



What You Should Know About Google Updates

Each day, Google usually releases one or more changes designed to improve our search results. Most aren't noticeable but help us incrementally continue to improve.

After a Google Update – Reassessing Content

There's nothing wrong with pages that may perform less well in a core update. They haven't violated Google Webmaster Guidelines nor been subjected to a manual or algorithmic action, as can happen to pages that do violate those guidelines.

In fact, there is nothing in a core update from Google that targets specific pages or sites.

Instead, the changes are about improving how Google's systems assess content overall. It could be that from an update, changes may cause some pages that were previously under-rewarded to do better.

Pages that drop after a core update don't have anything wrong to fix.

This said, it is understood those who do less well after a core update change may still feel they need to do something. It is then suggested focusing on ensuring your offering the best content you can. That is what Google's algorithms seek to reward.

A starting point is to revisit any advice you have been offered or provided with.

What our aim is to do, is assist clients based on what we have learned from Google in the past 20years some of which remains core values today.

We also assist our clients on how to self-assess if you already believe your website pages are offering quality content.

Following on from what is seen as the latest and biggest core algorithm roll out on December 3rd 2020 by Google is to use a fresh set of questions taken from Google's Quality Rating Guidelines to ask yourself about your content.

What counts as a High-Quality Website?

Google's quality algorithms are aimed at helping people find "high-quality" sites by reducing the rankings of low-quality content. The questions on the next page are extracted from Googles Quality Rating Guidelines to help assist you think about your website content.

Content and quality questions

- Does the content provide original information, reporting, research or analysis?
- Does the content provide a substantial, complete or comprehensive description of the topic?
- Does the content provide insightful analysis or interesting information that is beyond obvious?
- If the content draws on other sources, does it avoid simply copying or rewriting those sources and instead provide substantial additional value and originality?
- Does the headline and/or page title provide a descriptive, helpful summary of the content?
- Does the headline and/or page title avoid being exaggerating or shocking in nature?
- Is this the sort of page you'd want to bookmark, share with a friend, or recommend?
- Would you expect to see this content in or referenced by a printed magazine, encyclopedia or book?

Expertise questions

- Does the content present information in a way that makes you want to trust it, such as clear sourcing, evidence of the expertise involved, background about the author or the site that publishes it, such as through links to an author page or a site's About page?
- If you researched the site producing the content, would you come away with an impression that it is well-trusted or widely-recognized as an authority on its topic?
- Is this content written by an expert or enthusiast who demonstrably knows the topic well?
- Is the content free from easily-verified factual errors?
- Would you feel comfortable trusting this content for issues relating to your money or your life?

Presentation and production questions

- Is the content free from spelling or stylistic issues?
- Was the content produced well, or does it appear sloppy or hastily produced?
- Is the content mass-produced by or outsourced to a large number of creators, or spread across a large network of sites, so that individual pages or sites don't get as much attention or care?
- Does the content have an excessive amount of ads that distract from or interfere with the main content?
- Does content display well for mobile devices when viewed on them?

Comparative questions

- Does the content provide substantial value when compared to other pages in search results?
- Does the content seem to be serving the genuine interests of visitors to the site or does it seem to exist solely by someone attempting to guess what might rank well in search engines?

Beyond asking yourself these questions, consider having others you trust but who are unaffiliated with your site provide an honest assessment.

Also consider our website audit service and have a professional look in more detail at the drops you may have experienced. What pages were most impacted and for what types of searches? Look closely at these to understand how they're assessed against some of the questions above.

Your Website's Recovery After a Google Update

A common question after a core update is how long does it take for a site to recover, if it improves content?

Broad core updates tend to happen every few months.

Content that was impacted by one might not recover - assuming improvements have been made - until the next broad core update is released.

However, as said, Google are constantly making updates to their search algorithms, including smaller core updates. This is happening in some cases daily.

Google doesn't announce all of these because they're generally not widely noticeable.

Still, when released, they can cause content to recover if improvements warrant.

Do keep in mind that improvements made by site owners -

aren't a guarantee of recovery

nor do pages have any static or guaranteed position in Google search results.

If there is more deserving content - that will continue to rank well with Google's systems.

It's also important to understand, search engines like Google do not understand content the way human beings do. Instead, Google **looks for signals** it can gather about content and understand how these, correlate with how humans assess relevance.

Bare this thought in mind. With the amount of information available on the web, finding what you need would be nearly impossible without some help sorting through it. Google ranking systems are designed to do just that: sort through hundreds of billions of webpages in its Search index to find the most relevant, useful results in a fraction of a second, and present them in a way that helps you or your potential prospects find what is being looked for.

How pages link to each other is one well-known signal that Google use.

But Google does use many more, which they don't disclose to help protect the integrity of their results.

Of course, no improvement Google makes to Search is perfect. This is why, Google, keeps updating. It takes in more feedback, does more testing and keeps working to improve its ranking systems. This work at their end can mean that content might recover in the future, even if a website owner makes no changes. In such situations, the continued improvements might assess such content more favourably.

We hope the guidance offered here is helpful.

As Digital Marketing Professionals we work hard to offer our client base plenty of advice when working with us about good content with the resources we are constantly monitoring or spending time in Google Webmaster Hangouts, being a Google Partner and clients having access to our more advance marketing analysis tools.

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