



# Typing's Out, Talking's In: Canadians Are Eager for Voice-Based Assistance

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As Canada celebrates its 150th anniversary, we're casting our gaze forward. What will the next 150 years hold? Chiel Hendriks, performance agency lead at Google Canada, has insight into how consumer behaviours, new tech, and machine learning are moving Canada rapidly into the age of assistance.

think with **Google**

It seems like just yesterday millennials everywhere were teaching their parents and grandparents appropriate texting etiquette. “No need to sign your name on your texts, dad.” But just as soon as those lessons sink in, will they be obsolete? Voice search and digital assistants may put keyboards out of style faster than you may think. If Canadians get their wishes, using voice instead of fingers could be our digital future, ushering in the age of assistance.

Based on my work helping large agencies and brands rethink their digital strategies based on changes in consumer behaviours, it’s become clear that new and varied types of smart devices will become indispensable as rich data and machine learning are applied to consumer experiences. Consumers are already accustomed to turning to search when they need something, and the age of assistance is the natural next step.

Canadians will want to ask questions aloud to their phones (or cars, or refrigerators) and get [helpful answers in the moment](#) and in context. These shifts are all happening quickly. Based on my read of the Canadian landscape and the latest research, here are four signs that Canadians are eager to talk their way into the [age of assistance](#):

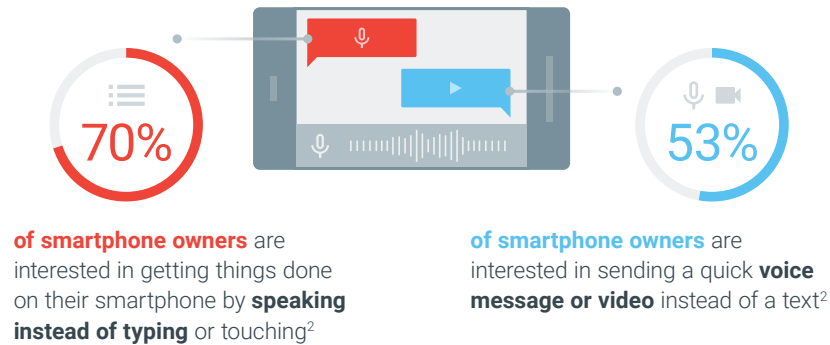
## #1 Consumers globally have already started adopting voice search

**20% of searches**

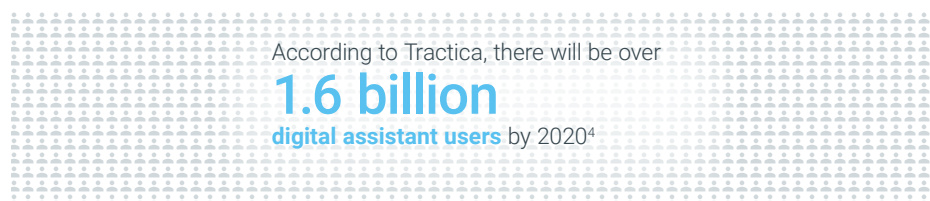
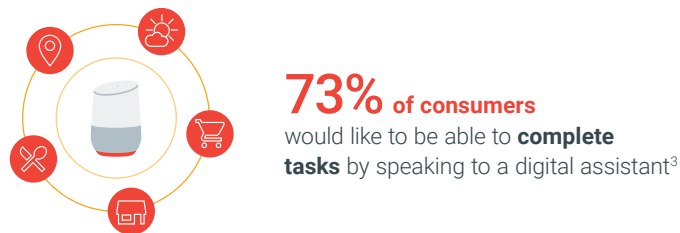
in the Google App on Android  
are now done by voice<sup>1</sup>



## #2 And in Canada, overall interest in voice is booming



## #3 Interest in getting things done with digital assistants is high—and will continue to grow ...



## #4 ... including assistance for a broad range of things

Tasks Canadians would like to be able to do with a digital assistant:<sup>3</sup>



## How brands can get ahead in the age of assistance

In the age of assistance, there will be no limit to the moments people look for answers, help, or inspiration in their daily lives. This means there will be countless opportunities for brands to provide consumers with valuable assistance.

Voice search and digital assistances are a unique way for consumers to interact with your content. When people start to think of their mobile devices as assistants rather than search terminals, it changes the kinds of questions they ask. Instead of using keywords like “weather Montreal today,” they might ask “will I need an umbrella today?” These questions will require an understanding of spoken language, location, time, and intent before they can be answered.

Based on these new behaviours, I suggest brands and marketers start asking themselves these questions:

- What are the top questions your consumers expect your brand to answer?
- Do you clearly address these questions with relevant content on your site today?
- What actions would your consumers like to take through voice commands today and in the future?

Brands and marketers will need to be able to [anticipate consumer needs and wants in more depth than ever before and find ways to engage them with help and answers before](#) they even ask. Businesses will win or lose based on their abilities to predict needs and delight their customers.



### Chiel Hendriks

Chiel is a performance agency lead at Google Canada and has worked with some of the largest global performance agencies and brands, helping them rethink their digital strategies and achieve their business objectives.

## Sources

- 1 Google Internal Data, Google App, Android, May 2016, U.S.
- 2 Google/Kelton, "Rising Consumer Expectations Study," December 2016, Canada, n=2,225 smartphone owners, representative sample of Canadians 18+.
- 3 Google/Kelton, "Rising Consumer Expectations Study," December 2016, Canada, n=3,077, representative sample of Canadians 18+.
- 4 Tractica, "[Digital Assistants Are Changing the Way We Search](#)," forecast based on 2015 to 3rd quarter 2016, figures do not include business usage.