

Google's 'srsltid' Parameter Appears In Organic URLs, Creating Confusion via @sejournal, @MattGSouthern



Google's `srsltid` parameter, originally meant for product tracking, is now showing on blog pages and homepages, creating confusion among SEO pros.

Per a recent Reddit thread, people are seeing the parameter attached not just to product pages, but also to blog posts, category listings, and homepages.

Google Search Advocate John Mueller responded saying, "it doesn't cause any problems for search." However, it may still raise more questions than it answers.

Here's what you need to know.

What Is the srsltid Parameter Supposed to Do?

The srsltid parameter is part of Merchant Center auto-tagging. It's designed to help merchants track conversions from organic listings connected to their product feeds.

When enabled, the parameter is appended to URLs shown in search results, allowing for better attribution of downstream behavior.

A post on Google's Search Central community forum clarifies that these URLs aren't indexed.

As Product Expert Barry Hunter (not affiliated with Google) explained:

"The URLs with srsltid are NOT really indexed. The param is added dynamically at runtime. That's why they don't show as indexed in Search Console... but they may appear in search results."

While it's true the URLs aren't indexed, they're showing up in indexed pages reported by third-party tools.

Why SEO Pros Are Confused

Despite Google's assurances, the real-world impact of srsltid is causing confusion for these reasons:

- **Inflated URL counts:** Tools often treat URLs with unique parameters as separate pages. This inflates site page counts and can obscure crawl reports or site audits.
- **Data fragmentation:** Without filtering, analytics platforms like GA4 split traffic between canonical and parameterized URLs, making it harder to measure performance accurately.

- **Loss of visibility in Search Console:** As documented in a study by Oncrawl, sites saw clicks and impressions for srsltid URLs drop to zero around September, even though those pages still appeared in search results.
- **Unexpected reach:** The parameter is appearing on pages beyond product listings, including static pages, blogs, and category hubs.

Oncrawl's analysis also found that Googlebot crawled 0.14% of pages with the srsltid parameter, suggesting minimal crawling impact.

Can Anything Be Done?

Google hasn't indicated any rollback or revision to how srsltid works in organic results. But you do have a few options depending on how you're affected.

Option 1: Disable Auto-Tagging

You can turn off Merchant Center auto-tagging by navigating to **Tools and settings > Conversion settings > Automatic tagging**. Switching to UTM parameters can provide greater control over traffic attribution.

Option 2: Keep Auto-Tagging, Filter Accordingly

If you need to keep auto-tagging active:

- Ensure all affected pages have correct canonical tags.
- Configure caching systems to ignore srsltid as a cache key.
- Update your analytics filters to exclude or consolidate srsltid traffic.

Blocking the parameter in robots.txt won't prevent the URLs from appearing in search results, as they're added dynamically

and not crawled directly.

What This Means

The srsltid parameter may not affect rankings, but its indirect impact on analytics and reporting is being felt.

When performance reporting shifts without explanation, SEO pros need to provide answers. Understanding how srsltid functions work, and how it doesn't, helps mitigate confusion.

Staying informed, filtering correctly, and communicating with stakeholders are the best options for navigating this issue.

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