

Search Off the Record - 60th episode

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[00:00:10] **Martin Splitt:** [00:00:10] Hello and welcome to another episode of Search Off the Record, a podcast coming to you from the Google Search team discussing all things search and having some fun along the way. My name is Martin. And I'm joined today by John and Gary from the Search Relations team of which I'm also part of.

[00:00:26] Also, thanks to everyone listening out. We have just passed our two million downloads mark with this podcast, and we are really excited about that and thank you all for your continued attention and all the feedback that we are getting for our podcast. This is been much appreciated.

[00:00:43] All right. Speaking of feedback, today, I would like to talk to you two wonderful people here in this recording setup, Gary and John.

[00:00:54] **Gary Illyes:** [00:00:54] Please don't call me "people."

[00:00:55] **Martin Splitt:** [00:00:55] You are a people, so deal with that. You're a cat to our resident cat. I don't know. Are you still a cat? I have no idea what you are these days. Anyway, I would like to talk about a LinkedIn post that you made, Gary. The one where you asked what people want to see on the blog. And it's not the blog admittedly, but I really like the questions or the suggestions we got there.

[00:01:20] **Gary Illyes:** [00:01:20] Okay.

[00:01:21] **Martin Splitt:** [00:01:21] Okay. I'll start with one question that was particularly interesting to me, because I would like to hear your answer to that, which came from Hendrik Wigström. He asked about all the drawbacks of client-side rendering like crawl rate, indexing speed, risk of not showing all the content for search engine etc. I think there should be an article about all the potential drawbacks and suggested solutions for them.

[00:01:43] And you said, "Not bad for the question or for the suggestion, but Martin will kill me though." I promise not to kill you, okay? But what do you think are the drawbacks of client-side rendering?

[00:01:55] **Gary Illyes:** [00:01:55] I mean, let's start with the most basic thing. It's...

[00:01:59] **Martin Splitt:** [00:01:59] You are saying JavaScript...

[00:02:01] **Gary Illyes:** [00:02:01] You are doing this because you have JavaScript, and the JavaScript is doing something that is too resource intensive, for example. And then you have to end up with something silly like client-side rendering that might affect crawl rate, indexing speed, risk of not showing all the content for search engines.

[00:02:20] Now imagine if you moved all that (beep) into HTML, and then you don't have this problem anymore. How about that?

[00:02:28] **John Mueller:** [00:02:28] What if you copied and pasted a JavaScript code into BARD and told it to create HTML for it?

[00:02:35] **Martin Splitt:** [00:02:35] Ooh...

[00:02:36] **Gary Illyes:** [00:02:36] Okay, I have to try that.

[00:02:37] **John Mueller:** [00:02:37] (laughs)

[00:02:38] **Martin Splitt:** [00:02:38] I didn't see that coming. While Gary is trying it, I find the question super interesting, because I am dealing with it from a very ambivalent position, which is on one hand, there are still enough SEOs out there that say, "No, don't do it. It doesn't work for Google. Your content will not show up," which is not true. And even Gary, you would have to argue that it's true that we do render JavaScript, and the content does show up and get indexed unless there is a problem with it particularly, right?

[00:03:08] **Gary Illyes:** [00:03:08] Sure.

[00:03:09] **Martin Splitt:** [00:03:09] Sure. Here's the key. So that's the key. There isn't an inherent problem. However, what you mentioned and what the question mentioned is all the potential problems that are coming in, and all of these problems are valid. It's true. If you have JavaScript that can potentially fail, especially because it might actually make network requests or something that can also fail, then that can bring problems about.

[00:03:31] But I would argue that-- I'm not sure if I agree with Gary. I would argue that if you have like a PHP thing, for instance, that generates something from a template in the database and that database connection fails, then your server spews out incomplete HTML to begin with.

[00:03:45] Gary, you look like that BARD thing has done something that you didn't expect. What happened?

[00:03:49] **Gary Illyes:** [00:03:49] So the prompt was "Interpret this as HTML document," right. "Hello meow, and P tag."

[00:03:56] **Martin Splitt:** [00:03:56] (laughs)

[00:03:56] And BARD spit it out, " The following HTML code will be generated: " Hello meow", and "P."

[00:04:03] **Martin Splitt:** [00:04:03] Oh my, so a simple JavaScript it can actually do.

[00:04:07] **John Mueller:** [00:04:07] So you're saying we should replace rendering with BARD?

[00:04:11] **Gary Illyes:** [00:04:11] No, that's not...No.

[00:04:12] **John Mueller:** [00:04:12] (laughs)

[00:04:03] **Martin Splitt:** [00:04:03] But Gary, there's actually an interesting question that I think needs a slightly more nuanced answer that is part of this, which is the crawl rate issues or like delay issues that keeps popping up. And I'm not sure how relevant that really is. I mean, risk of not showing all the content. Again, that can also happen with a server-side rendered solution if the server-side rendered solution is not set up correctly. And the same goes for a client-side rendered solution, even though the client-side rendered solution is probably slightly more brittle.

[00:04:45] But crawl rate, does that have any implications on crawl rate if it's client-side rendered versus server-side rendered?

[00:04:51] **Gary Illyes:** [00:04:51] I mean, I don't think so. I don't think I understand client-side rendering enough to make a call about that. I did something related to server-side rendering back when I was still young and innocent.

[00:05:04] **Martin Splitt:** [00:05:04] (chortles)

[00:05:05] **Gary Illyes:** [00:05:05] And I thought JavaScript is a good idea.

[00:05:07] **Martin Splitt:** [00:05:07] So six months ago?

[00:05:08] **Gary Illyes:** [00:05:08] No, this was probably 2008 or 2007 or something like that. And I was using a headless Firefox, I think, for server-side rendering. And that wouldn't have any implication on crawl rate.

[00:05:21] Client-side rendering? I don't even know how that works, to be honest.

[00:05:24] **Martin Splitt:** [00:05:24] Okay.

[00:05:25] **Gary Illyes:** [00:05:25] If you want to enlighten me, then I can give you, maybe, an answer.

[00:05:29] **Martin Splitt:** [00:05:29] Am I allowed to enlighten you? Because I am burning to enlighten you on this.

[00:05:34] **Gary Illyes:** [00:05:34] Yes, please enlighten me.

[00:05:35] **Martin Splitt:** [00:05:35] Okay. The way that it works is you have the HTML that contains a piece of JavaScript. That JavaScript needs to obviously be fetched. So yeah, sure. That JavaScript piece then actually executes and makes additional requests to, for instance, an API, gets some JSON back, and then generates HTML from that JSON.

[00:05:52] **Gary Illyes:** [00:05:52] So it's JavaScript.

[00:05:53] **John Mueller:** [00:05:53] It's kind of like CSS and script files or something, like extra requests.

[00:05:59] **Martin Splitt:** [00:05:59] It's extra requests. It's also specifically extra requests, because it needs to get the API response to actually generate the content. So there's one extra request, maybe two or three, depending on how your API is structured.

[00:06:10] **Gary Illyes:** [00:06:10] Wait, I'm confused. How is that different from any other JavaScript that writes content?

[00:06:16] **Martin Splitt:** [00:06:16] Well, I mean, JavaScript could, for instance, just inject additional content or actually move content around on the page. In that case, it wouldn't really count as client-side rendering, because the content is there to begin with. But if the HTML is empty, and then pretty much all the content is pulled from somewhere, and the template lives in the JavaScript as well, then that is what I would call client-side rendering classically.

[00:06:41] **Gary Illyes:** [00:06:41] All right. So old GWT, like Google Web Toolkit, that would be client-side rendering?

[00:06:46] **Martin Splitt:** [00:06:46] I would argue, yeah.

[00:06:47] **Gary Illyes:** [00:06:47] Okay. I don't think it's different. I think the bigger problem is that we will have to render everything, and we can't have fallback because the fallback is empty HTML, right?

[00:06:59] **Martin Splitt:** [00:06:59] Correct. Yeah.

[00:07:01] **Gary Illyes:** [00:07:01] And personally, I would not risk that. I would want to always have HTML and content in the response body, mostly because I know that rendering can go wrong, and it can produce sometimes errors, in which case we are just not going to write it to the index. And then, if you don't have a fallback, then you basically don't have anything in the index.

[00:07:29] **Martin Splitt:** [00:07:29] Yeah. And that's exactly where potential delays come from. If you have a successful rendering, and we index the content, and then we have an unsuccessful rendering, and then we're like, "Ooh, what happened here?" We might not get the updated content, because it didn't render in this instance, and then we would have to wait until the next crawl. If the next crawl comes in a week...

[00:07:46] **Gary Illyes:** [00:07:46] Right.

[00:07:47] **Martin Splitt:** [00:07:47] Yeah, okay. I don't know. Are we adjusting the crawl schedule based on failed renderings or something?

[00:07:52] **Gary Illyes:** [00:07:52] I doubt it. I don't think so.

[00:07:54] **Martin Splitt:** [00:07:54] Okay.

[00:07:55] **Gary Illyes:** [00:07:55] Mm...

[00:07:55] **Martin Splitt:** [00:07:55] So that's it for the client-side rendering. I do think it does still have value, because it allows you to do much more interactive applications. I'm querying or questioning the value of necessarily indexing application content. But if you want to build informational websites, then I don't think client-side rendering is your best strategy.

[00:08:15] **Gary Illyes:** [00:08:15] Cool.

[00:08:16] **Martin Splitt:** [00:08:16] Anyway, there's another really nice question that I saw, and I'm just asking them to see what you're going to do.

[00:08:21] **Gary Illyes:** [00:08:21] Wait. I want to ask a question now.

[00:08:23] **Martin Splitt:** [00:08:23] Oh, you want to ask a question?

[00:08:24] **Gary Illyes:** [00:08:24] Yeah.

[00:08:24] **Martin Splitt:** [00:08:24] What do you want to ask?

[00:08:25] **Gary Illyes:** [00:08:25] This is specifically for John. How do you weight value links?

[00:08:30] **Martin Splitt:** [00:08:30] Oh, man.

[00:08:32] **John Mueller:** [00:08:32] Would it be like a ton of links?

[00:08:34] **Gary Illyes:** [00:08:34] Oh my god.

[00:08:35] **Martin Splitt:** [00:08:35] (laughing)

[00:08:38] **Gary Illyes:** [00:08:38] This is why we don't have John on the podcast too often.

[00:08:42] **John Mueller:** [00:08:42] Okay, back to you, Martin.

[00:08:46] **Martin Splitt:** [00:08:46] Oh my god. My question is similarly relevant, which is Dan Brickley asked us, actually. "Google Search has heard more than anyone ever about what billions of people want on a daily basis for decades now. What has it learned, if anything, about humanity and its needs, hopes, fears, etc. from all of this?" What have we learned?

[00:09:07] **John Mueller:** [00:09:07] If you don't know, Dan Brickley is a friend of ours, and apparently he hates us with these questions or based on these questions, he hates us. "What did Google Search learn over the decades?" Well, I think we know that people love navigational queries.

[00:09:27] **Martin Splitt:** [00:09:27] Really?

[00:09:28] **Gary Illyes:** [00:09:28] Yeah!

[00:09:29] **John Mueller:** [00:09:29] I do that all the time too.

[00:09:30] **Martin Splitt:** [00:09:30] Do they forget what URL Amazon is at or...?

[00:09:34] **John Mueller:** [00:09:34] I mean, I'm old, so...

[00:09:36] **Gary Illyes:** [00:09:36] Same!

[00:09:37] **John Mueller:** [00:09:37] I go to Google and search for Google--No...

[00:09:39] **Martin Splitt:** [00:09:39] Stop lying.

[00:09:40] **John Mueller:** [00:09:40] I'm not that bad, but sometimes you just don't know what the actual URL is supposed to be. It's like bookmarking things in a browser is just terrible.

[00:09:49] **Martin Splitt:** [00:09:49] Yep.

[00:09:50] **John Mueller:** [00:09:50] Sometimes it's just like, I couldn't be bothered with typing ".com." It's like you just hit the company name, hit enter and then click.

[00:10:01] **Martin Splitt:** [00:10:01] Yeah, okay, true.

[00:10:03] **John Mueller:** [00:10:03] It's not even so much like I forgot what the URL is. It's just like it's easier. We're all old, I guess.

[00:10:09] **Gary Illyes:** [00:10:09] Oh, God.

[00:10:10] **John Mueller:** [00:10:10] (laughing) It's...

[00:10:12] **Gary Illyes:** [00:10:12] What else did we learn?

[00:10:13] **John Mueller:** [00:10:13] I don't know. I always find the year in review videos that the marketing team does pretty interesting, because on the one hand, I always start them and it's like, "Oh, this is going to be like traditional marketing blah blah blah. But it's still kind of like, "Oh, you see," like people are searching for things that actually happened over the year. I search for some of that stuff as well. Especially during the Corona times. It's like, "Oh, can you shake people's hands?" Like, "How often do you wash your hands" kind of thing. Or everyone now is like, "Nobody washes hands anymore. Like, Why?"

[00:10:47] **Gary Illyes:** [00:10:47] (laughing) What do you mean no one washes hands?

[00:10:01] **Martin Splitt:** [00:10:01] I was about to say, "What?"

[00:10:54] **John Mueller:** [00:10:54] You wash your hands? Oh my gosh.

[00:10:55] **Martin Splitt:** [00:10:55] Oh God, please don't tell me that that comes as a surprise to anyone out there. (groans)

[00:11:03] **John Mueller:** [00:11:03] No, but like the totally exaggerated, like how many times a day you wash your hands kind of stuff.

[00:11:07] **Martin Splitt:** [00:11:07] Oh yeah, that's fair.

[00:11:08] **John Mueller:** [00:11:08] Like you go shopping and you wash your vegetables. Or you put them in like, of course you wash them, but it's like everything that...

[00:11:16] **Gary Illyes:** [00:11:16] Wait, you wash your vegetables?

[00:11:19] **Martin Splitt:** [00:11:19] Okay, let's move on to other questions that people asked. For instance, Tom Shahr asked us the reason why 410 response codes are showing the same as 404s in GSC. 410 is HTTP gone, right? And 404 is not found. Why are we treating them the same?

[00:11:40] **John Mueller:** [00:11:40] I know why.

[00:11:41] **Gary Illyes:** [00:11:41] Tell me.

[00:11:42] **John Mueller:** [00:11:42] It's because they both start with a "4."

[00:11:44] **Gary Illyes:** [00:11:44] No, that's not it.

[00:11:46] **John Mueller:** [00:11:46] No, it's mostly because the Search Console team decided to do it that way because they wanted to have fewer categories.

[00:11:44] **Gary Illyes:** [00:11:44] Oh.

[00:11:55] **John Mueller:** [00:11:55] It's like for most people, it doesn't matter which one, so Search Console is like, "Oh, we will just pick one and show it. And then, there are people who understand status codes. They look at it and they're like, "Oh, but I returned 404.25674."

[00:12:13] **Gary Illyes:** [00:12:13] What?

[00:12:15] **Martin Splitt:** [00:12:15] What? (laughing)

[00:12:16] **John Mueller:** [00:12:16] You're rounding it up to 404.

[00:12:19] **Martin Splitt:** [00:12:19] What? Okay, but wait, does that mean that just that Google Search Console shows it as the same thing and we treat it differently in the back end?

[00:12:28] **Gary Illyes:** [00:12:28] No.

[00:12:16] **John Mueller:** [00:12:16] Well, treat it differently in the back end is a different question. But Search Console decides to show it that way.

[00:12:36] **Gary Illyes:** [00:12:36] But also in the back end, we don't treat them all that differently. So basically, what Search Console is doing is actually the appropriate thing. And it reflects how we internally in crawling and fetch ingestion. We think about these 404, 410 status codes. I think that's working as intended from our perspective. It is confusing if you think about the standards perspective, but otherwise, from a technical point of view, from our side, or implementation point of view, that is pretty much how we just deal with them.

[00:13:13] **Martin Splitt:** [00:13:13] Okay, that's very good to know.

[00:13:16] **Gary Illyes:** [00:13:16] We have other status codes as well that are treated similarly. For example, the 429 and 503, for example. I think 429 is the-- I might be wrong and it's not that status code, but I think it's 429. Only if we had a search engine we could use to look it up. 429, too many requests. And we treat that similarly to 503. And I think also 500.

[00:13:46] We could, or I would be actually surprised if we didn't treat them the same in Search Console.

[00:13:52] **Martin Splitt:** [00:13:52] Oh.

[00:13:54] **John Mueller:** [00:13:54] Okay, worth trying out like, how many times can you trigger this request before your server tells Google to take a break?

[00:14:01] **Gary Illyes:** [00:14:01] Yeah.

[00:14:02] **Martin Splitt:** [00:14:02] Okay, I don't want to ask all the questions. Does any of you want to pick a question or do you want me to pick the next question?

[00:14:08] **John Mueller:** [00:14:08] The Web3 thing. How would Web3 affect SEO?

[00:14:13] **Gary Illyes:** [00:14:13] Did you see my reply to that?

[00:14:15] **John Mueller:** [00:14:15] Oh, oh, this is specifically about Web3 hostings. My understanding, which might be wrong, because I'm not a crypto brother. (laughs) Sorry, is that a lot of these Web3 addresses are essentially top-level domains that were made up. It's like you have ETH, which I don't know. I don't think that's a country code top-level domain, but it's for one of the types of cryptocurrencies.

[00:14:50] I think someone is selling domains (.eth). It's basically a made up top-level domain, so you can go to their service and look up what it means. But since it's not an actual top-level domain, we can't crawl it. We can't index anything there. Even if you have a browser plugin installed that does something with that made up top-level domain, Google doesn't know what it's trying to do. So, from that point of view, it's basically almost like a-- I don't know, vanity name that people are just using and treating it as a domain name. But it's actually not a real domain name.

[00:15:30] **Gary Ilyes:** [00:15:30] That feels like the Onion network, like the Tor network.

[00:15:33] **Martin Splitt:** [00:15:33] Mm-hm!

[00:15:34] **John Mueller:** [00:15:34] Exactly. It's pretty much the same thing. Like it's a top-level domain.

[00:15:39] **Gary Ilyes:** [00:15:39] Why did we need another one?

[00:15:40] **John Mueller:** [00:15:40] Sorry?

[00:15:41] **Gary Ilyes:** [00:15:41] Why did we need another one?

[00:15:43] **John Mueller:** [00:15:43] Oh, because it has to use cryptocurrencies. Onions are not as cool. But of course, there's a Garlic Cryptocurrency. So, maybe you could use garlic domains instead of onion domains and then we could keep the same theme.

[00:15:58] **Gary Ilyes:** [00:15:58] Okay, I'm, yet again, impressed with the internet. Good, good. So basically, there's no effect on crawl budget, because we just can't crawl it whatsoever.

[00:16:10] **John Mueller:** [00:16:10] It's pretty efficient in that case, right? It's like if you link to this made up top-level domain, it's not going to load your server and saves energy.

[00:16:21] **Gary Ilyes:** [00:16:21] I should probably dig into this, because I don't understand how or why people do it.

[00:16:27] **Martin Splitt:** [00:16:27] Gets your attention, I guess, as well. I haven't seen as much built on Web3 systems so far. I guess if it becomes a big thing, then we'll figure it out and investigate further. We also have a past episode on Web3 where we cover a little bit of the basics and figure out that amongst the three of us in the podcast. We weren't sure which definition to apply because it's a very, very fuzzy definition as well.

[00:16:57] **Gary Ilyes:** [00:16:57] Yeah.

[00:16:58] **Martin Splitt:** [00:16:58] So that was fun.

[00:16:59] **Gary Ilyes:** [00:16:59] Okay, I do the next question.

[00:17:01] **Martin Splitt:** [00:17:01] Okay.

[00:17:03] **Gary Ilyes:** [00:17:03] Baptiste Wallerich is asking, "If you had to rebuild a search engine differently from Google, what would you do differently?" And that reminded me of Steve.

[00:17:12] **Martin Splitt:** [00:17:12] Steve! We haven't talked about Steve in a while, have we?

[00:17:15] **Gary Ilyes:** [00:17:15] Exactly, and what happened to Steve?

[00:17:18] **Martin Splitt:** [00:17:18] Yeah, what happened to Steve?

[00:17:19] **Gary Ilyes:** [00:17:19] Why are we not talking more about Steve?

[00:17:22] **John Mueller:** [00:17:22] Does Steve have a chat engine?

[00:17:24] **Martin Splitt:** [00:17:24] Woof!

[00:17:25] **Gary Illyes:** [00:17:25] This is why we are not talking more about Steve.

[00:17:31] **Martin Splitt:** [00:17:31] Maybe we should launch Steve at some point.

[00:17:34] **John Mueller:** [00:17:34] So what would you do differently to get Steve finished and finalized?

[00:17:39] **Gary Illyes:** [00:17:39] Mm, to get Steve what?

[00:17:41] **John Mueller:** [00:17:41] To get Steve launched.

[00:17:43] **Gary Illyes:** [00:17:43] I would hope that the service that it offers is better than what other search engines can offer. And I would prefer not to rely on aggressive marketing to make it take off, but rather show it to people and then use their own reasoning to make it more popular. Basically, if it's a good product, then I would expect that people start using it.

[00:18:14] **John Mueller:** [00:18:14] Hmm, isn't that a bit naive?

[00:18:17] **Gary Illyes:** [00:18:17] That's my middle name. Thank you very much.

[00:18:19] **John Mueller:** [00:18:19] (laughing) No, I mean it's always tricky, like we always tell people, you should make a good website and then people will link to you.

[00:18:27] **Gary Illyes:** [00:18:27] Oh, and that's naive?

[00:18:28] **John Mueller:** [00:18:28] Well, I mean, does it happen in practice? I don't know. Sometimes, sure. But you also have to do a lot of work to get people to try it out, right?

[00:18:39] **Gary Illyes:** [00:18:39] Yeah, but for example, you are not doing heavy advertising everywhere. And then you basically just annoy people with the heavy advertising that you are doing.

[00:18:51] **Martin Splitt:** [00:18:51] I think it's a really tricky balance, though, because if you don't do enough advertising, then you will just not be seen because there is a lot of advertising in people's face already. But you're absolutely right. If it's too heavy a campaign, then people will be annoyed by it. There used to be like this one, I think it was like a project management tool or something that had so many ads everywhere that pretty much out of spite, I didn't even try it.

[00:19:17] **Gary Illyes:** [00:19:17] Yeah.

[00:19:18] **John Mueller:** [00:19:18] Okay, so you would make a good search engine. I feel this answer is unsatisfactory. We need more details. Like how would you make it better?

[00:19:28] **Gary Illyes:** [00:19:28] Well yeah, I think that's my original question. Like why are we not talking more about Steve and how are we improving different aspects of Steve, because we talked about in an episode about using speed and I think user experience in Steve.

[00:19:44] **Martin Splitt:** [00:19:44] Mm-hm, yup.

[00:19:45] **Gary Illyes:** [00:19:45] What else? I know that it came up in at least in two episodes, but I don't actually remember.

[00:19:50] **Martin Splitt:** [00:19:50] I think we had the basics like some sort of reputation management based on how much it gets quoted and stuff. I think like that was like a basic thing that we wanted as well.

[00:20:01] **Gary Illyes:** [00:20:01] Yeah, we should probably bring it up more, because it's very nice to talk about a search engine that's not real and then explain using that search engine, some concepts. I still think this was a genius idea from John.

[00:20:16] **Martin Splitt:** [00:20:16] Mm-hmm, it was, absolutely. But this question sounds like a lot as a Make-A-Wish foundation kind of thing where I can just like ask for anything I want. And what I would like, for instance, is a search engine that takes into account some sort of social, what do you call that? Social...

[00:20:34] **John Mueller:** [00:20:34] Signals.

[00:20:35] **Martin Splitt:** [00:20:35] Yeah, social signals. For instance, if the search engine knows who I am and who I hang out with and what we collaboratively like, and I can basically say like, "Ooh, I really like this restaurant," and then someone else looks for a restaurant, then they should probably see the restaurant that I like as well, slightly higher up in ranking results than elsewhere, because it's likely that if we hang out a lot together, then we could do that in Steve, I guess. But I don't know how to make sure that people can't game that system. No idea.

[00:21:06] **John Mueller:** [00:21:06] It sounds a lot like Google+. Not like that (laughing)...

[00:21:12] **Martin Splitt:** [00:21:12] Oh my God, I had a feeling you would say that. Oh, come on. No, not like that. Better.

[00:21:18] **Gary Illyes:** [00:21:18] Better than Google+.

[00:21:19] **Martin Splitt:** [00:21:19] More modern.

[00:21:20] **John Mueller:** [00:21:20] I think it's fantastic that some of these ideas kind of return, and everyone's like, "Oh, maybe if we did something like a times two button in the search results." (laughing).

[00:21:35] **Martin Splitt:** [00:21:35] Oh, God. No, what I'm trying to say is like this word of mouth kind of marketing, bringing that into a search engine, I think is an interesting idea. I know that that has been explored in some way in Google+, but we know that better than Google+ is a very low bar.

[00:21:50] **Gary Illyes:** [00:21:50] Yeah, I think one of the problems that we might face with Steve, if we are going down that route is that, well a couple of things. One is that those routes that we have to social platforms are, or can be closed without notice at any time. That's a big issue because, for example, if you start relying on cheerper.com and you are ingesting signals from there, and then overnight they close the fire hose that we have, then we don't have that signal anymore. And then your results will be potentially worse because you don't have that fire hose anymore. That's one problem.

[00:22:35] The other problem is that many of the things that people put up on these social platforms are actually not public. And then if they are not public, I think that they should stay not public. It should not be ingested by Steve and then used for just that one user. So once again, technically, you would only improve for users who are using one specific social platform.

[00:23:07] **Martin Splitt:** [00:23:07] Okay, yeah. But then also there's a problem that social platforms are something that Steve doesn't really necessarily have control over, and we need to trust these social

platforms. Because if we can't trust them to do good curation, then I could just be paid to write good things on places I've never been to or on things I bought or on articles I read...

[00:23:30] **Gary Illyes:** [00:23:30] Oh, you mean like everywhere else on the internet?

[00:23:32] **Martin Splitt:** [00:23:32] Yeah! And I think with the social, that is particularly annoying, because it could be such a nice, strong signal. But if we can't trust it, then obviously it cannot.

[00:23:43] **John Mueller:** [00:23:43] Yeah, that's fair.

[00:23:44] **Martin Splitt:** [00:23:44] So, yeah, mm...

[00:23:45] **John Mueller:** [00:23:45] So a slightly different question. Do you want the search results more dynamic, more colorful? Or do you prefer just the results?

[00:23:55] **Martin Splitt:** [00:23:55] Do you mean by more colorful, like with images and maps and stuff interlinked?

[00:23:59] **John Mueller:** [00:23:59] Yeah!

[00:24:00] **Martin Splitt:** [00:24:00] Oh.

[00:24:01] **John Mueller:** [00:24:01] I mean, from my point of view, it feels like just a personal preference; but you want more color, Martin, less color?

[00:24:08] **Martin Splitt:** [00:24:08] I don't know. I guess it depends on what I'm trying to do. If I'm just trying to look something up real quick, then no. But if it's a topic that is broad and I have no idea, or if I've heard a word and was like, "What is that?" and then I search for it, and then I find out, "Oh, it's a location. It's here." Then having a maps link is really nice. Also, if it's like a point of interest, it might be nice to have images or videos of it so that I'm like, "Oh, okay. Oh, it's interesting." I didn't know it's an archaeological site of importance. Stonehenge. "What's a Stonehenge?" And then you type it in. It's like, "Oh, it's okay. Ah, okay, It's there. It's a place. It's a location. Here are images. Here are videos. Here's a Wikipedia article. That mix is nice.

[00:24:58] **Gary Illyes:** [00:24:58] Yeah, I think that's all right. Basically, it depends on the context, whether you should get more colorful results or not. I think there needs to be a balance as well, because you can certainly overwhelm people with too colorful results. Like, for example, if you are searching for something of great import, then if you start showing images, videos, maps, ratings, whatever, and then the "10 blue links," then suddenly it will just look cluttered, I guess. That's not necessarily something that most people like.

[00:25:36] **Martin Splitt:** [00:25:36] So there needs to be a balance. As with everything, there needs to be a balance.

[00:25:41] All right. Those were some of the questions that you got asked or the things that people would like us to talk more about. I think that has been very interesting, and I agree we should bring back Steve, and we should probably look into some of the other things as well a little more. If you're interested in these things that we talked about today, there are other podcast episodes. We also have a YouTube channel with lots of content, and we have a blog on developers.google.com/search along with our documentation. There's a lot more that you can dive into. And yeah, thank you so much, John. Thank you so much, Gary, for being here and having this little chat with me.

[00:26:20] And with that, that's it for this episode. In the next episode, we are going to talk about indexing problems and people who say "My site isn't indexed!" and what they can do about things that are not going so well.

[00:26:34] 🎵 (music) 🎵

[00:26:38] **Martin Splitt:** [00:26:38] We've been having fun with these podcast episodes, and we hope that you, the listener, have found them both entertaining and insightful too. Feel free to drop us a note on Twitter at @googlesearchc or chat with us at one of the next upcoming events that we go to if you have any thoughts. And of course, don't forget to like and subscribe. Thank you so much and goodbye!

[00:27:00] **John Mueller:** [00:27:00] Bye!

[00:27:01] **Martin Splitt:** [00:27:01] Arrivederci.

[00:27:03] 🎵 (outro music) 🎵