SMX Overtime: Schema and structured data – hidden gold for SEOs

SMX Overtime is part of our SMX speaker series from conference presenters who answer questions from attendees on a variety of topics.

Q. Is it worth implementing schema if there are no visible changes to the search result on the SERP, just to help Google better understand your content generally?

A. Yes, it can definitely be worth implementing structured data, even if there is no direct impact for rich results in the SERPs. As we know, Google is constantly adjusting the SERP landscape so new rich results are always a possibility. Structured data can help Google better understand the content of a page as well as help it understand how that content relates to entities it identifies.

Related: Learn more about structured data in the HTML section of our SEO Guide.

Q. Have you incorporated MREIDs in client structured data? If so, have you seen any benefits and any reduced ambiguity with the SERPs for any given queries?

A. MREIDs (machine readable entity IDs) are definitely something that could benefit Google's understanding around the primary entity of a page.

MREIDs provide Google with a dedicated string associated with a particular entity. This would be similar to how a SKU number references a specific product. While structured data's direct

impact on rankings is a bit nebulous, using MREIDs is a great opportunity to help Google more directly understand the entity, especially when the entity shares the naming convention of others. Bill Slawski has found that Google has used similar Machine IDs in the past to improve image search.

By referencing the MREID in a "sameAs" property, Google could know with more certainty, the exact entity referenced. In a way, this would be similar to referencing the entity's associated Wikidata page within the structured data.

Q. What are the best practices for schema markup for product teasers on e-commerce category pages? Some suggest a list of Products, other documentation says a Product shouldn't point to another page.

A. Generally, we recommend marking up each item on product listing pages with "Product" markup that defines the information given within the visible content of each listing. Of course, this should be dynamically generated so it always reflects the page's inventory.

If the goal of structured data is to help Google better understand the content of a page, than defining each item in the list may help Google understand that the page contains an aggregation of products.

See more articles on structured data and schema.

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