

Google has come out with its annual Year in Search: Insights for Brands report. The report is a deep dive into what Indian users are searching for online and the opportunities these trends can unlock for brands.

Sharing insights from the report, Vikas Agnihotri, country director, Google India said, "The online space in India has never been more vibrant. India has become the fastest internet consuming country in the world and the internet has now become the bridge to Bharat's aspirations. As highlighted in the Year in Search Report, the growing influence of online video, increase in usage of language and voice, along with a rise of machine learning (ML) and artificial intelligence (AI) are opportunities for brands and marketers. This enables brands to create relevant experiences to engage and retain customers on a platform that they spend considerable time on."

The top five emerging trends from the Google India Year in Search-Insights for Brands report are:

1. Bharat is going online: With an average yearly addition of 40 million users, the internet is being welcomed into homes all over India. Rise in online search volumes in non-metros is now trumping metros. Consumers in non-metros are using the internet to search for information regarding insurance, beauty and travel more than metros.

2. Video is the new search tool: Everyday millions of users are using Video to 'learn' something new. Online video audience in India is expected to grow to 500 million by 2020. Watch time for science videos as well as hobby related videos in India have more than tripled in 2018. YouTube has also become the new beauty advisor, as watch time for beauty tips videos in India has doubled YoY in 2018 and searches related to beauty have grown by 40 per cent last year.

3. Regional languages: Indian language internet users are expected to account for nearly 75 per cent of India's internet user base by 2021, and Google search trends show a significant

move in this direction. Hindi is also gaining traction in the technology sector with 2X increase in Hindi queries related to laptops and PCs.

4. The rise of omnichannel: With the rise of omnichannel, consumers are making the most of their online and offline experiences. Food seems to be the 'topic of interest'. There was a 2.5X jump in aggregator brand queries in comparison to the total growth of food tech queries.

5. Assisting businesses through AI and ML: 2018 saw an increase in the adoption of online automation, as businesses used AI and ML to drive efficiency and improve customer experience. Brands across various categories, such as BFSI and telecom, have started integrating voice assistants like Google Assistant with their customer service to help customers. Brands such as Uber, Ola, Meru made cab booking services available on Google Assistant. Furthermore, brands are using automated capabilities in digital marketing to save time and drive higher return on ad spend (ROAS).

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