



ASTRIX

# SEO: CHANGES TO ALGORITHM, FOCUS AREAS, AND STRATEGIES

## INTRODUCTION

The digital landscape continues to evolve, driven by advancements in technology and changes in user behavior. In this ever-changing environment, Search Engine Optimization (SEO) remains critical for businesses to maintain and improve their visibility on search engines like Google. However, with frequent algorithm updates and shifts in search engine priorities, staying relevant demands continuous adaptation. This white paper explores the latest changes in search algorithms, key focus areas, and effective strategies to remain competitive in the SEO ecosystem.

## THE EVOLUTION OF SEARCH ALGORITHMS

### Google's Major Algorithm Updates

Search engines, particularly Google, continually refine their algorithms to provide users with more relevant and accurate search results. In recent years, several notable updates have reshaped the SEO landscape:

- Bidirectional Encoder Representations from Transformers (BERT): Enabled Google to better understand the context of words in search queries, focusing on natural language processing (NLP). This improved the interpretation of long-tail and conversational queries.
- 2021 Core Web Vitals Update: Emphasized user experience by focusing on page loading speed, interactivity, and visual stability as critical ranking factors.
- Multitask Unified Model (MUM): Advanced search understanding by processing multimodal data, enabling more complex queries to be answered comprehensively.

## **Focus on Genuine, Helpful Content**

Google now prioritizes helpful, user-focused content. Websites focused solely on search engine rankings rather than delivering genuine value to users may see a decline in their rankings.



# NATURAL LANGUAGE PROCESSING AND SEO

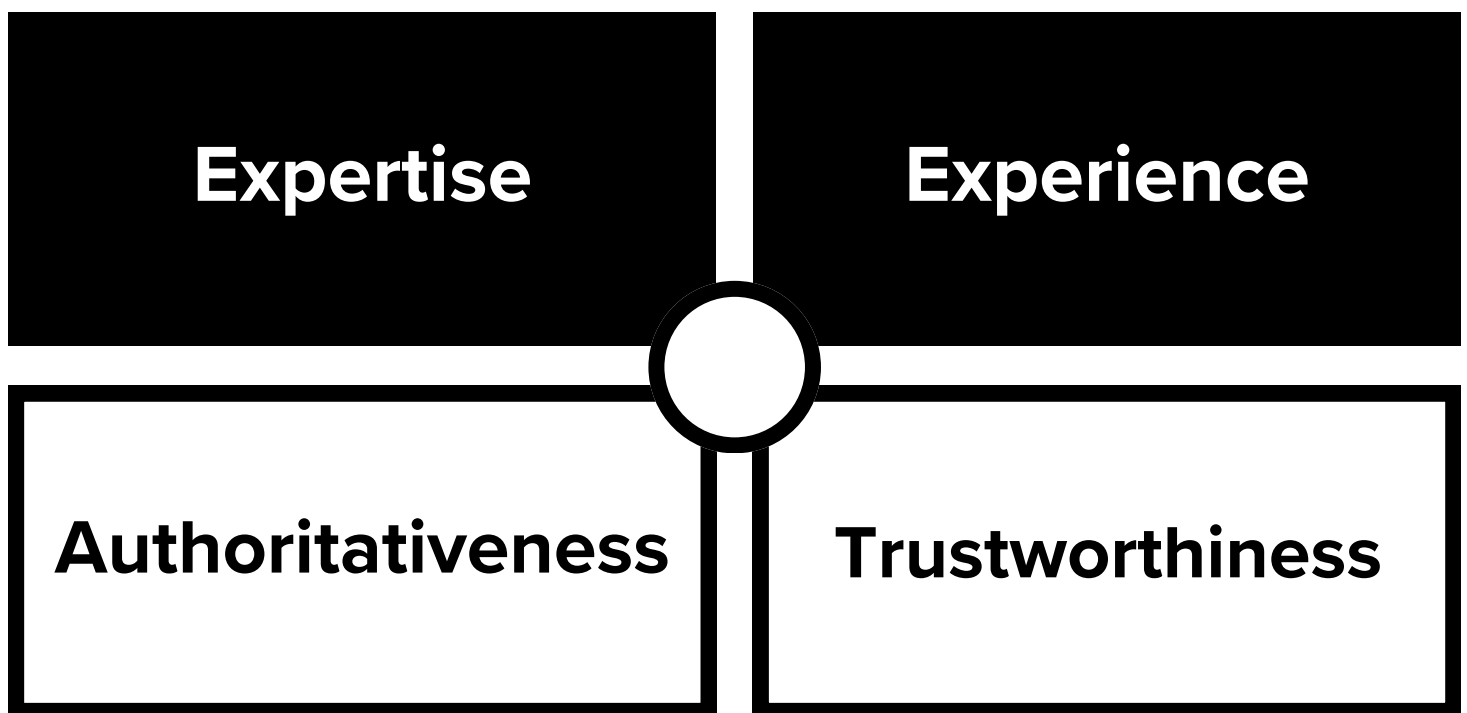
## The Importance of User Intent

Google's shift to understanding the intent behind searches, powered by updates like BERT and MUM, highlights the importance of conversational content. Content creators should focus on user intent rather than keyword density.

## THE RISE OF E-E-A-T: EXPERIENCE, EXPERTISE, AUTHORITATIVENESS, AND TRUSTWORTHINESS

### Google's E-E-A-T Framework

In 2024, Google added Experience to its existing framework of Expertise, Authoritativeness, and Trustworthiness (E-A-T). This update emphasizes content that not only demonstrates knowledge but also real-world experience in the subject matter. This is particularly critical for sensitive topics like health, finance, and legal advice, where accuracy is paramount.



# EFFECTIVE SEO STRATEGIES FOR 2024

## 1. Optimizing for Search Intent

Ensure that content aligns with different query types (informational, navigational, transactional, and commercial investigation). Provide comprehensive answers and encourage exploration through internal linking.

## 2. Targeting Featured Snippets and Rich Results

To enhance visibility, structure your content with clear headings, bullet points, tables, and schema markup for context. This will increase the chances of being featured in rich results and featured snippets.

## 3. AI-Driven SEO

Leverage AI-driven tools like GPT and Bard for content creation and optimization. While AI improves efficiency, human oversight is essential to maintain originality and user intent.

## 4. Local SEO

For businesses serving specific regions, local SEO remains crucial. This includes:

- Optimizing Google My Business profiles.
- Building local citations.
- Encouraging customer reviews to improve local search visibility.

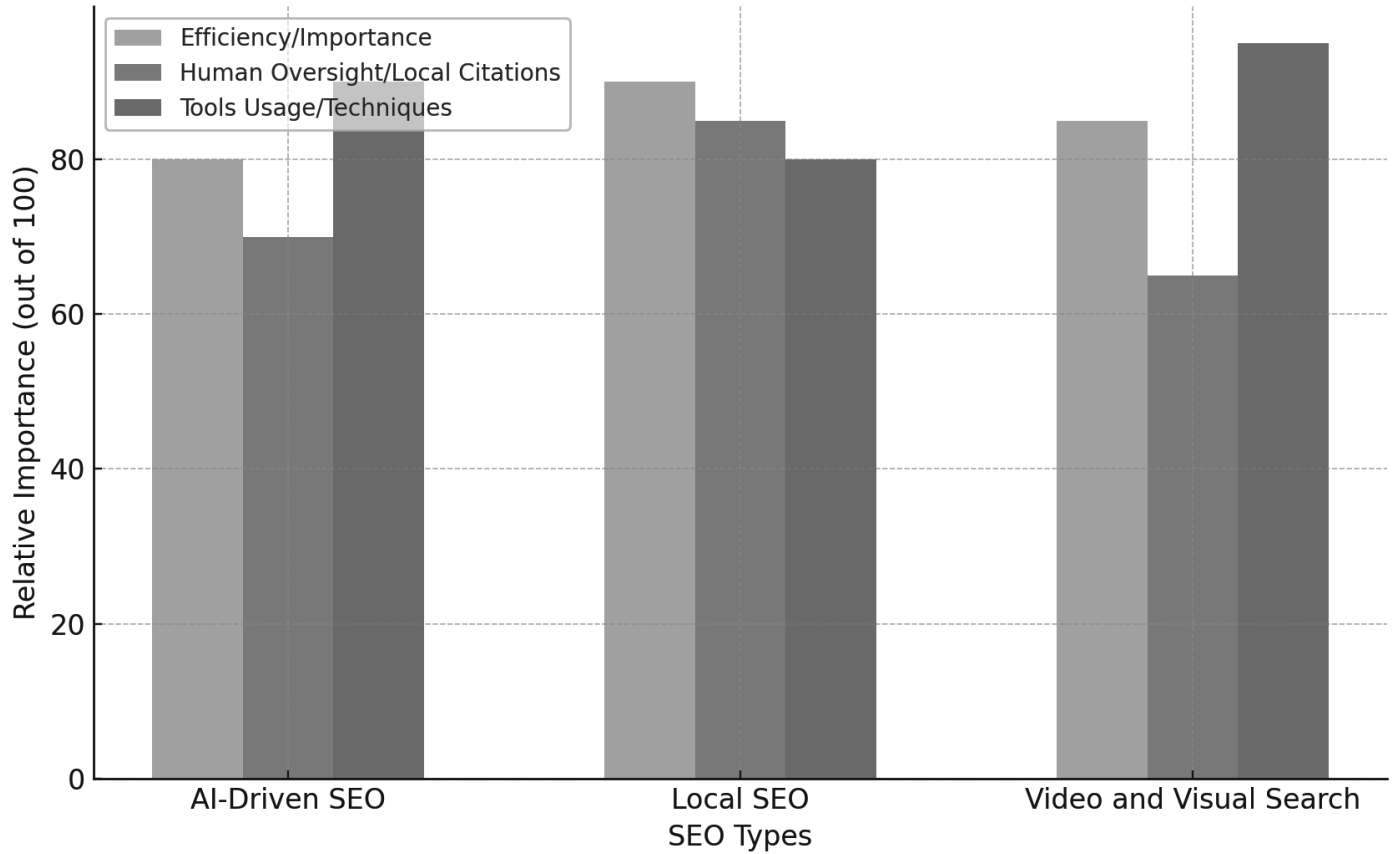
## 5. Video and Visual Search

Video marketing is gaining momentum, particularly on platforms like YouTube and through visual search engines like Google Lens.

To optimize for this:

- Use descriptive ALT text for images.
- Include video transcripts.
- Implement structured data for videos.

## SEO Trends: AI-Driven, Local, and Visual Search



## IMPACT OF GOOGLE'S HELPFUL CONTENT UPDATE

### 2023 Helpful Content Update

Google's Helpful Content Update, which rewards websites prioritizing "helpful, people-first" content, has led to a 5-10% decline in rankings for pages with thin or irrelevant content. This emphasizes the importance of quality content that directly addresses user needs.

## KEY STATISTICS TO NOTE

- 64% of marketers are updating existing content to stay competitive (Semrush).
- Companies using AI-driven SEO tools report a 30-40% decrease in time needed for keyword research and analysis (Thatware).
- Properly optimized AI-generated content has led to a 20-25% increase in traffic compared to traditional methods (Thatware).
- 91% of businesses incorporate video marketing into their strategies, with anticipated video ad spending of \$78.5 billion in 2024 (Thatware).
- Short-form videos, particularly on TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube Shorts, are delivering the highest ROI.

## CONCLUSION

SEO continues to evolve at a rapid pace. To stay competitive, businesses and SEO professionals must focus on quality content, user experience, and intent-driven optimization. By adopting a user-first approach and staying agile in response to algorithm changes, businesses can enhance their visibility and maintain a competitive edge in the digital marketplace.

### Key Takeaways:

- Focus on helpful, people-first content aligned with user intent.
- Optimize for Core Web Vitals and mobile-first indexing.
- Leverage AI-driven tools while ensuring human oversight.
- Prioritize local SEO, semantic search, and voice search optimization.
- Stay updated with algorithm changes and refine your strategy continuously.