Google: Pages Are Getting Larger & It Still Matters via @sejournal, @MattGSouthern

Google’s Gary Illyes and Martin Splitt used a recent episode of the Search Off the Record podcast to discuss whether webpages are getting too large and what that means for both users and crawlers.

The conversation started with a simple question: are websites getting fat? Splitt immediately pushed back on the framing, arguing that website-level size is meaningless. Individual page size is where the discussion belongs.

What The Data Shows

Splitt cited the 2025 Web Almanac from HTTP Archive, which found that the median mobile homepage weighed 845 KB in 2015. By July, that same median page had grown to 2,362 KB. That’s roughly a 3x increase over a decade.

Both agreed the growth was expected, given the complexity of modern web applications. But the numbers still surprised them.

Splitt noted the challenge of even defining “page weight” consistently, since different people interpret the term differently depending on whether they’re thinking about raw HTML, transferred bytes, or everything a browser needs to render a page.

How Google’s Crawl Limits Fit In

Illyes discussed a 15 MB default that applies across Google’s broader crawl infrastructure, where each URL gets its own limit, and referenced resources like CSS, JavaScript, and images are fetched separately.

That’s a different number from what appears in Google’s current Googlebot documentation. Google states that Googlebot for Google Search crawls the first 2 MB of a supported file type and the first 64 MB of a PDF.

Our previous coverage broke down the documentation update that clarified these figures earlier this year. Illyes and Splitt discussed the flexibility of these limits in a previous episode, noting that internal teams can override the defaults depending on what’s being crawled.

The Structured Data Question

One of the more interesting moments came when Illyes raised the topic of structured data and page bloat. He traced it back to a statement from Google co-founder Sergey Brin, who said early in Google’s history that machines should be able to figure out everything they need from text alone.

Illyes noted that structured data exists for machines, not users, and that adding the full range of Google’s supported structured data types to a page can add weight that visitors never see. He framed it as a tension rather than offering a clear answer on whether it’s a problem.

Does It Still Matter?

Splitt said yes. He acknowledged that his home internet connection is fast enough that page weight is irrelevant in his daily experience. But he said the picture changes when

traveling to areas with slower connections, and noted that metered satellite internet made him rethink how much data websites transfer.

He suggested that page size growth may have outpaced improvements in median mobile connection speeds, though he said he'd need to verify that against actual data.

Illyes referenced prior studies suggesting that faster websites tend to have better retention and conversion rates, though the episode didn't cite specific research.

Looking Ahead

Splitt said he plans to address specific techniques for reducing page size in a future episode.

Most pages are still unlikely to hit those limits, with the Web Almanac reporting a median mobile homepage size of 2,362 KB. But the broader trend of growing page weight affects both performance and accessibility for users on slower or metered connections.

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