

Do people really use voice search?



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🔍 Search



2 About us

As a full-service Marketing Agency, we have been helping businesses since 1997 with all things digital. We collaborate and innovate with the sole purpose of finding our clients new business, engaging with their target audience and improving their overall success and positioning in search engines and on social media platforms.



Paid Social

We deliver carefully curated ads to a highly analysed audience on the leading social media advertising platforms such as; Instagram, TikTok and Spotify.



Pay Per Click

As proud and certified Google and Microsoft advertising partners, our team create search campaigns that drive clicks and conversions.



SEO & Content

Our exceptional content and SEO strategies will get your product or service in front of your audience.



Organic Social

We immerse ourselves into your audience and produce strategies that are engaging and full of your personality.



Website Design

We are experts in delivering bespoke websites that have been recognised by several national and international publications and awards.



Academy

We build and train amazing teams so you can work with ours, or we can train your team so they become in-house customer magnets themselves.

What we do

“We’re responsible for those adverts that follow you everywhere online and on your phone. We also make sure that when you search for something you get the right results. We do this for a whole range of companies from National newspapers to Global charities and our agency’s been doing it since before Google was born.

It’s all done through a combination of data analysis and pinpoint targeting which is why it’s so effective. If you see an advert or a search result that makes you want to click then that’s probably us!”



3 An introduction to voice search

For years, marketers have been told, “prepare for voice search. It’s the future, and if you’re not ready, you’re going to be left in the dust.” We were told that people would search for everything - from products to services to restaurants and hairdressers using voice search, and that websites should be optimised for long tail phrases in preparation.

And yet... this predicted liftoff hasn’t become a reality yet. Our clients often ask us if they need to be worried about voice search, and while we always advise that the safest bet is to start working towards optimising their sites for voice search, this isn’t something that needs to cause a panic.

Although Google claims that 27% of global online users are currently using voice search on mobile devices...

the team at MCM Net remained unconvinced.



We love search. And we love SEO.

Our team pays extremely close attention to trends, user habits and yes - Google. And what our experience told us is that, while these numbers are no lie, they may not be totally representing what’s actually happening in the world of voice search. The overall concern within the team was that most people don’t actually know what voice search really is, whether they’re using it daily or not.

Let’s start by defining voice search.

Here's how Wikipedia defines this technology:

Voice search, also called voice-enabled, allows the user to use a voice command to search the Internet, a website, or an app. In a broader definition, voice search includes open-domain keyword query on any information on the Internet, for example in Google Voice Search, Cortana, Siri and Amazon Echo.



Now, we know that Siri, Alexa and Google and all the other devices do a whole lot more than search the internet for information. They compose text messages for us. They set reminders, turn on the lights in our house, set the heating to the perfect temperature and set timers for tonight's dinner. These voice search devices have become our personal assistants.

So, examples of true voice search would be...

"Ok Google, what's the best florist near me?"

"Alexa, where can I buy Italian leather shoes?"

"Hey Siri, what's the best brand of automatic drill?"

Not...

"Hey Siri, text my husband: can you stop and get milk on your way home please?"

"Alexa, set a timer for 15 minutes."

"Ok Google, set a recurring reminder for the 10th of each month to pay the credit card bill."



The first list is voice search. The second list is voice command.

We hypothesised that while 27% of users might be using these devices for **voice command**, most of them probably aren't using genuine **voice search**.

So we set ourselves the task of finding out how users in the UK really use "voice search" by conducting a survey.

We surveyed a sample of internet users in the UK to see if Google is right about their stats. And we weren't at all surprised with what we found.

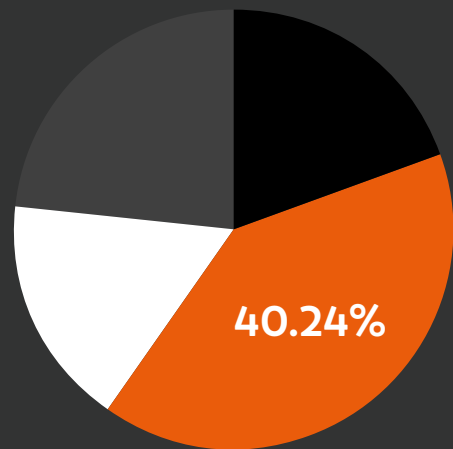
Of the users we surveyed, **56%** of respondents said they use voice search. Those that answered no (44%) were exempt from the remainder of the survey. Here's what else we found out.



4 The facts and figures

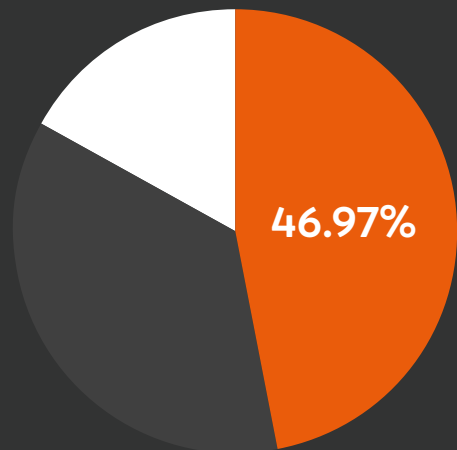
Do you use voice search for...

- **19.51%** Search (finding local businesses, services, etc)
- **40.24%** Activation of music, weather report, turning on electronic devices in the home, etc
- **17.07%** Dictation (text composing, setting up reminders, etc)
- **23.17%** All of the above



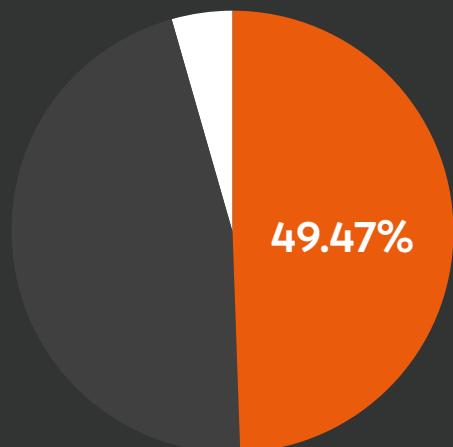
How often do you use voice search?

- **46.97%** Everyday
- **36.36%** Once or twice a week
- **16.67%** Rarely



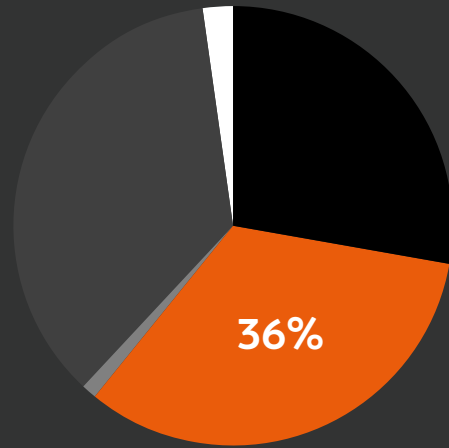
What do you use to voice search?

- **49.47%** Mobile
- **46.32%** Smart speaker
- **4.21%** Other (dictaphone app, tv remote sky, fire tv stick, car)



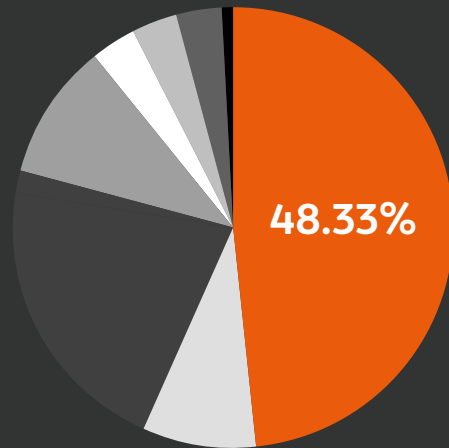
What software do you use?

- 28% Siri
- 33% Google
- 1% Cortana
- 36% Alexa
- 2% Other



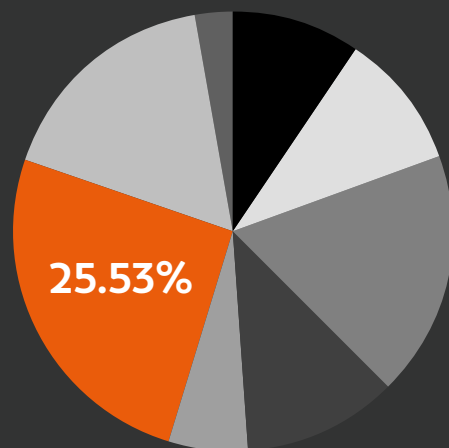
Where do you usually voice search?

- 48.33% Home
- 8.33% With friends
- 20.83% In the car
- 1.67% At the gym
- 10% In the office
- 3.33% Shopping
- 3.33% At a restaurant
- 3.33% Public transport
- 0.83% Other



What type of things do you use voice search for?

- 9.57% Leisure Activities (restaurants, gyms, attractions, hotels etc)
- 10.11% Shopping or Browsing
- 18.09% Weather
- 11.17% Traffic
- 5.85% Schedule
- 25.53% Music
- 17.02% Searching for facts/figures
- 2.66% Other (dictation, texting, tv channels, language translation, spelling)



5 Our analysis

Looking at the data, we can see that less than 20% of those who think they use voice search are actually using voice search solely for its true and intended purposes. The rest of the respondents - more than 80% - are using their smart device to carry out tasks for them, find out facts, or a combination of all purposes. The overwhelming majority - more than 40% - are using it for voice command purposes - like activating music, getting the weather report, or turning on the lights.



The statement that the majority of users are carrying out voice search (or similar commands) on mobile devices is definitely true, with close to half turning to their smartphone to conduct searches or commands. What's interesting about this though is that while most people use their mobile device, they actually carry out the most voice searches from home. This would indicate that not everyone feels that it's necessary to buy a smart speaker to carry out these searches.

Analysing user habits can also shed light on which types of businesses need to make voice search optimisation a priority. Most respondents appear to be using voice search for weather, music and random facts and figures, followed by shopping. This would indicate that retail is the industry that would currently benefit most from focusing on voice search optimisation for their websites, followed by leisure businesses. However, these numbers fall very short when compared to people using their voice search device for personal admin reasons.



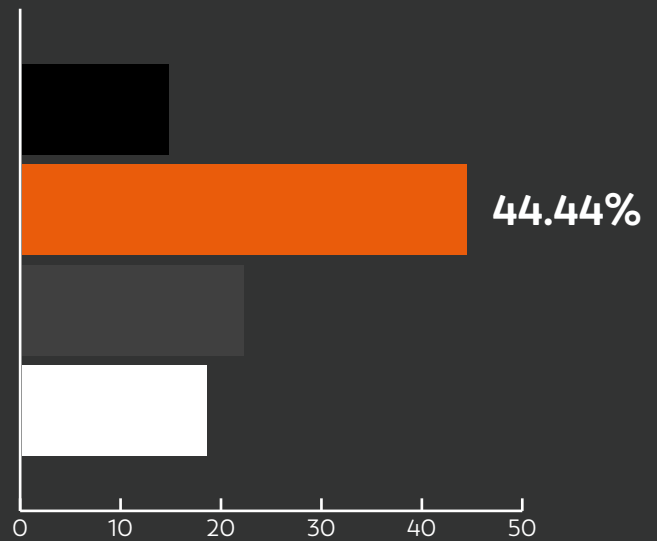
6 Does age matter?

We wanted to dive deeper into the data though. Surely, people of different ages use voice search functionality differently? Those who have grown up in the technological revolution could be more likely to use voice search for a wider variety of things, while older users might use it for simpler tasks. Here's what the data told us:

Age 18-25

Do you use voice search for:

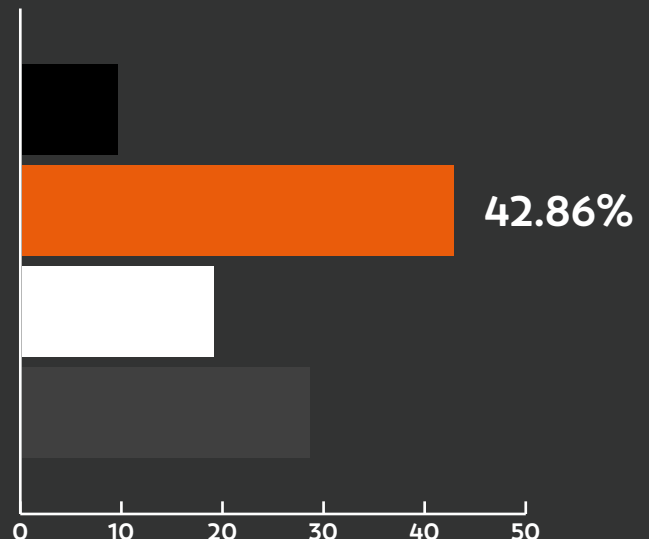
- **14.81%** Search (finding local businesses, services, etc)
- **44.44%** Activation of music, weather report, turning on electronic devices in the home, etc
- **22.22%** Dictation (text composing, setting up reminders, etc)
- **18.52%** All of the above



Age 26-35

Do you use voice search for:

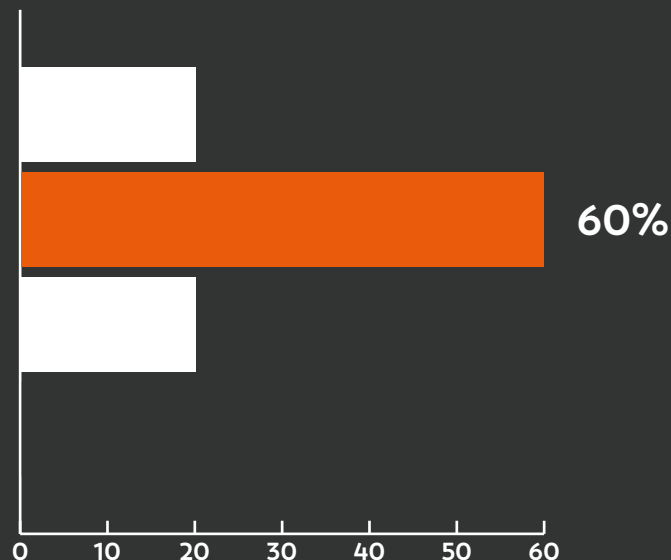
- **9.52%** Search (finding local businesses, services, etc)
- **42.86%** Activation of music, weather report, turning on electronic devices in the home, etc
- **19.05%** Dictation (text composing, setting up reminders, etc)
- **28.57%** All of the above



Age 36-45

Do you use voice search for:

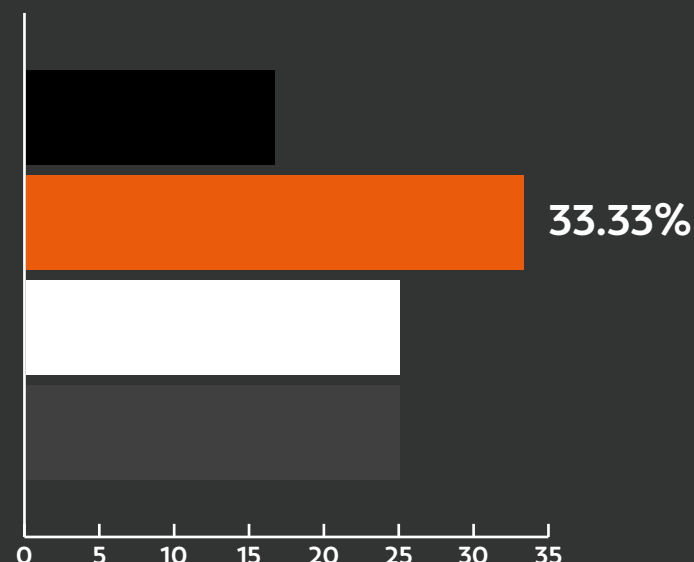
- **20%** Search (finding local businesses, services, etc)
- **60%** Activation of music, weather report, turning on electronic devices in the home, etc
- **20%** Dictation (text composing, setting up reminders, etc)
- **0%** All of the above



Age 46-55

Do you use voice search for:

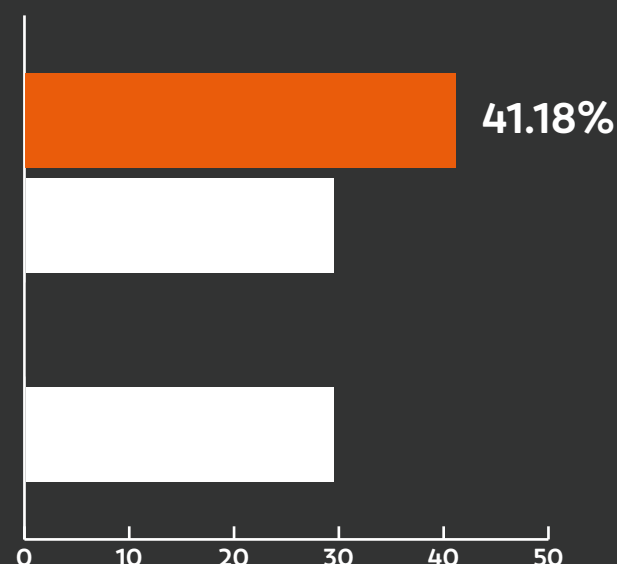
- **16.67%** Search (finding local businesses, services, etc)
- **33.33%** Activation of music, weather report, turning on electronic devices in the home, etc
- **25.00%** Dictation (text composing, setting up reminders, etc)
- **25.00%** All of the above



Age 56+

Do you use voice search for:

- **41.18%** Search (finding local businesses, services, etc)
- **29.41%** Activation of music, weather report, turning on electronic devices in the home, etc
- **0%** Dictation (text composing, setting up reminders, etc)
- **29.41%** All of the above



Interestingly, what we find when analysing this set of data is that older audiences (56+) tend to use voice search more for its purest purpose. This could indicate that businesses with services or products geared towards those in this age group could want to prepare for voice search as a higher priority than those that do not.



7 Conclusion

We can confidently say that our assumptions were correct: people use voice search devices and software regularly, and it's an industry that's only going to grow. However, the vast majority of the people we surveyed - more than 80% - aren't using them exclusively in a way that means businesses need to worry about being left behind. Most people's "searches" are actually questions about the weather, prompts to play music and reminders. So, don't worry... just yet. But definitely be prepared.

Google is rarely wrong, and while most users aren't carrying out voice search queries that are likely to affect the way you do business currently, this is the direction the world is moving in.

If you want to get started on gearing up your digital presence for voice search, there's plenty to do.

We'd recommend starting with optimising your website for long tail keyword phrases relevant to your products and services, as this is how users will speak when carrying out voice queries. This takes a lot of keyword research and a fair amount of work, but it's something that in-house marketing teams are certainly able to do to get started.

You can also get in touch with us! Our team of SEO experts would love to speak with you and get your website optimised for voice search!



8 Contact

Our office is based in Tonbridge, Kent, but we service clients all over the world!

MCM Net Ltd
188 High St
Tonbridge
Kent TN9 1BE

Tel: +44(0)1732 368120

Email: enquiries@mcmnet.co.uk

