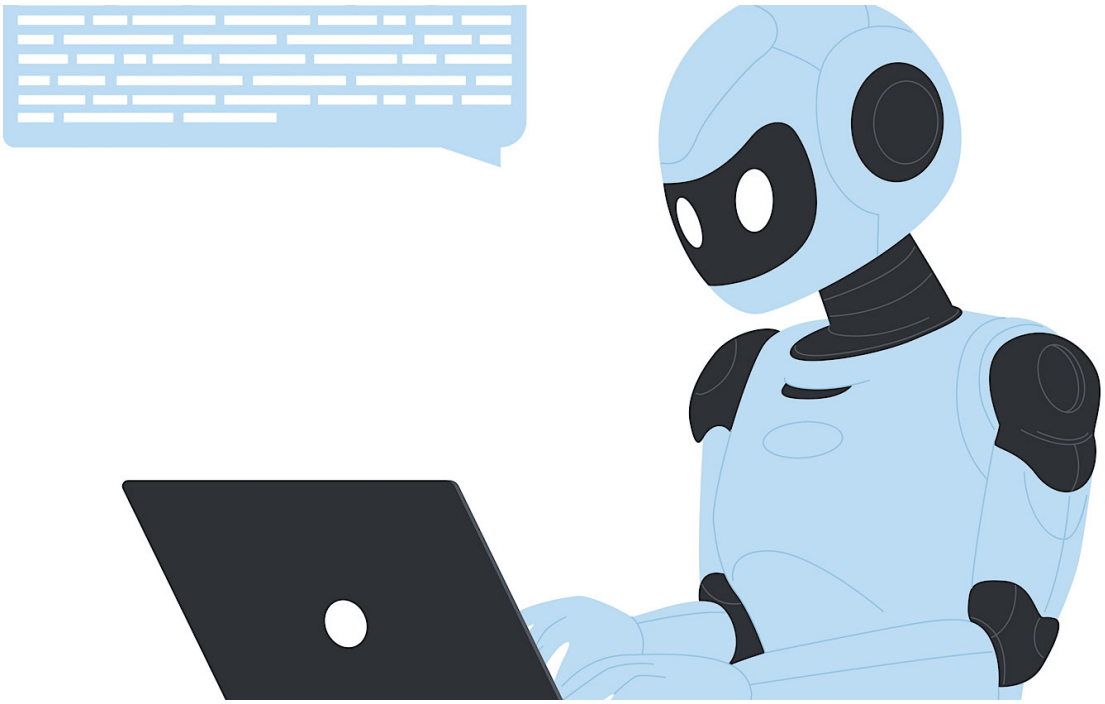
Google Adds AI & Bot Labels To Forum, Q&A Structured Data via @sejournal, @MattGSouthern



Google updated its Discussion Forum and Q&A Page structured data documentation, adding several new supported properties to both markup types.

The most notable addition is digitalSourceType, a property that lets forum and Q&A sites indicate when content was created by a trained AI model or another automated system.

Content Source Labeling Comes To Forum Markup

The new digitalSourceType property uses IPTC digital source enumeration values to indicate how content was created. Google supports two values:

- TrainedAlgorithmicMediaDigitalSource for content created by a trained model, such as an LLM.
- AlgorithmicMediaDigitalSource for content created by a simpler algorithmic process, such as an automatic reply bot.

The property is listed as recommended, not required, for both the DiscussionForumPosting and Comment types in the Discussion Forum docs, and for Question, Answer, and Comment types in the Q&A Page docs.

Google already uses similar IPTC source type values in its image metadata documentation to identify how images were created. The update extends that concept to text-based forum and Q&A content.

New Comment Count Property

Google added commentCount as a recommended property across both documentation pages. It lets sites declare the total number of comments on a post or answer, even when not all comments appear in the markup.

The Q&A Page documentation includes a new formula: answerCount + commentCount should equal the total number of replies of any type. This gives Google a clearer picture of thread activity on pages where comments are paginated or truncated.

Expanded Shared Content Support

The Discussion Forum documentation expanded its sharedContent property. Previously, sharedContent accepted a generic CreativeWork type. The updated docs now explicitly list four supported subtypes:

- WebPage for shared links.
- ImageObject for posts where an image is the primary content.

- VideoObject for posts where a video is the primary content.
- DiscussionForumPosting or Comment for quoted or reposted content from other threads.

The addition of DiscussionForumPosting and Comment as accepted types is new. Google's updated documentation includes a code example showing how to mark up a referenced comment with its URL, author, date, and text.

The image property description was also updated across both docs with a note about link preview images. Google now recommends placing link preview images inside the sharedContent field's attached WebPage rather than in the post's image field.

Why This Matters

For sites that publish a mix of human and machine-generated content, the digitalSourceType addition provides a structured way to communicate that to Google. The new properties are optional, and no existing implementations will break.

Google has not said how it will use the digitalSourceType data in its ranking or display systems. The documentation only describes it as a way to indicate content origin.

Looking Ahead

The update does not include changes to required properties, so existing forum and Q&A structured data implementations remain valid. Sites that want to adopt the new properties can add them incrementally.

https://www.searchenginejournal.com/google-adds-ai-bot-labels-to-forum-qa-structured-data/570425/