

MUM

MUM is an extension of BERT and seeks to understand the intent behind a search, not just the keywords.

- Increase the use of multimedia on content pages.
 - Zero in on user intent and create content that caters to all aspects of a topic.
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URL STRUCTURE

URLs are case sensitive.

- Check your CMS to see which style it automatically creates, and stick to one style: whether it's lowercase, uses underscores or hyphens, etc. Being inconsistent with your structure can cause canonical issues. It is recommended you use dashes and a directory structure. However, it is critical you consult with an SEO consultant before any URL migrations.
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SITEMAPS

The goal of a sitemap is to make it as easy as possible for Google to find things on your site.

- Update them frequently.
 - If you have a large website, have a sitemap of sitemaps, broken down by images, videos, and sections of your website.
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NEW TESTING TOOLS

AMP, Mobile Friendly, and Rich Results testing tools are now fully aligned with the URL Inspection Tool.

- Run each tool on your site to find and fix any errors, without bringing in third-party tools.
 - Familiarize yourself with all the tools available and how they work. Those who can master these tools will win the day in the SEO world.
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JAVASCRIPT AND SEO

Using JavaScript can make it more difficult for Google to read your page.

- Install the Website Developer toolbar from Chrome, turn off Javascript and go through page-by-page. If you don't see everything rendering, you're at risk.
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URL INSPECTION TOOL

This tool provides up-to-date information about Google's indexed version of a specific page. Results shown in the URL Inspection are more recent and should be taken as authoritative when they conflict with the Index Coverage Report. Reasons your page may not show in the index:

- Overall Domain Authority
- Links to One Page
- Content Quality
- Technical Issues
- Algorithm

Note: If you're doing a site migration or just launching, it may take longer to show in the search results.

CONTENT OVER TECHNICAL ERRORS

While speed is important, Google recommends focusing on content quality and how it stacks up in your industry.

- If you're hit by a Core Update, look to fix your content quality and backlink profile first. Don't only focus on a particular page, but the site overall. Focus on making each page high-quality.
 - Content quality considerations include:
 - Facts
 - References
 - Length
 - Questions Answered
 - Images and Multimedia
 - Author
 - Structure
 - Keywords
 - Quality of Writing
 - Usability of Page
 - Link Spam Score
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301 REDIRECTS

HTTP 301 redirects suggest a URL has permanently moved to a new location.

- Keep a redirect in place for at least a year to make it permanent.
 - Clean up internally.
 - Pay special attention to 301 redirects during site migrations if you're moving content from one CMS to another, moving pages over, or changing just a segment of the website.
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PAGE EXPERIENCE UPDATE

Target interstitials, or pop ups, interrupt the user experience across mobile and desktop.

- If you're using interstitials, make sure they don't feel intrusive to users. Especially in the case of gated content, understand how much space they're taking up and what they're covering on the page.
 - Make sure to use subscription and paywalled schema.org JSON-LD to indicate paywalled content on your site with CreativeWork properties. This structured data helps Google differentiate paywalled content from the practice of cloaking, which violates Google's guidelines.
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PAGESPEED INSIGHTS

Google's rolled out a new version, which includes more actionable insights.

- Run each individual section of a website through the PageSpeed Insights tool, including the homepage, category pages, subcategory pages, blog, product pages, etc.
 - If you're in the green, you're good to go. In the yellow, some improvements are needed. In the red, fix that immediately.
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PAGE TOPICS

Make the topic of your page as clear as possible for users and Google.

- Look at the intent of a query. Does your page match? If not, tweak until it does, or find a new query to target.
 - Assign 3-5 keywords to a page and optimize your:
 - Title
 - Description
 - H1
 - H2
 - Image File Name
 - Image Alt Text
 - Image Caption
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ANSWER QUESTIONS ON YOUR PAGE TO PROVIDE VALUE

When crafting your content, consider what questions your the end user will have about the topic.

- Use tools like SEMRush, Answer the Public, and Google search results. Include these questions in your page and content marketing strategy.
 - Shoot for list featured snippets if possible. To get this, structure your content with the search term in the heading, rank on page 1, and have 30-80 text characters below the heading.
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VOICE SEARCH

Voice search has the opportunity to be a mature aspect of search.

- Add Speakable Markup to specify what you'd like spoken from a page.
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VIDEO OPTIMIZATION

Video is gaining more real estate in the SERPs, and presents a huge opportunity for brands to rank.

- Repurpose videos across your website, YouTube, and your social channels, if applicable.
 - Create authority around your YouTube Channel:
 - Focus on a niche
 - Create content regularly
 - Link content together on YouTube
 - Embed YouTube videos on corresponding web pages
 - Create a video on all searchable content
 - Take the time to create a great thumbnail
 - Include Clip and Seek Markup to make your videos more search-friendly.
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WEBSITE DESIGN

Bad design and UX can actually hurt your search rankings.

- Think about your design from a user's standpoint. Look for:
 - Spelling Errors
 - Multiple Popups
 - Too Many CTAs
 - Multiple Ads
 - Inconsistent Branding
 - Mobile Design
 - Pages that are Hard to Use or Don't Have a Clear Purpose.
 - All of these could harm users and Google's perception of your site and hurt your search rankings.
 - Run your pages through the 7-second test (find out more on ignitevisibility.com).
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PASSAGE INDEXING

Passage indexing is a new search feature that helps optimize and improve rankings of pages that don't necessarily perform well for a specific keyword.

- Include words that are commonly used and associated with the keywords and phrases you're focusing on in your content.
 - Have a heading with a clear question or topic and add a direct answer underneath, that is around 70 characters.
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CORE WEB VITALS

Google's Core Web Vitals focus on three factors:

1. Largest Contentful Paint (LCP): Refers to loading time
2. First Input Delay (FID): Refers to interactivity
3. Cumulative Layout Shift (CLS): Refers to visual stability

- Double-check these three factors, as they're now ranking factors for Google. Use the report in Google Search Console and the Core Web Vitals Testing Tool.
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HEADING TAGS

Heading tags are becoming more important and showing up in the search results.

- Make sure your title tags and heading tags are aligned.
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INTERNATIONAL SEO

Brands with an international audience will need different pages for different countries or languages.

- Start with a directory structure, not a subdomain or different domains.
 - Have clear hreflang tags and canonicals on each page. Set a canonical page for each country or language version.
 - Write unique content for each page.
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GOOGLE PROFILING

In the era of machine learning, the way Google understands content is by creating profiles of what good content for a specific vertical/topic looks like.

- Stop thinking about content from a "ranking factor" point of view and start looking at how the authorities in your deal with the topic matter so you can align with the profile is looking for.
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GOOGLE DISCOVER

Optimizing for Google Discover is very little about right image size and very much about topical authority.

- Create strong and focused topical authority with consistent content to establish yourself as a "topical player."
 - Use the max image preview tag and ensure you have an image set.
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PREDICTIVE NEED

Google will soon be able to break down the implied and various meanings of a query. This will present users with multiple content paths to consider.

- Think about the intent of a user's search and then predict what supporting details they would need along the way. Think of the additional queries they would make in order to fully understand the topic.

- Provide this as additional content to help align you with MUM.
 - Internally link all these topics together and have them all listed in one hub.
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USABILITY

As Google gets better at understanding content, user experience and content quality will have more impact on winning rankings. Technical SEO will become a less significant area to devote time to.

- Provide useful, easily digestible content. Make sure it isn't:
 - Out Of Date
 - Duplicated Across Multiple Sites
 - Incorrect
 - Low Quality
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ALGORITHM UPDATES

In 2021, there was a 65% increase in days showing high levels of rank volatility vs 2020. This is due to necessary testing and recalibration in machine learning, which results in extreme levels of rank reversals with updates.

- Don't panic if your page drops. Look at the long-term ranking patterns. Most often, a sudden drop will be reversed in a short period of time.
 - If you're having consistent issues, look at the SEMRush tool to find the algorithm update and diagnose the purpose of the algorithm.
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GOOGLE PLUGIN STRATEGY

Search engines are growing more and more advanced every year. To succeed and earn that coveted #1 ranking spot, you need to understand how they work so you can create content that they will return in search results.

- Think about your design from a user's standpoint. Look for:
 - HTML
 - Videos
 - Images
 - Types of Content
 - Structure of the Page
 - User Intent
 - Schema
- Create a better version of that content by plugging these features into your content.
- Update your content often. For less competitive queries you can update quarterly or monthly, for more competitive queries you should update weekly or daily.
- Build links through PR, outreach and external linking strategies.
- Taking into account everything that is in this checklist, ask yourself, "How can I plug directly into Google?"