Google shouldn’t pause algorithm updates during the pandemic, expert SEOs say [Video]

“I was expecting that people would be more like, ‘No, we don’t want updates,’” said Daniel Waisberg, search advocate at Google, in response to a Twitter poll that Search Engine Land News Editor Barry Schwartz posted asking whether Google should temporarily halt algorithm updates during the COVID-19 outbreak.

> *Should Google stop pushing out search algorithm updates during the COVID-19 outbreak?*
>
> *— Barry Schwartz (@rustybrick) March 16, 2020*

Although the sentiment from poll participants was relatively split, Bing’s Frédéric Dubut and Google’s John Mueller have said that their respective companies should continue to improve algorithms to serve users during these times — a perspective that was echoed by all of the SEO panelists during our first Live with Search Engine Land session.

[embedded content]

“Google’s doing a lot to fight misinformation and that’s just going to continue to happen, I imagine, over the next few months,” said Lily Ray of Path Interactive, adding, “If Google finds ways to improve the quality of the results to reduce misinformation, then they should continue rolling out those updates.”

“If people stopped working, ultimately systems are going to fail at some point and if there is no one there to [make]

these improvements, then we're just going to implode," said Pedro Dias of APIs3, referencing the misinformation problems Facebook is dealing with as a result of having to send its legion of content reviewers home. "We don't want to do that; we want to maintain what can be maintained … we should not stop just because other parts cannot move ahead," Dias said.

Why we care. As the outbreak began to spread across the U.S., Google completely transformed its coronavirus-related search results into an information portal where users can find information on symptoms, testing locations, the latest developments and more. It also published structured data guidelines for COVID-19-related announcements and enabled local businesses to mark themselves as temporarily closed. Bing also adopted SpecialAnnouncement schema and enabled local businesses to add a donate button to their local listing page.

Although these features are do not affect search rankings, they are new tools that brands and local businesses can use to communicate with their customers, which can help them stay afloat until the economy begins to recover.

Related: *What Google's Search Relations team has been doing in response to COVID-19 [Video]*

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