

What Google Hummingbird means for online marketing

 By [Cole Rautenbach](#)

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Google loves to shake things up now and again, reminding everyone in the digital marketing space to not get complacent. Tired of hearing of its zoological transformations at algorithmic level? Tough. The Hummingbird has landed. What does this mean for online marketing?

Anyone in the digital marketing space may have experienced an albatross around their neck towards the end of August 2013. Their website rankings and numbers went all wonky; their wings were clipped. Many suspect that this was the result of Google's new Hummingbird algorithm being introduced before it was announced on the internet giant's 15th birthday.

Ever since the announcement of Hummingbird, digital, internet, and content marketing people have flocked to the web to find out more about how Google's latest algorithm update affects them.

Why should you care?

Digital marketers follow the trends inspired by Google's ever-changing algorithms in order to rank higher, get better results, and earn more money from searches, which become leads, which they can convert to sales. When these algorithms change, digital people may feel like their goose has been cooked. They shouldn't count their chickens before they've hatched, however; the early birds who are able to quickly get their ducks in a row will be able to control how their rankings take flight.

How the algorithm updates have improved online content

Remember when Black Hat SEO was the done thing; when you could stuff keywords into meaningless content and it successfully changed the pecking order of your online rankings? You were tricking the machine, but frustrating searchers. As Google introduced the Penguin and Panda updates, many feathers got ruffled because it meant that digital marketers and online businesses had to spend real money on good writers in order to rule the roost. Real writers (instead of content-spinning software) produce the content that actually *means* something to Google users instead of sending them on a wild goose chase after keyword-stuffed turkey tripe.

Only good, valuable content gets shared, so Google used social sharing and user experience metrics (click-through rates and web page interaction) to determine a website's position on the SERP's. This kills two birds with one stone - it makes SEO-hungry digital marketers (and their bevvies of good writers) produce valuable content *and* subsequently gives searchers the content/answers they're looking for. If they find it useful enough, they'll hopefully interact with it (Like, leave comments, and share it), making it even more SEO-valuable.

So what is Hummingbird?

Google's introduction of Hummingbird is a feather in the cap of the search giant, which is constantly looking to improve users' search experiences. And, since searchers' behaviour has been slowly changing over time, Google is improving the way it provides results to searchers, ensuring that results are more relevant to not only *what* they're searching for, but *how* they're searching for it.

The advent of spoken queries on mobile devices has had a huge impact on how search is conducted *and* now in the way Google provides the answers. Consider a typed search: "best poultry dish Vryheid" versus a spoken search: "Where can I find the best poultry dish in the town of Vryheid?" Google is optimising its results to answer the more frequent query-based searches its users perform. It's called Conversational Search.

Digital marketers and content writers who have already been speaking directly to users instead of to the search machine will find this algorithm change to be duck soup. Keeping doing what you're doing. Google's focus is on how valuable content satisfies user intent, so now it's rewarding content writers who've been doing that all along, by prioritising that valuable content in the search rankings.

Don't understand some of these bird idioms? Just Google them ;)

PS. If this put you in fine feather, don't forget to Tweet it!

ABOUT COLE RAUTENBACH

Having worked her way through various jobs and gained invaluable experience, Cole Rautenbach decided that she was better suited to being her own boss. Now she takes on numerous writing projects across industry lines. Where there are words, there you will find her. Her approach to her clients is to assist them to get more out of their own business development endeavours, and she enjoys seeing the results of those joint efforts. Follow @ColeRautenbach on Twitter.

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