



Expert blog

From ChatGPT to generative search



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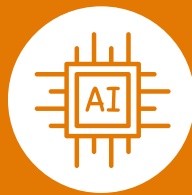
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Introduction

Based on our own experiences from the Squadra MLC data science team, in this article we look at how the role of a search engine may change in the coming years and answer the questions: 'What does it mean for search engine optimization if you product text is nothing more than input for a text generator?' and 'What role will images play in the search engine optimization of the future?'





Generative Search

Multi-modal models have overturned our vision of the future: it searches texts as easily as images and videos. Although this development in itself is not new, the impact for websites has not been considered before. Can you still speak of search engine optimization if the search engines start to understand that the customer hardly reads the text and buys based on the images?

Does that mean generative search will replace normal search? Not any time soon. It is especially suitable for answering difficult questions in an accessible and interactive way. These kinds of questions mainly concern general knowledge such as culture and society, but you can also think of orienting yourself on buying a product.



Will generative search replace normal search?



Multi-modal model some images, searches texts and videos.



Mainly applied to general knowledge such as culture and society.



Generative Search for products

AI models are virtually unusable for products. Because the model uses so much data, it is not clear why certain products are shown, and they are often not the products you would choose yourself. But the development is very fast and such a buying experience is worth a lot of money, so we think we are working hard to improve this experience. In that case, it is important as a retailer to optimize the website in case your product is shown in a summary. That means the queries will be different. They are more likely to include pros and cons questions. That is why it is very important to clearly indicate disadvantages in the product description.

Fashion & lifestyle products

With lifestyle products such as fashion or furniture, we think it is even more important to give each product its own identity. Five years ago it was still sufficient to include certain search terms in the product text, but it is becoming increasingly important to score high on nuanced, subjective queries such as: "white dress for work". Models like ChatGPT can read between the lines almost as well as a human, so there's no need to spell everything out, but it's important to keep in mind which queries a particular product should be found on.

PowerText.ai

Do you want to get started with AI to increase the findability of your products? Then PowerText.ai is an AI-driven tool where smart algorithms automatically generate thousands of SEO-optimized product descriptions. As a result, the entire product portfolio can easily be provided with a unique product description and the findability will improve. The software automatically translates texts into +150 different languages, which increases the reach internationally. Scan the QR code and request a demo!

PowerText.ai



Improvements needed to make multi-modal models work for products.



Extensive product descriptions essential for match queries.



Generate thousands of optimized product texts with PowerText.ai.



Multi-modal search

Will most products be bought in 5 years time on a query such as “what should I consider when buying a pair of pants?”, after which the search engine generates a whole screen of text, followed by a whole discussion about prices, brands and trends ? We don't think so. If you want to buy a pair of trousers, you will probably mainly want to see pictures.

For about three years there have been multi-modal models, which are models that no longer distinguish between images, texts and videos: all these inputs can be converted into the same representation. In this representation - a list of a few hundred or a few thousand numbers - it can be determined how much two inputs are similar, whether they are images, texts or videos. Those who use this for search convert the query to this representation and compare it with a database of representations of the texts, images and videos on the websites. The sites that are most similar will be at the top.

Until now, these models have never been applied to the scale of the entire Internet, and almost no one is doing search-engine optimization of what appears in images. Although new demos show that it is heading there.



Multi-modal models that convert all inputs to the same representation.



The sites that most closely match that query appear at the top.



Demos show us moving to search engine optimization for images.



Search engine MLC

At Squadra MLC we created a multi-modal search engine for an American customer in fashion and lifestyle. Much of their data was scraped from small webshops, so that the product texts were virtually unusable. For example, there were leather bags where the product text did not indicate anywhere that it was a leather bag, because the webshop sold nothing but leather bags.

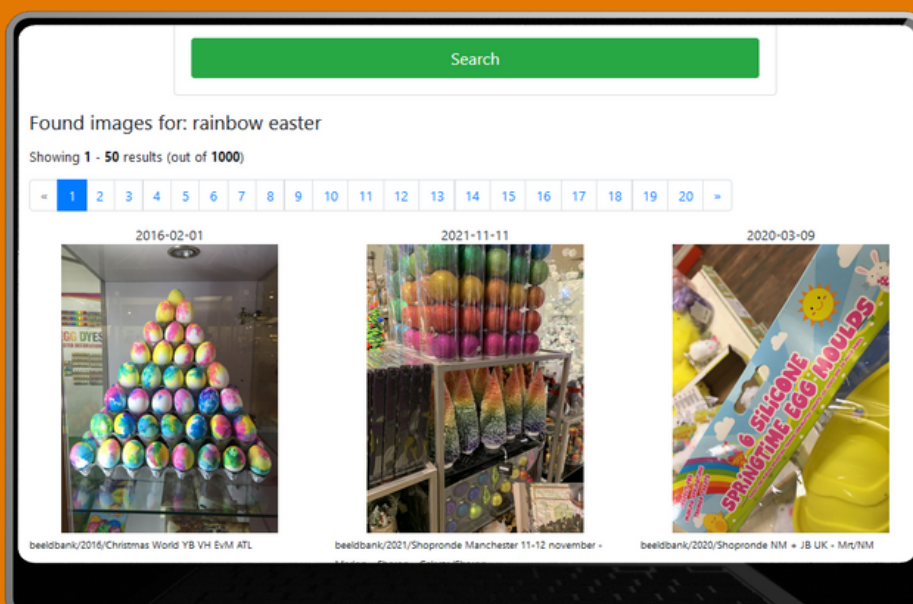
By using the images it became not only possible to find the leather bag, the model can also associate on the intent of the query. In fact, it can do this so well that the query: "a pair of trousers for on vacation" initially showed mainly people on the beach. It took a while to tame the search engine so that the product class was not forgotten.

Our experience with our own search engine shows that standard product photos in a studio often score better on short queries

such as "green pants", while photos with more character score better on a question about style: "a dress for a party". If a product is suitable for different target groups, it is very important to show these different identities. For example, t-shirts that are suitable for both men and women perform much better on a query "men's T-shirt", if there is also a product photo with a male model.

However, we should note that Google's model may work differently than our own model, so that there may be differences in behavior. The models are broadly trained in the same way, so it is likely that the model will show the same behavior.

Example MLC multi-modal search engine





Conclusion

Our view of the future of search has been turned upside down in recent weeks. Generative search answers difficult questions in an accessible way. This also applies to questions about buying a product. It is therefore important to respond to these new queries by providing a more nuanced view of the product identity, whether that is the style of the product or the pros and cons.

Although generative search is front page news, adding multi-modal search for the retail sector is probably much more important. Multi-modal search is an application that Squadra-MLC also offers itself. We are able to apply this not only in fashion and lifestyle, where these models excel, but we can also train the models on other (niche) data.



Contact Squadra MLC