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LATEST HAPPENINGS IN THE WORLD OF LOCAL
SEARCH FOR THE MONTH OF **JANUARY 2017**

easySEO



WHAT 2017 MAY BRING FOR DIGITAL MARKETERS

JANUARY 2017



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LATEST HAPPENINGS IN THE WORLD OF LOCAL SEARCH FOR THE MONTH OF JANUARY 2017

Google's strategy of closing the map maker to prevent spam might backfire because earlier it showed who made the changes, and the business owners or users were able to track them down and report if they were spammers. But after the removal of Mapmaker, anybody can suggest edits and it will go live without any authentication. Business owners, users, and marketers are [concerned](#) about this feature. Let's see if Google takes this into account or has any plans for that.

Google is currently testing [promoted places](#) within Google maps. The testing is limited to the big brands & will be available to rest very soon. It seems like that this feature is here to stay, so keep an eye.



Now you can let your customers know that your business is wheelchair accessible within the local listings. It's not only good for people with disabilities but will also help you improve your business reputation.

Google has just provided users with the power to organize search results as per the timings and ratings of business. This makes having good reviews even more important.

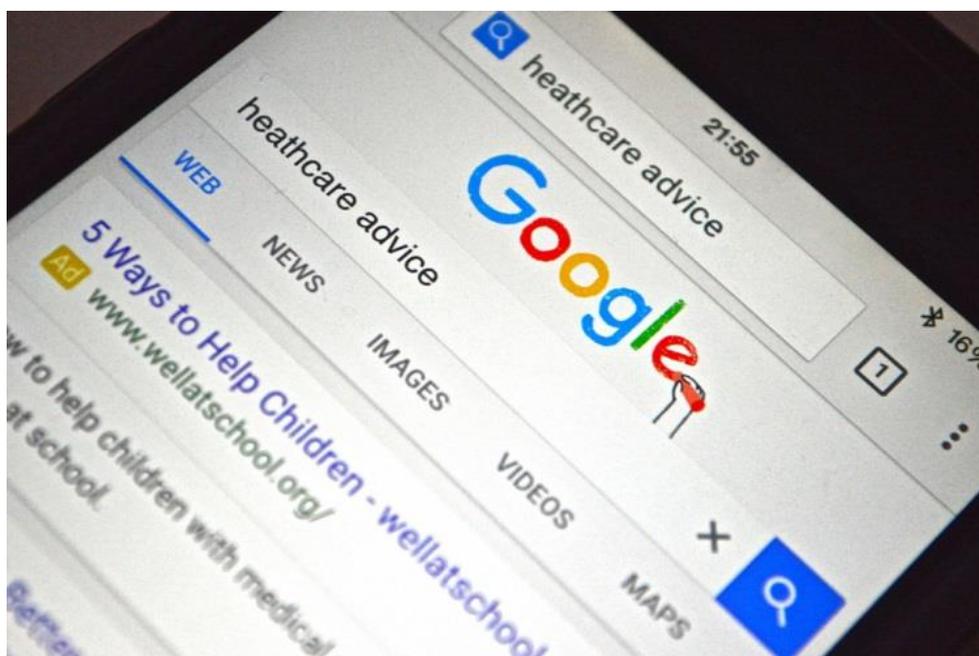
Social media can help you create great local content, here's a great [guide](#).

Creating an accurate Google Analytics report for small businesses can be overwhelming, but with the help of these [tips](#), you can do it with ease.

Google My Business is encouraging business owners to upload as many photos as they can to counter the growing number of spam and fake local listings. They are not declaring the specific benefits, but it is evident that Google will offer some advantage as a token of appreciation.

2

GOOGLE MOBILE ONLY INDEX MIGHT GO LIVE VERY SOON



So Google's mobile first index might go live this month. Although Google has said that those with responsive websites don't have to worry, but we still think that there will be some big changes as well because this is the first time that a giant search engine like Google is entirely shifting the base. We are resisting our urge to write a long list of predictions & scare you on what might happen, and just providing you with the facts & tips.

- First time ever Google is basing its search results on the mobile version of your site.
- If you already have a responsive website, then you don't have to worry about the shift.
- However, you'll need to have your structured data on both, the mobile and desktop version of your site.
- Go to Google console and claim both versions of your site.
- If your website's mobile version is lacking comprehensive content then you will lose rankings. So make sure both version of your site have the same content.
- In case you have opted for AMP and don't have mobile version of your site, then Google will use desktop version for rankings.
- Utilize robots.txt testing tool & make sure that mobile version of your site id accessible to Googlebot.

3

WHAT 2017 MAY BRING FOR DIGITAL MARKETERS



The only thing constant in the world of digital marketing is change and 2016 was no different. Google announced that they are shifting from Desktop first to mobile first index, Facebook continued its rapid rise and Yahoo, as usual, managed to disappoint everyone, by first axing 15% of their workforce and then by letting the data of over a billion users get into the hands of hackers.

2016 ended on such a note that it has left everyone one wondering that what's going to happen next. So we tried to figure out that what can possibly happen in 2017:

Google will push HTTPS: In 2016, Google [announced](#) that they will add warnings to the sites that collect personal information over a non-SSL connection. Currently, they are just recommending, but in the near future, they may start pushing it just like they made it mandatory to have a mobile friendly website. It is possible that Google may not prefer sites that will refuse to opt for HTTPS. So if you haven't shifted to the secure site yet, [now](#) is the time to do so.

Progressive web Apps (PWAs): Be informed that "Apps" have the reach of the web and provide immersive user experience just like the mobile apps. [PWAs](#) load instantly, respond quickly, regardless of the strength of the network. This can be a masterstroke by Google because the [Mobile app market is dying slowly](#). Approximately 1000's of apps get uploaded on a daily basis on Apple App Store and Google Play Store and we know how many apps actually taste the success.

Also, getting people to download your app is one thing and compelling them to keep coming back is another. Do you know that most of the revenue from mobile apps is coming from just 1% of the publishers: Facebook and Google.

So PWAs will not only provide good user experience but will also give a chance to rest of the guys to compete with the giants. Good guy Google!

Facebook recommendations: Facebook [launched recommendations](#) a while ago, and at first, everyone thought of it as a crowdsourcing tool. But recently Facebook revealed their ambitious plan that it's not just another crowdsourcing tool but in fact a golden opportunity for small business owners to boost up their sales. After the latest update, people can suggest their friends their favorite restaurants, places, and experiences, it will be mapped out and saved into one place for users to see.

So if you are a local business owner, start seeding your business with the help of your friends, existing customers and family members, as it will turn out beneficial for you.

The growth of Machine Learning SEO: Google is the leader in using AI & Machine Learning. And 2017 could be the year when SEO's will start using machine learning to their advantage. Now you can automate the process of image captioning and can dominate the image search with the help of [TensOrFlow](#). It's an open source software that is trained to provide captions of the recognized images.

Keep an eye on the Local Guide program: Google closed the Mapmaker because of the heavy spamming. Many experts expressed their concern over this and some people even predicted that the idea might backfire. However, it seems almost impossible that a company like Google will not have another plan in place to tackle the issue. And currently, they are pushing Local guide programs. It's highly likely that they are going to push it by paying huge rewards in exchange of writing local contents. They want to generate bottom-line involvement, so the rewards are going to be pretty impressive. Also, pay attention to the SMB posting to search beta feature. It can be very beneficial for you. Here's how.

Google Echo and Amazon Alexa Solve Crimes:

As the digital assistants like Google Echo and Amazon Alexa are getting more sophisticated, there's an increasing chance that they will not only provide convenience but will also help in solving the crimes.

The rise of internet of things, digital assistants and wearable are making it easier to collect the information & solve the cases. Crimes have been solved using Fingerprints, browser history so recorded information from a DA seems like a natural progression.

Twitter may be acquired for Real this time:

Twitter is now under more pressure to sell but it seems that no one in the market is willing to pay the price. Most of the potential buyers think that it is overvalued and thus have pulled their hand from it. Looking at the list of the companies that are willing to buy it, Google's acquisition of Twitter makes the most sense.

Takeaway

It is safe to say that in 2017, digital marketing industry will get more complicated than ever, and thus there will be more demand for your specialized skills. But in order to take the full advantage, you will have to keep an eagle eye on the minutest changes. So that you can break the code, before even other starts to understand it.

4

2016 PAY PER CLICK FLASHBACKS: THE BIG CHANGES THAT ARE GOING TO IMPACT US IN 2017



So here we are in 2017, all excited & little nervous about the changes that 2017 will bring. But before stepping into the future, let's take a deep dive in the past and find out that what was the biggest happenings in 2016 that changed the way we advertise, especially via search engine ads aka PPC.

Many experts predicted that Yahoo might get back on the track when the CEO Marissa Mayer announced that they are going to focus on the mobile search. And also because Verizon was about to close the deal with Yahoo. But expert predictions failed and so does the IT guy, who were responsible for the security of data of over one billion account users.

But let's not waste our time on what could have been happened, and focus on the what happened and how it impacted us.

Big changes

One of the biggest change that happened in 2016 was Mobile finally & officially took over the desktop and the whole focus changed from desktop to Mobile. It was pretty obvious that mobile will lead the pack in near future, but its dramatic escalation surprised everyone. Some reports are even showing that mobile now accounts for 60 percent of searches.

In 2016, google brought back device-level bid adjustments for tablet & desktop devices. They also made it possible to have mobile be the base bid. Bing on the other hand, still makes desktop the base bid, however, they became little restrictive with device bidding.

The biggest change of the year was expanded text ads. The new format changed the way advertisers use to write text ads since the very inception of AdWords.

Change in the shopping trend

The vast reach of Amazon, Facebook's dynamic product ads, and even the Pinterest's promoted pins have put Google under the pressure to get everything they can from the product search and product listing ads. From now on, you'll be able to see Carousels of product listing ads in Google image searches, YouTube & 3rd party retailer sites.

Google also announced that sellers must have at least 150 plus ratings in the past 12 months if they want to show it in their ads. Also, Google announced that now the GTINs will be required for brand name products sold by multiple merchants.

Local ad packs and maps

Google took everyone by surprise when they introduced ads in the local pack & promoted pins in the Maps. Ads also started showing up in the local finder. In 2017, you need to keep an eagle eye on Google's home service ads program because it has the potential!

The store visits continued to gain traction in Adwords, thanks to the Google's effort to connect online campaigns with offline impact. They announced that over 1 billion store visits have been recorded in 11 countries.

Revised Targeting strategy

Google is shifting its strategy from Intent targeting to the audience + intent targeting, due to the pressure from social media giants like Facebook. They also announced that they are going to support cross-device retargeting. They are also providing many features that will help us narrow down our audience and get the maximum bang for our advertising dollars.

Analytics & Reporting

2016 was the year when the Google introduced some of the best analytics tools such as Analytics 360 suite. The freebies also got some useful tools such as reporting and visualization platform, Google data studio & more.

Ad Extensions

- A [Social Extensions test](#) was launched by Bing which got faded away.
- Swipeable carousels. Started showing [Sitelinks](#).
- [Affiliate extensions](#) didn't flourish.
- [Message extensions](#) came out of beta.

Additional mentions

- Addition of [native inventory to the Display Network by Google](#)
- Conversions is the new way of measuring performance in AdWords.
- Now salesforce users can import their lead data into AdWords.
- Many [weird things](#) happened in AdWords Keyword Planner
- Payday loan ads are now [banned](#), thanks to Google.
- Google is closing its [Compare products](#) in the US and the UK.
- [Automated bidding](#) in Adwords is recently updated.

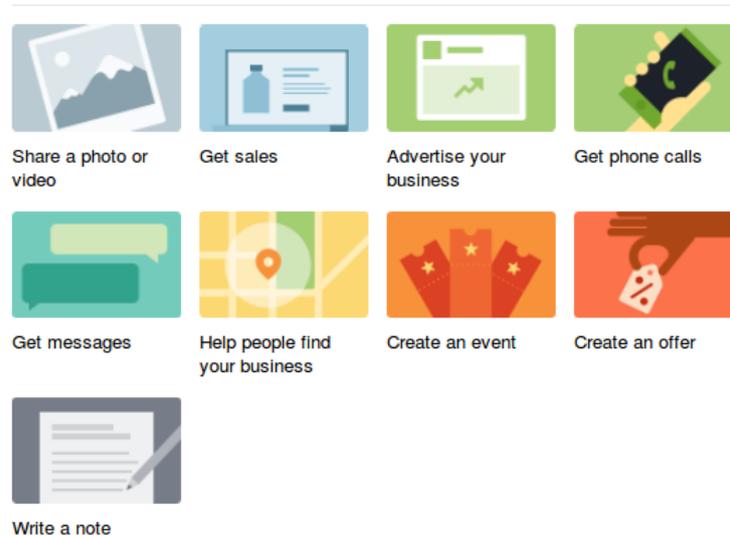
5

New Status & Messenger For Fanpages

Fanpage Status:

Hope you've already experienced the extremely new and cool Fanpage's status update that was rolled out in 2016 for all the Fanpages. *This feature was conceptualized to enhance the performance and to make it more user-friendly.*

Here's how it looks:-

**Advertise your business**

This tab enables you to advertise your business from the page itself. You don't need to go into the Ads manager section separately to create the ads for the following kind of objectives: Get More Calls, Get More Website Visitors, Promote Your Business Locally, Promote Your Page. Also, there is one more option included inside it i.e: Share Page With Friends which helps you to invite your friends to like the page. Just like you, we are also wondering why this option has been added here.

Get phone calls, Get messages & Get Directions (Help people find your business)

With the help of these options, you can simply add Call-To-Action buttons in your posts. Earlier it was available only in Paid Advertising & Power Editor tool.

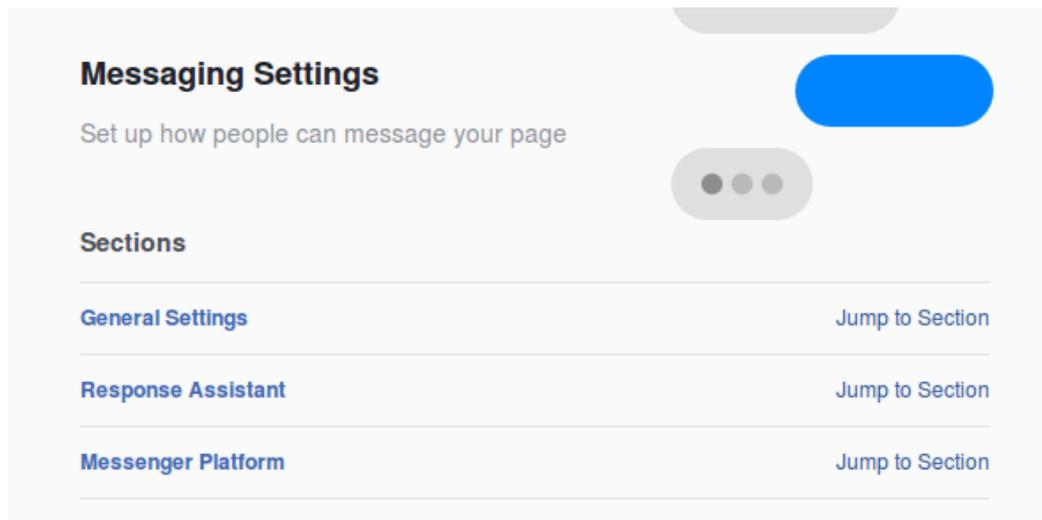
Create an event, Create an offer & Write a note

We know that these options are not new to us. Use these options when your business have an event or an offer is going on...

“Write a note” option will help you add a short story with a catchy image to showcase your business to the audience.

And, It seems “Milestone” option is currently unavailable on the updated version of pages which is big flaw by facebook.

New Messenger Settings:



How many of you made a use of it? If you haven't set this up for your Fanpage then don't wait & rush to update it now.

General Settings

When you have written a message, you can tap the Return/Enter key to send it. To avail this feature on your messenger, change settings to Yes. You may find it not useful compared to the below ones..

Response Assistant

There are 3 different settings available in this section.

1- Stay responsive when you can't get to your computer or phone

You can let your customers know that you will respond soon by a custom message which will automatically send to the ones who message and keep your responsiveness rating good, any time you're away.

2- Send Instant Replies to anyone who messages your Page

You can set an instant reply to be sent automatically so the people would be aware that you will respond soon.

3- Show a Messenger Greeting

You can display a greeting message to the people when they open a conversation with you for the first time.

Messenger Platform

The apps that are currently subscribing to your page and their information will be listed here. Information includes app name, permissions, and who subscribe the app to the page.

Hope Facebook comes up with new exciting features in this year as well. **Happy New Year 2017.**