



Beyond the search bar



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# The Search Dilemma: Challenges & Opportunities

**Cracking the Code:** What are searchers *really* saying? We'll dive into the whispers of user frustration

**The Great Migration:** Users are quietly fleeing to Reddit, Instagram, and AI chatbots for answers — but why?

**Trust Issues:** In a world of SEO-manipulated content, users are questioning what - and who - they can believe

**Digital Amnesia:** Once users find valuable information, it vanishes into the digital ether

**The Paradox of Choice:** When presented with multiple sources, users feel less informed, not more

**Unveiling the Arsenal:** Discover how we can address these pain points to make Google Search even more indispensable

# Voice of Users

**Who:** Young professionals with moderate technical proficiency

"I prefer reddit over Google as the answers there are not Search Engine Optimized"

- Himanshu, Developer

"I research on Perplexity because I can have natural conversations and give feedback on the results. Plus, I also avoid SEO-manipulated results."

- Deepanjal, Analytics

"Google throws multiple answers from different sources, and I'm left wondering which ones I can actually trust."

- Harsh, CA Articleship

"For work research, I stick to books, biographies, experts, and teachers. For personal stuff like travel, Google's results are too varied - I default to other sources, for example, asking a friend"

- Cherisha, Movie Producer

"Google forces me to sift through multiple sites instead of directly answering my questions, like when I needed help with Google Sheets."

- Sonika, Analytics

"When Google highlights an answer it pulled from a website, I have no way to know if it's coming from a reliable source."

- Aesha, Corporate lawyer

# Voice of Users

"For math problems, I go straight to ChatGPT or Gemini - they give me the solution and explain the approach without making me hunt for the right page."

- Ayush, Preparing for a competitive exam

"Gemini/ChatGPT are better for step-by-step instructions, like explaining ERP implementations."

- Aditi, IT consulting

"For tracking order, delivery, application status, etc, I wish I could just type my ID and the website (like Bluedart) in the search box and see my delivery status right there."

- Amit, Product Manager

"When I search on google, it's always keywords and not in a natural language. I'm often paranoid that I'm not using the right words"

- Ojus, Doctor

"When I try to find something I've searched before, the results are totally different, leading me to different conclusions. Plus, I can never remember which links were actually helpful."

- Suraj, Health Coach

"The results lack crucial real-time updates. If there's a landslide in Wayanad or a hurricane in Florida, that should be the first thing I see."

- Upasana, Analytics

# Key Paint Points

## **Information Reliability**

- Skepticism about source credibility
- SEO manipulation affecting result quality

## **Search Experience**

- Difficulty finding previously useful answers (just an indicator of visited links)
- Lack of confidence in using natural language queries
- Multiple sources have to be checked for simple queries

## **Information Quality**

- Missing critical real-time updates (ex natural disasters)
- Lack of a credibility indicator on featured answer snippet/widget

## **Alternative Preferences**

- Forums like reddit for authentic discussions & varied opinions
- AI tools for Step-by-step approach, natural language conversations & feedback on results
- Direct website integrations for tracking (orders/delivery/applications)

# Leveraging Community Wisdom: The Reddit Opportunity

**Problem:** Users want answers from forums like Reddit, they append reddit keyword to their Google searches for: authentic opinions and varied viewpoints from real people (vs articles on the web incentivised to push sales), and to avoid SEO manipulation.

**Solution:**

1. Increase weightage of Reddit results, esp for topics where opinions and discussions matters more than just the answer
2. On topics with fewer answers: "Ask on Reddit" widget – allow users to directly post questions to relevant subreddits from the Google Search results page (requires integration with Reddit profiles)

**Focus Area:** Improved task success for users and increased user trust

**Measurement:**

- % of queries ending on Reddit
  - Search session duration (lower is better)
- (requires access to visited links on the browser)

**GTM:** “Ask on reddit” widget - educate users through tutorials & tooltips on first impression: how to use, what is required from user, etc

# Delivering Instant Answers: Expanding Widgets

**Problem:** Users often need quick answers without navigating multiple websites.

**Solution:**

Similar to currency conversion, calculator, stock trends, game scores, etc, expand widget library to cover common queries (ex. order tracking, application status checks) by partnering with key businesses to integrate information directly into search results.

**Focus Area:** Reduced search time and increased user satisfaction, & potential savings for partners due to reduced site traffic

**Measurement:**

- Adoption: % interaction/impression
- Coverage: % common queries (by their share among searches) addressed by widgets

**GTM:**

1. On Search page: Nudge users to add the widget on the home screen or search page for the duration of the event (ex till the application is approved/denied, a sports is live, etc)
2. On Partner site: nudge to add widget on search home / chrome landing page

# Building Trust

**Problem:** Users lack confidence in the reliability of resource links as well as highlighted answers.

**Solution:**

1. Introduce "Verified Source" badges for trustworthy websites.
2. Implement user feedback options (on accuracy/usefulness) on \*ALL\* search results, not just AI overviews.
3. An accuracy/usefulness indicator on the summarized/highlighted answer widget
3. Utilize AI tools for enhanced fact-checking of flagged content, by giving them more resources, more time to generate result, or elevated access to certain resources
4. Streamline the process for fact-checkers to identify and address flagged results

**Focus Area:** Accuracy / information quality, user trust, and a more robust feedback loop

**Measurement:** change in accuracy/usefulness of flagged content at an aggregate level



# Remembering the Past: Improving Search History

**Problem:** Even with highlighted visited links, important insights from past visits can still take time to find

**Solution:** Enrich search history with:

1. Last visited date
2. An overview/summary of the site
3. Integrating "Highlights", a browser feature allowing users to highlight text and add notes directly on webpages.

**Focus Area:** task success - reduces time spent searching for the answer.

## Measurement

1. [Highlights feature] - adoption (% users highlighting content)
2. Search query duration for visited queries

**GTM:** educate users through modals, tutorials & tooltips on highlights discovery, how to use, and where they can find the highlights

# Filling the Gaps: Addressing Information Sparsity

**Problem:** The intent behind the search isn't clear. If presented with more details, the query will lead to a concrete & accurate answer

**Solution:** Interactively prompt users for query refinement. Ex: on searching "Slack login error", the result page can prompt for clarification on the nature of the error.

**Problem:** Complex queries for which an answer isn't available

**Solution:** Crowdsourcing answers: Similar to reddit/quora, but Google generated questions to complete it's knowledge base. User profiling to identify their areas of expertise. Aggregate answers across users and verify through AI or user feedback, since verification is easier problem than finding the answer.

**Problem:** The facts are available, but scattered across the web / not structured well enough. There's data which needs to be organized into information.

**Solution:** I imagine this to be an active area of focus at Google already, to continue improving it's knowledge graph builders to gather, structure and verify fragmented information

**Focus Area:** Improved information availability, and a more comprehensive knowledge base

# Looking Ahead: Future Considerations

**AI Overview strategy:** When to providing answers vs presenting links - a complex problem of balancing user expectations, answer accuracy, and monetisation. One way perhaps, is using a freemium model - ask users to opt in for a generative summary by spending tokens

**Advanced search filters:** Finding ways to better educate the users about features like 'site:', 'filetype:', filters like 'any time', 'size', etc

**User confidence:** Imbibing confidence that the search query was understood correctly and they don't need to worry about using the right keywords

Thank you.