

ONLINE CONSUMER SEARCH TRENDS REPORT 2020

How Confusion & Trust Drive Online Journeys

BRANDVERITY

brandverity.com

Consumer Search Trends

US retail ecommerce spending soared to **\$586.92 billion in 2019**, representing an increase of 14.0% from 2018 and 10.7% of total US retail spending¹. It's no wonder that brands across industries are investing so heavily in paid search programs to capture massive amounts of traffic.

While brands and their marketing departments deploy strategies to capitalize on ecommerce trends, new BrandVerity research has brought to light some important findings and hidden risks brands need to be aware of when it comes to the journeys consumers are taking online.

In order to give brands a better understanding of the search experiences their consumers are having and how they are impacting brand perception, we commissioned a research study in October to over 1,000 US consumers, balanced against the US population for age, gender, region, and income.

¹ | eMarketer, US Ecommerce 2019

Amongst the many findings, three main themes stood out:

1 Consumers are confused by how search engine results work.

Only 37% of consumers understand that search engine results are categorized by a combination of relevance and advertising spend.

The other 63% of consumers believe that a Search Engine Results Page (SERP) is categorized by either relevance or spend, or they simply “don't know.” Additionally, nearly 1-in-3 consumers (31%) say they don't believe search engines (e.g. Google) do a good job of labeling which links are ads.

2 Consumers are more inclined to click on the result that appears first.

Without a clear understanding of how search results are served up, consumers are more inclined to click on the result that appears first, believing it to be the most relevant option. **And with 54% of consumers saying they trust websites more that appear at the top of the SERP, this isn't just an assumption.**

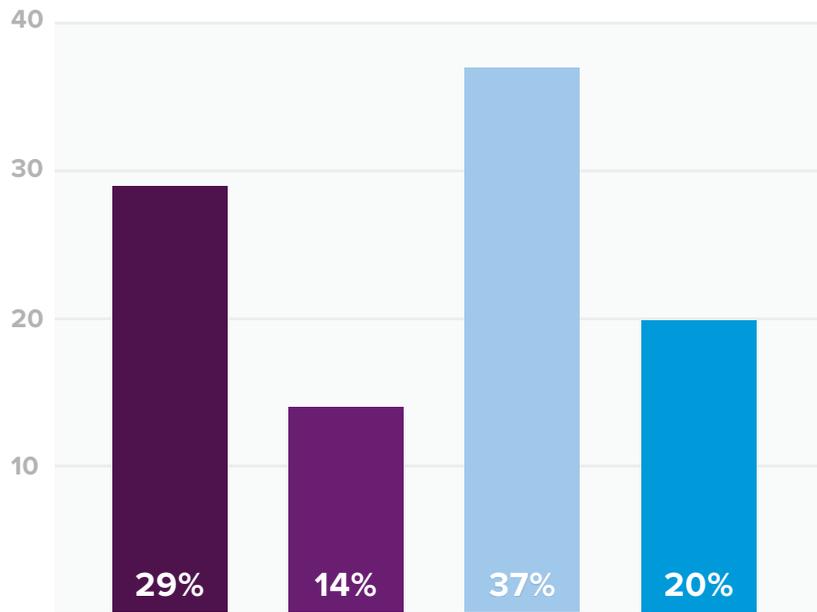
3 Consumers feel misled by the websites they find in the search results.

Fifty-one percent of consumers say that when searching for information on a product, they sometimes feel misled by one of the websites in the search results. **An additional 1-in-4 (25%) report feeling misled “often” or “always.”** Even further, 1-in-4 also say they often end up somewhere unexpected that does not provide them with what they were looking for when clicking on a search result.

[Read the full report for all the survey findings.](#)

Consumers are confused by how search engine results work.

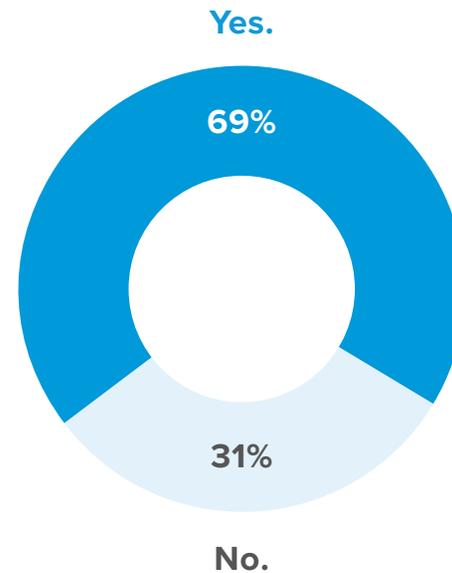
How do you think search engine (e.g. Google) results get ordered on a page?



The ranking is determined by...

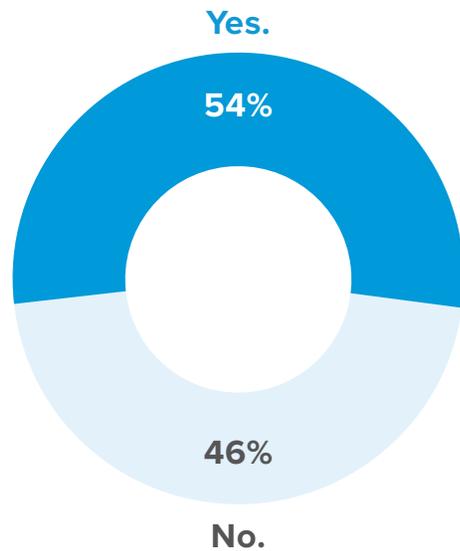
- Which results are the most relevant
- Who pays the most
- Which results are the most relevant **and** who pays the most
- I don't know

Do search engines (i.e. Google) do a good job of labeling which links are ads?

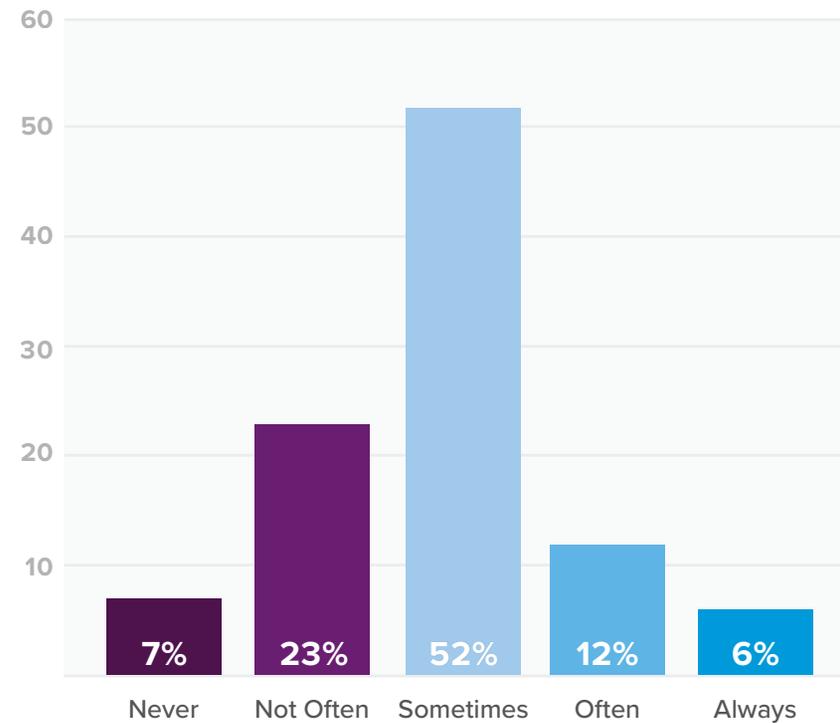


SERP position can impact both consumer trust and the likelihood to buy.

When you search for a product online, do you have more trust in the websites shown at the **top of the results page versus at the bottom** of the results page?

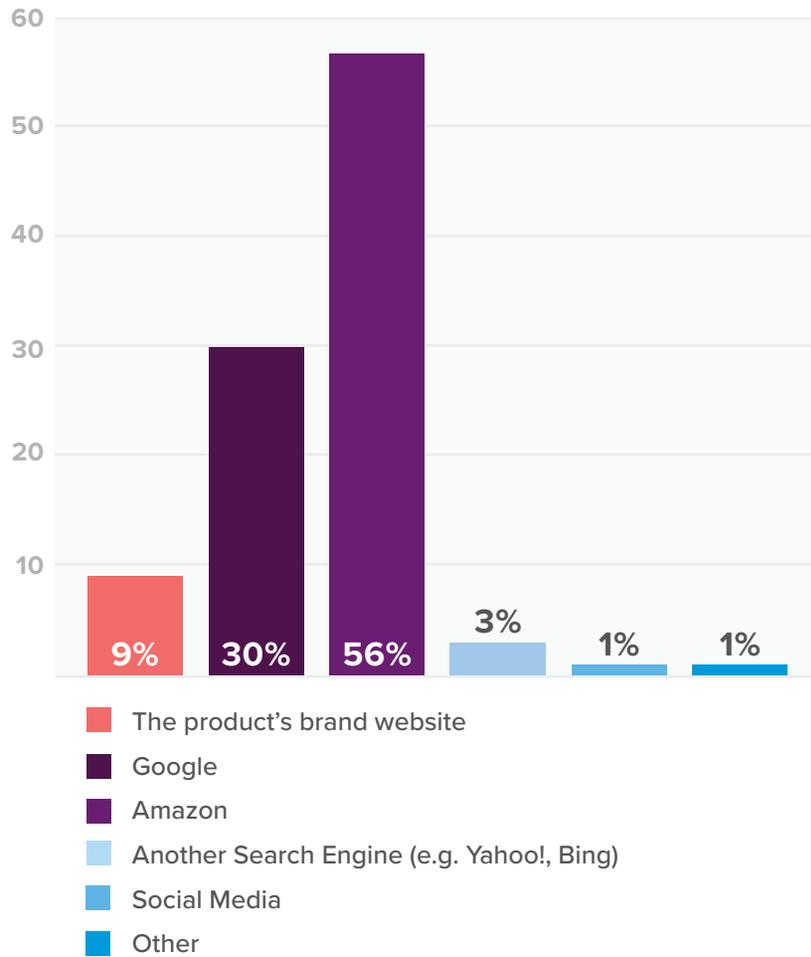


Have you ever searched for a specific brand of product (e.g. Nike) but ultimately **purchased a competing product** (e.g. Adidas) because it also appeared in the search results you received?

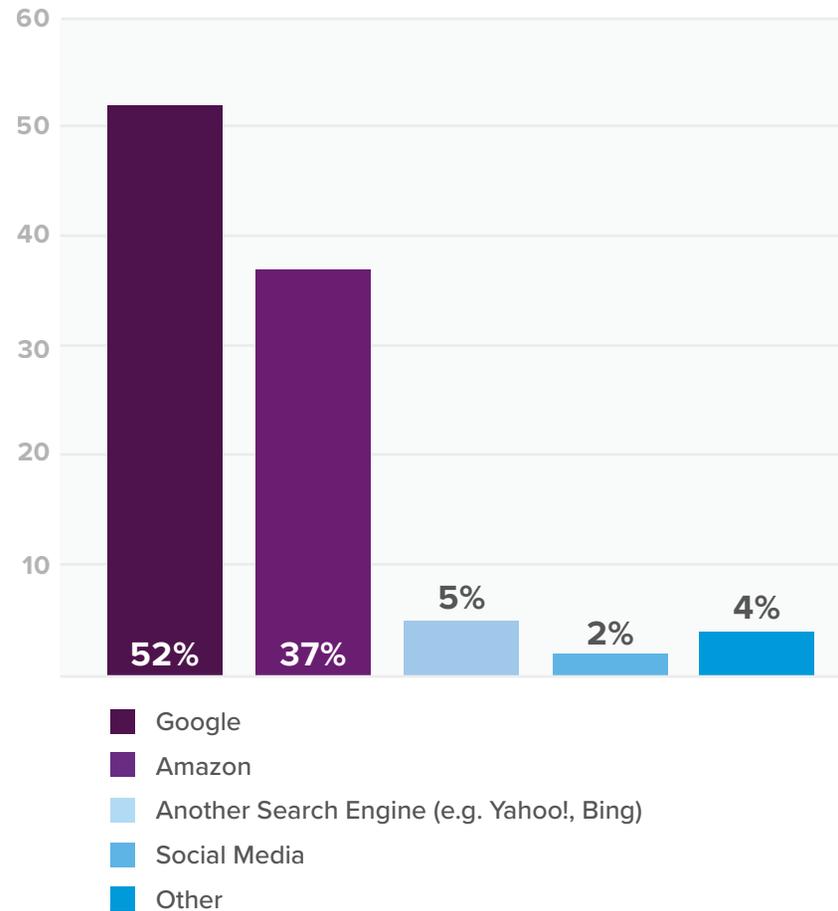


Consumer preferences differ for branded vs. unbranded product searches.

When searching for a specific brand of product online, where do you start your search?

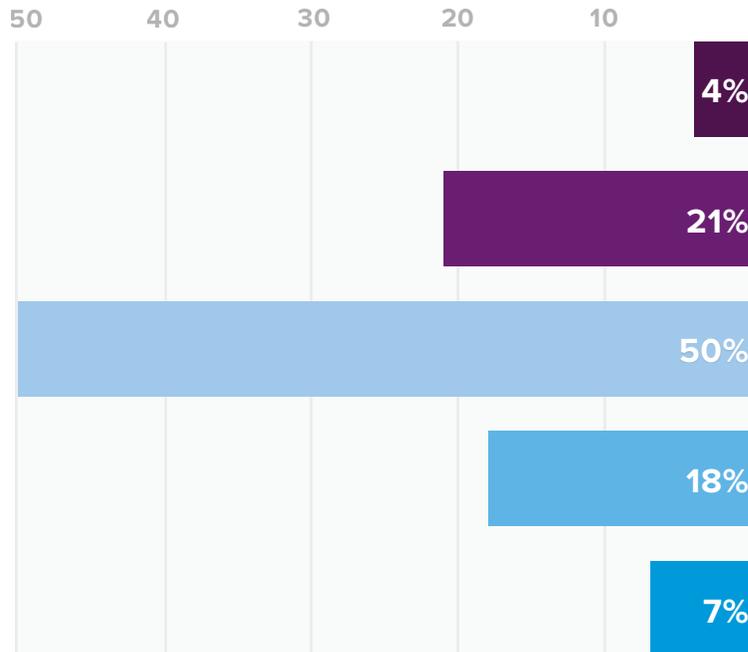


When searching for a product (e.g. "running shoes") but do not know the specific brand, where do you start your search?

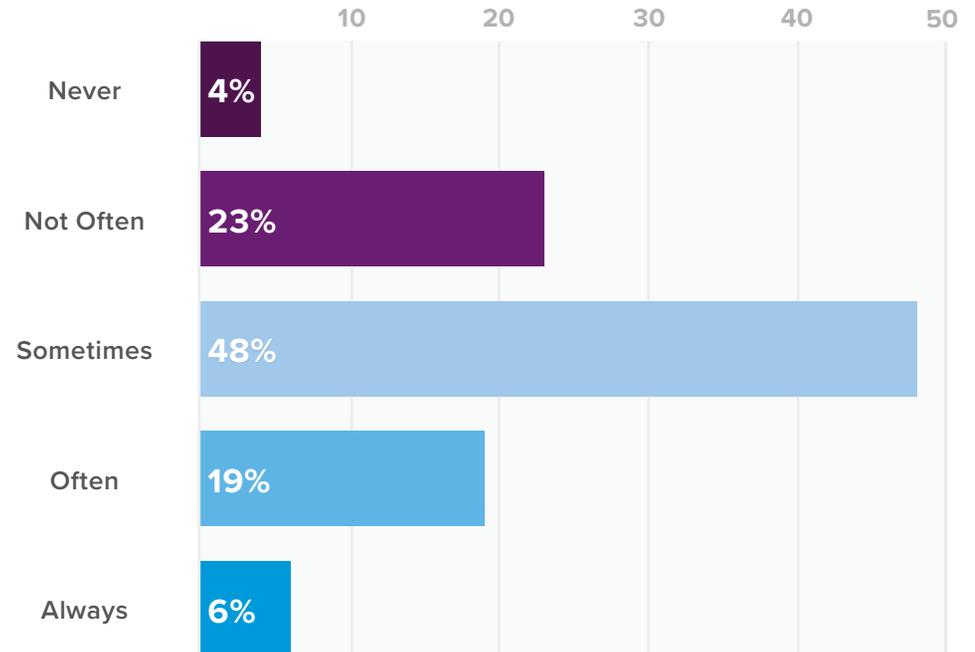


Consumers feel misled by the websites they find in the search engine results.

While searching for information about a specific product, how often have you **felt misled** by one of the websites in the search results?



How often have you clicked on a search result and been **taken somewhere unexpected** (that does not provide you with what you were looking for)?



Consumers are increasingly wary of the brands they do business with and are holding them to new and higher standards.

Companies must ensure that the entirety of the experiences they provide meet customer expectations. As our findings illustrate, oversight on paid search programs is more important than ever when it comes to safeguarding these experiences.

About Us

BrandVerity protects the world's leading brands online by safeguarding their marketing programs and ensuring they remain compliant in today's ever-evolving digital landscape. BrandVerity uses proprietary technology to automatically discover and remediate online infringements while monitoring partners, affiliates, and third parties to maximize revenue and improve the customer experience.

For more information, visit www.brandverity.com.

ADD BRAND PROTECTION TO YOUR PPC STRATEGY

See who's bidding on your brand terms with a personalized demo.

[Request a Demo](#)