Google Uses Infinite 301 Redirect Loops For Missing Documentation via @sejournal, @martinibuster

Google removed outdated structured data documentation, but instead of returning a 404 response, they have chosen to redirect the old URLs to a changelog that links to the old URL, thereby causing an infinite loop between the two pages. Although that is technically not a soft 404, it is an interesting use of a 301 redirect for a missing web page and not how SEOs typically handle missing web pages and 404 server responses. Did Google make a mistake?

Google Removed Structured Data Documentation

Google quitely published a changelog note announcing they had removed obsolete structured data documentation. An announcement was made three months ago in June and today they finally removed the obsolete documentation.

The missing pages are for the following structured data that is no longer supported:

- Course info
- Estimated salary
- Learning video
- Special announcement
- Vehicle listing.

Those pages are completely missing. Gone, and likely never coming back. The usual procedure in that kind of situation is to return a 404 Page Not Found server response. But that’s not

what is happening.

Instead of a 404 response Google is returning a 301 redirect back to the changelog. What makes this setup somewhat weird is that Google is linking back to the missing web page from the changelog, which then redirects back to the changelog, creating an infinite loop between the two pages.

Screenshot Of Changelog

In the above screenshot I've underlined in red the link to the **Course Info** structured data.

The words "course info" are a link to this URL:
https://developers.google.com/search/docs/appearance/structured-data/course-info

Which redirects right back to the changelog here:
https://developers.google.com/search/updates#september-2025

Which of course contains the links to the five URLs that no longer exist, essentially causing an infinite loop.

It's not a good user experience and it's not good for crawlers. **So the question is, why did Google do that?**

301 redirects are an option for pages that are missing, so Google is technically correct to use a 301 redirect. However, 301 redirects are generally used to point “to a more accurate URL” which generally means a redirect to a replacement page, one that serves the same or similar purpose.

Technically they didn’t create a soft 404. But the way they handled the missing pages creates a loop that sends crawlers back and forth between a missing web page and the changelog. It seems that it would have been a better user and crawler experience to instead link to the June 2025 blog post that explains why these structured data types are no longer supported rather than create an infinite loop.

I don’t think it’s anything most SEOs or publishers would do, so why does Google think it’s a good idea?

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