Google on Better Search Presentation with Videos by @martinibuster

On a Webmaster Help session, someone asked a question related to how videos on web pages might impact site speed and rankings. Google's John Mueller offered insights into how videos and images worked to help a web page gain enhanced listings in the search results.

Thinking Beyond Site Speed

A person asked if it made a ranking difference for a news website to put a video above the fold instead of an image. She said that other news sites were adding videos because they communicate so much more information. Her concern was the effect on the site speed.

> *"But then it affects the site speed. …do Google prefer video over image or no?"*

This is an important question because site speed is a known ranking factor. Thus, adding something that benefits users may negatively affect a ranking factor.

The person asking the question said that this was in the context of news content. However, the answers John Mueller gave seemed to give insight into how Google reviews video content and how it decides whether it's important or not.

John Mueller's answer indirectly addressed the issue of speed. He seemed to indicate that it may not matter as a speed issue if there's a video above the fold or not. The answer seemed to suggest that the more important consideration might be how that video may be used by Google in the search results.

John Mueller's response:

> *"So in general for webs search, I don't think we would care, either way. So… the normal textual search, I guess."*

Enhanced Listings Vs Regular SERPs

Google's John Mueller went on to discuss the advantages of showing a video on the web page. There's more to ranking than the ten blue lines. Any time you're thinking about ranking for keywords or any other visibility, considerations of enhanced listings should be a part of that thought process.

Thus, if you're creating an article, the choice of the image used to illustrate the article or accompany the text plays a very important role. It can become the difference between ranking number three or ranking at the top at position zero.

Here is how John Mueller explained it:

> *"It depends a little bit on how you want to be visible. So for video content we can pick that up and we can show the video thumbnail, which is sometimes something what users like.*
>
> *So if you're searching for something and you see that there's a video available and you want to consume the content in video format, then that's something that might make sense.*
>
> *An image is also pretty nice. So it's also something that we can show for example in the Top Stories Carousel.*
>
> *I believe if you use the article markup then with an image that might also be an option to show it like that.*
>
> *But in general for web search it's not that we would rank these pages differently. It's more a matter of how we would present them in the search results."*

Will Showing Videos at Top of Page Help Rankings?

The follow up question was if it made a difference for ranking in enhanced listings if the video content was located near the top of the page or elsewhere in the page.

> *"It helps us to have it such that when we look at the page, we can tell that this is more like a video landing page rather than the video is a random element somewhere else on the page.*
>
> *So I'd say fairly high up, it doesn't need to be the first thing on the page but so that when we look at that page we say, well this is a video landing page, not a normal page that happens to have a video like in the footer somewhere."*

That's an interesting answer because John Mueller seems to be saying that the location of a video (and presumably image) content can influence how Google interprets how important that content is to the page.

Ranking Above the Ten Blue Lines

We are accustomed to thinking in terms of ranking in positions one through ten in Google. John Mueller reminds us that if we step back from that view we can begin to see other opportunities beyond positions one through ten.

Download speed is one of the few confirmed ranking factors. So it's understandable to be focused on that metric.

However focusing on a ranking metric like speed (or any other ranking factor) can hide the opportunities available for enhanced search listings, user experience and more traffic.

So it's important to set ranking factors aside temporarily and

think in terms of what a page element contributes to the overall meaning of the content, how it impacts and satisfies users and how those elements might help your page qualify for enhanced listings.

This is also a reminder of how important non-textual content is to Google and for your traffic.

Watch the video here.

More Resources

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