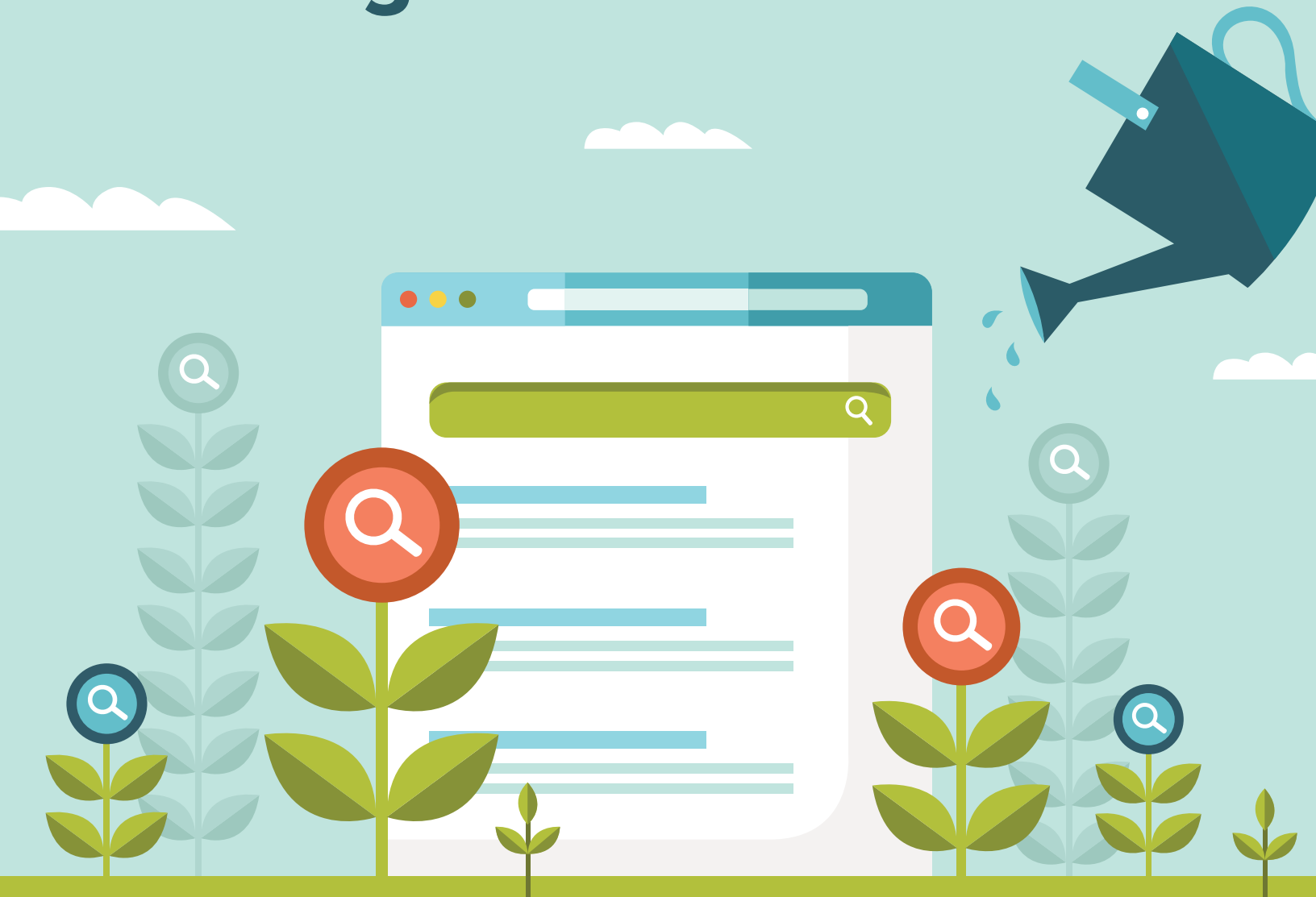


A Content Marketer's Guide to Every 2020 Google SERP Feature



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Introduction

Every second of every day, Google processes **63,000 search queries**. This year, we can expect more than 2 trillion searches.

There's no way around it. We're beholden to the search behemoth and its mystical computing power.

Did we mention Google also owns **75%** of all search engine market share?

This is all to say one thing: If you're a marketer and you're not capitalizing on the Google SERP features that are relevant to your website, something has gone scarily wrong.

Knowing how impactful indexability and site optimization are to organic rankings, it's imperative that digital marketers understand the expanding list of Google SERP features. Not just the names but the functions, characteristics and opportunities inherent in each one.

That's what we've done here. Take a look.



What are Google SERP Features and Why are They Used?

A **Google SERP** is a **search engine results page**. When you input a query into Google, the results are formatted to individual pages, often 10 per page. SERPs can contain a number of content variations, including paid advertisements, organic listings and Google-devised “features.” Google SERP features are any results that reveal more information or context beyond a standard results display; they are the natural evolution of the SERP interface.

In virtually every way, SERPs are cleaner, more accurate, more relevant and more helpful than ever. Here's what traditional organic search results looked like a decade ago:



Searched the web for google.

Categories: [Google Directory](#) [Computers > Internet > WWW > Searching the Web > Discussion](#)

[Google \(GoogleSM\)](#)

Search 1,247,340,000 web pages. ... [Google Web Directory](#) the web organized by topic
New! Try our do-it-yourself advertising program - AdWords. ... 2000 [Google](#).
Description: Lists the results in the order of popularity, determined by the number of links from other sites....
Category: [Computers > Internet > WWW > Searching the Web > Search Engines](#)
[www.google.com/](#) - 3k - [Cached](#) - [Similar pages](#)

[Why Use Google?](#)

Why Use Google? Because Google delivers the ... [Google Brings Order to the Web](#). [Google](#) is designed to ...
[www.google.com/why_use.html](#) - 8k - [Cached](#) - [Similar pages](#)
[[More results from www.google.com](#)]

[TechNetCast Play](#)

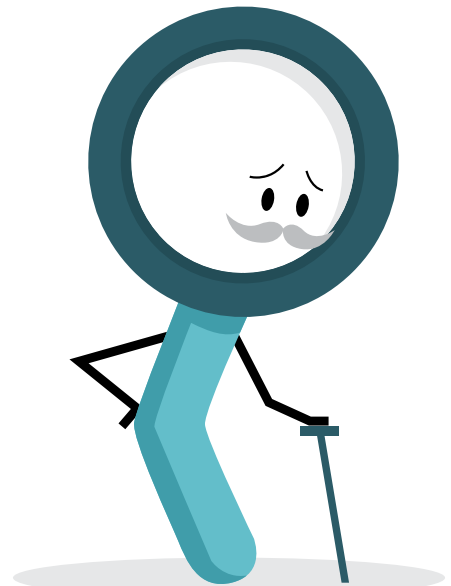
... The Technology Behind [Google](#). By Jim Reese, Chief Operations Engineer, [Google](#). How to build an internet ...
[technetcast.com/tnc_play_stream.html?stream_id=420](#) - 7k - [Cached](#) - [Similar pages](#)

[Google detailed searching structions - Constructing and ...](#)

... requested. To get to [Google](#) : ... com. Detailed [Google](#) Instructions.
Organized by the following infoseek Features: ...
[www.lib.berkeley.edu/TeachingLib/Guides/Internet/Google.html](#) - 18k - [Cached](#) - [Similar pages](#)

[Yahoo! Search](#)

... giving easy access to some of the most prominent sites on the Web. [Google](#) technology - serving as a complement to Yahoo!'s directory and navigational guide. ...
[av.yahoo.com/](#) - 4k - [Cached](#) - [Similar pages](#)



And here's an example of a SERP with updated features:

The screenshot shows a Google search for "macbook pro". At the top, there's a search bar with the query and a microphone icon. Below it are navigation tabs for "All", "Shopping", "News", "Images", "Videos", "More", "Settings", and "Tools". The search results indicate "About 404,000,000 results (0.63 seconds)".

The first section is "See Apple MacBook Pro Laptops" (Sponsored). It features five product cards:

- Apple - MacBook Pro - \$1,199.99 (Best Buy, 1k+ reviews)
- Apple 16" MacBook Pro... \$2,485.85 (hhgregg.com, Free shipping)
- Surface Laptop 3, 256GB SSD... \$999.00 (Microsoft Store, 147 reviews)
- Apple - MacBook Air - \$799.99 (Best Buy, 9k+ reviews)
- Apple 13.3" MacBook Pro... \$1,099.99 (B&H Photo-Vid..., Special offer)

Below this is an advertisement for BackMarket.com: "Up to 70% Off | Macbook Pro From \$319 | BackMarket.com". It includes a phone number (855) 442-6688 and several bullet points: "Tested & Certified, with a 1-Year Warranty. Crisp Screen. Fast Shipping. Professionally Certified. Excellent Battery Life. Fast Shipping. Free 1-Year Warranty. Promptly Shipped. 500,000 Happy Customers. Express Shipping. Certified Refurbished." There are also links for "Check our MacBook prices" and "Check our Reviews".

Next is the official Apple product page snippet: "MacBook Pro - Apple" with the URL "https://www.apple.com/macbook-pro". It describes the MacBook Pro as "our most powerful notebooks featuring fast processors, incredible graphics, Touch Bar, and a spectacular Retina display." There are two sub-sections: "Buy MacBook Pro" and "13-inch MacBook Pro".

The "Top stories" section features three news items:

- "MacBook Pro Diary: My 16-inch MacBook Pro review begins, albeit a little late" by 9to5Mac, 23 hours ago.
- "iPad Pro and 12-inch MacBook compatibility with Apple Pro Display XDR tested in new..." by 9to5Mac, 1 day ago.
- "Amazon and Best Buy drop incredible deals on the MacBook Pro 15 and 16" by Digital Trends, 1 hour ago.

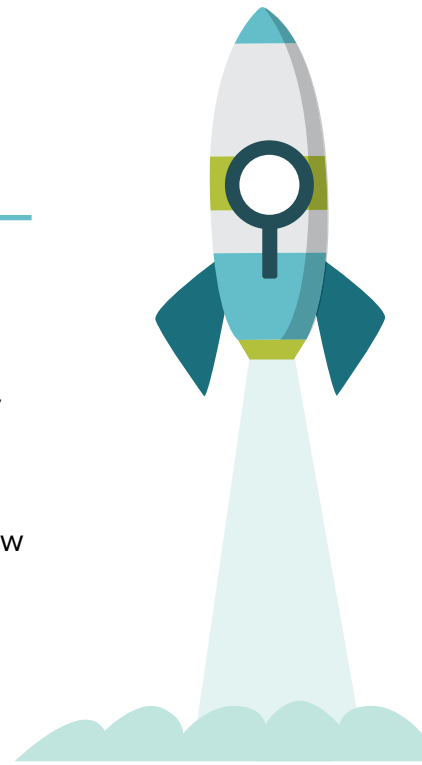
At the bottom, there's a link "More for macbook pro" with a right-pointing arrow.



SERP Features of Today and Beyond

As you can see, a lot has changed. Google SERPs are trending toward greater dynamism, with rich media that provides users with more context upfront. In essence, searchers no longer need to click through every result to find info they need; often it is served directly to them following a query.

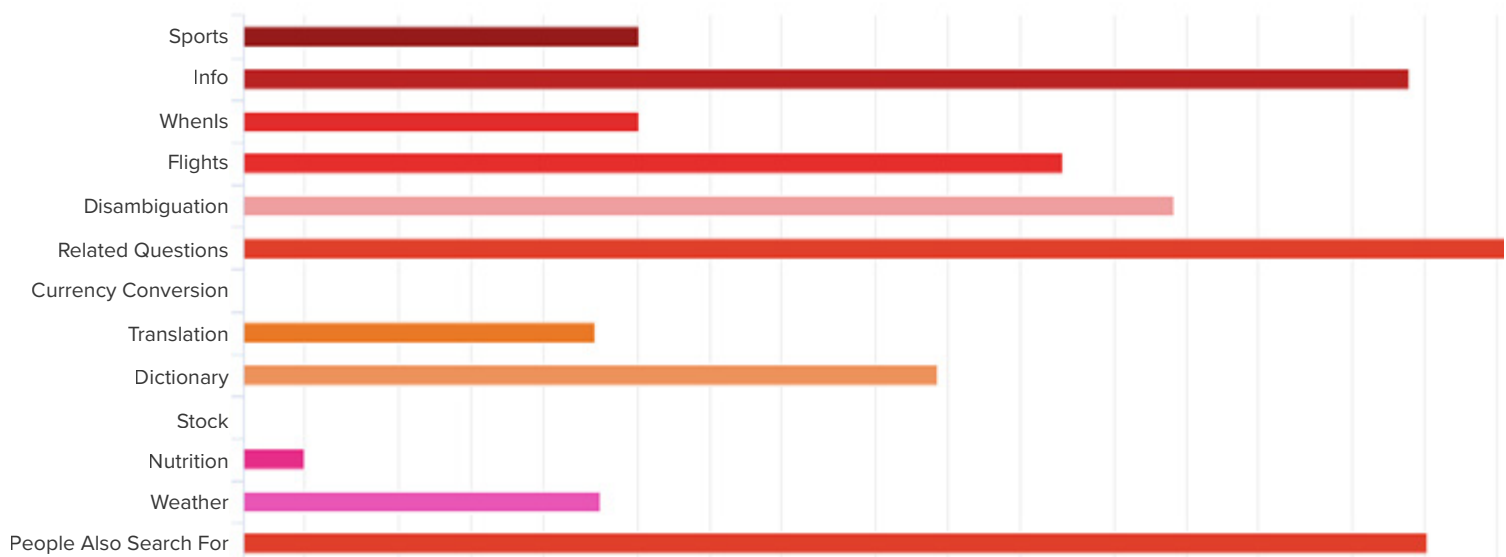
SERP features are growing in usage as marketers optimize their websites to allow Google to better crawl web pages and pull relevant information that users are searching for. And that's what the overhauled SERP interface is all about: **better UX and greater relevance to match search intent**. Here is every Google SERP feature you can expect to come across.



A Full SERP List + Visuals

SEO software tool Rank Ranger crunches SERP numbers in real time and found paid ads (currently) appear on 56.47% of page one results. On the organic side, **17.75% of page one results display Direct Answer features**. *Side note: Direct Answers are also commonly called Answer Boxes, Quick Answers or Rich Answers*. Those Direct Answers most often appear as:

Direct Answer Types (17.44% of page one SERPs have Direct Answers)



We've grouped SERP features into organic and paid categories for easier consumption. Let's start with organic search.



ORGANIC:

Direct Answer Box

Short pieces of information that are public-domain facts and do not credit a source. (e.g., “how many feet in a yard” or “who was the 21 president”)

The screenshot shows a Google search interface. The search bar contains the text "who was the 21 president". Below the search bar, there are navigation tabs for "All", "News", "Images", "Shopping", "Videos", "More", "Settings", and "Tools". The "All" tab is selected. Below the tabs, it says "About 1,090,000,000 results (0.64 seconds)". The Direct Answer Box displays the text "President of the United States (21)" followed by "Chester A. Arthur" in a large font. To the right of the text is a black and white portrait of Chester A. Arthur.

How to optimize:

Direct Answers aren't really within your control. Because these features do not provide a backlink or citation, there's no inherent value a brand could earn from them. Additionally, brands would not be eligible to be displayed, as only publicly available information is used.

ORGANIC:

Featured Snippets

Snippets of added context that typically credit a source and are deemed by Google to be the most contextually relevant result. Featured Snippets are served in many display formats based on the intent of the search query and the type of information to be featured. Those formats include:

Paragraphs

(e.g., FAQs, how tos, “who is,” “what is”)



who is tim cook?

All News Images Videos Maps More Settings Tools

About 89,300,000 results (0.57 seconds)

Born in Alabama in 1960, **Tim Cook** graduated from Auburn University with a bachelor's degree in industrial engineering and earned an MBA from Duke University's Fuqua School of Business. Following a 12-year career at IBM, **Cook** went on to executive roles at Intelligent Electronics and Compaq, before joining Apple in 1998. Dec 29, 2017

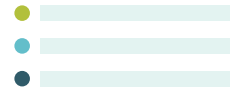
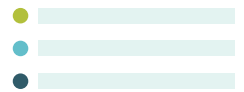


9to5mac.com

[Tim Cook - Business Leader - Biography.com](https://www.biography.com/people/tim-cook-20967297)
<https://www.biography.com/people/tim-cook-20967297>

Bulleted Lists

(e.g., rankings, "best of" lists)



top senators of all time  

- All
- News
- Images
- Videos
- Shopping
- More
- Settings
- Tools

About 10,700,000 results (0.62 seconds)

According to ranker.com

[View 5+ more](#)



Robert F. Wagner



Hubert Humphrey



Lyndon B. Johnson



George W. Norris



Mike Mansfield



Arthur Vandenberg

- Robert F. Wagner Died at 76 (1877-1953) ...
- Hubert Humphrey Died at 67 (1911-1978)
- Robert M. La Follette, Sr. ...
- Lyndon B. Johnson Died at 65 (1908-1973)
- George W. Norris Died at 83 (1861-1944)
- Mike Mansfield Died at 98 (1903-2001)
- Arthur H. Vandenberg Died at 67 (1884-1951)
- George McGovern Died at 90 (1922-2012)

[More items...](#)

The Greatest Senators Post-1900 - Ranker

<https://www.ranker.com/list/greatest-senators-post-1900/marka-lempke>

Numbered Lists

(e.g., recipes, how tos, DIY tasks)

vegan burger recipe
🔍

All
Videos
Images
Shopping
News
More
Settings
Tools


About 3,160,000 results (0.54 seconds)

What You'll Need

1. 1 tablespoon canola oil (or vegetable oil)
2. 1 small onion (white or yellow, diced)
3. 1 clove garlic (minced)
4. 3 green onions (diced)
5. 1/2 teaspoon cumin.
6. 3/4 cup mushrooms (fresh, diced small)
7. 1 15 oz. can pinto beans.
8. 1 teaspoon parsley.

[More items...](#)

Mushroom Veggie Burger Recipe (Vegan and Gluten-Free) - The Spruce
<https://www.thespruce.com/vegan-mushroom-bean-burger-recipe-3378623>



ohsheglows.com

Tables

(e.g., prices, rates, data)

What is today's mortgage rate?

3-month trend	30-year fixed rate	15-year fixed rate
9/25/2019	3.91%	3.28%
9/18/2019	3.97%	3.31%
9/11/2019	3.87%	3.22%
9/4/2019	3.75%	3.11%

[14 more rows](#) • Dec 11, 2019

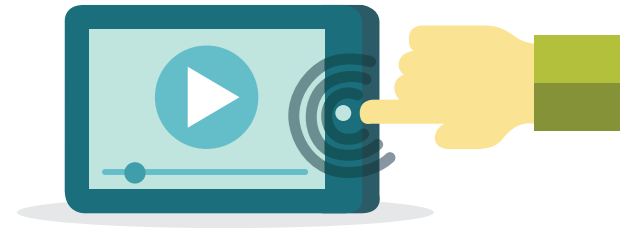
1.

2

3.

YouTube Videos

(e.g., a standalone video, a short clip of video or a combination of video and text)



Seals & Crofts | Greatest Hits (1975) [FULL ALBUM] - YouTube



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LRI4MB7U8N8> ▼

Sep 24, 2015 - Uploaded by Sounds for Everyone

Seals & Crofts | Greatest Hits (1975) [FULL ALBUM] 0:00 When I Meet Them 3:38

Diamond Girl 7:54 ...

How to optimize:

Although Google has the ability to pull information from your web pages and reformat it for SERPs, you make it much easier on the search engine if you pre-format your content with the intention of it qualifying for a Featured Snippet opportunity. If you want to win a Bulleted Featured Snippet, for example, you would ideally format a chunk of text into bullets and include the target keyword in a subheading. The same process follows for Tables, Numbered Lists and other forms of Featured Snippets. In general, the higher up on the page your keyword-centric copy appears, the better.

ORGANIC:

Rich Snippets

Additional lines of context beyond traditional SERP displays. (e.g., ratings, prices, availability)

iPhone X review: The best iPhone challenges you to think different ...

<https://www.cnet.com/products/apple-iphone-x/review/> ▼

★★★★★ Rating: 4.5 - Review by Scott Stein - \$1,149.00 to \$1,300.00



Dec 22, 2017 - Apple iPhone X (256GB, Silver) ... The Good A great blend of handheld comfort and a big, gorgeous OLED screen. ... I had shaved my beard to test Face ID, Apple's new method for unlocking your iPhone by simply looking at it.

How to optimize:

Rich Snippets require the use of schema markup, a coding language that Google uses to parse through web pages and best serve users results. Tagging your product pages with schema alerts Google that it should display your result with the additional rich context.

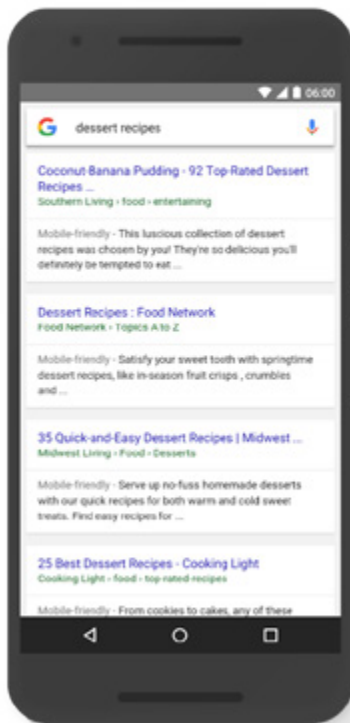
ORGANIC:

Rich Card (For Mobile Devices)

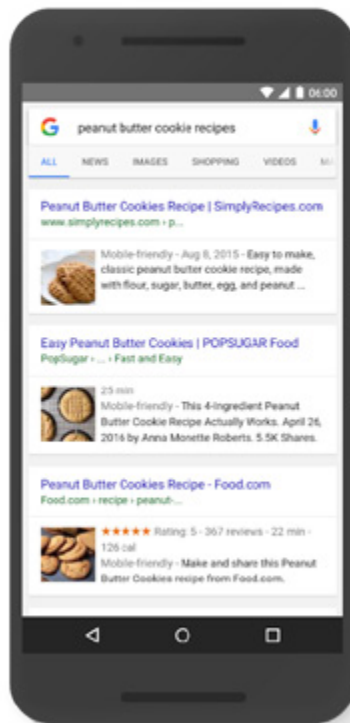
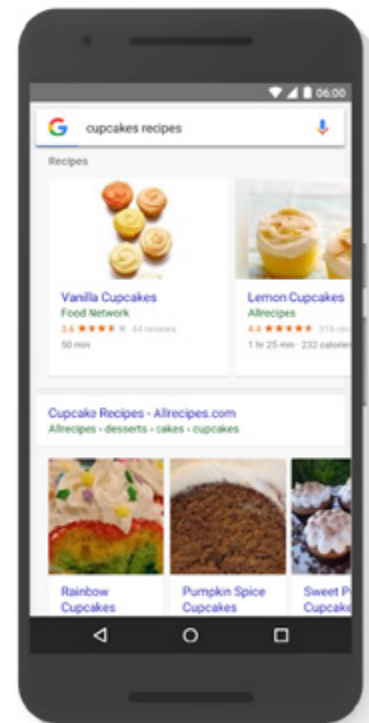
A cleaner, condensed mobile variation of Rich Snippets in card format.



Standard results



Rich Snippets

**NEW** Rich cards

How to optimize:

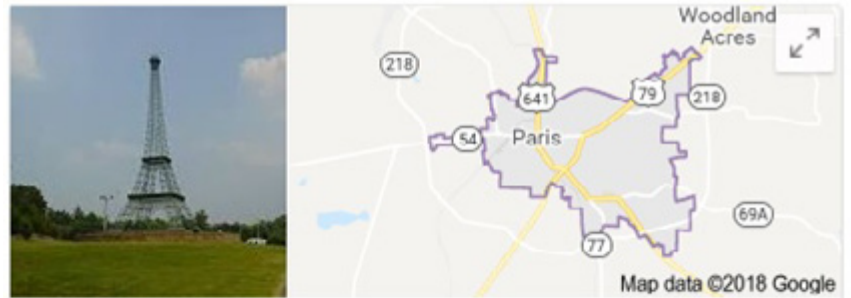
Similar to Rich Snippets, you'll need to employ structured data markup via schema. Google provides free tagging help, HTML coding plugins and testing tools to ensure accuracy and implementation of schema.

ORGANIC:

Knowledge Graph

Shows up on the right or above organic results, displaying images, factual information and more.

Google scrapes information from both Google data and external sources (in this case, Wikipedia) to feature in Knowledge Graphs, which differ from Knowledge Panels. (e.g., searches for people or organizations)



Paris

City in Tennessee

Paris is a city in Henry County, Tennessee, 86 miles northwest of Nashville, on a fork of the West Sandy River and the Tennessee River. As of the 2010 census, the city had a total population of 10,156. It is the county seat of Henry County. [Wikipedia](#)

Weather: 18°F (-8°C), Wind NW at 4 mph (6 km/h), 61% Humidity

Hotels: 3-star averaging \$97. [View hotels](#)

Zip code: 38242

Population: 10,192 (2016)

Local time: Wednesday 4:38 PM

Points of interest



Eiffel Tower Park



Paris Henry County H...



Paris Winery

How to optimize:

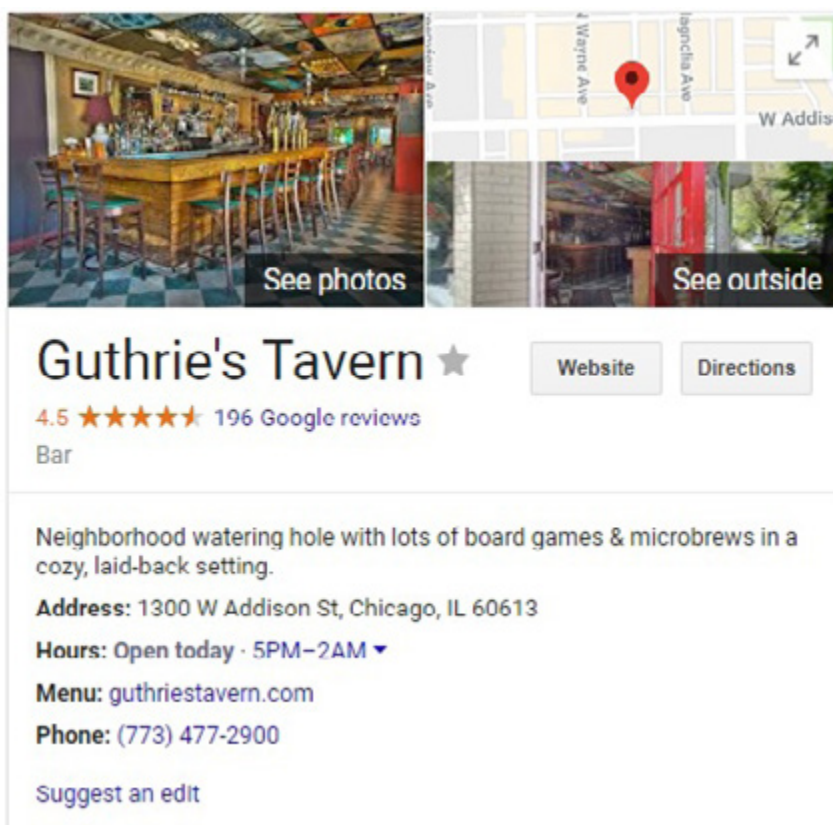
Updated Google My Business accounts, websites and online directories are great ways to make information easily available to search engines and searchers. Google may pull data from a brand's About Us page, Wikipedia page or various business listings, among others. Structuring the data on a few organization-specific pages of your website can also cue Google to properly categorize your information as eligible for Knowledge Graph results.

ORGANIC:

Knowledge Panel

Nearly identical to Knowledge Graphs, except that Google pulls information only from Google My Business listings or Google Maps.

(e.g., queries for brands)



How to optimize:

Because websites, social media channels and other directories do not impact Knowledge Panels, the only way to optimize for this SERP feature is to update your Google My Business and Google Maps — both properties of the search engine itself. In this way, if you want Google to feature you, you have to play its game and appropriately fill out all relevant info on these web applications.

ORGANIC:

Local Pack

A formatted list of local businesses as Rich Snippets below a Google Map with location points. Searchers have a high commercial intent, with location and reviews playing key roles in users' ultimate decision-making.

Local Packs originally featured seven businesses but now show only three, meaning it's more difficult for businesses whose web properties aren't optimized to earn a Featured Snippet. (e.g., restaurants, hospitals, community establishments)



best dive bars in san francisco

All Maps News Images Shopping More Settings Tools

About 1,890,000 results (0.92 seconds)

4.0+ rating Hours

Hi Dive Bar
4.2 ★★★★★ (276) · Bar
Seafood shack with views of the bay
28 Pier
Happy hour food · Happy hour drinks · Fast service

The Saloon
4.5 ★★★★★ (254) · Bar
Blues joint & one of SF's oldest bars
1232 Grant Ave
"bar keep, and the locals at this dive were a spectacle to take in."

Li Po Cocktail Lounge
4.2 ★★★★★ (192) · Cocktail Bar
Mai tais in a Chinese cocktail lounge
916 Grant Ave
Opens at 2:00 PM

How to optimize:

Local Packs are based on locations, so you can show up in SERPs only if your business is geographically relevant to the search query. Filling out a Google + profile, updating your social media channels and generating positive user reviews through Google My Business and Yelp will provide enough information for Google to quickly serve your business to users in a Local 3-Pack format.

ORGANIC:

People Also Ask



Additional questions natively displayed in results that are closely related to the original query. (e.g., related questions to search queries)

People also ask

What is content in digital marketing? ^

Content marketing is a form of **marketing** focused on creating, publishing and distributing **content** for a targeted audience online. It is often used by businesses in order to: Attract attention and generate leads. Expand their customer base. Generate or Increase online sales.

[Content marketing - Wikipedia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Content_marketing)
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Content_marketing

Search for: [What is content in digital marketing?](#)

What is a content plan? v

What is content management in marketing? v

How much do content marketing managers make? v

What is included in content marketing? v

Is social media a part of content marketing? v

How to optimize:

People also ask (PAA) operates based on relational topics and machine learning. Adding semantic search terms and similarly related keywords to your content provides more depth and context to your web pages, which Google will use to populate its manifold PAA dropdowns. What are the follow-up questions one could logically ask in reference to your target keyword phrases? Include those questions and answers in your content to stand a better chance of being featured in SERPs.

ORGANIC:

Image Pack

Queries that specifically refer to photos or ones that strongly necessitate relevant imagery (such as storefronts or homes) often return an Image Pack, a horizontal carousel of images. (e.g., queries best answered in photo format)

Images for english bulldog getting a bath



→ More images for english bulldog getting a bath

Report images

How to optimize:

Use descriptive file names, alt tags, image captions and associated copy to make your images as rich and search-friendly as possible. The pages your images live on should also have relevant page titles, URLs and unique metadata.

ORGANIC:

Site Links



An expanded pack of links related to a specific domain. This typically occurs when someone searches for an organization, signifying intent to glean more information or perhaps make a purchase. (e.g., Careers or About Us pages below the core domain)

brafton

All News Maps Images Shopping More Settings Tools

About 1,370,000 results (0.78 seconds)

Brafton | Content Marketing Agency
<https://www.brafton.com/> ▼
 An in-house content marketing agency that develops and manages targeted content strategies from blogs, graphics and video to SEO, social and more.

<p>Careers Want to work in a fun and collaborative workplace ...</p>	<p>Video Brafton's expert video team will work with you to produce ...</p>
<p>What Is Content Marketing? Content marketing is about getting the right information to the right ...</p>	<p>Blog Fuel your career and your brand with content marketing insights ...</p>
<p>Copywriting Services Brafton's copywriting services remain its foundation, even as ...</p>	<p>Content Marketing Strategy Need a custom content strategy? Our expert content marketing ...</p>

More results from brafton.com »

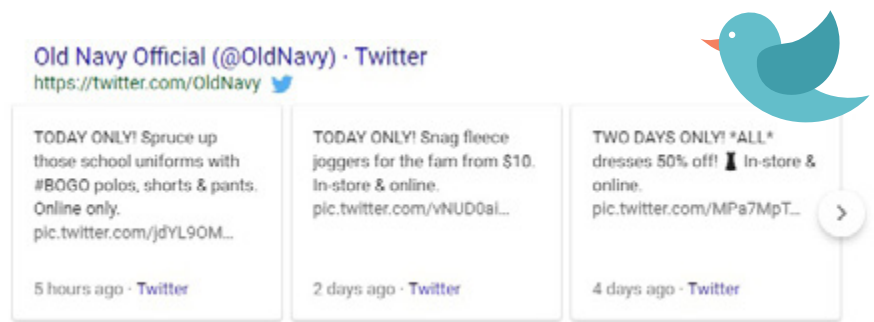
How to optimize:

Site links are auto-generated by Google based on website optimization best practices and how relevant additional links may be to a search query. That means a coherent, navigable site structure and unique page-level metadata help Google understand which site links should be featured.

ORGANIC:

Twitter

A carousel of three Twitter posts with clickable images and links. Scrolling to the right reveals additional tweets. (e.g., a brand's most recent Twitter posts)



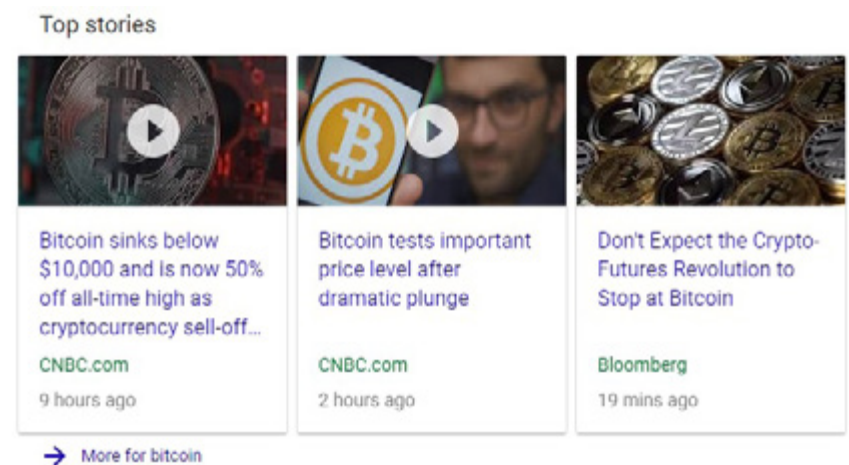
How to optimize:

A regularly updated Twitter feed allows Google to cycle through trending tweets from your brand and feature them in search results. You do not need to have a verified blue checkmark on Twitter or even have a huge social following — all you have to do to be featured in SERPs is post often and encourage engagement. Tweets that have a lot of comments and retweets send strong signals to Google that your Twitter profile is relevant.

ORGANIC:

News Box

Trending or breaking news related to a search query. Google recently retitled this feature from “In the news” to “Top stories.” (e.g., stock movements or time-sensitive topics)



How to optimize:

Typically, only larger news-based publishers appear in Top Stories because the intent behind this feature is to report breaking news and ideas in relation to a search query. You can still set yourself up for a chance of appearing at the top of SERPs by posting timely content on a hot topic or current event, in addition to following SEO best practices. Organizations that don't generally publish news may find little value in Top Stories.

PAID:

Google Ads Top

Through Google Ads and based on Quality Scores, several paid ads are featured at the top of SERPs, above organic results. The green "Ad" label informs searchers they're clicking on a paid advertisement. (e.g., shopping results, commercial sales, promotional keyword branding)

About 82,500,000 results (0.68 seconds)

Content Marketing | Understand the challenges | adobe.com

Ad www.adobe.com/ExperienceCloud/Marketing_Cloud

★★★★★ Rating for adobe.com: 4.7 - 1,447 reviews

Attract, engage & convert throughout the customer journey. Learn More!

Campaign Measurement · Better Content Governance · Higher Engagement · Faster Time to Market

The #1 Content Marketing Firm | Engaging Content For Influence

Ad www.pumped.com/ (855) 473-2946

Engaging **Content** Created From Your Expertise To Drive Awareness & Customers.

Increase leads and sales. · Op-Ed / Byline articles · Groundbreaking exposure

Highlights: Pump Up Your Content, Pump Up Authority And Credibility...

[Our Difference](#) · [Why Pumped](#) · [Our Methodology](#) · [Case Studies](#)

Better Content Marketing - percolate.com

Ad www.percolate.com/

See the world's leading **content marketing** software.

Grow your revenue faster · Increase productivity · Elevate your brand

Services: Campaign Planning, Marketing ROI Analytics, Content Marketing, Social Content Marketing

Content Marketing Planning | Fast, Beautiful And Intuitive | airtable.com

Ad www.airtable.com/

Plan your **content** powerfully with the platform used by 30,000+ companies.

Gallery and Card Views · Drag & Drop File Uploads · Free to Sign Up · 350+ App Integrations

How to optimize:

Ad position is dictated by a number of factors, including expected click-through rate, relevance to the search query, quality of the ad landing page and the amount of money you've bid within Google Ads, to name a few. You can influence Google to rank your ads at the top by bidding more, improving UX of the ad and targeting keywords that match the intent of your ad.

PAID:

Google Ads Bottom

Paid ads featured below organic results are often cheaper, as the four most coveted ad positions (the very top) are more expensive and more competitive. They serve the same purpose as above-the-fold ads but don't contribute to SERP crowding. (e.g., same as above)



St Patricks Day Gifts Ideas

Ad www.theirishstore.com/ ▼

★★★★★ Rating for theirishstore.com: 4.6 - 3,747 reviews

Winter Sale - up to 65% Off. Authentic Irish Products. Express Delivery

[Irish Gifts For The Home](#) · [Celtic & Irish Jewelry](#) · [Aran Irish Sweaters](#) · [Irish Gifts From Ireland](#)

Deal: 10% off your order · Code GGLE10

St Patricks Day Party Supplies | 110% Lowest Price Guarantee

Ad www.orientaltrading.com/ ▼

★★★★★ Rating for orientaltrading.com: 4.7

Hosting a **St Patricks Day** Party or Event? Shop our Green Party Supplies Here.

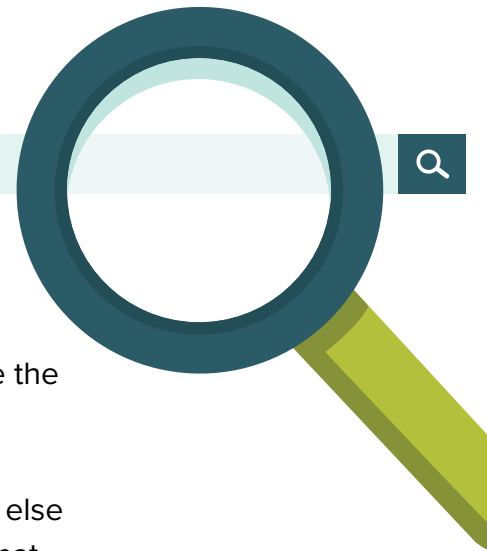
Types: [Beads](#), [Party Supplies](#), [Decorations](#), [Candy](#), [Hats](#), [Costumes](#)



How to optimize:

Ads at the bottom of SERPs are not ideal, as the overarching goal is to be the first visible listing for a keyword. However, Google may determine that organic search results actually serve the user more value than paid ads, despite your bidding on a keyword within a Google Ads auction. On the other hand, ranking above other bottom-SERP ads is still preferable, whereby you'd want to follow the same optimization tips presented in the "Google Ads Top" section.

Where Does SEO Factor in?



If Google is publishing great info directly in SERPs, then doesn't that reduce the likelihood of a user actually clicking on a full-length result? **Yes and no.**

If your web pages do not earn a featured spot in SERPs, it means someone else has provided information that is more relevant to searchers. It also means that Featured Snippets and the like will appear above all other results, pushing your content further down the page. This is bad for your SEO, as the former glory of being on Page 1 holds less significance if you don't actually own Position 0 (aka Featured Snippet).

Conversely, you can drive higher click-through rates, site traffic and search visibility by winning SERP features, thus improving your SEO. And as your click-through rates rise, Google's RankBrain algorithm will begin to recalculate the value of your listings and may subsequently adjust your rankings upward.

Which SERP Features are Most Important?

Not all Google SERP features are created equally, but that's only because they're all respective to searcher intent. A Knowledge Panel, for instance, is not inherently more valuable than a Local 3-Pack if a user is actually Googling "cat videos" — in fact, in both cases, the SERP feature would be entirely irrelevant.

However, it may be safe to assume that since mobile, voice search and video search continue to expand their grip on internet traffic, SERP features will be likelier to return Featured Snippets containing YouTube videos and Direct Answers for simple queries.



Optimizing Your Content With SERP Features in Mind: What to Know

By design, web developers should update all relevant web pages with schema markup, as this will help structure page data so search engines can more easily crawl and scrape information to serve to users in SERPs.

In the past year, however, there have been instances of brands winning Featured Snippets without utilizing schema, which can be taken as a sign that Google's algorithms are evolving quickly. So quickly, in fact, that they're able to scan, compile and serve information that's unstructured, as long as those respective web pages most closely match search intent and topical relevance.

Site optimization is preferable either way.

This has been a lot to absorb, we know.

Now get out there and win the internet.



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