Google webspam report: Hacked sites, user-generated spam, bad linking topped 2018 priorities

Google released its annual webspam report last week to highlight advances against content that seeks to manipulate ranking algorithms and harm users. The company is also calling on webmasters, developers, and users to utilize its resources to prevent and report such content.

Why should you care? Some of the ways Google is trying to thwart spammers is by empowering developers with tools to run SEO health checks on their pages, educating site owners through resources on best practices, and providing users with channels to report harmful content.

To keep users coming back (and clicking) and advertisers buying, Google needs to provide a safe ecosystem to find information. Results filled with webspam are bad for business – yours and Google's.

The highlights. Here are a few of the takeaways from this year's webspam report:

- As in years past, Google said less than one percent of users were led to spammy sites through search results.
- Hacked sites are getting discovered faster, before they make their way into search results or harm users. Google also reminded us not to get too comfortable by emphasizing that, "While we reduced how spam on hacked sites affects search, hacked websites remain a major security problem affecting the safety of the web."
- 180,000 search spam reports were submitted by users (double the figure from last year), 64 percent of which

were acted upon.
- The impact of user-generated spam (spam accounts on forums, blogs, and other platforms, as well as the posts they create) on search results was reduced by over 80 percent.
- Four million messages related to manual actions were sent to site owners via Search Console (down from six million in 2017).
- Poor linking practices, such as link spamming, were made less effective.
- Google capped off the report by underscoring its engagement with SEOs, developers, and site owners by offering in-person events across the globe as well as live office hours in six languages.

For the full details, head on over to the Google blog post.

About The Author

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