

Google: Expect “Extreme” Ranking Fluctuations When Publishing New Content by @MattGSouthern



Google’s John Mueller stated this week that “extreme” ranking fluctuations may occur after publishing new content.

It’s also not unusual for these fluctuations to occur for up to one or two weeks after the content has been published.

This topic came up during a Google Webmaster Central office-hours hangout when a site owner asked the following question:

“... a bunch of our visitors had been asking for information about a topic, so last week we created a page centered around answering those questions.

On Friday, when we finished it, we launched it and submitted it though Search Console. Almost immediately, for a search for the long-tail term on that topic, we showed up number 12

in the rankings... and then Saturday comes and the page basically disappeared from the index to where we can't even find it anymore.

Another page on our site, our index page, which isn't even really at all related to that topic, comes up in the couple 100s in the rankings. We're trying to figure out what kind of problem this could indicate, or where we should even look."

Mueller says this type of situation is "completely normal."

When Google first indexes a piece of content it has to estimate where the content should be ranked in search results. Sometimes Google overestimates, or underestimates, the ranking position of new content.

Google will eventually determine the most appropriate ranking position for that content, which could take multiple weeks. During that time the ranking position may fluctuate before settling down.

When it comes to new content, Mueller says to expect rankings to fluctuate quite a bit. This could even involve disappearing from search rankings completely, and then showing up again.

You can hear this Q&A in the video below starting at the 3:48 mark. See below the video for a complete transcript of Mueller's response.

[embedded content]

"That can be completely normal. The tricky part there is when we find new content, on a new site or existing site, we kind of have to estimate where we think we should show it where it's relevant. Sometimes we estimate fairly high and, over time, that kind of settles down.

So it could be that it settles down in a similar position, it could be that it just fluctuates for a while and then settles

down in a similar position, or maybe it'll settle down ranking higher or maybe it'll settle down ranking a bit lower.

So especially with completely new content, the rankings that you see there I would expect would fluctuate quite a bit. Maybe – I don't know, I'm just making up a number – a week or two until things kind of settle down into a state where we say this is the normal ranking that we think is appropriate...

It's kind of extreme, I guess, but it can definitely happen that we index something that we rank it fairly high that, for a couple of days, it disappears completely and then it pops back in maybe at the same position or maybe a slightly different position."

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