Google Search Console notices for removing intrusive interstitials

Google seems to be sending out notices through Google Search Console for sites that have intrusive interstitials. The notice tells the site owner to remove those intrusive interstitials in order to "improve page experience" for your site.

What the email says. We spotted a copy of the subject line of the email in the Google Webmaster Help forums and it reads "Improve your page experience by removing intrusive interstitials from domain.com." We have been unable to find the full email or a screenshot of this notice yet.

Here's a screenshot of one of the messages (shared by Casey Markee on Twitter):

What are intrusive interstitials. Google says “intrusive interstitials and dialogs are page elements that obstruct users’ view of the content, usually for promotional purposes. Interstitials are overlays on the whole page and dialogs are overlays only on a part of the page, sometimes also obfuscating the underlying content. Websites often need to show dialogs for various reasons; however, interrupting users with intrusive interstitials may frustrate them and erode their trust in your website. Intrusive dialogs and interstitials make it hard for Google and other search engines to understand your content, which may lead to poor search performance. Equally, if users find your site hard to use, they are unlikely to want to visit those websites again, including through search engines.”

What is page experience? Google has a detailed developer document on page experience criteria. In short, these metrics aim to understand how a user will perceive the experience of a

specific web page: considerations such as whether the page loads quickly, if it’s mobile-friendly, runs on HTTPS, the presence of intrusive ads and if content jumps around as the page loads.

Page experience is made up of several existing Google search ranking factors, including the mobile-friendly update, Page Speed Update, the HTTPS ranking boost, the intrusive interstitials penalty, safe browsing penalty, while refining metrics around speed and usability. These refinements are under what Google calls Core Web Vitals. Please note, Google dropped the safe browsing factor last year from the page experience update.

Desktop also. This can be an issue for desktop as well since the page experience update is now live for desktop pages.

Why we care. While this does not appear to be a manual action, intrusive interstitials do impact your overall page experience signals and can impact your rankings in a super lightweight manner. So if you get this notice, try to remove the intrusive interstitials from your website.

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