

# Top 5 Ways To Benefit From Universal Search

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This paper explains Universal Search and the Top 5 ways you can position yourself to benefit from it. Sites are either on the forefront of these exciting changes and will benefit, or they aren't and the changes will end up working **against** you. This comprehensive white paper outlines the best strategies to make these changes work for you and put your site in the forefront.

Search Engine Optimization (SEO) can be confusing, especially with all the changes and new information to consider. For the basics, please refer to <http://www.ecombuffet.com/seo-library/seo-white-papers.htm> (white paper number 7 entitled SEO Basics: How to Get Top 20 Rankings).

## What is Universal Search and Why Should You Care?

In summary, Universal Search combines all the information within its Vertical engines/databases into one index to serve a single set of SERPs (Search Engine Results Pages).

An example of Vertical engines/databases are Google News, Google Video, Google Images etc.

What this means is when you go to [www.google.com](http://www.google.com), (their most highly trafficked domain) and do a search, rather than just getting websites from their main index, you will also get results from the News, Images, Video, etc databases as well. It is a more comprehensive results page.

Google Vice President of Search Products and User Experience Marissa Mayer said the company's goal for universal search is to create "a seamless, integrated experience to get users the best answers."

Sometimes the information you are looking for is best delivered by video, or images or a news story. Currently you would have to search each of the Vertical engines/databases to get all the information. Google is planning to integrate it into one search engine.

As a searcher this means easier access to various forms of information with only one search. It seems like a good thing, as long as the results are easily organized on the page. It could mean more scrolling to get to the different areas of results, depending how they lay it out.

As a business owner looking to gain new traffic from the engines, this could either work for or against you – depending on what action you take right now.

## What To Do and Why

Changes with the search engines can sometimes be confusing. There is a lot of information to evaluate and some decisions to be made. Before you decide anything, you need to understand what your options are.

If your site isn't already properly optimized for organic rankings, that would be the place to start. You want to make sure you have clean, search engine friendly code and a solid foundation, as well as on-page optimization. This would be the starting point, without this in place you have no hope of competing in the engines – with or without Universal Search.

If your site is already properly and aggressively optimized then you are in good shape to build on that and benefit from Universal Search.

Since Universal Search will take information from the Verticals (like images, press releases, videos, audios, Blog postings, etc) you want to make sure that you have some exposure in each of those areas.

Imagine someone does a search for what you have to offer, and in the Universal Search results your webpage comes up. In the same search your competitor's site comes up PLUS your competitor has video, images and Blog posts as well. A searcher is more likely to click on your competitor's site since more of the total number of results that come up will belong to your competitor.

The other factor is the layout of the results page. We don't know yet how it will play out. If Google mixes all the results together (ex: videos, web pages, Blog posts, images, etc all come up intermingled) that creates one scenario. It means you aren't competing apples to apples for the top spot. It could be video in the 1<sup>st</sup> position and you are hoping to get your web pages ranked in the 1<sup>st</sup> position.

Another way of delivering the results would be to group them by category. They could list all the Blog results, then all the video results under that, and then all the image results under that, etc.

If that is the case, you want to have something listed in each category section because if you happen to have a ranking in the last category section but nothing higher on the page, you are not likely to get a click.

What you really need to do in addition to adding content and optimizing your site, is also focus on getting something in the other Verticals.

## Top 5 Ways To Participate in Universal Search

1. **Google Image Search:** It has always been a good idea to use images on your site for illustrating your products and services. Now customers can find your site via Google Image Search. Optimize your images with descriptive, keyword-rich file names and ALT tags. Use accurate descriptions of your image files for the benefit of those who might need to view the site in text only format.
2. **Google Video (beta):** Use descriptive, keyword-rich file names for your video files. Also create a keyword-rich title tag, description tag, and video site map.
3. **Google News:** Submit your press releases for display as news, and also as a new content page on your site.
4. **Google Maps:** AKA Google Local – this has been included in Google search results for a while. Give your site a local presence through the Google Maps Local Business Center where local businesses can get a free basic listing to extend their reach in the SERPs.
5. **Google Blog Search (beta):** Use social media and Blog engines to drive traffic to the site. Submit to the Google Blog search and have your Blog help boost you in the new world of Universal Search.

## Guaranteed Search Engine Optimization

With a better understanding of the options, it becomes clear that in order to increase your exposure in the search engines and get new traffic you need to be proactive in anticipation of these Universal Search changes. **Don't wait until it is too late and you are scrambling to catch up.**

EcomBuffet offers guaranteed search engine rankings, as well as Press Release, Blog Submission and Video Submission services. EcomBuffet creates a one-stop solution for all of your needs, allowing you to deal with one company that has the vision, industry insight and cutting edge plans for your big-picture success.

For questions about our services contact Jennifer Horowitz at 562-592-5347 or [jennifer@ecombuffet.com](mailto:jennifer@ecombuffet.com).