What 20 years of Google algorithm updates say about what SEOs should focus on next

In my SEO keynote talk during our SMX conference SMX Next, I discussed what SEOs can learn from the historical record of Google search algorithm updates.

History lesson. I went as early back as how Google made updates back in the old Google Dance days. Remember the Florida update from 2003 or maybe the Caffeine infrastructure update from 2009? I covered it. I covered many of the large and even many small Google updates. These updates include Google Panda, Penguin, Hummingbird, RankBrain, BERT, and even all of the core updates including the latest May core update.

Yes, I also covered the Top Heavy Update, EMD (Exact Match Domain) Update, Pirate Update, Payday Update and so many more.

The pattern. Google has taken clear steps, update-by-update, to try to make the search results they display, more relevant for searchers. This includes efforts to reduce search spam, people trying to manipulate the Google algorithms. It also is Google aiming to reward the most authoritative and most trusted sources on the internet. Finally, Google also over the years has worked on better understanding content and signals both in a more efficient and smarter way. If you look back at all these updates, you can see the pattern over the past 20-years.

Be prepared for what's next. The point of the presentation was to take you through a timeline of these changes. Show how each update has a purpose and if you can see a pattern, where Google is headed – maybe, just maybe – you can make sure your

website is already in a position where the next Google algorithm update wants the site to be.

Build something that is awesome. Google's senior webmaster trends analyst, John Mueller, has joked that awesomeness is a Google ranking factor. You really need to objectively build a site that is unique, better, deeper, more trusted and authoritative then your competitors. Build an awesome site.

My advice, which I have said numerous times and is easier said than done, is to build something that Google would be embarrassed not to rank well.

Watch. To watch the full keynote and all of the other sessions from SMX Next, register here.

About The Author

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