

## Search Off the Record - 59th episode

[00:00:00] 🎵 [music] 🎵

[00:00:10] **John Mueller:** [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 John. And I'm joined today by Lizzi and Gary from the Search Relations team of which I'm also a part of.

[00:00:28] One of the questions I often see is around getting staging sites removed, so it reminded me that maybe launching a website might be an interesting topic to talk about. I mean, every website has to launch somehow, right? So, what do you think, Lizzi and Gary, is this a useful topic?

[00:00:48] **Gary Illyes:** [00:00:48] What?

[00:00:49] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:00:49] Waiting for you, you speak first.

[00:00:51] **Gary Illyes:** [00:00:51] Oh, I do the first, okay.

[00:00:52] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:00:52] [laughs] You go. [laughs]

[00:00:54] **Gary Illyes:** [00:00:54] Okay. Well, have you considered maybe twisting the topic into how not to remove a staging site at all, as in: I don't let it get indexed in the first place.

[00:01:09] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:01:09] Oh, avoid doing it yet.

[00:01:11] **Gary Illyes:** [00:01:11] Yeah.

[00:01:12] **John Mueller:** [00:01:12] So don't launch.

[00:01:13] **Gary Illyes:** [00:01:13] No. Launch, just don't get your staging site in search.

[00:01:17] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:01:17] Don't launch the staging site.

[00:01:18] **Gary Illyes:** [00:01:18] Yes.

[00:01:19] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:01:17] You launched the wrong one.

[00:01:20] **John Mueller:** [00:01:20] So, don't try things out. Just hit the launch button and close your eyes.

[00:01:25] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:01:25] [laughs] Launch directly into production. Okay. [laughs] No staging.

[00:01:29] **Gary Illyes:** [00:01:29] You can do that.

[00:01:30] **John Mueller:** [00:01:30] I can do that.

[00:01:31] **Gary Illyes:** [00:01:31] I mean, we did that.

[00:01:32] **John Mueller:** [00:01:32] I don't know. It always feels, like, site launches can be a bit scary for... especially for newer businesses, because it's like the first time you stick your head out, so I don't know. What do you think? Is this a big thing from an SEO point of view?

[00:01:49] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:01:49] I think this is interesting compared to our last episode about migrations, because what is the difference between a site launch and migration? Like, our site launches, like, how would we define a site launch? Is it brand-new, you never had anything before or is anything new, like, I guess you could say that a rebrand or a migration is a launch. But when we talk about site launches, are we talking about new, never existed before things?

[00:02:14] **John Mueller:** [00:02:14] I think you could say that they're kind of related, but it's always... I don't know. How do you separate that out? And I think we talked about migrations a bit already. So, might make sense to talk more about the, like, starting part and, I mean, as a business online, like, if you're listening to this podcast, my guess is you already have a website. So it's not that's like your first time launching something. But maybe you're launching, like, a feature or a specific part of a website or something additional in addition to the existing website. So you already kind of have some idea what is happening.

[00:02:58] Because I think if you've never worked on a website before and it's like, oh, how do I launch a website? You probably click that launch button accidentally, and that it's live. And then it's like, well, that was easy.

[00:03:12] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:03:12] Oh, so launching sites has become too easy.

[00:03:15] **John Mueller:** [00:03:15] Well, I think, if you're using a common hosting platform, it's basically click "save" and then it's live, right?

[00:03:22] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:03:22] Yeah.

[00:03:23] **John Mueller:** [00:03:23] It's like launched.

[00:03:24] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:03:24] Yeah.

[00:03:25] **John Mueller:** [00:03:25] And it's only after you've noticed that maybe you shouldn't have done that so quickly that you realize, "Maybe I should think about this before clicking that button."

[00:03:34] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:03:34] Who are the people having the problem with the staging servers stuff? Because if you're, like, using Squarespace or Wix or something like that is that, that's taken care of by them, right?

[00:03:43] **John Mueller:** [00:03:43] I guess. I haven't actually used them.

[00:03:47] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:03:47] Oh.

[00:03:47] **John Mueller:** [00:03:47] So I'm, I don't know, have you?

[00:03:50] **Gary Illyes:** [00:03:50] I imagine if you are using a custom CMS or in-house CMS, then you will run into this problem, but you can also run into this problem if you have technically two domain names or two host names and then on one, you are just testing the design and what not. And then you poured that over to your main site, eventually, and you could do that on Squarespace and other platforms as well. I could on wordpress.com.

[00:04:19] And these issues are the ones that we commonly saw in the forums and in... on Twitter where people are like, "Hey, I was testing my new setup here and it got indexed, what now?"

[00:04:23] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:04:23] Oh. Like, from a custom CMS thing? Or from, like, Squarespace?

[00:04:39] **Gary Illyes:** [00:04:39] Oh, maybe we should just not single out Squarespace, because...

[00:04:42] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:04:42] Okay. Sorry, sorry, you sound like we're promoting them. [laughs]

[00:04:46] **Gary Illyes:** [00:04:46] But, no, but...

[00:04:47] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:04:47] Google Sites. [inaudible]

[00:04:48] **Gary Illyes:** [00:04:48] But, no, but... It's not that, it's just, it's, it can happen on any CMS, like, regardless if it's Squarespace or Google Sites or whatever.

[00:04:48] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:04:48] Sure.

[00:04:56] **Gary Illyes:** [00:04:56] Because technically, you can get two host names like two accounts, perhaps, or whatever the setup is on these CMS's. And then test on one and then launch on the other one. And you can certainly get accidentally the staging one, the testing one indexed.

[00:05:16] **John Mueller:** [00:05:16] And I guess you'd have this setup, if you're working with multiple people together on...

[00:05:22] **Gary Illyes:** [00:05:22] Yeah.

[00:05:22] **John Mueller:** [00:05:22] ... a website. Like, if you're the only person working on your website, and if you're happy, you click the button. But if you have multiple people and you want to get feedback from them, you have to show it to them somehow and it could be that you, like, gather around the one big monitor in the office. But more likely, people will look at it on their own, or want to test it on, I don't know, a phone and a laptop and try things out.

[00:05:47] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:05:47] Is it better to do a staging site or password protection for that?

[00:05:51] **John Mueller:** [00:05:51] Yes.

[00:05:52] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:05:52] Yes. Okay.

[00:05:53] **John Mueller:** [00:05:53] Yes.

[00:05:53] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:05:53] [laughs]

[00:05:53] **John Mueller:** [00:05:53] I'm so helpful.

[00:05:55] **Gary Illyes:** [00:05:55] I mean, those can be the same thing, right?

[00:05:58] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:05:58] Yes. But I guess, so from our perspective, it doesn't matter.

[00:06:02] **John Mueller:** [00:06:02] I mean, we've talked about staging sites before and it's more that you need to somehow prevent search engines from being able to index that content. And using password protection is a great way to do that because it also prevents random other people from the internet of taking a look.

[00:06:19] Which maybe you care about, maybe you don't care about. Like, if you're launching some fancy new feature in Google or in other places as, like, you probably want to keep that to yourself until it's ready.

[00:06:31] **Gary Illyes:** [00:06:31] Really?

[00:06:33] **John Mueller:** [00:06:33] Yeah. I...

[00:06:34] **Gary Illyes:** [00:06:34] It never happened to us that someone...

[00:06:36] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:06:36] You don't want to leak on purpose?

[00:06:38] **John Mueller:** [00:06:38] No.

[00:06:39] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:06:39] No?

[00:06:39] **John Mueller:** [00:06:39] I mean, well, at least within Google, maybe it's better not to. I remember fun stories from back in the Google+ days because Google+ was, of course, the best thing at Google ever.

[00:06:52] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:06:52] What happened? What happened within the Google+ days?

[00:06:56] **John Mueller:** [00:06:56] We would try to launch new features. And, of course, it was mentioned in a JavaScript somewhere or in some HTML files somewhere. And there were smart people out there, looking at stuff, and they noticed that ahead of time. So it's like, I don't know, all of these subtle ways of accidentally leaking things.

[00:07:17] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:07:17] I think when I first were in the project, this is our team project like Search, I don't know. One of the first things that I published was structured data, pilot partner, I don't know, protected thing. And we published the document, the page itself was blocked, it was just for the partners that were supposed to see it. But the name of the feature, it was exposed in the table of contents on the side and that thing didn't have an allow list to block it. So people saw that and they were like, oh, what's that thing? The name of that feature and there's no page and the link doesn't work.

[00:07:51] **John Mueller:** [00:07:51] Yeah.

[00:07:51] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:07:51] So even if you don't have the page, you know, you think you're doing the right thing with the page. Sometimes it can get exposed in other ways. But...

[00:07:58] **John Mueller:** [00:07:58] Big company problems. I think that's really hard to avoid, but we haven't had that in a long time. I don't know you, you two launched the status dashboard. How did you do that? Were you hiding it away to prevent Rogers and Co. journalists from finding it?

[00:08:15] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:08:15] No. [laughs]

[00:08:16] **Gary Illyes:** [00:08:16] No, we did the absolute nothing. Like quite literally nothing.

[00:08:21] **John Mueller:** [00:08:21] What? What do you mean, absolute nothing?

[00:08:23] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:08:23] Just like, publish it and like, no one noticed for like months until we announced it. [laughs]

[00:08:29] **John Mueller:** [00:08:29] Wow.

[00:08:30] **Gary Illyes:** [00:08:30] So it's like, if you are not linking to something on the internet than it's very hard to notice it, or you're not mentioning it anywhere, and that's what we were doing. Not mentioning it anywhere, not linking to it, not having it in random JavaScript files. And by the way, this is one more reason not to do JavaScript.

[00:08:47] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:08:47] [laughs]

[00:08:48] **John Mueller:** [00:08:48] [laughs]

[00:08:49] **Gary Illyes:** [00:08:49] And it just worked, it was risky, I would say.

[00:08:53] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:08:53] There's no sitemap for that site, so it didn't get submitted anywhere. And we claimed it in a search console. [laughs] We claimed it and it didn't get indexed, so no other way for people to find it.

[00:09:05] **John Mueller:** [00:09:05] Okay.

[00:09:06] **Gary Illyes:** [00:09:06] Wait. What's the relation between...

[00:09:07] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:09:07] The relation was that we're monitoring it and it still didn't get found from, like, some other way. Like, it didn't get indexed, even though it's a live site floating around on the internet and, like, we didn't link to it but maybe, I don't know, the domain we're sitting on had a sitemap that submitted it and then Google found out about it. Still did not find out about it.

[00:09:23] **Gary Illyes:** [00:09:23] Right, but technically the internet is kind of like the deep space.

[00:09:28] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:09:28] Yeah.

[00:09:23] **Gary Illyes:** [00:09:23] Basically, you can go light years in a straight line and you are not going to hit literally anything. And the same goes for unlinked resources on the internet.

[00:09:39] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:09:39] Uhu.

[00:09:40] **Gary Illyes:** [00:09:40] Basically, if you don't mention it, then it's fairly impossible to find it, like, from Google's perspective. Like, we are looking at domain records for discovery but that also just means that we would discover the domain name. Not the subdomains. Well, depending how the DNS is set up.

[00:10:05] **John Mueller:** [00:10:05] Oh.

[00:10:05] **Gary Illyes:** [00:10:05] So for example if you are broadcasting in the DNS records the CNAMEs that you set up for... the CNAMEs are a special record for... in DNS which allows you to map custom authority bits to IP addresses. So you could do subdomain.example.com maps to example.com and then the server would know the authority bit is subdomain.example.com, then serve one specific resource on the server and you can set up your DNS to advertise these CNAME records and then we might be able to discover them.

[00:10:48] But if the DNS is set up, I would say properly, then these are not advertised. So basically, you just get the A record, which is the main record for a domain name, basically maps the domain name to the server's IP address. And that's how our domain names typically are set up. Basically, just the A record, when you are asking for the domain record, not all the other subdomains as well.

[00:10:05] **John Mueller:** [00:10:05] So we're kind of lucky we didn't use searchstatusdashboard.google.com and instead use a a long obscure subdomain.

[00:11:24] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:11:24] Wait, isn't this a subdomain though?

[00:11:26] **John Mueller:** [00:11:26] If you use, like, one word or dashes in the domain name or something?

[00:10:05] **Gary Illyes:** [00:10:05] I don't think that would have mattered, because we just don't advertise our subdomains in general.

[00:11:37] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:11:37] Right.

[00:11:37] **John Mueller:** [00:11:37] Yeah. But if we use a domain name, instead.

[00:11:40] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:11:40] You mean, if we went and got like, status.com or something like some other brand new domain?

[00:11:46] **Gary Illyes:** [00:11:46] Yeah. If we launched with a brand new domain, then yeah. That would have probably leaked it.

[00:11:52] **John Mueller:** [00:11:52] So, did you think looking back that was risky? Like, should we have blocked it somehow, or you're kind of the mind, like, if someone finds it, then we'll talk about it. It's no big deal.

[00:12:04] **Gary Illyes:** [00:12:04] Honestly, it was risky in the sense that we wouldn't have been able to control the launch the way we wanted, but there was no risk otherwise. So if it's leaked, then it's leaked and that's it, basically. Then we have the blog posts ready and we just publish it and that's it. So I don't think we cared all that much, if it's leaked or not. So we didn't go to lengths to protect it from people's eyes, I guess.

[00:12:34] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:12:34] We also, like, initially wanted to launch when there was an issue and so to have it not be, I don't know, extra steps to talk about it, I think, helps. So we were able to use the tool, like, right away.

[00:12:50] **Gary Illyes:** [00:12:50] It would have been really helpful if we did have an incident.

[00:12:53] **John Mueller:** [00:12:53] No, no.

[00:12:54] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:12:54] Yeah, yeah. [laughs]

[00:12:55] **John Mueller:** [00:12:55] No.

[00:12:57] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:12:57] It's not helpful to have incidents?

[00:13:00] **John Mueller:** [00:13:00] No, it's like, a boring status dashboard is the best status dashboard.

[00:13:05] **Gary Illyes:** [00:13:05] I don't know. I'm kind of looking forward to...

[00:13:07] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:13:07] I know you are.

[00:13:09] **John Mueller:** [00:13:09] Oh my gosh.

[00:13:10] **Gary Illyes:** [00:13:10] Maybe I should break something.

[00:13:11] **John Mueller:** [00:13:11] I guess this is similar with a lot of small businesses where they're when they're starting out, they put their website online, like, if people find it, fine. If they don't find it, fine. And at some point, they'll promote it and then they hope it actually gets found, right?

[00:13:27] It's not like, if you're opening, I don't know, a new cupcake store downtown, like, if that domain or that website gets leaked ahead of time, it's not terrible, right?

[00:13:41] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:13:41] I guess it would be annoying if they're trying to like order cupcakes from you and you don't have, like, cupcakes made.

[00:13:47] **John Mueller:** [00:13:47] Oh. Okay. Yeah.

[00:13:48] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:13:48] But I guess you would deal with that problem as it's coming and that people are really excited about this cupcake place.

[00:13:54] **John Mueller:** [00:13:54] I guess we could have put a noindex on the pages. Or was it just like from a technical point of view and not possible?

[00:14:00] **Gary Illyes:** [00:14:00] From our perspective that was not possible. Like, we could have blocked it with robots.txt but then that was like, why? And noindex, that was just not possible because the site or the CMS we are using is extremely static as in pretty much unmodifiable. Like, what you see on the dashboard, that is the same thing that you see on all other dashboards as well. And the reason you see the same things is because we can't modify the dashboard. And the reason behind that is that we need to have the simplest version of a functioning site, so the status dashboard doesn't break.

[00:14:42] **John Mueller:** [00:14:42] Okay. No SEO tricks.

[00:14:45] **Gary Illyes:** [00:14:45] Yeah. There's nothing that you can do that would alter the site in any shape or form, well, beyond the incidents themselves. So if I launch the new site and I wanted to not show up in search at all, then I would probably just go with robots.txt because that's super simple.

[00:15:05] And for the... I know that people are afraid of robots.txt for preventing indexing, but for the vast majority of the cases, it actually works because we can't possibly know what's in the pages because we can't crawl them, right? So we can't make an indexing decision about the URL. Like, at that point, we are not talking about the content.

[00:15:26] We can't make an indexing decision about the URL. So we would need some external hints about what's in the URL. Which means we need a considerable amount of links with proper anchor text from where we can assume the importance of that page on the internet. And if you don't have that, then why would we index it?

[00:15:48] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:13:48] So you... with your new site, you wouldn't be concerned about, I guess, how else would other people find it? That's kind of saying that search is like the only way that people would find your thing.

[00:15:57] **Gary Ilyes:** [00:15:57] If I don't advertise it, yeah.

[00:15:58] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:15:58] Yeah. Okay.

[00:15:59] **John Mueller:** [00:15:59] Yeah. I guess as soon as you promote it, then it's...

[00:16:03] **Gary Ilyes:** [00:16:03] Right.

[00:16:03] **John Mueller:** [00:16:03] Like, you would drop the robots.txt and let it get indexed and do whatever else to make a big party.

[00:16:09] **Gary Ilyes:** [00:16:09] Yeah. I would probably drop the robots.txt and then go to search console and Bing webmaster tools and other search engines tools and submit for indexing, the homepage, probably, and maybe a few more pages that I consider important and then just wait.

[00:16:28] **John Mueller:** [00:16:28] Okay.

[00:16:28] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:16:28] Did you do that for the status dashboard?

[00:16:32] **Gary Ilyes:** [00:16:32] No, because we didn't need to. And also, I didn't care.

[00:16:37] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:16:37] [laughs]

[00:16:40] **John Mueller:** [00:16:40] I mean, it's... I looked at a lot of new companies and businesses from the last years trying to find some examples of site launches that I could say, like, "Oh look, look at these people doing their site launch thing." And it seems like most of the more well-known businesses, even the online based ones, they're kind of like the kind of sites where I was like, well they were launched, they were promoted, but they're not launching it for SEO purposes.

[00:17:07] Like they have some cool functionality that they are trying to sell and then it's not like an SEO-focused launch, it's more a business-focused launch. Kind of aligns, I think, with the status dashboard as well where it's not like we need to have this found in search right away, but rather we need to get this functionality out and promote the functionality.

[00:17:31] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:17:31] Uhu.

[00:17:31] **Gary Ilyes:** [00:17:31] Yeah, noindex, probably that would be the second choice, because then you don't have to mess with, like, a separate file. But then you have to mess with every single page that you need to prevent from indexing. For most CMS's, that's doable, like WordPress. I imagine that can do it, because there you can tinker with everything. I don't actually know other CMS's.

[00:17:55] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:17:55] Squarespace.

[00:17:56] **Gary Ilyes:** [00:17:56] Yeah. But I don't know the... like, what can you do...

[00:17:58] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:17:58] Oh, know them. Like, know them in the functionality perspective.

[00:18:02] **Gary Illyes:** [00:18:02] Yeah, the functionality of the admin interface is... so, if you put a noindex on the pages then it will absolutely not get indexed. Especially if you don't mock up the head element, somehow.

[00:18:14] **John Mueller:** [00:18:14] Cool.

[00:18:15] **Gary Illyes:** [00:18:15] And then, if you need a staging site, then I would probably do the same thing. The robots.txt or noindex.

[00:18:20] **John Mueller:** [00:18:20] Or passwords. [whispering] Passwords.

[00:18:22] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:18:22] [whispering] Passwords. [chuckles]

[00:18:23] **Gary Illyes:** [00:18:23] Or passwords, yeah. Well, we also saw IP blocks.

[00:18:27] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:18:27] Oh.

[00:18:28] **John Mueller:** [00:18:28] Okay.

[00:18:28] **Gary Illyes:** [00:18:28] Or actually IP allow lists.

[00:18:31] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:18:31] Interesting.

[00:18:32] **Gary Illyes:** [00:18:32] So basically, if you matched a particular IP then you could access the staging site, otherwise not.

[00:18:39] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:18:39] So really lockdown?

[00:18:41] **Gary Illyes:** [00:18:41] Yeah, that's it. It's probably similar to our infrastructure as well, like, we could do that on certain things. I think that's more complicated perhaps, and you might need someone with some server management knowledge to make that happen. Plus, I don't know how many people pay for static IP addresses for their home network anymore.

[00:19:05] **John Mueller:** [00:19:05] I just remember the static IP addresses stuff in setting up servers where I would only allow my IP address to have access to the server's backend. And then of course my IP address changed and it was like--

[00:19:16] **Gary Illyes:** [00:19:16] Yep.

[00:19:17] **John Mueller:** [00:19:17] Wow, well good-bye server. [laughs]

[00:19:18] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:19:18] [laughs]

[00:19:19] **Gary Illyes:** [00:19:19] Yep. I did literally the same thing, and it took me like a week to figure out what happened.

[00:19:25] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:19:25] [laughs]

[00:19:25] **John Mueller:** [00:19:25] [laughs] Oh my God. What if you have a ton of content that you want to launch at the same time? Like, I don't know, a bunch of products, or you have a knowledge base where you have a thousand articles in there and you just want to launch...

[00:19:39] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:19:39] Thousand.

[00:19:40] **John Mueller:** [00:19:40] Yeah, it's like you've worked a really long time and now you're like, we will make a big splash. Do you launch it all at once? Or do you do it step-by-step? What would you recommend?

[00:19:52] **Gary Illyes:** [00:19:52] I guess it really depends on the number.

[00:19:54] **John Mueller:** [00:19:54] 7.000.

[00:19:56] **Gary Illyes:** [00:19:56] Seven... I like that number. I imagine if your server is well resourced, then it probably doesn't matter all that much. Meaning that if the server has resources to handle extra crawling and buy extra probably thousandfold more, then it shouldn't be a problem to launch 7.000 articles at once. But you can also bring your server to its knees quite easily with that.

[00:20:28] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:20:28] That also just seems like a lot QA.

[00:20:31] **John Mueller:** [00:20:31] Oh, to test out ahead of time.

[00:20:33] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:20:33] I don't know, yeah. Just to make sure it's all, like, rolling it out, like, from that perspective of, like, yep, everything looks good. Check, check, check, check, check. Just a lot of pages.

[00:20:41] **Gary Illyes:** [00:20:41] Yeah.

[00:20:42] **John Mueller:** [00:20:42] I mean, it could also be like, you're putting a business online. Like, you've been, you've had an offline store for a long time. You've kind of scanned all your products already, so you want to put your shop online, kind of thing. But it sounds like a couple thousand pages is like, well, like Google will be busy for a bit, but it's not going to be a problem. And probably if you have millions of pages then that sounds suspicious.

[00:21:10] **Gary Illyes:** [00:21:10] Oh, then you're screwed.

[00:21:11] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:21:11] This is crazy. [laughs]

[00:21:12] **John Mueller:** [00:21:12] [laughs]

[00:21:13] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:21:13] No, no.

[00:21:14] **Gary Illyes:** [00:21:14] So we also had this weird thinking in the forums a while back. Okay, I will admit that I haven't been to the forums for years, but...

[00:21:23] **John Mueller:** [00:21:23] [laughs]

[00:21:24] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:21:24] Oh, no. [laughs]

[00:21:25] **Gary Illyes:** [00:21:25] But when we were frequenting the forums more, then every now and then you saw these threads where spammyguy.com came there and like suddenly, we want to index one million pages and what's happening, because, like, Google just wouldn't take them. Like, why?

[00:21:45] Then the answer would be like, well, there are two reasons. One is that you have one million pages and we can't crawl from your server without putting it on its knees. Maybe a thousand URLs per day. Second, your site just sucks.

[00:22:01] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:22:01] Where'd you get all those URLs? Like, this is a lot. Like, is that...

[00:22:04] **Gary Ilyes:** [00:22:04] Oh, come on!

[00:22:05] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:22:05] ... also suspicious, a million? Like, is it suspicious behavior to, like, publish that many at once or no?

[00:22:11] **Gary Ilyes:** [00:22:11] I don't think that that would be a big problem...

[00:22:14] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:22:14] Hm.

[00:22:14] **Gary Ilyes:** [00:22:14] ... but the quality of the content. That's certainly...

[00:22:19] **John Mueller:** [00:22:19] Yeah.

[00:22:19] **Gary Ilyes:** [00:22:19] ...something that will affect indexing. And also generating like one million URLs with unique, I'm air quoting here...

[00:22:27] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:22:27] Yeah.

[00:22:27] **Gary Ilyes:** [00:22:27] ...unique content will, is not that hard. It wasn't hard 20 years ago. It's especially not hard nowadays, with all the large language models floating around.

[00:22:39] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:22:39] Right.

[00:22:39] **John Mueller:** [00:22:39] Okay.

[00:22:39] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:22:39] But for it to be good, I guess.

[00:22:41] **John Mueller:** [00:22:41] That's hard.

[00:22:42] **Gary Ilyes:** [00:22:42] Yeah.

[00:22:43] **John Mueller:** [00:22:43] Yeah. The other question I sometimes get is, should people use kind of, like, a free host name that they get with their hosting provider?

[00:22:52] **Gary Ilyes:** [00:22:52] Nope.

[00:22:53] **John Mueller:** [00:22:53] Like spammyguy.blogger.com, or should they get a domain name?

[00:22:57] **Gary Ilyes:** [00:22:57] [laughs] It depends. [laughs]

[00:22:59] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:22:59] Oh, no. [laughs]

[00:23:02] **Gary Ilyes:** [00:23:02] I mean, it depends on your business needs, right? Like, do you want to create your own brandy thingy or you are fine with carrying a Blogspot or WordPress brand with your site.

[00:23:14] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:23:14] Yeah.

[00:23:15] **Gary Illyes:** [00:23:15] Like, usually, if I go to, for example, Etsy, then the one thing that I will remember is that the thing that I found was on etsy.com. To me, that's not that helpful. And probably not that helpful for the business as well because I can't remember them. Alas, I'm old. So, my memory is not that good as it used to be. but maybe young people can actually remember those things but I cannot. If it were something like spammyguy.com, then I would remember that because then I have no other choice than to remember the actual domain name.

[00:23:49] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:23:49] Hm.

[00:23:50] **John Mueller:** [00:23:50] So something branded, especially, I guess, if you're trying to be present for the long term.

[00:23:56] **Gary Illyes:** [00:23:56] Right. But it also depends on what you are doing with that domain name because for example, if you are just, like, it will be a throwaway site as in, like, you have a promotion and it will last, I don't know, two weeks or two months or whatever. And then you launch it for that promotion and then you take it down, like, in that case, it doesn't matter.

[00:24:16] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:24:16] Because no one's paying attention to the domain name, or you don't need to build that recognition, I guess, for that, whatever that was, for two weeks.

[00:24:23] **Gary Illyes:** [00:23:23] Yeah, it's more likely that you are linking to it. Then that you are relying on people remembering and coming back to the site.

[00:24:31] **John Mueller:** [00:24:31] Okay, cool.

[00:24:32] **Gary Illyes:** [00:23:32] Why are we talking about marketing now?

[00:24:34] **John Mueller:** [00:24:34] Yeah.

[00:24:34] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:24:34] I don't know. Well, it's all connected, right? [laughs]

[00:24:37] **John Mueller:** [00:24:37] So Google cares about brands, you're saying.

[00:24:40] **Gary Illyes:** [00:23:40] Oh, God.

[00:24:41] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:24:41] [laughs] [inaudible].

[00:24:41] **John Mueller:** [00:24:41] [laughs]

[00:24:42] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:24:42] [inaudible]

[00:24:41] **John Mueller:** [00:24:41] I'm so sorry.

[00:24:44] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:24:44] I mean, what it's like, if you want to show up for your brand name then, like, you should choose a good brand name and not like a name that is closely related to another brand by one letter.

[00:24:55] **John Mueller:** [00:24:55] Yeah.

[00:24:55] **Gary Ilyes:** [00:23:55] Well, it depends what you want to do.

[00:24:57] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:24:57] It depends. Oh, my God. [laughs]

[00:24:59] **John Mueller:** [00:24:59] Maybe you want to rank for "it depends"

[00:25:01] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:25:01] .com? It depe... Hey, that's trademarked actually, I looked it up. Somebody owns the trademark for "it depends".

[00:25:07] **John Mueller:** [00:25:07] Wow. Okay.

[00:25:08] **Gary Ilyes:** [00:25:08] How did they get trademark for that?

[00:25:10] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:25:10] I don't know.

[00:25:11] **John Mueller:** [00:25:11] Well, I guess they'll get lots of traffic now. [laughs]

[00:25:13] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:25:13] [laughs]

[00:25:15] **Gary Ilyes:** [00:25:15] You're welcome. Cool.

[00:25:16] **John Mueller:** [00:25:16] Well, I thought this was fun and useful. Thanks for joining, you two.

[00:25:22] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:25:22] You're welcome.

[00:25:23] ♪ [music] ♪

[00:25:27] **John Mueller:** [00:25:27] We've been having fun with these podcast episodes. I hope you, the listener, have found them both entertaining and insightful, too. Feel free to drop us a note on Twitter @googlesearchc, or chat with us at one of the next events that we go to, if you have any thoughts. And of course don't forget to like and subscribe. Thank you, folks, for listening and goodbye!

[00:25:50] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:25:50] Bye. Bye, Gary!

[00:25:51] **Gary Ilyes:** [00:25:51] Oh, bye, bye, bye!

[00:25:53] ♪ [music ends] ♪