

SEO in the AI Era

How to Optimize for Google's SGE



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State of AI-Powered Search

Evolution of AI-Powered Search

- **2016:** Artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML) first used in Google search algorithms
- **2021:** Introduction of Google's Large Language Model (LLM) LaMDA
- **2022:** Arrival of ChatGPT
- **2023:**
 - February: Bing's AI Product "New Bing"
 - March: Google Bard
 - May: Search Generative Experience (SGE) Limited Rollout
 - August: SGE Expanded Rollout and Interface Update

Anatomy of the Google Search Generative Experience "Snapshot"

The screenshot shows a Google search interface for the query "computer engineering bachelor's". At the top, the search bar contains the query, and below it are filter buttons for "Converse", "Images", "Salary", "Jobs", "Requirements", "Programs", "Online", "Degree", and "Colleges".

The main content area features a green background with a "Generative AI" section. A yellow arrow points to the "Generative AI" icon, which is accompanied by the text: "Generative AI is experimental. Info quality may vary." Another yellow arrow points to the end of the AI-generated text: "Students also develop the ability to analyze computer systems, designs, and construction of electronic equipment." Below this, a third yellow arrow points to a dropdown arrow at the end of the text: "Graduates with a bachelor's degree in computer engineering qualify for jobs in many industries, including technology and sustainable energy. Some career options include:". Underneath, a list of career options is shown, with "Software developer" as the first item. A "Show more" button is located below the list.

On the right side of the main content area, there are three search suggestions:

- "Bachelor of Science in Computer Engineering (BSCpE) - pup.edu.ph" with a star icon and the source "pup.edu.ph".
- "Best Bachelor's in Computer Engineering..." with a star icon and the source "ComputerSci...".
- "12 Top Career Options after Computer..." with a star icon, the date "Sep 5, 2023", and the source "knowledgeh...".

At the bottom of the page, there are four "Ask a follow up" suggestions:

- "Ask a follow up" (highlighted in dark green)
- "Is a bachelor's in computer engineering good?"
- "Is BS in computer engineering hard?"
- "What is the income..."

At the bottom right, there are icons for a flask, a thumbs up, and a speech bubble.

Anatomy of the Google Search Generative Experience "Snapshot"

The screenshot shows a Google search interface for the query "schools with forensic science majors". At the top left is the Google logo. The search bar contains the query and icons for voice search, image search, and search. Below the search bar is a row of filters: "Converse", "Images", "Near me", "In usa", "In texas", "Best", "News", "Videos", and "Shopping". To the right of these filters are "All filters" and "Tools".

Below the filters, a purple icon indicates "Generative AI is experimental. Info quality may vary." Below this is the text "Some schools with forensic science majors include:" followed by a dropdown arrow. Two school entries are shown:

- University of New Haven**: This school has a well-known master's program in forensic science. (with a dropdown arrow)
- Syracuse University**: This school offers an Integrated Learning Major (ILM) in Forensic Science. (with a dropdown arrow)

Below the school entries is a "Show more" button with a dropdown arrow. To the right of the school entries are three article cards:

- Best Forensic Science Degree...** by Universities.c... (with a dropdown arrow)
- 25 Best Schools For Forensic Science In Th...** by scijournal.org, dated May 24, 2023
- The 14 Best Colleges for Forensics and...** by College Cliffs, dated Jul 20, 2023

At the bottom, there is a row of follow-up questions in purple buttons: "Ask a follow up", "What major is best for forensic science?", "What is the #1 forensic program in the US?", and "Is forensic science a...". To the right of these buttons are icons for a flask, a thumbs up, and a thumbs down.

Higher Education in AI-Generated Search Results

- SGE Snapshot is not automatically generated for every query and is not available at all for many keyword searches
 - YMYL: Your Money Your Life
 - Volatility related to cost of AI
- Higher education institutions' academic and thought leadership articles or blogs may be featured in the Snapshot:
 - Within a list of schools that offer a certain degree
 - As a carousel panel or source link within the generated answer to queries related to a topic, area of study, degree path, or career field

Search Generative Experience is a new landscape in search—

Does it change everything?

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SEO Strategies to Keep

Leverage Existing SEO Best Practices to Rank in the SGE

- Helpful Content
- Experience, Expertise, Authority, Trust (E-E-A-T)
- De-index pages and maximizing crawl budget
 - Ensure Google can serve your most important SEO pages
- Build linking strategy based on user experience and accessibility
 - Pages deeper in IA tend to be relevant to more specific queries
- Local SEO and Google Business Profile
- Include refreshes to academic and evergreen content in content calendar

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New Strategies to Adopt for AI

Adapt SEO and Content Strategy for the Age of SGE

- Write “snippet”-able answers to questions in content
- Add “search listening” to keyword research and content strategy
 - Does the Snapshot appear? If so, prompted or unprompted?
 - What type of content appears in the top three carousel panels?
 - What kind of answer is being generated? What kind of content is cited?
 - What are the follow-up questions? Can you answer them?
 - Does the information supplied in the Snapshot indicate the query is related to a certain position in the enrollment funnel?

Adapt SEO and Content Strategy for the Age of SGE, cont

- Prioritize authority management
 - Leverage subject matter experts within your institution
 - Focus thought leadership strategy on core pillars of knowledge
- Optimize for low-competition, long-tail keywords in robust academic and admissions content
 - Ex: “small colleges with internship programs in the new york city area with no application fee”
- Pages with images may have upper hand in appearing in carousel or panel-style citations

Adapt SEO and Content Strategy for the Age of SGE, cont

- Shift mindset in reporting organic traffic and search rankings
 - Dedicated tracking of SGE rankings and traffic not yet available
 - Appearances in the Snapshot remain highly volatile and change by the hour or day
 - May see initial or sustained loss in website traffic from informational queries
 - Users may be more equipped/ready to convert by the time they arrive
 - When reporting, weigh clicks against visibility, brand awareness

**Helpful
Content**

+

**Authority
Management**

+

Local SEO

= SGE Optimization Strategy

**Google GSE is (another) new
landscape in search—**

And we are ready for it.

Thank You!



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