What Google’s latest changes mean for your site

Everything Google has been up to in the past year.
DigitalCast

- New episodes whenever there is something noteworthy
- Usually 2-3x/week
- digitalcast.org

The marketer’s secret weapon
Who listened to Jenny or Bobby?
So, what has Google been up to?

Rule tweaks, questions, and clarity
Google doesn’t care about your fresh content

Unless it smells super nice.
Google judges all of your content

We don’t judge you, but Google does.
Mobile users search “near me” a ton

Why near me? It’s getting so crowded...
Singular and plural keywords don’t always rank the same

Plurality can indicate intent
Only 3% of your home page traffic makes it to your blog

...and that’s ok
Google treats PDFs essentially as HTML

But that doesn’t mean your menu should be a PDF
Don’t link to every page from your home page

Google understanding your full site is key
Google says you need alt text on your images

Duh
Go ahead, put reviews from Google Maps on your website

Just don’t mark them up
White space is not an SEO issue

But your clients might disagree
Google cannot index pages that require cookies

They even turn down Thin Mints
Aim for pages that download in less than 100ms

This guideline is focused on crawling
Google search results aren’t personalized as much as you’d think

They know everything about you, they’re just not sharing
Google indexes and ranks everything inside of accordions and tabs

Not everyone agrees
Google is looking for ways to handle GDPR blocking

Google doesn’t like it when you’re lazy
Google is using more neural matching to understand synonyms

This impacts 30% of search queries; over 1B every day
Low traffic doesn’t always mean low quality

But sometimes it does...
Making links to your site violates Google’s guidelines

Go make better content instead
Word count and other metrics can’t measure quality

Word count and number of outbound links don’t matter
Search ranking changes are unrelated to Google’s new mobile-first indexing

Indexing != ranking
Does Google use real-life user signals to assist with rankings?

No
Why you should learn JavaScript to help with SEO

JS is the future
Google says not to use hashtags in your URLs

Anchors are ok, but #that’s #all
Simply having more content doesn’t impress Google

More is better, but quality wins
Google finds new content through links, and then through sitemaps

Gotta have those links
Google gives more details about how 301 redirects work

No, they don’t decay
Google wants you to fill in your own meta descriptions

Automation can sound ungood
Human trust isn’t the same as Google trust

The BBB is worthless anyhow
Nofollow gives publishers a way to focus on content

It’s lazy, but now it makes sense
Google doesn’t index pages that have been redirected

How could they anyhow?
Position zero becomes a much bigger deal

I just want position -1, above your screen
Google’s tips for dealing with seasonal content

Give Google time to find your pages
Google says it’s good to have unique images on your pages

But find them somewhere other than Google Image Search
Don’t worry about keywords in your URLs

/it-can-look-dumb-anyhow-when-you-do-that/
There’s no such thing as negative keywords in organic search.

If you ignore some words, Google will too.
Google already knows about your shady links

They’re smarter than other tools out there
There are no “Google Partner SEO Agencies”

I can call you one if you want, but it won’t help either
Your contracts can’t require a link to your site

Those links are shady anyhow; putting them in a contract is evil
Don’t pretend that 404s are 301s

Be clear about what’s going on with your site
Google says not to change image URLs

Maybe DSC1058.jpg is a great name after all
Your site needs content to rank well

But pages without content load super fast!
Links continue to be a major ranking factor

They’re not going away any time soon
How long should you keep redirects in place?

“Too long” isn’t a thing
If Google mistakenly thinks all your pages are the same, it could be trouble

Your fancy JavaScript isn’t so fancy now, is it?
Google Posts can still be valuable

They’re like the new Google+

Not really.
How old content can outrank your fresh content

How do they know the new stuff is any good?
HTTPS is a “soft ranking factor”

But just do it.
HTTPS isn’t required to rank on Google

But still, just do it.
There is no time frame for ranking changes after you make improvements.

Sometime between right now and never.
Google reveals a bit more about RankBrain

500M searches are brand new every day
Using Hreflang won’t improve your rankings, but could still help bring better traffic.
Google is begging you to just stick to the basics

Great crawlable content wins
Pornyness is a ranking factor

That’s Google’s word, not mine
You can link internally as much as you want with no fear of penalty

And you absolutely should
Don’t break the rules just because your competition does

If they jumped off a bridge, would you?
Fake edits to your Google Maps listings can cause big trouble

Your agency isn’t open 24/7?
Don’t use UTM parameters on internal links

But mysite.com/about/?utm_source=saturn just looks awesome
Again, CTR does not affect rankings

But it does for me!
Don’t just stick content at the bottom of your ecommerce category pages

Keyword stuffing is fun
Working on mobile page speed isn’t a one-time fix

Feel the need
Google explains more about how JavaScript is indexed

Do the two-step
That redirect linking “hack” doesn’t work

Hacking away at problems that don’t exist
Adding keywords to CSS is meaningless

- `fire-risk-assessment .phone-number {
  Margin-bottom: 40px;
}

Your images don’t need to be on your domain

cdn.yoursite.com > yoursites.cdncorp.com
Videos are great for SEO, but they need text support

DSC10043.MOV
There is no limit to the traffic that Google will send to your site

That would be silly
Either use a mobile URL or a responsive design; not both

m.google.mobi/m
There is no ranking bonus for Google Partners

We're just friends
Redirects are treated differently than links

But redirects can pass link equity
Google is adding short URLs for GMB

g.page/yourname
g.page/yourname/review
Text in `<blockquotes>` is just normal text

*fancy!*
Ads and Analytics don’t affect rankings

Well, not directly...
Don’t focus on specific ranking factors

There are more than 200
Questions?

What wasn’t clear to you?
What Google’s latest changes mean for your site

Slides will be available on the GreenMellen blog next week!

GreenMellenMedia.com/blog