

Tourism Businesses Need to Get On Board the Voice Search Revolution



Optimise your digital presence online for the new conversational age. Voice search algorithms will do the rest for you.

The travel industry in Asia Pacific should prepare itself to maximise business from voice searches online.

Simply optimise your digital online presence by building reputation, trust, authority and relevance and the voice recognition algorithms of Google, Apple, Amazon and others will do the rest for you - mostly.

That was the recommendation by Bronwyn White, tourism strategist and co-founder of MyTravelResearch.com. She was addressing an audience of tourism marketers at the Tourism Marketing Rockstar Convention, which took place in Sydney, 14 September.

White told the audience that voice search and chatbots were the latest digital marketing outcomes of the artificial intelligence revolution currently transforming the travel industry by stealth.

Apple Siri, Google Now, Windows Cortana and Amazon Alexa are the leading voice activated chatbots helping consumers search without typing. They all use artificial intelligence algorithms to drive voice search. They also tap into user preferences, geographical location, and previous search history.

White told the audience that nearly 60% of searches from mobile devices are now voice searches. Google reports that 55% of teens and 40% of adults use voice search daily on Google.

Not surprisingly, research shows that people are more comfortable using voice search at home or in the office, not in public transportation, the gym or a public restroom. However, young people under 24 are more comfortable using voice search in public places.

"It's a foretaste of things to come," said White. "We're still at the start of the revolution."

White recommended that destinations, theme parks, hotels and restaurants etc should tailor online content to satisfy FAQs by voice, which, unsurprisingly, tends to be more conversational than written search. For example, rather than type "weather Khao Lak" we might now ask "What is the weather going to be like in Khao Lak when I arrive next week?" (it is likely Google will already know something of your plans).

She told the audience that there were five ways tourism businesses should adapt their marketing:

- Optimise location data
- Fill out all relevant business categories for Google My Business (make it as complete as possible)
- Cultivate reviews (search engines and therefore digital voice assistants love them)
- Ensure your branding is focused (don't try to be all things to all people)
- Publish great content and develop it with voice in mind

But it's important not to panic. "To a great extent, if tourism businesses are optimised for mobile typed search, Google will deliver accurate search results via voice too - at least in the short term," said White.

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About MyTravelResearch.com

MyTravelResearch.com is a market research and marketing firm specializing in the travel, tourism and aviation industries. Its specialty is providing insights that are actionable.

Founded by principals with lifetime careers in travel, tourism and aviation, MyTravelResearch.com exists to build the visitor economy and successful tourism businesses. It does this by putting the voice of the customer and best practice business thinking into an easy to implement, hands-on approach via an innovative membership model. MyTravelResearch.com can help:

* National Tourism Organizations (NTOs) meet the expectations of their industry by acting as an extension of their research and marketing resources

* Businesses make more informed decisions. (It is like having your own research and/or marketing team)

Visit www.MyTravelResearch.com.

Email: carolyn@mytravelresearch.com or bronwyn@mytravelresearch.com

Media queries

At MyTravelResearch.com Australia:

— Bronwyn White (mobile): (+61) 408 225 766

— Carolyn Childs (mobile): (+61) 416 213 962

ScottAsia Communications — Asia Pacific office:

Tel. (+66) [0] 2160 2644 (Ann Sriwongsa)

Email: ann@scottasia.net ??

UK office: Tel. (+44) [0] 7949 077959 (Ken Scott)

Email: kens@scottasia.net