Google Search experiments with showing less relevant search results when requested

Google has confirmed they are running a “narrow experiment” where they will ask the searcher if they want to show search results that may not be as relevant as they may expect. Google will show a notice in the search results that reads, “Hmm… the results for your search don’t seem very relevant.” You can then click a button to “see results anyway” to load the search results.

What it looks like. Here is a screenshot of what this looks like via @SEMrush:



Google’s statement. Danny Sullivan confirmed this is a restricted experiment triggering for too many users. In essence, too many searchers are seeing this show up for too many queries. “This is a narrow experiment focused on times when our systems detect there is little relevant content available on the web for the given query. It appears to be overtriggering. We will investigate and adjust,” Sullivan said.

Below is his tweet:

> *This is a narrow experiment focused on times when our systems detect there is little relevant content available on the web for the given query. It appears to be overtriggering. We will investigate and adjust.*
>
> *— Danny Sullivan (@dannysullivan) May 7, 2019*

Another bug? It may be another bug causing this “narrow experiment” to show too often, on too many queries, to too many searchers. I’ve seen numerous reports of people seeing this experiment, which means it’s probably a being served as a larger test than Google would like.

Ads. Google said it wasn’t intended to show ads in this test and it will ensure the ads do not appear in future tests.

> *Also in terms of the ads, we’ll ensure they don’t appear by default as part of the adjustment. We’re investigating why that happened; it wasn’t intended.*
>
> *— Danny Sullivan (@dannysullivan) May 7, 2019*

Why we should care. Think about this from the searchers perspective. They conduct a search and Google tells them they don’t have that many search results that are relevant to the query. Now, Google is suggesting they either search again for a different term or show these low-quality search results. What do you think the average searcher will do?

If you have relevant content related to a specific query and Google doesn’t show the search results first, you may lose out on driving searcher to your web site.

About The Author



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