



Google 3rd Event Q & A's

Date: Oct 22nd 08

Time: IST 9:30 PM to 10:45 PM

Question 1:

"What weight does the age of a site and the amount of time a domain is registered for have on its search placement?"

Rick Rayn, Indiana

Ans:

In the majority of cases, it actually doesn't matter--we want to return the best information, not just the oldest information. Especially if you're a mom/pop site, we try to find ways to rank your site even if your site is newer or doesn't have many links. I think it is fair for Google to use that as a signal in some circumstances, and I try never to rule a signal out completely, but I wouldn't obsess about it.

Matt Cutts, Bay Area, CA

Question 2:

"Recently, you removed this suggestion: "Submit your site to relevant directories such as the Open Directory Project and Yahoo!" from your guidelines. Is there any chance that you will be discounting these kinds of links for ranking value in future?"

Marjy, Boca Raton FL

Ans:

Hey Marjy (testing out this 'post a response' thingie). There's always the chance that we'll discount directory links in the future. What we were seeing was quite a few novice people would see the "directory"

recommendation and go out and just try to submit to a ton of directories, even if some of the directories were lower-quality or even fly-by-night directories that weren't great for users. Right now we haven't changed how we're weighting directory links--we've only removed the directory suggestion from the webmaster guidelines.

Matt Cutts, Bay Area, CA





Question 3:

"Can you explain how the use of sub-domains helps / hurts a sites ranking?"
Advice Co, Sausalito, CA

Ans:

Good question--do mean in terms of sub-domains vs. subdirectories? Maybe we can talk through this one after the official presentations?
Matt Cutts, Bay Area, CA

Question 4:

"Since Google is against using ranking software (ie: WebCeO) to monitor SERP rankings, is there any plans on Google creating an approved, in-house rank check application that webmasters can use?"
TylerDee, TX

Ans:

It's something that we've talked about. My concern is that sometimes people get too worried with paying attention to their "trophy phrase" and want to rank for that even if that's not the best phrase for them, or concentrating on one phrase to the exclusion of all the other stuff they rank for isn't the best idea. I think paying attention to server logs or analytics data gets you a really nice array of keywords that are practical to work on. But this is feedback that we've heard, and personally I think it would be nice if we offered this for some reasonable size of keywords.
Matt Cutts, Bay Area, CA

Question 5:

"Do inbound links from other sites owned by the same company help or hurt rank?"
Scott, Minnetonka





Ans 1:

I find that inbound links from the same company tend to break down into two camps. You'll find mom/pops that have a very few sites in one camp, and that can make sense if those sites are linked; in the other camp, I've see SEOs have 1000 or 2000 different domains and cross-link them. I definitely would not recommend that. I think a lot of the litmus test in my mind is whether it makes sense to a regular person for those domains to be interlinked. If you look at a product like Coke, people aren't surprised to see that they have cocacola.co.nz and several other domains. If you go to coke.com, it's perfectly reasonable to ask users which country they're coming from, and then send them to one of a bunch of domains. But if a regular user lands on example.com and finds 20 or 30 cross-links at the bottom of the page and they look like off-topic or cookie-cutter or a spammy domain, that's going to look bad to almost anyone.

[Matt Cutts](#), Bay Area, CA

Ans 2:

Hey Scott, I'm not trying to give you the run around, but this is a bit situation specific... overall, though, I wouldn't look at these links as helping or hurting your rank when written in a helpful manner to the user. So, if you run a sporting goods site, and you link to your sister companies for camping and tailgating equipment, that's good for the user. More happy users can lead to more buzz, leading to better rankings. If your sister companies are just linked at the footer of the page, in hopes of cross-advertising or getting more links, it's not likely to add value to ranking or the user. In extreme cases, if it's a bad neighborhood, these links will certainly not help you. Put yourself in the user's seat, and do what makes sense for these links. Good luck!

[Maile Ohye](#), MTV, CA

Question 6:

"Does Google plan to let us see rankings/positions of keywords in the webmaster tool?"
[wildnis](#), Vancouver, Canada

Ans 1:

We already do, for a limited number of keywords, in the "Top search queries" section of Webmaster Tools. While we generally don't comment on future features or plans, expanding this functionality is certainly an idea that's been suggested to us.

[Susan Moskwa](#), Kirkland, WA





Ans 2:

What Susan said, plus I personally think this would be cool to do.
Matt Cutts, Bay Area, CA

Question 7:

"Will Webmaster Tools ever give us an option to "disassociate" from sites that link to us? This feature exists in Yahoo's Site Explorer, but not Webmaster Tools."
JB, Texas

Ans:

So far because we work really hard to make it so that one site can't hurt another site, we haven't really offered this. It's something that people have suggested and we've thought about though. Part of the challenge would be if a site owner wanted to disassociate a bunch of links from their site. If you have a ton of links pointing to your site, scanning all of them would get really tiring. So that's a challenge, and since we haven't seen a need for it yet, that's why we haven't offered it yet.
Matt Cutts, Bay Area, CA

Question 8:

"Sitemaps question: If my website has an extremely large number of pages, like Amazon.com, should I include every single URL that I want indexed in my XML sitemap? If not, how should I go about populating my XML sitemap?"
Anonymous

Ans:

Feel free to use your Sitemap to list all of your pages... that's what it's for! :) However, if you have many duplicate URLs for the same content, then you may want to only list your preferred versions of the URLs in your Sitemap.
Wysz, Mountain View, CA





Question 9:

"Until recently (the last six months or so) a high ranking was achievable by submitting articles to article directories (providing they were 40%-60% unique), it no longer seems to be the case. Have links from article sites been de-valued at all?"

[tewmonkey](#), cardiff,wales

Ans:

In my experience, not every article directory site is high-quality. Sometimes you see a ton of articles copied all over the place, and it's hard to even find original content on the site. The user experience for a lot of those article directory sites can be pretty bad too. So you'd see users landing on those sorts of pages have a bad experience. If you're thinking of boosting your reputation and getting to be well-known, I might not start as the very first thing with an article directory. Sometimes it's nice to get to be known a little better before jumping in and submitting a ton of articles as the first thing.

[Matt Cutts](#), Bay Area, CA

Question 10:

"Duplicate content - How many unique URLs (domains) are permitted to point at the same destination before it becomes a problem? e.g. domain1.com, domain2.com, domain3.com all point to domain.com, which has its own pages..."

[Unnamed](#)

Ans:

Hi there, I'm happy to help with this question, but I'm not sure how it's duplicate content. In your example it seems like domain.com is the only site hosting content. It's common for companies to buy misspelling <-- did i spell that right? of their domain and then 301 to the correct version. Can you further explain the scenario for us?

[Maile Ohye](#), MTV, CA

Question 11:

"For SEO, I'd like to improve my rankings by removing technical obstacles (starting with dynamic URL parameters), what are the most important site fixes to make and how can I document before and after success metrics using the Google Webmaster Tool?"

[Adrienne](#), San Francisco





Ans:

To check the crawlability of your site, I would recommend crawling your site with a crawler like Xenu's Link Sleuth (freeware, for Windows). Doing that gives you a rough look at how search engines view your site and can point you towards areas where crawlers get stuck in a loop or start crawling duplicates based on the URL parameters.

JohnMu, Switzerland

Question 12:

"Are .gov and .edu back links still considered more "link juice" than the common back link?"

TylerDee, TX

Ans 1:

This is a common misconception--you don't get any PageRank boost from having an .edu link or .gov link automatically. Hah John, I beat you to it! If you get an .edu link and no one is linking to that .edu page, you're not going to get any PageRank at all because that .edu page doesn't have any PageRank.

Matt Cutts, Bay Area, CA

Ans 2:

We generally treat all links the same - be it from .gov or .edu or .info sites.

JohnMu, Switzerland

Question 13:

"In Webmaster Tools, you've recently started listing the sites that 404s are coming from. Many of our 404s are from sites that ceased to exist months (sometimes years) ago. How long does Google hold onto 404 errors?"

JB, Texas

Ans:

If the crawl error sources do not exist any more, I wouldn't worry about them -- they'll generally go away on their own over time. Having them there does not negatively impact your site's crawling, indexing and ranking.

JohnMu, Switzerland





Question 14:

"In addition to a XML sitemap, does it make any sense to have also an HTML sitemap on the same website? Does HTML sitemap helps improve the rating?"

Unnamed

Ans:

A HTML sitemap file can help search engines, especially those that don't use XML Sitemap files. Also, the 404 widget in Webmaster Tools (which you can place on your 404 pages) will use "/sitemap.htm" and similar files to help users to find the content they're looking for. So yes, I would recommend making HTML sitemap files, however I'd focus on the user and not the search engines.

JohnMu, Switzerland

Question 15:

"Suppose my website supports English and French. Should the English version of a particular page and the French version have different URLs? Any other best practices for multi-lingual site architecture?"

Anonymous

Ans:

"Suppose my website supports English and French. Should the English version of a particular page and the French version have different URLs? Any other best practices for multi-lingual site architecture?"

Anonymous

Question 16:

"Recently went through a rebranding of our company name. The old domain name was successful in page ranking, however the new domain name has terrible page ranking. Do 301 redirects transfer the site equity from the old domain to new domain?"

Cynthia, San Francisco





Ans:

Hi Cynthia, This is a pretty common question, so we actually did a blog post about it recently. In short, 301's are the best way to retain users and search engine traffic when moving domains. You can find the full post here: <http://googlewebmastercentral.blogspot.com/2008/04/best-practices-when-moving-your-site.html>

Unnamed

Question 17:

"What weightage is given to the links from social networking sites and blogs?"

Unnamed

Ans:

I would treat social sites and blogs the same as any other site.

Nathan J, Mountain View, CA

Question 18:

"Does the geotargeting feature in Webmaster tools hold as much weight as having a country-specific TLD?"

Jane, Ireland

Ans:

Hi Jane! Google uses a bunch of signals like location of the server or the TLD in order to determine which users might be interested in the sites content. Geotargeting is a way for webmasters who use non country specific TLD's like .net/ to tell Google which your target group was, if the site is specifically targeted to users from a particular area. Think of the site of a small, local hardware store or a vet for example. Potentially, their main target users would be people living in the nearby area. Geotargeting is not to be used for language targeting though.

Kaspar aka Guglarz, Dublin. Ireland





Question 19:

"Sitemaps question - How do we know what pages in the sitemap are NOT indexed? The report shows us how many are in the submitted sitemap and how many are indexed, but not which ones are or are not indexed..."

Unnamed

Ans:

One way you can do that is to set up separate Sitemap files for the different parts of your website. Doing that you can find which areas of your site are not being crawled and indexed as much as you would like. Perhaps you'll also stumble upon areas that you don't want indexed completely?

JohnMu, Switzerland

Question 20:

"Do you feel that the webmaster should be informed in case of a manual penalty & the reconsideration requests should be looked into more seriously in case of a manual penalty."

Unnamed

Ans:

Hey! That is a very good question, That we are being asked on a regular basis. So, imagine you have a site on which you add original content and/or tools on a regular basis. If it has been hacked and contains hidden content/links or you are a website owner and your webmaster did something he/she was not aware of being outside Google webmaster guidelines, like a 0 seconds redirection. In that case chances are high you would be informed about a temporary removal from Google results via Google Webmaster Tools. The message will surely contain hints regarding the problem on the site. Once you have fixed it, your reconsideration request will be reviewed very carefully. On the other hand, if you have a couple of hundreds of identical sites with - for example - scraped content from other sites, these are not adding any value to the Internet and I would not expect any notifications from Google.

Kaspar aka Guglarz, Dublin. Ireland





Question 21:

"Some blackhat linked to my blog from 300+ adult splogs as revenge for calling him out. My blog had #1 ranking for it's keywords, now it is on the second page at best. Can mass amounts of links from "bad neighborhoods" cause a drop in site ranking?"

ResdazMedia, Rehoboth Beach, DE

Ans:

We work hard to make sure a site can't have a negative effect on another site. Feel free to report spam if you think you find some - <https://www.google.com/webmasters/tools/spamreport>

Nathan J, Mountain View, CA

Question 22:

"Will too much of "rel=nofollow" or totally "nofollow" to all outgoing links by the author of a blog be stamped as over optimization and penalized? Is there any penalty for over optimization sort of stuff?"

Raj, India

Ans:

I wouldn't worry about this, Raj. I would try to work on making the site as natural as possible.

JohnMu, Switzerland

Question 23:

"Is abc.com/def better or def.abc.com better in terms of Search Engine Positioning."

Unnamed

Ans:

From a search engine standpoint, both are good - it really is a matter of preference. Depending on what you're trying to do, it may be easier to manage one over the other.

Nathan J, Mountain View, CA





Question 24:

"Is the bounce rate and speed taken into account when ranking a page? i.e. if you see a searcher click on a result then return very quickly and choose another result, is the first page ranked lower?"

[chrisff](#), palo alto, ca

Ans:

Hi chrisff, assuming that users will be jumping out of a site like that, there's a high probability that they won't be willing to recommend it to others (or come back themselves). So yes, indirectly at least, if a site is made in a way that users run away right away, then chances are that we might not be recommending it as much as other sites that users like (and recommend to others).

[JohnMu](#), Switzerland

Question 25:

"Many believe that to rank well, you simply need "quality" backlinks. But how important is having your keywords in the , and throughout your site? Is keyword density of any importance to show what the page is about? What % is suggested?"

[tewmonkey](#), cardiff,wales

Ans:

Links are just one factor involved in Google's ranking of pages. We look at both on-page and off-page content, so what you have on your page can be an essential part of ranking. However, there is no recommended "keyword density." Your content should be high quality and written for users. If you try writing for search engines, the language can become very unnatural, which may end up hurting you more than it helps.

[Wysz](#), Mountain View, CA

Question 26:

"What are most important aspects Google uses to rank a Site today?"

[Unnamed](#)





Ans:

The Help Center Webmaster Guidelines cover important info for getting indexed and ranked - <http://www.google.com/support/webmasters/bin/answer.py?answer=35769>. Lots of good content here.

[Nathan J](#), Mountain View, CA

Question 27:

"How will social media or more specifically share of comments (buzz about a brand) influence the SERP'S?"

[egarolera](#), barcelona

Ans:

Hi [egarolera](#), social media is great! But, there are a few things to say about this... Social media can add buzz to your site, finding new visitors, people linking to you, etc. That's a bonus and the more users that enjoy your content, often the better your site will show in SERPs. We want results to reflect what users are searching for, so social buzz can certainly be helpful.

A few things to note:

1. If you allow user-generated content on your site, remember to monitor for spam.
2. Also, if you're looking to get buzz to directly help your site in SERPs, know that we normally don't crawl javascript, so if it's hosted in javascript you'll still get the user traffic from the buzz (which can eventually lead better rankings), but the user comments themselves won't be indexed.
3. If you want to get the usergenerated content associated with your site (as part of your URLs), then make sure you host the usergenerated content on your domain (so it's not link to a separate site). Thanks, [egarolera](#)!

[Maile Ohye](#), MTV, CA

Question 28:

"Does inconsistent capitalization of URLs cause duplicate content issues and dilution of page rank? For example www.site.com/abc vs www.site.com/Abc. On Windows hosts, these are the same page, but are different pages on Unix hosts."

[John Erickson](#), Michigan





Ans:

Hi John, based on the existing standards, URLs are case-sensitive, so yes, these would be seen as separate URLs. Since the content on the URLs is the same, we'll generally recognize that and only keep one of them. However, we'd recommend that you try to keep all links going to one version of the URL. Keep in mind that this also applies to robots.txt files.

[JohnMu](#), Switzerland

Question 29:

"Does appearing high in image searches help improve the host sites PR and appearance on standard searches?"

[Andy Y](#), Beijing, China

Ans 1:

Thanks for the question Andy. Well-optimized, relevant images could definitely help increase traffic to your site, especially with the introduction of Universal Search, where we mix images, videos, and more into the web search results.

[Unnamed](#)

Ans 2:

Your site's ranking in Image Search doesn't impact your site's PageRank. However, as we continue to include images and other types of content in the search results, we might start showing your images in normal web search results as well. So I'd definitely recommend making sure that your great images (if you have them :-)) are available to search engine crawlers!

[JohnMu](#), Switzerland

Question 30:

"Does Googlebot strip URL fragments? In other words, is a link to /path/#fragment the same as a link to /path/?"

[Anonymous](#)





Ans:

Yes, we remove URL fragments since they are processed on the client side and not relevant when fetching URLs from your server.

[JohnMu](#), Switzerland

Question 31:

"Is there a META tag we can use to tell Google the geotarget (country) of a particular webpage?"

[Anonymous](#)

Ans:

Hi Anonymous (nice name! :), we don't have META geotargeting capability at this time. So the best ways to target a geographic region are talked about here:

<http://googlewebmastercentral.blogspot.com/2008/08/how-to-start-multilingual-site.html>

<http://googlewebmastercentral.blogspot.com/2007/10/better-geographic-choices-for.html?showComment=1197507780000>

<http://googlewebmastercentral.blogspot.com/2008/04/where-in-world-is-your-site.html>

Take care, Maile

[Maile Ohye](#), MTV, CA

Question 32:

"Until recently external links from article directories could improve page ranking. Is this still valid? Do links from article directories have a better weight than links from web sites or blogs?"

[myln](#), Europe

Ans:

Article directory links certainly aren't inherently worth more and don't get more weight than other web sites or blogs. I answered another question about article directories as well.

[Matt Cutts](#), Bay Area, CA

Question 33:

"Can one good unknown google secret so far - be revealed?"

[Shiva](#), Chennai





Ans:

We release secrets all the time -- such as the source code of Android just yesterday!
JohnMu, Switzerland

Question 34:

"Can we expect a Chrome Add-on using webmaster tools soon?"
Andy Y, Beijing, China

Ans:

Great question for the Chrome team. You can ask over here:
<http://groups.google.com/group/googlechrome-help>
Unnamed

Question 35:

"Can my site be penalized if somebody else uses ranking check software on it?"
Unnamed

Ans:

No! Don't worry about that :-)
Kaspar aka Guglarz, Dublin. Ireland

Question 36:

"Does a page load time play a crucial role in Google Page Ranking? If yes how important is it?"
Unnamed

Ans:

I think the more important issue here is user experience. If your site loads fast, your users will be happy; if it loads slow, users will be less happy. Make your users happy, right?
Nathan J, Mountain View, CA





Question 37:

"I have a website in 5 languages (and I cannot buy 5 different localized domains), which option is the best? To have different subdirectories (domain.com/en) or to have different subdomains? (en.domain.com)"

[guitzu](#), Salamanca

Ans:

Hi [guitzu](#), both versions are fine. I personally generally recommend using a subdomain when the sites are completely different and using subdirectories when it's more or less a shared site, but it's up to you.

[JohnMu](#), Switzerland

Question 38:

"What is ok/not ok to sell links? We get requests on a daily base, we not offering to sell links, but sometimes we get a related request and wonder if we are "allowed" to sell one or two links without hurting our rankings?"

[wildnis](#), Vancouver, Canada

Ans:

Paid links that pass pagerank are not a good idea; more info here -

<http://www.google.com/support/webmasters/bin/answer.py?answer=66736>

[Nathan J](#), Mountain View, CA

Question 39:

"Do you have any plan on integrating Google Maps Local Business Center with webmaster tool? There is a lot of overlap and being able to verify ownership of an physical address via a website might be helpful/possible."

[Nathan](#), Cincinnati, O





Ans:

That's definitely something that we're considering. However, it's also important for us that these areas are available separately so that people who are looking to get a listing in the Local Business Center but who don't have a website will still be able to access it easily.

JohnMu, Switzerland

Question 40:

"Any chance of Google favouring sites with valid markup anytime soon? On the principle that if the webmaster has taken the trouble to write valid markup, it's less likely to be a spammy site?"

Jane, Ireland

Ans:

Since less than 5% of the pages out there actually validate according to study done by Opera, it wouldn't make much sense for us to give the other 95% of the pages any trouble. You can find the study at <http://dev.opera.com/articles/view/mama-markup-validation-report/>

JohnMu, Switzerland

Question 41:

"If my sub domain got high Page Rank, how far it will contribute to the main domain?"

Mayu J, Sri Lanka, Colombo

Ans:

Hi Mayu, PageRank is on a page-by-page basis. The PageRank of a page (on a subdomain or not) is based on the links to it.

JohnMu, Switzerland

Question 42:

"Given, the incoming links are intact and there is no link buying/selling. Can there be any other reason for a drop in Page Rank?"

ROW





Ans:

Assuming the number of links stays the same, it's always possible that some links change with regards to the way they pass PageRank.

JohnMu, Switzerland

Question 43:

"How will i know that a website is banned by google in SERP (search engine result pages)."
arnold, delhi , india

Ans:

To see if you're indexed in Google, try a site: search on your site. For example, site:example.com. We may also drop a message in the Message Center of your Webmaster Tools account if we detect an issue with your site. In general, it's best to make sure you stay within the webmaster guidelines:

<http://www.google.com/webmasters/guidelines.html> If you feel your site may have been penalized, go ahead and fix the problems, then file a reconsideration request:

<http://www.google.com/support/webmasters/bin/answer.py?answer=35843>

Wysz, Mountain View, CA

Question 44:

"Is there a "glass ceiling" that either prevents sites from monopolizing the index or throttles traffic to specific sites?"

JB, Texas

Ans:

Hey JB... I haven't heard this one before -- internally at Google or externally. Our index has lots o' sites, it would be hard for one to monopolize it. There are certain things we do to prevent one site from monopolizing search results (for a given query) because users tend to prefer seeing multiple sites in their results when they enter a search term. Also, results are filtered when the title and snippets are identical (even if the domains are separate) because that users don't like seeing the same title/snippets. I'm not sure if I'm addressing your concern, but I wouldn't worry about a "glass ceiling." Every site has a chance of being returned in search results.

Maile Ohye, MTV, CA





Question 45:

"Recently you posted on the webmaster central blog that you would suggest to not rewrite dynamic urls to static. Is there penalties for sites that rewrite? Would you suggest changing if a site has 5+ years history? Can you discuss further? Thanks."

Unnamed

Ans:

Hi there, great question. If your site is already doing well and you have rewrites, then you're probably doing them properly so please don't worry about it. Feel free to spend time on your content and business! Yay! :) In our blog post, we wanted to discourage new sites, or less experienced webmasters, from feeling they HAD to use rewrites. We've improved our processing of dynamic URLs, so there's no need for newer webmasters to be afraid of them any longer.

Take care, Maile

Maile Ohye, MTV, CA

Question 46:

"Does 301 Redirect moves the Google Page Ranking to the new location? If so how long does it take for this to take effect?"

Unnamed

Ans:

Where appropriate, ranking signals will be transferred across 301 redirects (if the same page has moved from one URL to another). This may take some time, so you should probably leave the redirect in place as long as you have control over the URL. That way any new links will make our crawler follow the 301.

Wysz, Mountain View, CA





Question 47:

"When we report a site for buying links, how long does it take for Google to act on it? If the violator is still listed—and the bought links are still present—what other action can we take?"
JB, Texas

Ans:

It's tough to give a specific time frame, but rest assured that we do look at all requests.
Nathan J, Mountain View, CA

Question 48:

"Are subdomains considered entirely separate entities if they have no links from the parent domain. e.g. if widget.example.com has no links from www.example.com, is it on its own in terms of reputation, or will it rank through association alone?"
SteveJohnston, Bath, UK

Ans:

We treat each URL separately. That said, if you have www and non-www versions of your site, I'd recommend setting a preferred domain and setting up a 301 redirect. Also, sometimes it makes sense to add both your www and non-www versions in Webmaster Tools so that links for both versions are known (and shown). Susan recently covered that in a blog post at <http://googlewebmastercentral.blogspot.com/2008/10/wheres-my-data.html>
JohnMu, Switzerland

Question 49:

"Can you tell me how Google decides whether to include video on the first page of the SERPS or not?
Views? Links? Age? Relevance? What's the most important?"
Urban Kudos, London, UK





Ans:

I think relevance is always the top-level answer, because we want the best information (be it search results, videos, or even ads) to come up highly. And relevance for each property will vary--for ads it might be clickthrough, and for video it might be different signals.

[Matt Cutts](#), Bay Area, CA

Question 50:

"If a website temporarily loses backlinks, but are re-instated shortly after, in theory once the pages are reached, would the "damage" be reverted? If the website fails to return to its original place, would that suggest there are other causes?"

[tewmonkey](#), cardiff,wales

Ans:

Hi tewmonkey, it's difficult to say for certain without being able to take a look at the site. It seems strange to me that a site would temporarily lose backlinks... I'd definitely recommend starting a thread in the Webmaster Help Groups to let the advanced users there take a look at your site in specific.

[JohnMu](#), Switzerland

Question 51:

"Sub-Domains are considered as a new site for Search Engines, if a 5 years old site which uses forums.domain.com, www.domain.com now plans to add shop.domain.com and download.domain.com will this take another few years for both new domains to get rank"

[Sandeep Khetan](#), India

Ans:

PageRank is purely at a page level, so if you forums.domain.com has a high PageRank and links to new urls such as download.domain.com, that PageRank will flow immediately.

[Matt Cutts](#), Bay Area, CA





Question 52:

"Geotargeting + Dupe Content Question: Aaron D'Souza of the Search Quality team was reported as stating that publishing the same content on two separate geotargeted paths under your domain will not trigger the dupe content filters. Is this correct?"

Richard Hearne, Dublin

Ans:

Hey Richard! In general, in a case like that, we'd try to pick the best page based on various factors, including geotargeting and language choices. If that page is one which is also available for other geotargeting/language choices, we will generally try to pick the version that our algorithms feel makes the most sense.

JohnMu, Switzerland

Question 53:

"Does Googlebot treat content and links within NOSCRIPT as normal content and links, assuming the webmaster is not using noscript to cloak or otherwise deceive?"

Anonymous

Ans:

Hi there, I think I know the answer, but let me check with our crawl and indexing teams just to double-check. (I'm risk averse! :) If we're able to disclose the information, I'll find a way to post in follow-up from the event.

Maile Ohye, MTV, CA

Question 54:

"Before linking to a domain, how a webmaster could ascertain penalties if there are any imposed by Google, so that he is not affected by linking to a spammy site?"

Raj, India





Ans:

When linking to another site, you should ask yourself, "Would my visitors find this useful?" Don't worry too much about trying to find a technical signal that the site is not seen well by Google. If a site looks high quality to you as a user, you should be fine. And if you don't want to vouch for a site (for example if your users can add links in comments), then you can use rel=nofollow in the link tag.

Wysz, Mountain View, CA

Question 55:

"You claim that you can identify original content and RSS scrapers, but still why scrapers are ranking better for certain keywords?"

Raj, India

Ans:

We do our best to identify duplicates and identify the best URL for a set of content. There are a couple of ways you can help us out with this. In your content, if you're providing articles or other information that may be syndicated across other sites, include a full link (not just a relative link) back to your site so you can more easily be identified as the originator of the content. And if you find that a scraper site is spamming Google's search results, please submit a spam report via Webmaster Tools: <http://www.google.com/support/webmasters/bin/answer.py?answer=35265>

Wysz, Mountain View, CA

Question 56:

"What is the minimum time a webmaster should wait before re-applying for a reconsideration & how does a webmaster know that his request has actually been seen by someone."

Unnamed





Ans:

Hi!

The turnaround time for reviewing reconsideration requests is usually very fast, it actually can be as quick as 24h. However, the results of it can kick in after a while. Please keep in mind that once a site has lost Google's trust, rebuilding it can take some time. If you have applied for a consideration and received a confirmation via email, give it some time first. If your site is positively Google webmaster compliant, try again after a week or two, if there is no change in the SERP's. However, please keep in mind that if your site has been hacked cleaning it up AND fixing the server/site can be time intense and needs to be done accurately, in order to prevent the problem from happening again.

Kaspar aka Guglarz, Dublin. Ireland

Question 57:

"What is the #1 piece of advice you would suggest I give when helping guide people through search optimization projects?"

Unnamed

Ans:

Check out Google's Webmaster Guidelines -

<http://www.google.com/support/webmasters/bin/answer.py?answer=35769>

Nathan J, Mountain View, CA

Question 58:

"Why there is a difference in the number of indexed pages between the "Sitemaps overview" at webmaster console and "site:" command?"

Raj, India

Ans:

It's possible that your Sitemap file does not include all the URLs that can be found when crawling your site. Additionally, it might be that we recognized that some of the URLs are more or less duplicates and therefore we might not be counting them in a site:-query.

JohnMu, Switzerland





Question 59:

"Will it make any difference between a shared IP and a dedicated IP on SEO or search results, as opinions are divided on this aspect?"

Raj, India

Ans:

Hi Raj, most of the web is on shared IP addresses, so it doesn't make much sense for us to give those on dedicated IP addresses any advantages. That said, if your server is struggling with the load of your website, it might make sense to move to a dedicated server that helps to make sure that your users are happy when visiting your website.

JohnMu, Switzerland

Question 60:

"What should I do about declining ranking for my site? Can you explain how the use of sub-domains helps / hurts a sites ranking?"

saravanakumar, chennai, India

Ans:

Saravanakumar, generally speaking sub-domains don't impact your site's crawling, indexing and ranking. However, it's possible that there is something specific to your site, so I'd recommend starting a thread in the Google Webmaster Tools, mentioning your site and the things you've observed.

JohnMu, Switzerland

Question 61:

"If I 301 redirect a well-ranked page to a new domain with the exact same content, will all of the rankings be replaced with the new domain once it has been indexed? How long after indexing can we expect the swap? And is the same thing true for 302s?"

Kyle Wegner, Atlanta, GA





Ans:

If you're moving from one URL to another (even if it's on a different domain), ranking signals can be passed via a 301. A 302 is used for temporary redirects, so this is less likely to transfer ranking signals.

Wysz, Mountain View, CA

Question 62:

"Regarding international websites, we have sites in about 10 different languages, yet they have very different rankings with nearly identical content. Does the googlebot struggle with some languages? What can be done?"

Andy Y, Beijing, China

Ans :

Hi Andy, we look at content on a URL by URL basis, so even if you have translated top content from one language to another, we might not treat it the same way as we would treat the original content. It's also possible that the translated content is not as relevant as other original content in that language. Generally speaking, making sure that your content is as unique and compelling as possible for the users in that target market is the best thing to do.

JohnMu, Switzerland

Question 63:

"Every page of my website has an RSS feed with similar content as the corresponding page. Should I allow Googlebot to crawl all my RSS feeds, or should I robots.txt block the feeds?"

Anonymous

Ans:

If your RSS feeds include unique content, then I think it's fine to allow Googlebot to crawl them.

JohnMu, Switzerland





Question 64:

"I have 2 sites, one is domain.com and the other one is domain.au. They share a lot of their content, is there a way to keep the content on both sites without blocking it on either, while ensuring they only show on their respective geo locations?"

MG, Orlando, FL

Ans:

Hi MG, your situation sounds pretty good for targeting users globally and specifically in Australia (is that au?). It's helpful that you have separate TLDs. While you can't "ensure" that your content shows only to certain geolocation, you can use some of our features to help. Here are more resources in case you missed them:

<http://googlewebmastercentral.blogspot.com/2008/08/how-to-start-multilingual-site.html>

<http://googlewebmastercentral.blogspot.com/2007/10/better-geographic-choices-for.html>

<http://googlewebmastercentral.blogspot.com/2008/04/where-in-world-is-your-site.html>

So for Australia, domain.au will help with targeting and Webmaster Tools will not be needed.

For other areas -- say Canada, you can use geolocation in Webmaster Tools for canada.domain.com or www.domain.com/ca or www.domain.com/canada... Take care, Maile

Maile Ohye, MTV, CA

Question 65:

"Duplicate content - www. and non www. - I understand the best practice is to have a perm redirect for the non www to the www. some appear to get away with it and rank high, others dont - Duplicate content agn -domainname.co.nz and domainname.com ?"

Peter, New Zeland

Ans:

Hi Peter! Doing a redirect or not doing one does not significantly impact your site's crawling, indexing or ranking in Google. I'd still recommend doing that though - otherwise it can confuse users to see different domain names for the same content. If you have a local (.com.nz) and a global (.com) site, then I would recommend using separate content for them (since there are going to be different users) -- but I wouldn't worry too much about it if you have the same content at the moment.

JohnMu, Switzerland





Question 66:

"Some search queries show a thumbnail when a result is from a video web page. How can I get a thumbnail displayed by my indexed pages that also offer videos on them? Are thumbnails going to be used more for other type of results too?"

[Matt Cutts](#) [Cat](#), [Neenah](#)

Ans:

Hey Cat, I agree, videos are sometimes much more interesting than text :-)! The thumbnails are shown for video results. We generally get video content from Video Sitemaps, which you can set up and submit for your site as well. Sometimes it takes a while to get video content indexed, so it's good to make sure that you submit your Video Sitemaps as soon as you have that content available.

[JohnMu](#), [Switzerland](#)

Question 67:

"Matt says, Google takes 200 signals for ranking a query and PR is one among those. If that is the case, why is it still showed prominently on toolbar. Any possibility of seeing PR info dropped from Google toolbar?"

[ROW](#)

Ans:

Hi ROW, PageRank is just one signal that we use, but it's also one of the easiest metrics to show to users and an easy one to understand where the metrics come from. So I think it's something that still provides value to users and still makes sense to show to them in the Google Toolbar.

[JohnMu](#), [Switzerland](#)

Question 68:

"A site has lost sitelinks. No significant changes were made to site architecture, e.g. menu templates. Overall public PR has actually increased. Suggestions as to how to keep dynamically generated sitelinks? How often are they recalculated?"

[Sean Carlos](#), [Italy](#)





Ans:

Sitelinks are dynamically generated - more info here -

<http://www.google.com/support/webmasters/bin/answer.py?answer=47334>

Nathan J, Mountain View, CA

Question 69:

"1000's of junks sites are spamming Google index & Googlers still find time to penalize or ban more genuine sites. How do you plan to fight spam in longer term."

Unnamed

Ans:

Thanks for being interested in keeping our index free of spam. If you do find sites violating our webmaster guidelines, please submit a spam report here:

<http://www.google.com/webmasters/tools/spamreport>

As far as how we fight spam, we can't reveal too much. Spammers might be reading. :)

Unnamed

Question 70:

"Of late, I have been experiencing sudden drop in rankings for my sites. One day it would be on #3 and the other day it would go back to #19 or #26. Any specific reason behind this.."

ranjeet, India

Ans:

Hi!

Most likely, you have been accessing different Data Centers checking your rankings. As Google DC's are being updated continuously but not all simultaneously, slight variations in the SERP's are possible. If you still believe there was an issue with your sites rankings, I would suggest to drop the question, including the domain on the Google Webmaster Help Group:

groups.google.com/group/Google_Webmaster_Help/ There is plenty of savvy webmasters eager to help, along with Google guides monitoring the community and joining the discussions occasionally :-)

Kaspar aka Guglarz, Dublin. Ireland





Question 71:

"What should I do about declining ranking for my site?"

Jonathan, Simon

Ans:

Drops in rankings can be caused by many factors, but here's a quick checklist:

1. Check for crawl errors in Webmaster Tools
 2. Make sure your site follows the Webmaster Guidelines, specifically the Quality Guidelines:
<http://www.google.com/support/webmasters/bin/answer.py?answer=35769>
 3. Ask other webmasters to review your site in the Webmaster Help Group:
http://groups.google.com/group/Google_Webmaster_Help
- Wysz, Mountain View, CA

Question 72:

"How does Google view content that is placed in divs that are hidden/display none until a user does something? These are also good places to stuff SEO content that a user may never see.

What is best practise from Google's point of view?"

SteveJohnston, Bath, UK

Ans:

Hi Steve, I've addressed this question in the Google Webmaster Help Group here:

http://groups.google.com/group/Google_Webmaster_Help-Indexing/browse_thread/thread/b2d09046ab4d5ed/d6aa4da7a87e5230

And here: http://groups.google.com/group/Google_Webmaster_Help-Indexing/browse_thread/thread/5d31cc395fe20b64/3b97dfcdb32b6957

What boils down to is intent: If it's there for the user, you're probably safe. If you're trying to deceive search engines... that's risky. :)

Wysz, Mountain View, CA





Question 73:

"Duplicate content is always penalized by search engines. Then what is the reason that duplicate news content spread across many sub-domains from yahoo.com and many other popular sites does not gets penalized?"

Sandeep Khetan, India

Ans:

Hi Sandeep, as far as I know, none of the search engines penalize duplicate content -- they just ignore the duplicates.

JohnMu, Switzerland

Question 74:

"I have reworked a site. I have deleted all of the pages with nasty code. Some of the pages still appear as "not found" by web crawler, even though no links point to the deleted pages. Are they held in a cache? How do I delete?"

BaileyQueue, Santa Cruz, CA

Ans:

It generally just takes a while for things to clear out -- so I wouldn't worry about it or try to manually remove them.

JohnMu, Switzerland

Question 75:

"I've spend 4 years trying to track down a mystifying penalty on my site. Why won't Google help?"

Spander, Canada





Ans:

Hi Spander :-)

Did you try to drop this question on the Google Webmaster Help Group?

http://groups.google.com/group/Google_Webmaster_Help/

We also do have a French speaking Help Group, you could use:

http://groups.google.com/group/google_webmaster_Help-fr/

In my experience, the community almost always is able to identify the problem, if there is one.

And if they are not 100% right, there always are supportive Google guides around :-)

Kaspar aka Guglarz, Dublin. Ireland

Question 76:

"How does one know if the domain name they just bought carries a penalty (ie. keyword-stuff) while it was parked at a registrar. My site did carry a penalty for many years before I learned it did carry a penalty for keyword stuffing at godaddy"

Burchman519, NYC Metro Area

Ans:

Hey Burchman519, if you feel that your site isn't ranking where it should be (especially if the domain name is new), I'd recommend submitting a reconsideration request just in case.

Submitting a request when it's not required won't be held against you!

JohnMu, Switzerland

Question 77:

"Are you going to focus more on personalised search? If so, these results we currently look at won't really matter, as different sites will be at #1 for different people, right? - thank you :)"

Miscej, Norwich, uk

Ans:

Hi Miscej, that's right -- with personalized search it's possible that each user sees slightly different search results. We try to make those search results unique and compelling enough to make the user go visit and stay on the sites listed -- so if your site is really awesome, chances are high that we'd be recommending it to users as well :-).

JohnMu, Switzerland





Question 78:

"We had a great site that was very popular with lots of original content, but we had to switch to a new CMS (new shared IP) AND new domain - traffic tanked! I need help!!! Any suggestions?"
Unnamed

Ans:

I'd recommend making sure that all old URLs 301 redirect to the new ones. Also, it can take a bit of time for a change like this to be completely processed, so sometimes you just need to be a bit patient (and continue working on your new site). If it absolutely doesn't come back, it might be that we're just ranking the new site where we'd be ranking the old one as well. Alternately, you might want to start a thread in the Google Webmaster Help groups, where the folks there can take a look at your site in particular, since these kinds of changes involve steps that are unique to your site.

JohnMu, Switzerland

Question 79:

"Does using W3C standards make a difference in ranking on Google? If yes, when will HTML5 be supported?"
Unnamed

Ans:

Indirectly adhering to standards always makes sense -- it helps to make sure that your site is accessible to a larger group of users, which could in turn result in more recommendations for your site, leading us to want to send more users there as well. I'm not sure how HTML5 fits into the whole thing though -- we'll have to wait and see what they come up with.

JohnMu, Switzerland

Question 80:

"For inbound links to a site, can Webmaster Tools display the anchor text in the link?"
Unnamed





Ans:

Hi there, got it, this is a feature request we've heard before. I'll add "Unnamed" from our Webmaster Chat to the request (seriously). Keep-in-mind that we show anchor text in Webmaster Tools, it's just not associated with each URL. We want to develop features in Webmaster Tools that really help you to build a better site and improve the web -- I'm not sure if we've determined anchor text to backlinks to be a high priority. Nonetheless, we've noted your request. Maile

Maile Ohye, MTV, CA

Question 81:

"Rankings - How can a site rank #1 & #2 on Yahoo & MSN but completely disappear from the first 50 pages in Google for the same group of keywords?"

Unnamed

Ans:

Each search engine has it's own set of factors that determine ranking. If you feel that your site isn't ranking as high as it could be, you might want to start a thread about it (mentioning the URL) in the Google Webmaster Help Groups, where smart users (and some Googlers) can take a look and help you to determine any open issues the site might have.

JohnMu, Switzerland

Question 82:

"How many chained 301 redirects does Google not "like"?"

Quentin, Vancouver

Ans: 1

It's ok to chain a few together; I would avoid doing a whole bunch, like 20 or 30. :)

Nathan J, Mountain View, CA





Ans: 2

As far as I know, the HTTP 1.0 standard allows for a maximum of 5 redirects for a URL. That said, search engines might treat it in different ways, so I'd recommend reducing the redirects to a minimal number.

JohnMu, Switzerland

Question 83:

"I have a folder (used in URL path), it's name includes a hyphen, which I read was not friendly for google. It is an important folder, I cannot rename without interfering with our archive links (2004-present). What should I do?"

BaileyQueue, Santa Cruz, CA

Ans:

Hyphens and underscores are fine :-). If you do decide to rename something, I'd recommend making sure that you use 301 redirects appropriately.

JohnMu, Switzerland

Question 84:

"My company controls the main domain out of Italy with a .eu extension. We have an English version of the site. Will the European domain hurt our ranking?"

Kevin, Boston Ma

Ans:

No, you won't have any ranking disadvantages due to the .eu/ domain :-)

Kaspar aka Guglarz, Dublin. Ireland

Question 85:

"Does having the domain name for a long period e.g. 5 or 10 years really affects SEO and give high rankings?"

Ellithy, Egypt





Ans:

Hi Ellithy, a site's reputation can be a indicator to search engines, but of course, it's not everything. Having a site for a long period of time can establish credibility with users, and as a search engine we also want to reflect this type of credibility. Of course, newer domains can also gain users and credibility. It seems like running a good site is a bit like running a reputable business. So yes, if your domain has been credible for years it can help. If you buy an old domain and put all your content on it in hopes of getting instant rankings, that's not the best idea. Thanks for asking, good luck, Maile
[Maile Ohye](#), MTV, CA

Question 86:

"If i have backlinks from porn sites do this affect my PR or anything else ?"
[Valentin](#), Oltenita, Romania

Ans:

Hi Valentin, those links might be positively affecting your PageRank (PageRank does not go down from "bad" links like those from adult sites). In general, you don't have to worry about bad links like that which point to your site which aren't under your control.
[JohnMu](#), Switzerland

Question 87:

"I have reported sites that clearly have paid links (e.g. the backlink page says "Advertising" above the link), but Google does not seem to take action. Why would that be the case? These are .orgs who are clearly selling their .org juice."
[Spanishgringo](#), Spain

Ans:

Hi Spanishgringo!
While paid links and spam reports are being taken very seriously by Google, the results may not be seen immediately for users or even not at all. This does not mean no action is being taken on the offending sites. Also, the TLD of the sites should not be a factor being taken into account. For this reason reporting both, web spam and PageRank passing link selling makes sense and contributes in an important way to the quality of Google's index.
[Kaspar aka Guglarz](#), Dublin. Ireland





Question 88:

"How often does your search algorithm change?"
ecurtin, London, England

Ans:

We change the algorithms all the time - last year we had over 450 changes.
http://www.popularmechanics.com/blogs/technology_news/4259137.html
JohnMu, Switzerland

Question 89:

"Is it still worthwhile to buy links from good quality, niche directories?"
Unnamed

Ans:

Buying links which pass PageRank is not something that we recommend. Get the full story here:
<http://googlewebmastercentral.blogspot.com/2007/12/information-about-buying-and-selling.html>
Wysz, Mountain View, CA

Question 90:

"I recently went through and "cleaned up" my Wordpress site by deleting some old posts and unnecessary categories/tags. I re-submitted a new Sitemap, but I still see several "Not Found" web crawl errors in Webmaster Central. Will this fix itself?" Unnamed

Ans:

In some situations it could be that you can 301 redirect some old URLs to relevant new ones, otherwise it's fine to let them return 404. The errors are not something to worry about, they're just for your information, so it's fine to leave them there and to let them expire over time.
JohnMu, Switzerland





Question 91:

"Are you going to surprise us with new webmaster services in the future?"
big boy, Russia

Ans:

We're always looking for more ways to help webmasters. :)
You can help us out by submitting feature requests in the Webmaster Help Group:
http://groups.google.com/group/Google_Webmaster_Help-Requests/topics
And one thing we've been working on a lot recently is providing training resources to webmasters interested in search, including videos. Stay tuned to our blog to see what we've been doing: <http://googlewebmastercentral.blogspot.com/>
Wysz, Mountain View, CA

Question 92:

"Does using display:none or left: -9999px for accessibility lower your site's ranking?"
Jake Mates, Italy

Ans:

If this is not hiding something which attempts to mislead users and search engines, then it is generally fine.
JohnMu, Switzerland

Question 93:

"Does Googlebot follow the information given on the last modified headers? Does it look at E-tags?"
Fer, UK

Ans:

Hi Fer, we do take a look at the last modification headers. You can spot that in your server's logs - it should show a 304 response code ("not modified"). That said, many sites are set up in a way that return 200 even for pages which haven't changed.
JohnMu, Switzerland





Question 94:

"Is it true that the fewer the links FROM your website, the more influence they have on the sites receiving those links?"

Allen Graves, Tampa, Florida

Ans:

PageRank is split up over the links from a page, but I would recommend not concentrating on this (as you won't be able to "measure" and act upon it anyway) and instead making your site as usable as possible for your visitors.

JohnMu, Switzerland

Question 95:

"How many times a year do you update a site PageRanking?"

Malcarada, European Union

Ans:

PageRank is re-computed all the time (different PageRanks every day). But we update the toolbar PageRank 3-4 times/year.

Matt Cutts, Bay Area, CA

Question 96:

"If a blog is only penalized then how long it takes for a blog to be re-indexed again after sending a reinclusion request against 8 weeks for a banned blog?"

zola, India

Ans:

Hey zola, I'd recommend starting a thread in the Webmaster Help Groups where users can take a look at your site to see what's really going on. It might be that we can't crawl your site - so in that case it would help to know about that as soon as possible.

JohnMu, Switzerland





Question 97:

"We have a site that was 301ed to a new domain. Due to legal issues we had to let go of the new domain. Now we want the old domain indexed again in Google. Submitted re-inclusion request, got links, 2 months and counting; it's still not in the index?"

[InternetGuy](#), Vancouver, Canada

Ans:

Hey InternetGuy, I'd recommend starting a thread in the Webmaster Help Groups. It could be a number of issues, including us not being able to access your site properly. The folks there have experience in figuring these issues out and can help you to find the important parts.

[JohnMu](#), Switzerland

Question 98:

"How to tackle with google penalty? This is very important because may be after penalization or banning you are working on something to get your site or business back which may not be the exact reason for the ban or penalty."

[anirban](#), New Delhi

Ans:

Hi anirban, I'd recommend starting a thread in the Google Webmaster Help Groups.

[JohnMu](#), Switzerland

Question 99:

"From the webmaster's tools list of urls blocked by the robots.txt file, I see a lot of people are trying to access the blocked urls. Can you show me where those clicks are coming from, so that I can change the links?"

[Unnamed](#)

Ans:

The easiest way to find out where users came is to use an analytics tool like Google Analytics.

[JohnMu](#), Switzerland





Question 100:

"A parent co. requires their subsidiaries use sub-domains of the parent. Will a 301 redirect from old domain to new sub-domain pass link value? (e.g. Parent co.: www.123.abc.com; Subsid. former: www.xxx.yyy.com; New Subsid.: www.xxx.123.abc.com)."

dgj, san diego

Ans:

dgj, yes a 301 redirect is optimal in a situation like that.

JohnMu, Switzerland

Question 101:

"Does Google prejudice a link based on having a parameters after URI (e.g. a tracking code)?"

Zille, San Francisco, CA

Ans:

Sometimes Googlebot has a hard time crawling pages with dynamic urls that have a ton of parameters. It's a good idea to keep them to a minimum.

Nathan J, Mountain View, CA

Question 102:

"What are those deeds by a webmaster that could befriend Google and provoke Google?"

Raj, India

Ans:

Hi Raj, to befriend us make your site as unique and compelling as possible and help users to recommend it to others so that we find it as well!

JohnMu, Switzerland





Question 103:

"Are natural results geotargeted?"

Kowen, Tampa Bay, FL

Ans:

Yes. If you search for [bank] in the U.S., you'll get different results than if you search in the U.K. or Germany.

Matt Cutts, Bay Area, CA

Question 104:

"If I change a URL to optimize it and use a 301 to redirect to the optimized URL will the PR or link juice be redirected as well?"

Unnamed

Ans:

Yep! If we can find the redirect, we'll generally try to pass any associated data along to the new URL over time.

JohnMu, Switzerland

Question 105:

"Any plans to do a more in-debpt webmaster chat? I'm kind of embarrassed to report that I didn't learn anything in the last hour and a half."

Anonymous

Ans:

A survey should load immediately following the event, and you can leave us feedback in the Webmaster Help Group: http://groups.google.com/group/Google_Webmaster_Help Please let us know how you felt about the level of the content... we have beginner to advanced users in these chats and try to have a balanced discussion.

Wysz, Mountain View, CA





Question 106:

"Does a multi-language site have any positive or negative impact in terms of rankings?"

Unnamed

Ans:

Multi-language sites attract a larger group of users, so over time they'll help your site to rank in the various regions that your users come from.

JohnMu, Switzerland

Question 107:

"Should I be using hyphens instead of underscores in my URLs to improve a page's rank?"

Alex W, UK

Ans:

For the time being, I would recommend still using hyphens instead of underscores. If you're already using underscores and that's working fine for you and your rankings, it's not worth switching. But if you're doing a new site, then I would go with hyphens.

Matt Cutts, Bay Area, CA

Question 108:

"Does link: gives exactly the number of back links to a site?"

krish, India

Ans:

The link: operator only shows a sampling of links to a site, so it may not show all of the links that Google knows about. To find more information about backlinks to your own site, we give verified site owners more information about backlinks in Webmaster Tools:

<http://www.google.com/support/webmasters/bin/answer.py?answer=55281>

Wysz, Mountain View, CA





Question 109:

"Does getting a lot of comments in a blog help in being well indexed/ranked by google?"

Unnamed

Ans:

Having a lot of enthusiastic users commenting on your posts and doing so generating content on your site, certainly does not harm your rankings :-). Furthermore, a large fan base gives the webmaster a bit of independence from search engine traffic, which is the reason why generating original and compelling content in order to nurture a group of committed users is something I would highly recommend to any blogger :-).

Kaspar aka Guglarz, Dublin. Ireland

Question 110:

"Does it matter how I 301 redirect? I prefer the .htaccess? Does it matter?"

carl, delray beach, fl

Ans:

.htaccess should be just fine; I use it myself! :)

Just make sure you're returning the correct status code in the HTTP headers. There are some web services that let you do this, and even a Firefox extension:

<http://livehttpheaders.mozdev.org/installation.html>

Wysz, Mountain View, CA

Question 111:

"I am a Web Standards fan. Is there really _no_ ranking benefit in use of Web Standards?"

Unnamed

Ans:

I like clear code, too but I am afraid it does not help in terms of ranking directly. However, avoiding errors can help getting your site indexed by the bot on the one hand and it can also potentially increase the level of satisfaction for your users, if the sites are being rendered correctly :-).

Kaspar aka Guglarz, Dublin. Ireland





Question 112:

"Do the verification codes for Webmaster Tools, Analytics, Apps for Domain have to remain intact after the first verification or can you just remove them once it's done?"

Alex W, UK

Ans:

I can only speak for Webmaster Tools, but we do recheck for those codes periodically to make sure you are still the site owner. So you'll want to leave that code in place as long as you want to use Webmaster Tools.

Wysz, Mountain View, CA

Question 113:

"Can my site be penalized if I use rel="nofollow" too much?"

Unnamed

Ans:

No, you run no risk of an impact on your site's rankings if you use the attribute :-)

Kaspar aka Guglarz, Dublin. Ireland

Question 114:

"Why can't I save the Google Analytics benchmarking page to a PDF?"

Hank, Connecticut

Ans:

Try asking in the Analytics Help Group: <http://groups.google.com/group/analytics-help>

Unnamed





Question 115:

"Since robots.txt doesn't stop pages from being indexed, how can you prevent an entire site from being crawled? This is necessary for sub-domains that aren't actual websites. In some cases, these sub-domains don't have html in which to place the metatag"

JB, Texas

Ans:

Hi JB, you can prevent your pages from being crawled by putting a robots.txt disallow in place. If you have pages that were crawled and indexed before putting this in place, I would recommend using the URL Removal Tool (in Webmaster Tools) to remove those, and rely on the robots.txt to prevent future crawling of that section of your site. As you might have heard Matt discuss earlier, you can use noindex in your robots.txt file, but be very careful not to apply this incorrectly.

Unnamed

Question 116:

""There is no optimal keyword density." However, keyword stuffing seems to work to some degree. What's going on here?"

Anonymous

Ans:

As Matt said, remember that correlation does not always imply causation. ;) Keyword stuffing actually reduces the quality of a page in the eyes of a user, and that's what we look for: Which pages will be most relevant and useful to the user? So keyword stuffing is definitely something I would avoid: <http://www.google.com/support/webmasters/bin/answer.py?answer=66358>

Wysz, Mountain View, CA

Question 117:

"If my website "A", linking to website "B", and "B" linking back to "A" - am I going to be penalized? Does linking strategies still work?"

big boy, Russia





Ans:

Participating in linking schemes to impact ranking is not advised it's against the webmaster guidelines. <http://google.com/support/webmasters/bin/answer.py?answer=66356> The best linking strategy is to create a site with unique content or services that people want to link to. Then publicize it.

Jonathan, Simon

Question 118:

"Website in two languages. I heard that IP of the server, where my website is hosted, will affect site positions in search results. Is it true? The best solution: place russian and english content on one website or create different site.com & site.ru?"

big boy, Russia

Ans:

This is really up to you based on what makes most sense for your site. If you choose one site you can use subfolders that can be verified separately in Webmaster Tools which then allows you to set the geo-targeting for a specific country on that subfolder level. Going this route consolidates all your page rank under one domain. On the other hand some people really like to have a country level tld and the flexibility of multiple domains so in that case going with a site.com and site.ru would make more sense for them. Both of these approaches can be done a way that can rank well in the search results depending on the quality of the site(s).

Jonathan, Simon

Question 119:

"give access to webmaster tools account. why can't we give access to our webmaster tools account like we do in Google analytics. Now we have to insert verification files to every person who want to see webmaster tools"

iguana, Guarda, Portugal

Ans:

Right now webmaster tools is a completely different system from Analytics. So there's no feature like My Client Center (MCC) from AdWords or anything like that. It's a good feature request, but for the time being you need to insert verification files for each person who wants to get access. On the bright side, I believe you can force a re-verification for all owners for your site.

Matt Cutts, Bay Area, CA





Question 120:

"Describe proper canonical strategy and how to adhere. Is it enough to tell Google which is my preferred domain or is there more I must do to avoid all issues? Perhaps permanent 301 redirects? If so please explain how thoroughly. Thanks!"

Unnamed

Ans:

Preferred domain will only tell Google the canonical domain. To be complete for users and other search engines, 301 would be the way to go.

<http://www.google.com/support/webmasters/bin/answer.py?hl=en=44231>

Unnamed

Question 121:

"This is a very basic question: where can I find information about First Click Free? I'd like to use it but can't find it in your own search results. Thank you."

Kami D, Barcelona, Spain

Ans:

<http://googlewebmastercentral.blogspot.com/2008/10/first-click-free-for-web-search.html>

Jonathan, Simon

Question 122:

"Will transcripts of the audio be translated into other languages for non-native English speakers?"

alxndr, San Francisco, CA

Ans:

Not sure if we can do that easily--I'll try to check on that. Worst case, translate.google.com would give a pretty good translation immediately, even though it would be machine-generated.

Matt Cutts, Bay Area, CA





Question 123:

"How would one search for flash content in sites?"

Unnamed

Ans:

You can do filetype:swf to search a lot of Flash content. For example [filetype:swf hours] will search Flash content across the web for the word "hours."

Matt Cutts, Bay Area, CA

Question 124:

"Shared hosting -- I have heard that we are good to link multiple sites together as long as they have unique IP addresses. If you do the same with shared IP hosting then BIG penalty So whats the real deal?"

Rick Rayn, Indiana

Ans:

Hosting on shared IP addresses is generally fine. That said, I think it definitely makes sense to concentrate your efforts on a single site instead of splitting things up over many sites.

JohnMu, Switzerland

Question 125:

"You say links don't count, but why is there such an emphasis on them and why does it seem that they DO make a difference?"

Corey Hammond, Akron, OH

Ans:

Links are one of the ways users and search engines find your site. So if visitors are important to you then links should also be important to you.

Jonathan, Simon





Question 126:

"About IP addresses, you always used to hear that you don't want to share because you could get punished if you share with a bad site. I'm guessing that's not a concern anymore -- true or false?"
SEO Betty, Akron, OH

Ans:

Hey SEO Betty, you're right, I wouldn't worry about that anymore. The situations where it would matter are when the server is overloaded (can't respond to your visitors) and when it's incorrectly configured (not returning your site to your visitors).

JohnMu, Switzerland

Question 127:

"When checking out your links to not found pages, what would you do about links from spam sites? In fact, what to do about links from spammed sites in general?"

Unnamed

Ans:

In general, it's not something that you should worry about. We understand that you can't control all links to your site, and work hard to make our algorithms robust enough to prevent this type of activity from harming your site's ranking. If you do notice any spam sites that are affecting Google's search results, please let us know by submitting a spam report:

<http://www.google.com/support/webmasters/bin/answer.py?answer=35265>

Wysz, Mountain View, CA

Question 128:

"Thoughts on SE Rank Checking software? Are you against them? Would you purposely disable them?"

Vince, NYC

Ans:

Hi Vince, I generally believe that rank checking software doesn't make much sense anymore (not to mention that they're against our Terms of Service and could result in us blocking your IP address). We use a lot of personalization and geotargeting in our search results - so what ranks high for one user might not rank high for others. It doesn't really help you much to know a "ranking number" if you can't tell how far this ranking is actually something that the majority of your users are likely to see.

JohnMu, Switzerland





Question 129:

"Regarding sharedip, if another site that is hosted along with my site is banned by google - will it affect my website ranking??"

Shiva, Chennai

Ans:

In general, no it won't affect your site's ranking. However, if your site is doing the same sneaky things as the site that got banned, then I think it would be a good idea to just clean things up instead of waiting :-).

JohnMu, Switzerland

Question 130:

"John, regarding duplicated content on the site. Lets say i have a description of my website is about on all pages. Will that be fine, even if that paragraph is duplicated?"

Unnamed

Ans:

Sure, that's not a problem for us :). Whether or not it would confuse users depends more on the layout that you choose, so I'd say it's up to you.

JohnMu, Switzerland

Thanks Regards,

Ravi Shanker

<http://www.everythingundertheglobe.com/>

<http://rvshanker.wordpress.com/>

