

How gutefrage increased their SEO Visibility by 150%

gutefrage is run by gutefrage.net GmbH, a 100% subsidiary of Holtzbrinck Digital GmbH. With around 17 million unique users a month (AGOF digital daily facts, August 2018), the Q&A platform has, since its foundation in 2006, been one of Germany's online success stories, with few websites reaching a bigger audience.

Challenge:

On average, gutefrage users ask 5,000 questions a day on the platform. They also write around 17,000 answers and comments. Search, visibility and content are all interdependent: Users ask questions and provide answers, which is how the content is produced that is then listed in search engine results. As the amount of content on the platform grew, so too did its dependence on Google web search.

Search engine optimization used to be a top priority for gutefrage. This changed over time, as the product developed from a platform primarily driven by SEO to become Germany's largest Q&A portal – this transformation brought a switch in focus.



The Searchmetrics Digital Strategies Group is a valuable consultant for us - their knowledge and experience were vital in helping establish our strategy.

Melanie Ruf,
Head of SEO,
gutefrage

SEO increasingly drifted into the background and external support was only infrequently called upon. However, the last few years saw gutefrage suffer at the hands of several Google Updates, meaning something had to change. As a result, SEO was re-established as a major part of the company's processes and became closely integrated into product management, with the aim of improving the domain's capacity to meet the changing demands of search engines and the search landscape.

Solution:

gutefrage developed a strategy that would make it possible to significantly increase its reach. Concrete SEO measures had to be defined, prioritized and implemented in order to reverse the downward trend in the platform's fortunes. At the same time, the product had to be viewed from two distinct perspectives: from the point of view of community members, producing the content and asking their own personal questions, and from the point of view of users with a particular search intent, who arrive at the platform via search engines and want to quickly find the relevant information and answers they're looking for. In its role as consultant on this complex project, the [Searchmetrics Digital Strategies Group](#) assisted with impact assessments, workshops, prioritization and weekly consultancy calls, as well as providing a critical analysis of the domain's strengths and weaknesses. Valuable advice on technical SEO measures and strategic consultancy based on current SEO trends played a key role in helping to establish the strategic direction for gutefrage to take.

The biggest challenge facing gutefrage was how to intelligently manage the large volume of content that had been generated over the years by the platform's users. In September 2017, there were more than 16 million pages indexed in the Google Search Console. As part of its new SEO strategy, gutefrage discarded its old principle of "quantity before quality", and replaced it with "focus on content relevance and search intent". Other measures were also implemented: making "mobile-first" a priority in product development, page speed optimization measures and addressing an array of other technical SEO issues.

Results:



+150%

Increase in SEO Visibility

After gutefrage had been focusing on SEO for more than nine months, [Google's Core Update](#) in August 2018 showed that the measures implemented were working and that the domain was now fulfilling the search engine's relevance criteria more effectively. In terms of absolute increase in Searchmetrics SEO Visibility, gutefrage emerged from the Google Update as one of the top 10 most-improved domains in Germany. The platform increased its Visibility by 150% as a result of the update and has remained stable since.

For gutefrage, this was the biggest increase in its online visibility following a Google Update since 2014. This success does not mean that gutefrage is resting on its laurels. The platform continues to face challenges, as it aims is to create a product that the community members enjoy using but also that fulfils users' expectations of finding high-quality answers and information. gutefrage wants to provide both user groups with added value and make the most of the platform's potential to gain online visibility and traffic.

I am very proud of what we at gutefrage have achieved in cooperation with the Searchmetrics Digital Strategies Group. And I am delighted with the 150% increase in visibility.



Melanie Ruf,
Head of SEO,
gutefrage

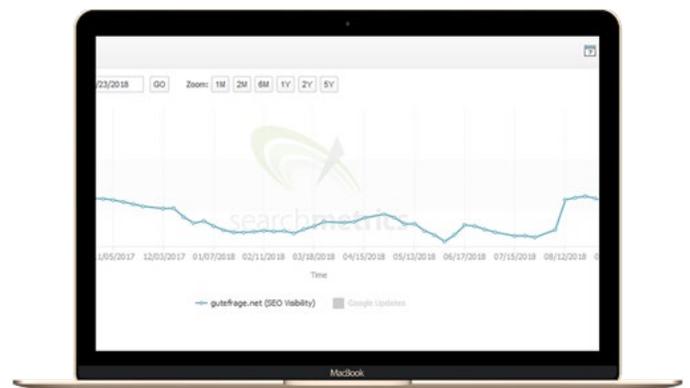


Image 1: SEO Visibility of gutefrage.net

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