

Voice Search Readiness Report



Helping 1,000,000 locations stand out

2019

03

Executive Summary

- 04 Voice Search Report Introduction
 - 06 Background on the Voice Search Readiness Report
-

07

Understanding Voice Search Readiness

- 08 What Is Voice Search?
 - 09 What Is Voice Search Readiness (VSR)?
 - 09 Getting Beyond the White Noise of Voice Search Predictions
 - 12 The Future of Voice Search: 2019 and Beyond
 - 13 The Uberall Voice Search Readiness Methodology
-

17

Going Beyond Talk: What Does the Hard Data Say?

- 18 We Analyzed 73,000 Business Locations -
Were They Voice Search Ready?
 - 21 Most Surprising Findings of the VSR Study
 - 24 “But Google Says You’re Open?” -
Where Businesses Are Failing Most
 - 26 How You Can Check Your Own VSR Score
-

27

Do You Need to Get Voice Search Optimized?

- 28 Voice Search Survey 2019:
What Are People Saying About Voice Search?
 - 32 Conclusions From the Voice Search Survey
-

33

How You Can Optimize Your Business for Voice Search

- 34 How to Improve Your VSR Score
- 35 Getting Your Voice Search House in Order:
A Comprehensive Checklist
- 37 Conclusions From the VSR Report
- 38 Improve Your VSR and Online Presence With Uberall

Executive Summary

CHAPTER 1

Voice Search Report

Introduction

Voice search is one of the most often talked about, but least understood topics confronting businesses today.

Although voice search is becoming a more mainstream topic in the business community, very few understand what it is to become 'voice search ready' and whether there is actually an ROI justification to begin with.

Before we decided to perform our voice search analysis, we understood that almost every consumer-focused business out there has heard, read and most likely watched some form of content regarding voice search.

So...businesses already knew about voice search, but did this knowledge help them to optimize for it?

After carrying out an analysis of 73,000 business locations - **the most comprehensive analysis of its kind** - across SMB, mid-market and enterprise, we discovered that the vast majority of businesses were not voice search ready - despite all of the existing information out there.

The question then quickly became: How could we increase voice search readiness for businesses where so many others had failed?

We started by analyzing the most common types of voice search queries/problems online and narrowed it down to five:

- 1 What does voice search readiness (VSR) mean?
- 2 How can I measure voice search optimization?
- 3 How can a business become voice search ready?
- 4 What is the future of voice search?
- 5 Why should I care about voice search?

Each of these questions will be answered in the following report to provide you with a comprehensive overview of voice search, how you can diagnose your own voice search readiness and improve it, and whether or not voice search actually matters for your business.



Background on the Voice Search Readiness Report

One of the benefits of our platform is that it gives us the ability to run status checks on business locations across all platforms and directories where the business is listed.

This provides us with information on the overall health of a business online.

If a business has errors and inconsistencies across various online directories, we can both see that data and provide an optimization analysis - **scoring the business on a scale of 0 – 100%** for the accuracy and completeness of their online business information.

Managing almost 1 million business locations has given the team at Uberall a unique perspective on online optimization and just how many businesses have data inaccuracies across the web. Because we understand this in such a direct way, we are ideally positioned to assess individual voice search readiness.

We already had the tools to run an online business optimization analysis and identify the overall online health of that business, but why write a report on voice search readiness?

We decided to create the VSR report after making four important observations:

- 1 Only 4% of business locations are voice search ready
- 2 Despite all the information out there, businesses still don't know how to optimize for voice search
- 3 As experts in the field of voice search optimization, our customers average 96%, we are uniquely placed to define 'voice search readiness'
- 4 Using this definition, we could provide businesses with a VSR score and help them to improve their score if necessary

We will analyze each of these observations in greater depth throughout the report but first, we need to define voice search and voice search readiness...

Understanding Voice Search Readiness

CHAPTER 2

What Is Voice Search?

Voice search occurs when a user utters a query or command to a virtual assistant on a device. The assistant recognizes the voice command or query, analyzes the user intent and provides a response to that query from search engine results.

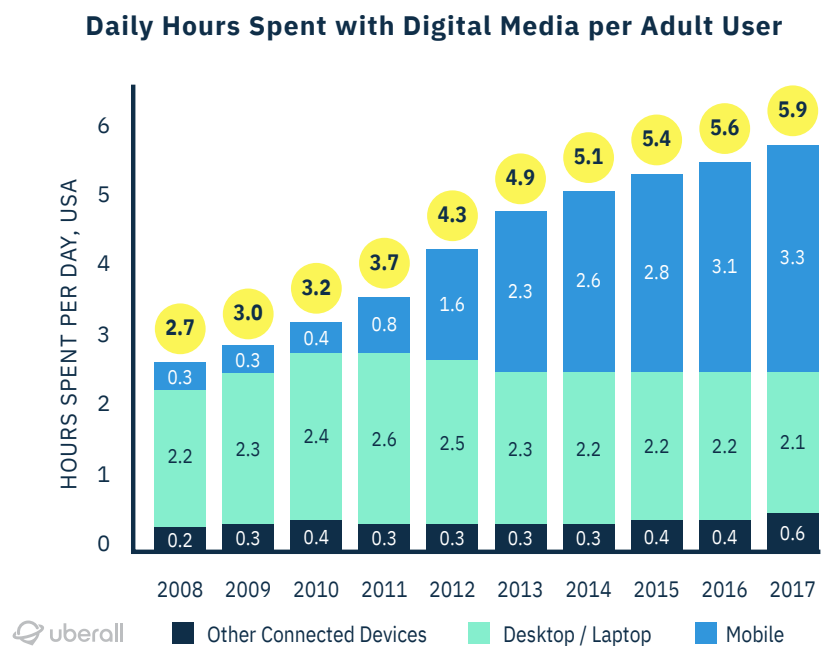
In the years before the Internet, a business search generally involved word of mouth or a printed directory. If you wanted prime placement in search you needed to take out an ad, or choose a business name that started with AAA.

Voice search is poised to change search once again. It is already a necessary feature in modern cars and has made its way into homes due to the increasing popularity of smart home devices.

When the world wide web first came into broad use, this system was digitized but extremely poor at understanding user search intent. **Flash forward to 2019 and search intent is king.** Not only for search engines looking to return the right information for the right query, but also for businesses looking to engage with their consumer base.

The most notable shift that has taken place in the last 10 years is the universal adoption of online search as a means of finding business information and the rise of mobile search. **Since 2008, the average digital user is spending more than twice as long online and 10x longer on their mobile phones,** which is by far the most popular voice search device used today.

Fig. 1



KLEINER PERKINS
ZONE
INTERNET TRENDS

Source: eMarketer 9/14 (2008-2010), eMarketer 4/15 (2011-2013), eMarketer 4/17 (2014-2016), eMarketer 10/17 (2017). Note: Other connected devices include OTT and game consoles. Mobile includes smartphones and tablets. Usage includes both home and work for consumers 18+. Non deduped defined as time spent with each medium individually, regardless of multitasking.

Voice search is poised to change search once again. It is already a necessary feature in modern cars and has made its way into homes due to the increasing popularity of smart home devices.

Today, when a consumer utters a command like, 'OK Google/Hey Siri/Alexa, find the best mechanic in my area', the query will return only one result at a time. This means that, **unlike with local and organic search results, only one business can win.**

What is Voice Search Readiness (VSR)?

So what does it mean to be 'voice search ready' Industry experts have been advocating voice search optimization for some time without providing common standards or a way of analyzing voice search readiness for easy business adoption.

While several attempts have been made to provide comprehensive voice search ranking factors, there are no concrete parameters or definitions that are widely accepted.

Because of this, **we set out to define voice search readiness within a percentage-based grading system that analyzed a business's optimized online presence.**

This way, a business can see if they are optimized for local voice search queries and understand the exact problems they need to address.

When a user searches for business information in their area verbally, the accuracy of business information, across certain key directories, **will determine whether a business is recommended in search results.**

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Getting Beyond the White Noise of Voice Search Predictions

If you've been keeping an eye on voice search trends, you've probably seen the widely circulated prediction in just about every voice search blog, stating that 'voice will constitute 50% of all search by 2020'.

It's an amazing prediction, which is probably why it is still being used in articles to this day. The original prediction was made by Andrew Ng, then Chief Scientist at Baidu in 2014 and was in regards to the growth of

Baidu voice search specifically (10% at the time in China). He stated in [his interview with Fast Company](#) that “in five years time at least 50% of all searches are going to be either through images or speech.”

Ng’s quote was not a global prediction, it was not even remotely about US voice search. It was in regards to the explosive growth of voice search in China at the time and never exclusively mentions voice search, but voice search and image search together.

Why is this important?

This prediction, and others like it, have hyped expectations around voice search to the point that it’s hard to know just where voice search sits in today’s consumer and business landscape.

The latest data on voice search from Google (released in May of 2016) states that **20% of all mobile searches were conducted through voice**. As Google has around 90% of the mobile search market share in the US, data straight from Google is our best indication of where mobile voice search is heading.

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However, this data still only reflects the percentage of voice search on one search engine and one device - it does not include searches performed on desktop for instance. According to Statista, mobile share of organic search engine visits made up roughly **50% of all search in 2016**. If we take that stat and apply it to Google’s data that 1 in 5 mobile searches were conducted by voice in May of 2016, we can conclude that roughly 10% of all Google search queries in 2016 were voice search queries.

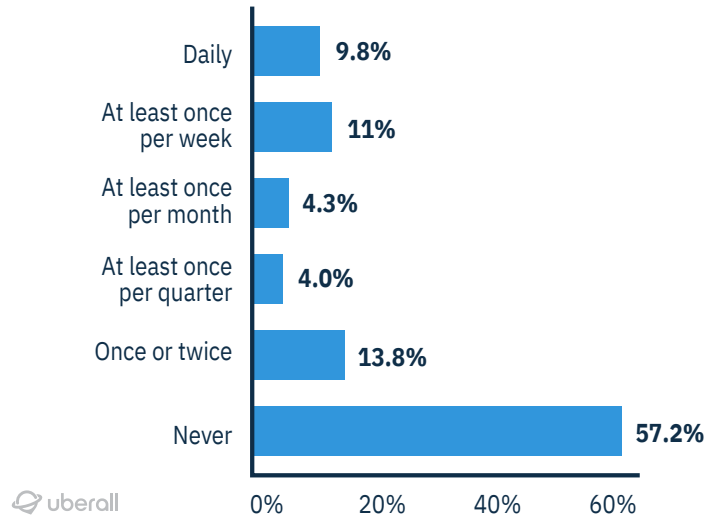
Now take into account that recent data from the same Statistica study shows that mobile search currently makes up roughly 57% of the entire search market - **a growth of approximately seven percentage points in two years. That would place voice search queries nearer to 12% of total Google search - based on Google’s data from 2016.**

At present there is no way of knowing what percentage of search is voice until Google updates their data. However, results from our 2019 voice search survey found that 21% of respondents were using voice search every week, whereas 57% of respondents have never used voice search.

Fig. 2

Over the last year, how often have you used voice search?

1,007 respondents



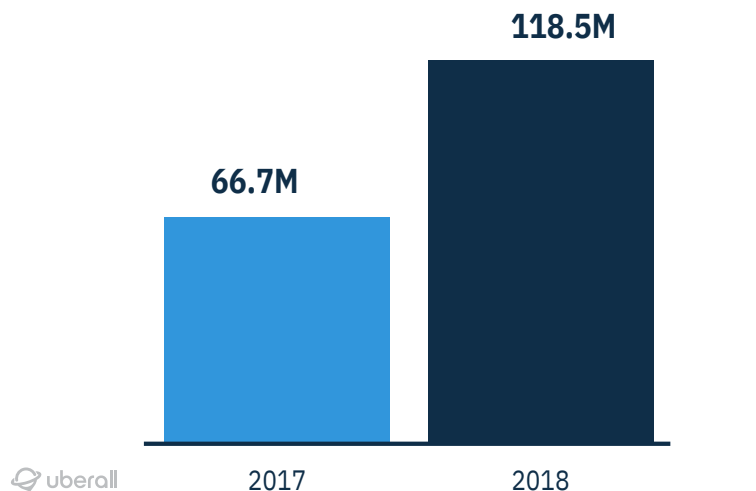
These results are extremely interesting because it shows usage is either frequent (daily and weekly) or not at all. This suggests that those who are adopting voice search are becoming frequent users while those that aren't still see no reason to do so.

50% Is a Myth, But Voice Search Is Growing

If the rate of smart speaker purchases is anything to go by, adoption of voice technologies is certainly on the rise. [Data from NPR](#) shows that between December 2017 and December 2018, the number of smart speakers in US homes grew by 78% suggesting that consumers are warming up to the idea of using voice-operated technology in their day-to-day lives.

Fig. 3

The number of smart speakers in US homes grew 78%



Surveys conducted at the end of December in 2017 and 2018. Source: NPR and Edison Research



The Future of Voice Search: 2019 and Beyond

Usage frequency data from a [Statista study in 2018](#) states that 45% of mobile users search via their voice assistants at least sometimes and with mobile now accounting for 57% of all searches, adoption will likely increase.

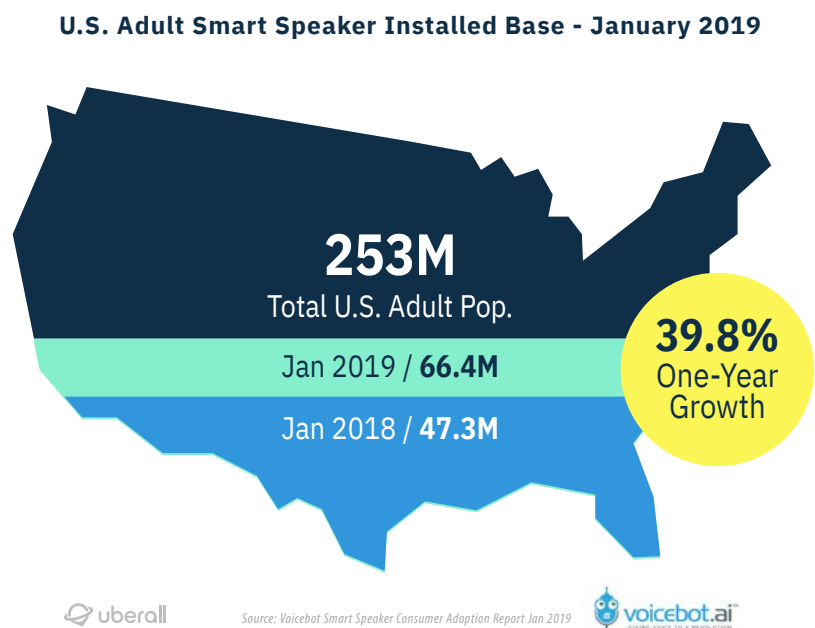
When Uberall recently asked SMBs how voice figured into their marketing strategies and budgets, more than [one-third](#) (35%) said it would be increasing. However, more than half said they would invest in voice if they had better insight into ROI.

Data from [Mary Meeker's Internet Trends report](#) shows that Google's machine learning-backed voice recognition has surpassed a 95% word accuracy rate for the English language. That rate happens to be the threshold for human accuracy -- meaning that Google's AI has now become much more accurate at understanding human search intent.

Accuracy and the relatively low price point could be the reason why smart speaker sales exploded in 2018. Strategy Analytics' 2018 research reveals that global Q4 shipments grew 95% to 38.5 million units. This was more than the entire 2017 total and brought the 2018 tally to 86.2 million units shipped.

That trend continued in 2019. According to a report by eMarketer, 26% of Americans use a smart speaker at least once per month. This figure is backed up by a recent [Voicebot report](#), which also shows that smart speaker ownership grew by 40% in the last year.

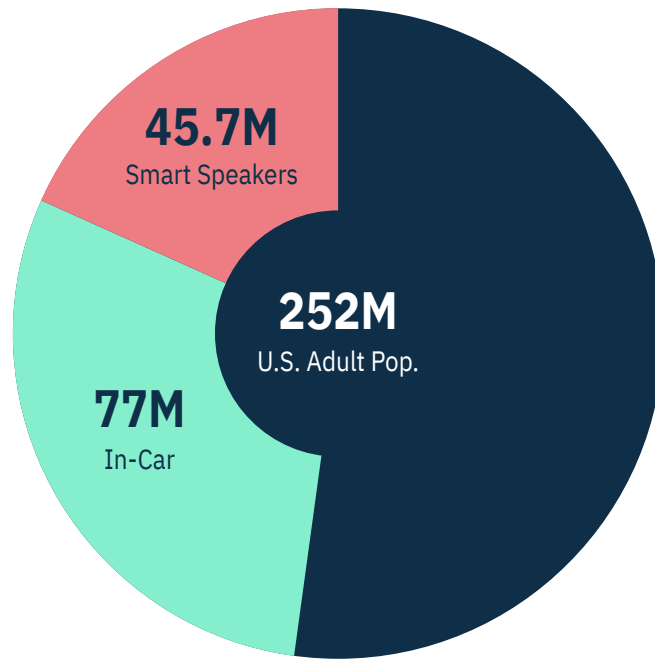
Fig. 4



In 2018, Voicebot also reported that twice as many US adults have used voice technologies in their car and monthly active users were [60% higher](#).

Fig. 5

Monthly Active Voice Assistant U.S. Adult Users



Source: Voicebot



This coupled with the continued sales growth and adoption of smart speaker technologies (at home and in the car) provides us with an indication that voice search is definitely on the rise and should be a focus of every business, big or small, in 2019.

The continued growth of mobile search and the decline of desktop has given us some indication of changing search behavior online. This coupled with the continued sales growth and adoption of smart speaker technologies (at home and in the car) provides us with an indication that voice search is definitely on the rise and should be a focus of every business, big or small, in 2019.

The Uberall Voice Search Readiness Methodology

The goal with the VSR project has always been to develop a method businesses could use to benchmark their voice search optimization efforts.

However, as there is no universal voice standard, we needed to first develop a way to measure voice search readiness and visualize it in a way that businesses could easily understand.

Before we could do this, we needed to ask and answer several important questions:

- What should be included in a Voice Search Readiness (VSR) score?
- How can a business calculate their own score?
- What are the benchmarks a business should be measuring itself against?
- Which industries/verticals rank best and worst for Voice Search Readiness?
- Is Voice Search Readiness a competitive advantage?

As this study was a pioneering project, Uberall's Value Engineering experts needed to develop a methodology that would provide businesses with:

- **A percentage weighting for directories** - based on which directories are most important for feeding voice search platforms
- **A percentage weighting on business information** - based on the business information that is most important in terms of accuracy

Our Value Engineers identified 37 directories that directly feed voice search platforms - and as such, are the most important in terms of voice search readiness.

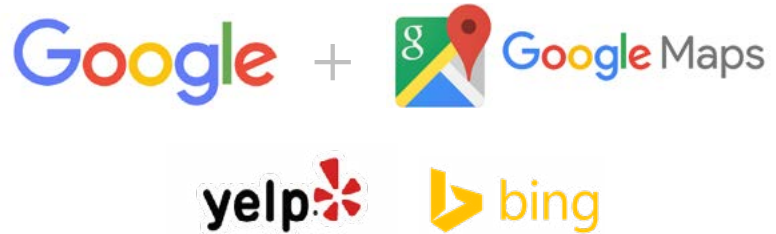
37 IMPORTANT VOICE SEARCH DIRECTORIES



FACEBOOK FOURSQUARE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
 EZLOCAL JUDY'S BOOK LOCALSTACK US CITY
 MY LOCAL SERVICES CITY SQUARES FACTUAL N49
 ELOCAL HOTFROG US INFO COM SHOWMELOCAL
 BROWNBOOK I GLOBAL ACOMPPIO CYLEX PAGES24
 TUPALO WHERE TO STADTBARCHENBUCH YALWA
 NAVMII YA SABE PALM BEACH POST STATESMAN LA VOZ
 TX MUNDO HISPANICO AL DIA TX CHRON UNIVISION

THE MOST IMPORTANT DIRECTORIES

While all 37 directories have some impact on your voice search readiness score, the bulk of VSR comes directly from three key directories:



Note: (According to our experts, Google, Yelp and Bing comprise approximately 90% of our voice search readiness score - the other 33 directories are grouped together as they comprise approximately 10% of our full optimization score.



What About Apple Maps?

Although Apple Maps is certainly an important directory, in terms of listing your business details, it will not help your business to optimize for voice search queries.

After all, it's actually Google's search engine that feeds Siri directly so VSR optimization is already addressed for Siri when listing your business information directly on Google.

This once more reinforces just how far reaching Google's influence is and how important it is to voice search readiness.

The Importance of Business Information

After we identified the 37 directories that were necessary for voice search readiness, we needed to also include business information categories and provide them with a weighting (from most important to least). If a category, such as opening hours, was missing from a particular listing, this would impact a VSR score more than if the zip code was missing. This is because the most frequent voice search queries are for the address and opening hours of a business location rather than for a website or zip code.

The most important business information (from most to least important) is:

- 1 Address
- 2 Opening Hours
- 3 Phone Number
- 4 Business Name
- 5 Website
- 6 Zip code

By assigning a value to each data point, that we have identified as important for voice search readiness, we created a way to calculate the voice search score, from 0-100%, of each and every business.

Lastly, we selected 73,000 businesses from the Boston Metro area as a data set and analyzed their information accuracy across the necessary 37 directories. This allowed us to see the percentage of businesses that were/weren't voice search ready.

Using this information we were able to build a comprehensive picture of data quality (and trends) across the entire city.



Going Beyond Talk: What Does the Hard Data Say?

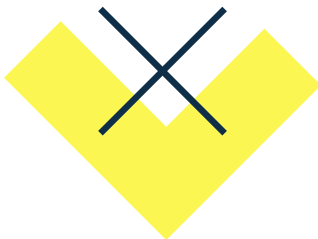
CHAPTER 3

We Analyzed 73,000 Business Locations — Were They Voice Search Ready?

INDUSTRY	AVERAGE VSR SCORE	AVERAGE UBERALL CUSTOMER VSR SCORE
All 73,521 locations	44.12%	95.87%



BEST CATEGORIES	AVERAGE VSR SCORE
Dentists	96.82%
Health food	96.60%
Home improvement	96.55%
Criminal attorneys	91.51%
Dollar stores	90.11%



WORST CATEGORIES	AVERAGE VSR SCORE
Consumer protection organizations	0.20%
Congressional representatives	0.24%
Business attorneys	1.29%
Art galleries	1.65%
Wedding services	1.90%



Here is what we discovered:

The Good

The locations with the best scores were: dentists, health food shops, home improvement, criminal attorneys and dollar stores.

These business types had extremely impressive VSR scores between 90% and 97%

Although these locations have different constituencies, service offerings and industries, one common factor is the reliance of these business types on generating local search traffic and converting that into foot-traffic to the physical address.



The Bad

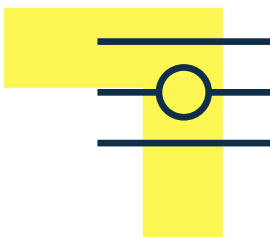
The locations with the worst scores were: consumer protection organizations, congressional representatives, business attorneys, art galleries and wedding services.

These business types had almost no trace of voice search optimization. Not one type had a score over 2%

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Here we do see industries that are either public services who do not typically practice SEO optimization, or industries that are highly dependent on word of mouth.

It is not surprising to see public services like consumer protection organizations and congressional representatives with low scores, as they typically do not advertise their services. However, although SMBs such as art galleries and wedding services may get by based on word of mouth, they are also neglecting the opportunity to reach consumers searching locally for their information.



The Average

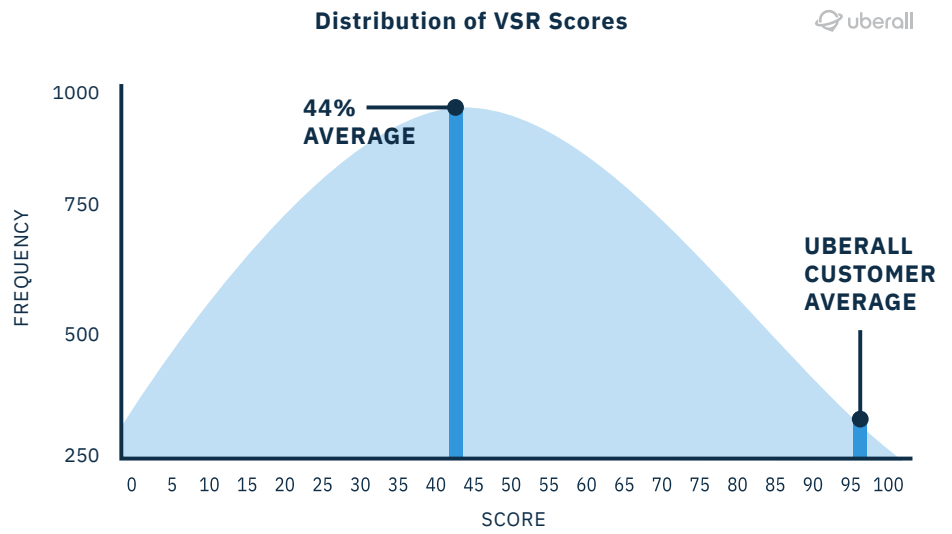
The average VSR score across the 73,000 locations analyzed is 44%. To put this into context, **the average Uberall customer has a score of almost 96%.**

This means that most businesses are failing to optimize to an acceptable standard for consumer voice search queries.

Not only are these businesses not being found by consumers searching locally, but consumers that do find these businesses (by chance or by

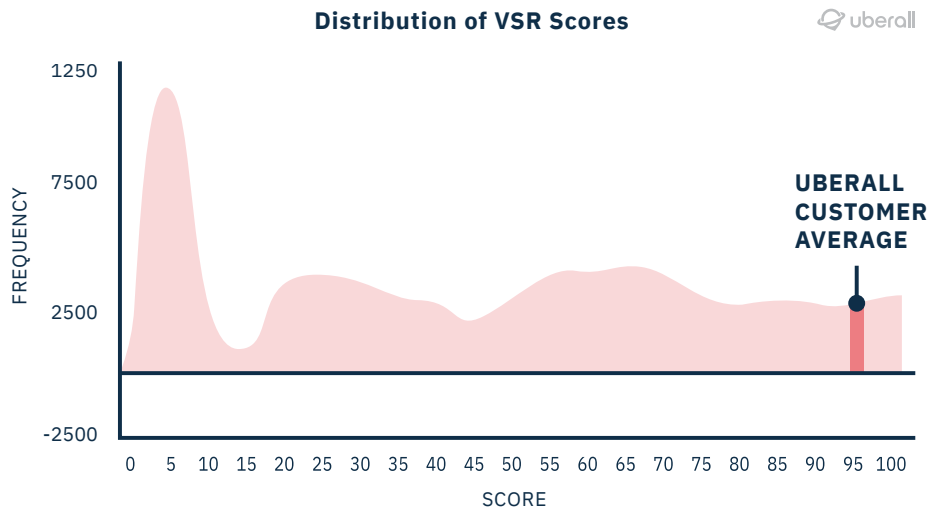
direct search), will likely find incorrect business information such as incorrect opening hours or address information.

Fig. 6



As we can see in this distribution graph, the number of locations that are voice search ready start to decline rapidly as we move beyond the average 44% VSR score. As we can also see in the graph below, approximately 1 in 5 businesses have a VSR score under 5%

Fig. 7



Based on the information provided in our analysis, and visualized in these graphs, there is only a very small percentage of business locations that could be considered voice search ready.

The lack of VSR ready business locations can be attributed to the difficulty in managing accurate business information across multiple locations and voice search directories. The reason that Uberall

customers have an average of 95.87% voice readiness is largely because their business listings can be consolidated and managed in one platform.

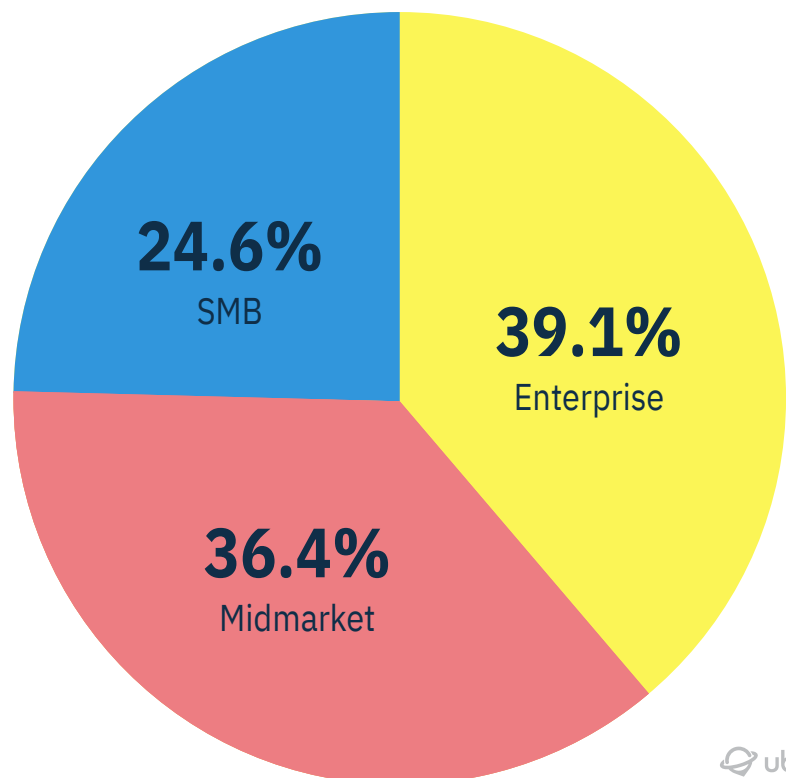
Most Surprising Findings of the VSR Study

Only 4% of Business Locations Have Correct Information on the 3 Major Directories

Using the same 73,000 business locations from the VSR score analysis, and this time just using Google, Yelp and Bing (the three most important directories for voice search), we found that **only 3.82% of business locations had no critical errors**. This means that over 96% of all business locations are failing to list their business information correctly - even after analyzing just three directories.

We then broke down the 3.82% of business locations with perfect citations on Google, Yelp and Bing by business size:

Fig. 8

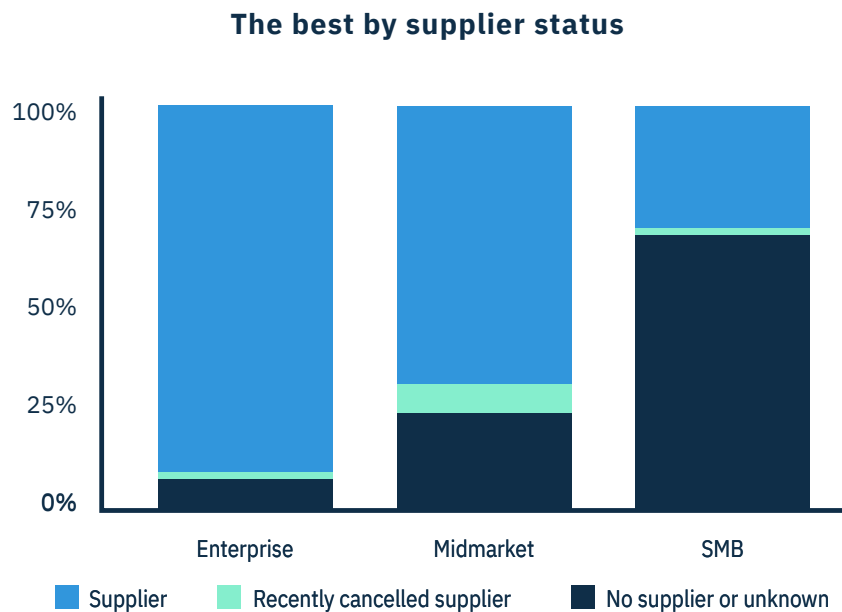


Note: 3.82% is comprised of 2,803 business locations within our initial analysis of 73,000 locations. Within this sample, enterprise businesses were defined as having 10+ locations, mid-market were defined as having 2 - 9 locations and SMBs were defined as having only a single location.

When drilling down into how businesses deal with the issue of VSR by size, we are left with some interesting findings:

- **92.9%** of enterprise-level locations that have a perfect score currently employ an external supplier to manage citations - meaning that only **6.9%** of enterprise locations are achieving perfect VSR scores when doing it alone
- The bigger the company, the more important a location management provider is to overall VSR score - companies we manage average a **95.87%** VSR score

Fig. 9



- Larger companies seem to be preparing more actively than smaller companies, even though smaller companies have a massive advantage (because the cost of effort is lower)
- **75%** of VSR ready business locations belong to mid-market and enterprise
- **76.5%** of all optimized business locations (3.82%) are using a supplier, meaning that it is highly unlikely that a business will reach voice search optimization without outside help

Getting a Perfect Score Across Google, Yelp and Bing

SMB Findings

VSR optimization should not be as difficult for SMBs to achieve as mid-market and enterprise, since they have only one location to manage, but our findings show that **they are the least likely to be voice search ready.**

SMBs are also more likely to try and optimize their online presence across these three directories without the help of an agency, which is not surprising considering that the small business mentality tends to be the DIY approach.



Recommendation

While SMBs are the least successful group for perfect optimization across Google, Bing and Yelp, they are also the most successful with the DIY approach, however, VSR optimization is relatively inexpensive for SMBs with a relatively high ROI (being found by local consumers performing local search). Because of this, it is our recommendation that small businesses look seriously at working with an agency to become VSR ready.



Mid-market Findings

Interestingly enough, mid-market business locations have the largest percentage of recently cancelled suppliers (by some margin). The reason for this is unknown, however, although more mid-market businesses are having success going it alone than enterprise, it is far less than SMBs - **almost 75% of perfectly optimized mid-market businesses either have a supplier or a recently cancelled supplier.**

Recommendation

It makes sense that suppliers become more necessary as the complexity of managing business listings across multiple directories increases. This also means that the effectiveness of in-house optimization management will decrease as the number of business locations increases.

Enterprise Findings

As stated, enterprise businesses are having the least success at achieving a perfect VSR score across Google, Yelp and Bing when going it alone - only **7% of enterprise businesses are VSR ready without using an external supplier.**

Recommendation

The findings are clear when breaking down the research across business size. While SMBs are least likely to be VSR ready, enterprise businesses are least likely to be ready without a supplier so if they want to be voice search ready, it is necessary for them to engage with an external supplier to make it happen.

“But Google Says You’re Open?” — Where Businesses Are Failing Most

As we looked at the findings across the study, we have identified the areas where businesses are failing most, which also offer the greatest opportunities for improvement...

Businesses Are Blind to Bing

We found that most businesses lack a strong Bing game. The Microsoft search engine had the most errors of the three directories with 35,095 total errors across all 73,000 business locations. This means that almost half of all Bing business listings had missing or inaccurate Bing listings.

Although Bing may not be the biggest search engine by volume, it is critical in search results from Windows. This is because Windows sites make up *approximately 25%* of all search queries in the United States and work invisibly behind many other apps -- including Cortana, Microsoft’s virtual assistant. Businesses should therefore take Bing seriously and factor accurate Bing listings into their online optimization efforts.

The Biggest Business Errors/Inconsistencies

After analyzing 73,000 businesses across 37 platforms, which gives us 2.1 million possible listings for each business information type, we were able to identify the categories of business information that were missing most frequently.

The most glaring business listing errors/missing data were as follows:

Opening Hours:

978,305 errors
(almost half of all listings)

Location Name:

510,010 errors
(almost one quarter of all listings)

Website:

710,113 errors
(almost one third of all listings)

Street:

421,048 errors
(almost one fifth of all listings)

Correct Opening Hours Are Crucial

As noted above, almost half of all business locations analyzed had incorrect opening hours on at least some directories.

This is one of the most glaring mistakes businesses continue to make. When a consumer conducts a search for a business online, they expect and trust that the information listed will be accurate. If the customer then turns up and finds that the business is closed, the immediate result is a loss of trust that will likely discourage them from ever returning to a business location.

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Even worse, users conducting voice search queries for local business information have almost certainly decided to visit the store with purchasing intent, so it is sales you are losing at the end of the day.

These types of business errors turn consumers off businesses and brands every day and cost a business money, so they strongly impact VSR scores.

Many businesses are trying to attract more customers to their stores by pouring money into online advertising. The problem here is that even if a business does hook a potential customer, the incorrect business information they receive will likely drive them away

In most cases this is an easy fix.

Using an external supplier that offers a location marketing solution is the easiest way to update and manage correct business information online. This is especially important during the holidays when opening hours change and this is precisely when consumers are counting on businesses to have accurate opening hours so that they can plan their store visits around their busy lives.

If you're looking for a more extensive explanation on the benefits of location marketing, take a look at a recent blog which offers [5 reasons](#) why you should prioritize it this year.

How You Can Check Your Own Score

The good news is, it's relatively simple to find out how accurate your business information is online. The more accurate it is, the more likely it will be that you reach the top result in local search results and voice search queries.

You can easily calculate the online health of your business by simply visiting this [online presence check tool](#), entering your company name, street address, zip code and find out your own score from there.



Do You Need to Get Voice Search Optimized?

CHAPTER 4

Voice Search Survey 2019: What Are People Saying About Voice Search?

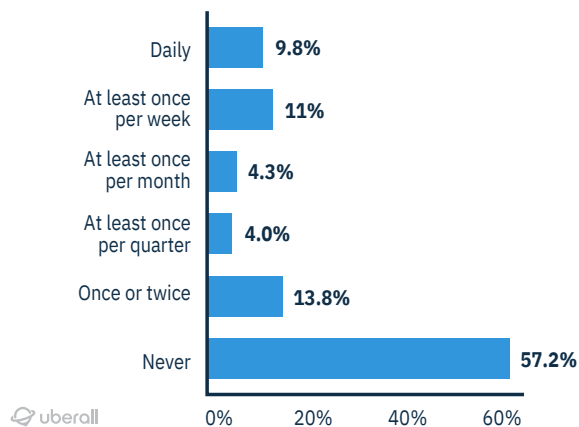
While compiling our own internal data for the voice search report, we also ran an external survey involving 1,000 participants to find out if people were adopting voice search and if it's even necessary for a business to optimize for it at all.

What is the state of voice search and how many people are really using it?

As stated previously in the report, our results found that 21% of respondents were using voice search every week, whereas 57% of respondents never used voice search. These results show usage is either frequent (daily and weekly), or not at all.

Fig. 10

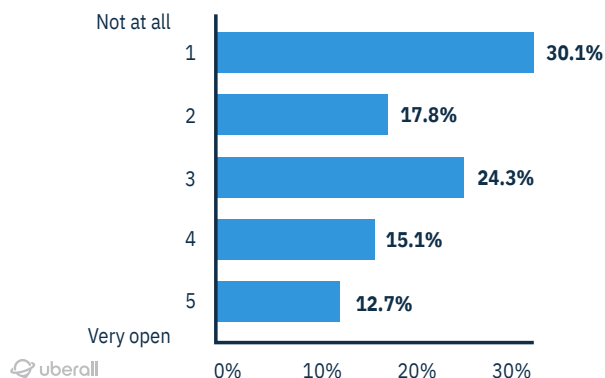
Over the last year, how often have you used voice search?
1,007 respondents



Does that mean that the other 57% of those surveyed who never use voice search will never adopt it?

Fig. 11

How open are you to using voice search in the future?
867 respondents

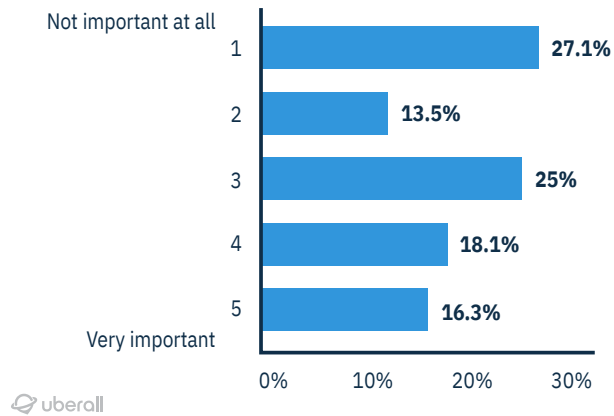


When asked how open they were to using voice search more frequently in the future, 52% of respondents were open to the idea and only 30% were flat out opposed to adopting voice search more often.

Fig. 12

How important do you think voice search will be in the future?

972 respondents



Even though 52% were open to adopting it at present, almost 60% of respondents feel that voice search will be important in the future, while 27% of respondents feel that voice search will not be important at all.

Those that were not open to adopting voice search in the future are also more skeptical of its future.

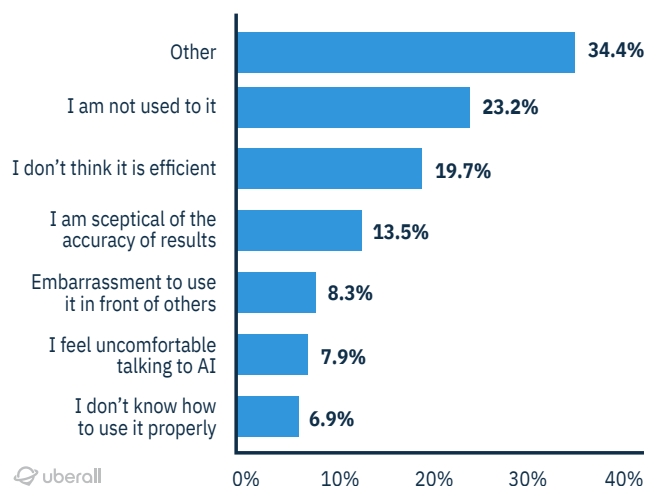
Interestingly, how open people feel towards voice search adoption seems to directly relate to how important they feel it will become in the future. While 30% of respondents are not open to using voice search at all, 27% of the same survey group feel that voice search will not be important in the future.

It is therefore likely that as voice search continues to become more pervasive in society, it will see much heavier future adoption. This has already been proven through the rise in smart speaker sales and in-car voice technology in 2018.

Fig. 13

What is currently keeping you from adopting voice search more frequently?

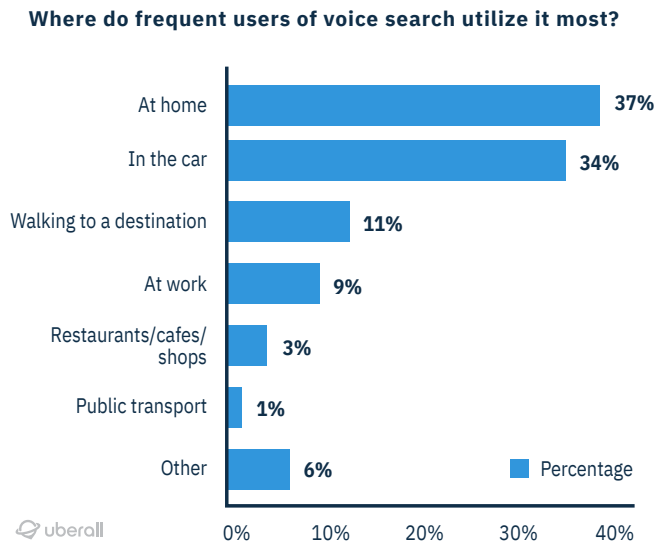
972 answers from 854 respondents



We also took a look at the top reasons people are not adopting voice search more frequently. Either they are not used to it (23.2%), they don't feel that it is the most efficient means of search (19.7%), or they do not feel that it is accurate enough (13.5%).

It is fair to say that voice search technology has to become more user-friendly before it wins the hearts and minds of the general public.

Fig. 14



When we asked a sample group of frequent users where they were most often using voice search, most were either using it in their own home (37%) or in the car where using their hands was not an option (34%) - 11% of frequent users also utilize voice search when they are walking to a destination.

From this data, businesses can start asking questions such as 'is a consumer likely to search for my business while out driving and walking to a destination or at home?'

Fig. 15

How often have you used voice search to find local business information such as nearby shops, opening hours, addresses, phone numbers, bookings or websites?

787 respondents

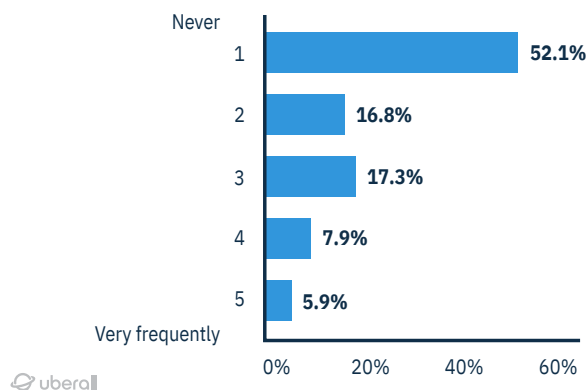
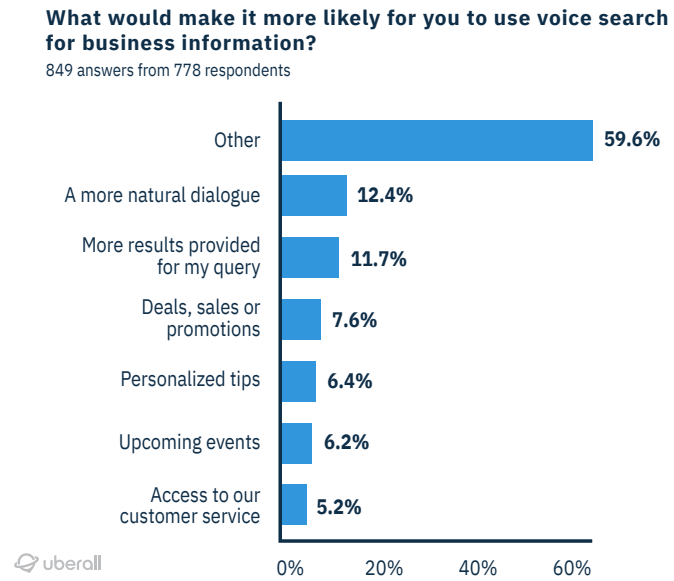


Fig. 16



We asked our survey group this very question and we found that 48% were using voice search as a means to locate business information **at least some of the time**.

Voice search assistants need to up their game before the general public begins to adopt voice search technology in their day-to-day life.

The number one reason users gave for their lack of voice adoption to search for business information was the lack of natural dialogue (12.4%), followed closely by the lack of results provided for the search query (11.7%).

The limits of voice search technology seems to be the biggest hurdle stopping it from gaining universal adoption, while the biggest opportunity for businesses to get ahead of their competition seems to be in offering consumers deals, sales or promotions that are tied to voice search (7.6%)



Conclusions From the Voice Search Survey

We already know that mobile is the most dominant form of voice search at present and that approximately 21% of people are using voice search on a weekly basis.

VSR is a golden opportunity for businesses to reach more customers easily and improve their online presence.

Furthermore, the largest reason respondents gave for failing to use voice search more frequently was the limitations of the technology coupled with a belief that voice search is not here to stay.

As voice search technology is constantly improving and finding its way into our homes, workplaces and transport, adoption is only likely to increase and, although 21% may not seem like a lot of regular users, that's 1 in 5 people businesses aren't reaching every day when they decide to neglect voice search readiness.

The results of our voice search readiness study concluded that only 4% of businesses are perfectly optimized for voice search across the major search engines. That means that only 4% of businesses are doing what they can to reach 1 in 5 people who are using voice search frequently.

VSR is a golden opportunity for businesses to reach more customers easily and improve their online presence.

The opportunity is there for businesses both big and small to join the elite club of voice search ready businesses before voice search readiness receives broader business adoption.

How You Can Optimize Your Business for Voice Search

CHAPTER 5

How to Improve Your VSR Score

As implied by the results above, there are several best practices you can implement that will help you to improve a weak VSR score.

1

Step one always starts with Google

If you do not have an accurate and complete Google My Business listing for each of your locations, you are failing your voice search readiness score. It's as simple as that.

2

Don't ignore Bing and Yahoo

Google is important, but Bing and Yahoo power more voice search applications than you may realize. Having correct and consistent listings across the entire search ecosystem will increase your chances of hitting the number one spot in voice search.

3

Leverage the help of a software service provider

As noted earlier, only 23.5% of business locations surveyed are reaching voice search readiness without a supplier whose business is to expand and improve your digital listings footprint. The difference between the average VSR score (44.12%) and the Uberall customer average of 95.87%, shows that an external supplier can dramatically improve your VSR score.

4

Keep your facts straight

Make sure your listings are consistent across all platforms and apps, including hours, location, phone number, name and website information. This includes listings you might not even be aware of.

5

Use voice-friendly structured language

Make sure you're using the language on your listings and content that voice searchers will use when searching for you.

Getting Your Voice Search House in Order: A Comprehensive Checklist



VSR CHECKLIST		DONE
Directory Specific Optimization	Only 4% of businesses have perfect citations across Google, Yelp and Bing - the three most important platforms for voice search readiness. Having accurate and consistent information across all of your locations on these 3 directories will give you a VSR score of at least 90% - making your locations voice search ready.	
Google My Business <i>Step 1: Claim Your Profile</i>	Claim your GMB listing. You can find the steps here. At sign up you will be asked to add your business information (Address, Opening Hours, Phone Number, Business Name, Website, Zip code etc) - Claiming your GMB listing is your #1 voice optimization priority because Google feeds both Google Assistant and Siri.	
Google My Business <i>Step 2: Embed Map on Your Website</i>	Embed your Google Maps business location on the Contact Us page of your website by identifying your map embed code on your GMB business profile .	
Google My Business <i>Step 3: Create FAQs</i>	One of the lesser known voice search optimization strategies is to create your own FAQs in Google Q&A - within your GMB profile. This will allow you to build contextual search value within your profile and rank for long-tail voice search phrases.	
Google My Business <i>Step 4: Reviews + Engage</i>	Gaining user reviews is crucial when ranking in voice search for queries where users seek quality ('best', 'top', 'highest rated' etc). Customers want you to respond to their reviews. When engaging with customers who leave reviews, you are more likely to influence a negative review when you reply to customer feedback.	
Yelp <i>Step 1: Claim Your Yelp Business Listing</i>	Claim your Yelp listing. At sign up you will be asked to add your business information (Address, Opening Hours, Phone Number, Business Name, Website, Zip code etc...) - make sure it is accurate and consistent with your Google My Business profile information. Yelp is also incredibly important to voice search optimization because Yelp reviews feed Alexa, Siri and Cortana.	
Yelp <i>Step 2: Get Reviews + Engage</i>	Being listed on Yelp is important for voice search 'visibility' but by engaging with customers whether they leave good reviews or bad, you are more likely to secure return business and change bad reviews to good ones. The better your review score, the better your chances of securing that top spot on local voice search queries.	
Bing	Claim your Bing listing. At sign up you will be asked to add your business information (Address, Opening Hours, Phone Number, Business Name, Website, Zip code etc...) - make sure it is accurate and consistent with your Google My Business and Yelp profile information. Bing is the final big player when it comes to your voice search optimization because it feeds Cortana, Microsoft's virtual assistant.	



VSR CHECKLIST		DONE
Content Specific Optimization	Optimize short descriptions with a location and neighborhood if it's local. In the long description you should use a different keyword variation for every 100 words and also add the location information. Also write blogs that cater to commonly asked consumer questions.	
Keyword Research	Find online consumer queries that match your business offerings and consider the difference between how people type and how people speak - voice search queries are likely longer than text and in the form of a question like 'how do I change a tire on a car' or a command like 'find the nearest Starbucks to me now'.	
Create an FAQ Page	The typical voice search result is 29 words in length - perfect for a website FAQ page. Identify frequent queries online, create an FAQ page and write answers that are around 29 words in length to answer them. This is one of the easiest ways to optimize for voice search.	
Write Featured Snippet Worthy Content	40.7% of voice search answers come from the featured snippets - optimize by answering key-words concisely (see FAQs above).	
Embed Long-Tail Keywords in Content	Less than 2% of voice search results have the exact keyword in the title - insert keywords into the body of the content specifically answering the question.	
Keep Your Message Simple	K.I.S.S. Methodology - Keep it simple for the consumer , think like a consumer and how they are conducting a voice search. The average voice search is conducted at a 14-year-old comprehension level.	
Website Specific Optimization	Optimize for voice search by adding "Near me" in your title tags, meta-description, internal links, and anchor text. Use phrases consumers use to describe the neighborhood around the location. Implement the titles of local institutions and landmarks that are most relevant to the business.	
Increase Site Page Speed	The average voice search result loads in 4.6 seconds - 52% faster than the average page. Find out how to improve your site speed .	
Structured Data Optimization	Make your pages relevant and structured with queries in mind. Include: Products, Places, People, Organizations, Events, Reviews, How-to Content etc..	
Submit Sitemap to Google	Submit your sitemap from your Google Search Console. From your dashboard click: Crawl > Sitemaps > Add Test Sitemap.	
Prioritize High-quality Pages in the Sitemap	If your sitemap directs bots to low-quality pages, search engines will interpret your site as low quality. Instead, direct bots to pages that include images and video, have lots of unique content and prompt user engagement through reviews.	
Create Actions on Google App	Publish your content on Actions according to these instructions	
Mobile-first Site Optimization	Optimize your website specifically for mobile. Most voice search queries come via mobile so it's crucial to make sure your website is mobile-friendly. You can test your site's mobile optimization and load time here: https://search.google.com/test/mobile-friendly	



Conclusions From the VSR Report

It is clear to see from the data presented that, while voice search is not the number one form of user search, it is still important to optimize for.

From our own analysis of over 73,000 businesses, we can categorically state that not only are most businesses not voice search ready, many businesses are not even optimized for local search to a satisfactory level.

Having accurate business information online such as the correct address and opening hours are foundational key elements every business needs for consumers to have an uninterrupted buyer journey and engage with that business both online and offline.

The fact that approximately half of all business locations we surveyed had inaccuracies with their opening hours represents one of the great problems for all users searching locally today. They are putting in the research and effort to find your business online and travelling there offline only to find the business closed.

Having a Voice Search Readiness score over 90% is a success and puts you among the 4% of the best business locations out there — but it still requires you to have accurate data for your locations across your directory listings. Plus, every percentage point over 90% could mean the difference as to whether you grab that coveted #1 voice result, or your competitors do.

Having a Voice Search Readiness score over 90% is good and puts you among the 4% of the best — but it still requires you to have accurate business data for the majority of your business locations across all of your directory listings.

The findings of this report demonstrate major failures across every business type and size and highlights the inability of 96% of business locations to both manage their presence online and become voice search ready.

Only 4% of business locations are currently voice search ready, and 76.5% of them are using suppliers

For more information on how you can fully optimize your business presence for voice, [contact Uberall directly](#).

Improve Your VSR and Online Presence With Uberall

Uberall is a global leader in the field of location marketing with almost 1 million managed locations worldwide. Our goal is to ensure that businesses have an optimized online presence when consumers search for them locally.

With the *Location Marketing Cloud*, Uberall users have access to a single, powerful, and streamlined point of control over their entire digital brand footprint - increasing traffic, and driving local in-store sales.

These are just some of our customers and partners who use the Uberall platform to optimize their local marketing efforts...

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PARIS



Uberall helps businesses manage their voice search readiness, reputation and interactions in real-time to connect with consumers across all mobile, voice, and desktop platforms - including websites, store locators, search engines, maps, GPS, social platforms, and apps.

Founded in 2013, Uberall's Location Marketing Cloud is widely used by businesses all over the world, leveraging the latest technology in listings and reputation management, locator-as-a-service, and personalized geo-targeted advertising. The cloud-based platform includes products such as...



Listings

Real-time management of store location data across all search platforms, mapping systems, and media channels that drive sales.



Locator + Pages

Leverage the power of search engines with optimized store pages that will boost SEO for every location.



Engage

Social reviews produce an impact directly influencing sales at the local level. Proactively engage consumers on all platforms in real-time.

[*Visit our website today*](#) to organize a demo and discover how we can help you become voice search ready.





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Uberall believes in enabling local businesses and customers to make even better decisions through optimized and more relevant location data. It is our mission to build first-rate solutions that contribute to the evolution of the local web.

Uberall is a Location Marketing solution company that makes it possible for any type of local business or public institution to automatically optimize their online presence. With Uberall they ensure that people will easily find them when searching for directions, opening hours, recommendations, event schedules, and other relevant information. Uberall has 280+ people, based in six offices across the world, including Berlin, San Francisco, Amsterdam, London, Paris and Cape Town.