

# Swarm State of Search | Fall Edition 2018

Wondering what's happening in the SEO realm and how those Google algorithm updates relate to you or your business objectives?

If so, then keep reading! In this first installment of Swarm's State of Search we discuss how to expand content, Google's Core algorithm update, and whether Google is shifting rankings on perceived value.



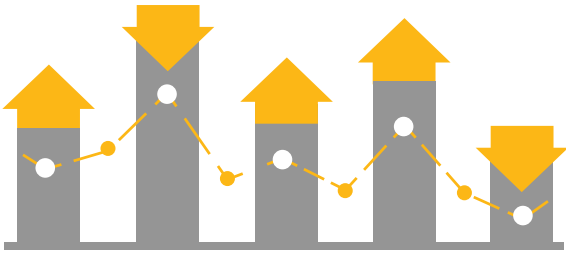
## Keyword Density and Word Count in 2018

We recommend our clients to expand content on their key pages fairly often. Common questions are always “How many words?” and “How many times should I mention the keywords in the content?”. It's difficult to answer. Our recommendation is usually to focus on the topic as a whole and to write as much content as possible without being redundant.

While it is true that the “average” word count of a Google first page result is 1,890, not all pages or queries require that much content. As far as keyword density is concerned, it's basically pointless. Google is able to rank pages for a query where the keyword isn't even mentioned on the page at all. It's mainly about the topic and the searcher's intent.

### When writing content, it's best to focus on 3 areas:

- 1 Purpose:** What information do you need to provide to your visitors? What will be the most beneficial to them?
- 2 Competition:** When looking at the keywords/topics that are ranking for your target, what is your competition doing? That's always a good starting point since Google is ranking them highly for a reason
- 3 SEO:** When looking at the keywords/topics that are ranking for your target, what is your competition doing? That's always a good starting point since Google is ranking them highly for a reason



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## Google Core Algorithm Update Should Be Complete

Google released an update at the end of July/early August. None of our clients really noticed. If anything, the update was beneficial since we've actually been seeing traffic increases with some of our clients since that time. There have been a lot of horror stories so I consider we're some of the lucky ones. Or we're just doing things right \*wink, wink\*.

This algorithm update was being reported as one of the biggest over the last year or so. The good news is that the update should be complete. Google confirmed it was a global rollout and won't be providing detail on the scale of impact on search queries either. They did give us a few nuggets. Mainly that the update was focused more on "relevancy" as opposed to quality.

We do know that there are a lot of complaints from other webmasters. There's no "fix" per se. The goal should always be to remain focused on creating great content.



## Are Queries Being Shifted Based on Perceived Value?

Google applies for patents all time. SEO by the sea usually looks at these patent updates and tries to decipher them. About 6 months ago Google was granted a patent that is focused on giving quality scores to queries. It's very technical and a little hard to grasp. However, it's very interesting.

One piece of the patent says they identify a user's selection as one determinant for quality score. Here's an example:

Let's say you had a great piece of content on "Samsung TVs" that was optimized and were ranked #5. Best Buy has a subpar piece of content on "Samsung TVs" and is ranked #8. What this means is that if more people click on Best Buy's page (since they're a well-known brand), Google can essentially re-adjust the results for that query as well as related queries.

This probably won't be a huge factor in the ranking results but it's something to keep an eye on.

