

Amid Competition, Google Revamps Its Shopping Experience

Google is remaking its shopping experience as it continues to try to [win back product searches](#) from Amazon and fend off fresh e-commerce efforts from [the likes of Instagram](#).

The company is launching a new Shopping homepage that will be personalized for users by their browsing history and direct them to make purchases either in-store, through Google's site or from a retailer's Web page, it announced Tuesday.

This new destination aims to integrate Google's various, rather convoluted shopping efforts. Previously, Google's main shopping tab had essentially been a list of advertisements where retailers paid every time someone clicked through to their website. Google wasn't involved in the actual purchase, [leaving shoppers in a lurch in cases of shoddy products or outright fraud](#). Meanwhile, Google has its "Express" shopping service, as well as Shopping Action ads, where it only partners with select retailers, takes a commission on any purchase made and guarantees delivery or facilitates returns. Google's new shopping page merges those experiences. The Express brand, originally launched in 2013 with [big ambitions as a delivery service](#), will be phased out in the next few months.

By launching a new destination aimed at users who are just browsing products as well as those ready to make a purchase (and may prefer to do so through a Google-guaranteed process), the company aims to bolster its shopping presence at a time when its [sales growth is slowing](#), Amazon is presenting [an increasing threat to its advertising business](#), and Instagram and Pinterest are beefing up their own e-commerce efforts.

"We want to help shoppers decide what to buy and where to buy it," Oliver Heckmann, Google's VP of engineering for shopping and travel, said during a press event announcing the news. The Shopping Actions ads, which will allow users to buy products directly through Google through Search, Shopping and Assistant, will also be launching for Images and YouTube later this year.

The YouTube integration means that viewers will be able to buy products they see in videos without leaving the page. Google's Heckmann says that it will give some of its sales commission to YouTube creators, but that it's "still thinking through," the exact business model. This announcement follows Instagram's recent launch of [shoppable influencer posts](#).

Google execs said that all sponsored listings will be clearly labeled as such.

Merchants will likely embrace this new format because Google doesn't compete with retailers in the way Amazon does and will allow them to keep a more direct relationships with shoppers, says Guru Hariharan, CEO of retail technology firm Boomerang Commerce. Google's Shopping Action ads will keep users on its own site, but allow retailers to ask buyers to log into their membership accounts or sign up for marketing emails.

"It is not surprising that Google would want to protect its advertising turf," Hariharan says

of the Shopping redesign. Still, he adds, despite the changes: “Google has a long way to go before competing with Amazon as a shopping destination.”

Google also took advantage of its positioning [as a friend to foes of Amazon](#) by emphasizing how its cloud computing service has many tools for retailers too (Google is a distant third behind Amazon and Microsoft in the cloud).

In addition to the revamped Shopping site, Google is also introducing new intent-based “Discovery ads” based on a users’ browsing history that will appear in YouTube’s feed, the Gmail Promotions and Social tab, and its [newly launched Discover feed](#), which is on its search homepage on mobile.

The company also said it would make it easier for brands to direct shoppers to buy things they find on Google within the retailers’ own apps on mobile, through a process called deep-linking.

Ultimately, as Google rolls out these changes, users should expect more e-commerce integrations across Search, Assistant, Discover, YouTube, Images and Maps.

As Heckmann put it:

“We want to make all of these properties shoppable.”

<https://www.forbesmiddleeast.com/amid-competition-google-revamps-its-shopping-experience>