

Can an Automatic Reload Script Hurt SEO? via @RyanJones



What's up, everyone? It's time for another edition of **Ask an SEO**.

Today's question is perfect for 2020 – because this topic is just one more thing that really annoys me.

Oren from Israel asks:

"Does a script which auto-reload my site every 5 minutes hurt SEO in anyway?"

I see it does change some of the data in Google Analytics, such as "Average Session duration" for example."

The simple answer to this question is no, probably not.

Things that happen via JavaScript after the site loads likely have little, if any, effect on SEO.

The keyword there is **after** the site loads.

If you code this horribly wrong, it's possible you could reload the site before the site is technically loaded, thus giving yourself an infinite load time.

But as long as you properly code the refresh, there should not be any SEO issues.

Again, emphasis on "should."

If you're loading a site about puppies and then doing a quick JavaScript refresh to a phishing or malware site, or a Viagra site, you won't be immune from an algorithmic downgrade or manual action.

But if you're just reloading the same content you shouldn't have any SEO issues.

Now, let's get into the bigger issue...

Why the F*@K Would You Want to Do This?

I believe what Oren is asking about is a concept called "ad refreshing".

Thanks in part to COVID-19 and reduced ad spend, it's quickly becoming the most hated tactic on the web.

If you want to learn more about it check out that article, but we've all seen this in practice.

We click on a result from Google news, start reading an article, get halfway down and, **boom**, the page refreshes.

Why?

It's all about ad revenue.

Especially now with the global pandemic, many brands have drastically reduced their ad spend.

That means lower CPMs for publishers.

So what do they do?

Increase the impressions, that's what.

By refreshing the page, every visit now generates more ad impressions.

Sure, it lowers their click-through rates, and depending on how they implement it could screw with some of their analytics metrics, but it usually results in more money – until the ad networks find out.

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I'm not an accessibility expert so I have no idea if this will affect that at all either. I'll leave that for somebody else.

I would strongly advise against using this tactic.

Sure it doesn't affect SEO, but it's still a bad idea overall.

Your users will hate it.

Your ad networks will hate it.

Your site analysts will hate you.

And, if this practice gets more pervasive, it wouldn't surprise me to see search engines or browsers eventually take some sort of action against it in the future.

In my opinion, it's not worth the short-term revenue gains.

So to answer the question, no it won't affect your SEO – but it will likely affect everything else.

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