

## Search Off the Record - 48th episode

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[00:00:11] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:00:11] Hello, 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 maybe having some fun along the way. My name is Lizzi, and today, I'm joined by John, who's also on the Search Relations team. In today's episode, I thought that we could talk about images. Also, I didn't let you say "hello."

[00:00:33] **John Mueller:** [00:00:33] Hi Lizzi!

[00:00:34] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:00:34] Hey! So just to kick us off, I know that you've been doing a lot with DALL-E in the Craiyon site, and all these kinds of places to get fun images. And I was wondering what would you say to using DALL-E to generate images for our site, Google Search Central, if we just started piping that in to refresh our images across the whole site-- what would you say to that?

[00:01:02] **John Mueller:** [00:01:02] That would be an exciting move. I think the tricky part would be if you're showing screenshots of specific things, and you're piping that into some machine-art-generated thing, then maybe you don't necessarily get actual screenshots.

[00:01:20] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:01:20] But it could be, like, you know, impression art. What does the robot think that the search result should look like.

[00:01:27] **John Mueller:** [00:01:27] So kind of like "Starry Night" instead of stars for reviews.

[00:01:31] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:01:31] Yes. I mean, we could see. Like what does DALL-E think a recipe-rich results should look like.

[00:01:38] **John Mueller:** [00:01:38] Okay.

[00:01:39] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:01:39] It could go into an interesting direction. Okay, so it sounds like you're bought in. Would you do this?

[00:01:45] **John Mueller:** [00:01:45] I would try it out. I mean...

[00:01:48] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:01:48] You don't want to tell me no?

[00:01:51] **John Mueller:** [00:01:51] I'm not going to say "no." I have no idea what it'd look like. Maybe it'll look really cool. Or maybe for Halloween, we could do that.

[00:02:00] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:02:00] Oh, like a spooky Halloween-- what does structured data look like in Halloween mode?

[00:02:06] **John Mueller:** [00:02:06] Yeah.

[00:02:07] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:02:07] I did do one test, where I pasted what we had as an alt description into DALL-E to see what would DALL-E spit out. Like is it... I don't know, that's a nice way to think about it. But like, "Oh, is this descriptive alt text enough such that DALL-E would generate an accurate depiction of whatever we intended this to be?" No?

[00:02:27] **John Mueller:** [00:02:27] No.

[00:02:30] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:02:30] It was like a recipe Google search results, and it was using Google colors, like our logo, in different shapes and things, but no actual search result, no screenshot, no nothing. And I don't know, maybe DALL-E doesn't know about search results.

[00:02:48] **John Mueller:** [00:02:48] I think one of the tricky parts with all of these tools is it builds off a known library of images. And if there are not enough images reflected there, then whatever you ask is kind of very vague. So I tried a lot of SEO terms once, and most of the time when it would recognize that this is something like marketing SEO-oriented, it would show me a graph of, like, some bar charts with a line graph drawing up, and it's like, "This is SEO." It's like, "Well, it's kind of like... it's..."

[00:03:20] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:03:20] That's like your opinion, man.

[00:03:21] **John Mueller:** [00:03:21] Yeah. Exactly.

[00:03:26] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:03:26] Okay. So maybe we experiment more with this. Maybe DALL-E just needs to know more about SEO and then they could start doing the work for us.

[00:03:34] **John Mueller:** [00:03:34] Maybe we have to build our own model. It's like take the whole site and put it into one of these systems. And then in the future, we can just have it generate new screenshots for us.

[00:03:44] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:03:44] That's true. Well, I guess in reality... I'm bringing this up because I'm looking for ways to make the work go faster I guess, or maybe be more exciting. We've got a lot of images on our site, Google Search Central, which we oftentimes call "Onesie." And not all of the images have alt text, and we've not done all that we can there.

[00:04:08] Another angle, perhaps, is to consider would we ever use stock photography on Onesie? What would you say to something like that?

[00:04:15] **John Mueller:** [00:04:15] So stock photography to avoid having to, I don't know, make a screenshot?

[00:04:21] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:04:21] Well, it could be for fun. Sometimes we have like, "Oh, we want a fun cosmetic image for a blog post or something like that."

[00:04:29] **John Mueller:** [00:04:29] I mean...

[00:04:30] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:04:30] You would also say, "Okay?"

[00:04:32] **John Mueller:** [00:04:32] Sure.

[00:04:33] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:04:33] Or would there would be downsides to using stock photography?

[00:04:36] **John Mueller:** [00:04:36] I think if you wanted to use them as a decorative element on a page, it's perfectly fine. It adds a little bit flavor, a little bit more color to the post, or to whatever content we have there. So if it's a, I don't know, Halloween themed article, then, adding, I don't know, stock photography of a spider-- I guess spider, you wouldn't want to have them too realistic. That might be triggering for some people.

[00:05:02] But some stock photography that's Halloween-themed, and not too scary for our site, I guess-- that would be perfectly fine.

[00:05:13] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:05:13] But it's Halloween, John. You could be on theme, no.

[00:05:18] **John Mueller:** [00:05:18] We're Google. It's like, we can't just put super-scary stuff on our documentation.

[00:05:24] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:05:24] Oh, okay.

[00:05:25] **John Mueller:** [00:05:25] But I think the aspect there is it's stock photography. And if people are searching for Halloween photos, it's unlikely that we would show up in the search results for that. We would have that image, but probably, I don't know, 20, 30 other sites have the same image, and they all have a license for it, and showing it is fine.

[00:05:47] And perhaps even the original stock photography site has that image in the search results. And if you're searching for something like a Halloween image, then you probably want to go with the original site. It's not that Google's documentation should rank for that query.

[00:06:02] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:06:02] That's a good point. I guess maybe if it was Googlebot in a Halloween costume, or something, maybe we would have something there. But if it's like a, I don't know, generic stock photography person typing on a computer, that kind of query, we wouldn't necessarily want our computer... I don't know... maybe we have like an image to showcase Search Console.

[00:06:26] Like you use Search Console on a computer, here is the graph and everything, and it's on a laptop, but it's not necessarily that we want to show for stock photography type queries, I guess.

[00:06:38] **John Mueller:** [00:06:38] Yeah. There's stock photography of people using Search Console, actually.

[00:06:43] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:06:43] Oh, really? Is this a whole, like, niche market?

[00:06:45] **John Mueller:** [00:06:45] Yeah. Someone created a bunch of photos with a laptop open, with Search Console open. They're typing stuff into the laptop with the Search Console in the background. So we could have topical stock photography as well. I guess...

[00:07:00] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:07:00] Theoretically.

[00:07:01] **John Mueller:** [00:07:01] I guess the other aspect is also you wouldn't rank for this in Image Search, but it doesn't count against it either. So you have other good images on the same page or on the site... or if you're talking about Web Search, that's not going to harm your site. It's more, it's like, well, it's decorative, but it's not what your site is about. Therefore, you won't rank for that specific stock photography. But everything else will be fine. It's not that we say, "Oh, this is a generic site. We shouldn't show it in Search."

[00:07:28] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:07:28] Alright. So we've got lots of images on our site already. And we're not necessarily looking to go get stock photography, but what would be, I guess, one of the first things that we should focus on in terms of, like, trying to get better with image SEO or like traffic from Google images. What would be the first place to start?

[00:07:48] **John Mueller:** [00:07:48] I think from my side, what I would recommend as a strategic starting point is to think about what do you think people would search for in a visual way to come to your website. I think that aspect is always something that you should be thinking about when you're kind of working through these SEO things. But it's always tempting to also just like dive into the details and say like, "Oh, I need to do these five things. I will do these five things. And I don't want to plan." Like that's too much overhead.

[00:08:28] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:08:28] Yeah. It's difficult to think in that space. But you're so right, because a lot of these checklist-type things, it's like, "Oh, here's ten things you can do to improve on Image Search." And like first one is write all text in like, just start putting these tags, or this kind of thing, get images. But actually, the step for that is like think about, "Is this even a goal that is applicable for my site?"

[00:08:54] **John Mueller:** [00:08:54] No.

[00:08:55] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:08:55] Do I need to be focusing on this, or does it even make sense to focus on this? And would this be strategic in the grand picture of all things that we could possibly be doing on our site? That kind of thing. But...

[00:09:09] **John Mueller:** [00:09:09] Who wants to think about strategy? Yeah. Let's look at the technical stuff.

[00:09:13] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:09:13] Alright, so the technical stuff. Alright. So the first thing would be, yes, consider, I've decided, yes, images make sense for my site. I think that people should be able to find us in Image Search if they're looking for some visual-type query. Like maybe it's for pictures of search result features or something like that. They might be discovering our documentation through that angle. Would step one be alt text?

[00:09:41] **John Mueller:** [00:09:41] Sure.

[00:09:42] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:09:42] So we've already got images. And maybe not all of them. I mean, this is true, not all of the images have alt text. But there's so many images. How would you go about? Would you just see a top-down systematic-- here's a list of all the images that I've found that are missing alt text. Let's add it just one by one? Or would there be more strategy there in terms of, like, where do you even begin? Like it could be kind of overwhelming looking at...

[00:10:10] I mean, I'm speaking from my own experience, I guess. There's so many images. Where we have images on old blog posts. Like decorative images. It could be, I guess, one way to look at it is pages that have the most traffic already. Like people are interested in this page, so let's start with those pages or the pages we think that should be improved, and perhaps that makes sense. Or they are lending themselves to being found with a visual query and start optimizing those ones. But even then, there's still a long list of

potentials.

[00:10:50] **John Mueller:** [00:10:50] Yeah. I mean, on the one hand, you could think about your Image Search goals. Kind of that strategy that we're trying to avoid talking about.

[00:11:02] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:11:02] Oh, we just keep coming back to it.

[00:11:04] **John Mueller:** [00:11:04] And kind of focus on what you want to have found in Image Search and make sure that that's really set up well. The other aspect is to focus more on what is already being found, maybe, in Web Search. Kind of the pages that get the most impressions or that get the most clicks from Search Console.

[00:11:23] And then kind of cross that with the alt text that you already have. There's some crawlers that you can run across your website where you can pull out all of the alt text that you currently have, put them in a spreadsheet, and then filter for empty ones, and kind of cross that with your list of impressions or clicks from Search Console. And then, from there, determine these are the most visible pieces of content, and they don't have alt text. Maybe we should focus on those first.

[00:11:53] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:11:53] That's a good idea. What if you've got alt text, but you're not sure if it's good? It could be improved in terms of being descriptive, or it's describing the image, but not necessarily in the best way? Because once you start to sit down and actually write the alt text, you discover that you could say a lot of things about, like, "Oh, it's a Search result," or you're describing like something that's happening. Maybe it's a diagram of how Search works, like something that's describing a concept.

[00:12:25] Or it's a picture of an event or something like that. Do you approach it from describing what's in there? Or are there other strategies that we could apply for improving the words that we're using for a given image?

[00:12:40] **John Mueller:** [00:12:40] So I think you have to watch out for accessibility. I don't know. Like everything around accessibility. So that might be something to check out with someone who is a little bit more informed on accessibility-side. Like how alt text should be chosen.

[00:12:57] From an SEO point of view, my recommendation is always to provide context for the image as well in the alt text. So if you have a picture of a beach, don't just be like, "Oh, this is a photo of a beach." But rather like, "This is the beach before the chemical spill happened." And...

[00:13:14] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:13:14] Oh.

[00:13:15] **John Mueller:** [00:13:15] Because it's very different context if someone is searching for a beach for a holiday, it's like, "Oh, I want to see a beautiful beach. I'll go there on vacation." And if you notice, well actually, this is before the chemical spill happened, then it's like, "Well, maybe like that would lend itself to different kinds of Search queries."

[00:13:34] Because ultimately, when you're talking about Image Search, it's not that people want an image, but rather they want information which is attached to that image. They want kind of to understand a specific topic to find some information. And that additional context is something that you can provide in the alt text. And that's something that they might be searching for. And if they're searching for it, then make it easy for them to find that.

[00:13:59] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:13:59] That's true. And putting context around the image, too, because you don't necessarily need to put all of it in the alt text. It could be the paragraph that's introducing the beach. And it may have more information about where it happened, like what beach are we at, and what year was it, and all this stuff. And using that real estate around the image, because you don't necessarily want like a huge paragraph as the alt text either.

[00:14:24] **John Mueller:** [00:14:24] Yeah.

[00:14:25] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:14:25] Right? So how do you know which text should go where, but providing context, I think, is always good to introduce the thing for screen readers as well, because it's reading like top-down.

[00:14:36] **John Mueller:** [00:14:36] Yeah.

[00:14:38] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:14:38] So if there's some text before it to prep you, like, "Alright, like this is..." I don't know... "background about what was happening before the oil spill." And now, it's the beach pre-oil spill, more information, and then the beach post... no, during the oil spill. And then the clean-up activity. I don't know. That kind of thing.

[00:14:59] **John Mueller:** [00:14:59] Something along those lines. If you're looking at the search documentation, and you have a sample of a screenshot with a recipe result, then you could provide some additional context, I guess, in the alt text, where you say like, "This is a recipe result with these five fields."

[00:15:17] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:15:17] Yes. And, I mean that's... Even the way that you've phrased the sentence there. Like, "This is a recipe rich result." That probably isn't the best alt text because it's a full sentence. It starts with words that are not related to the thing. And perhaps people, like also using screen reader would just skip through it. So one of the best practices is not to start every image with a screenshot of, a screenshot of, because then, it just becomes repetitive.

[00:15:46] We already are aware that it's an image. You don't need to say, "It's an image of" and then the thing. Just launch in with whatever the description is. And it also doesn't necessarily need to be a full sentence, I think.

[00:15:56] **John Mueller:** [00:15:56] Yeah.

[00:15:57] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:15:57] It could be just a descriptive phrase. It doesn't need to be a full thought, I think.

[00:16:02] **John Mueller:** [00:16:02] Yeah, yeah. I think that makes a lot of sense. I mean, the tricky part is probably balancing the two sides. The kind of accessibility aspect. What people want from alt text for accessibility. And then the SEO aspect where you would do some things like... traditionally, you would do some things that might be slightly different. Like you would list a bunch of synonyms, for example.

[00:16:27] Like, "Oh, this a beach at the ocean with waves." And that's the kind of stuff where sometimes it makes sense to do that in the alt text for SEO reasons, but probably not for accessibility reasons. And finding that balance is something that's sometimes a bit tricky. So it's good to watch out for that. But if you're just adding alt text for the first time, then sometimes, even any alt text is better than nothing.

[00:16:56] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:16:56] Like nothing. At least starting with something, but then, what can you do to even improve on top of that. And that's definitely something that... I think I struggle with more, like the more you get into decorative images, or things that are not... I don't know... the search result thing is fairly straightforward.

[00:17:13] But once it gets into things like, "Oh, this is a concept," or like, "It's decorative," so it doesn't... There's some places that say, "Oh, you don't need to put alt text in a decorative image." Like if it's purely there just for aesthetics, then it's better to just leave the alt text empty.

[00:17:31] But on the other hand, why would I have put it there? There was a reason to put it there. So shouldn't we have something that fills that gap for the experience of someone who is not seeing the image? Shouldn't we have a replacement thing? It was serving a purpose. We put it there for a reason, like what would be an alternate experience to still get that information across, I guess?

[00:17:51] So for like Googlebot, like doing stuff. Sometimes we have these I guess what would be categorized as a decorative image. Where it's like Googlebot is exploring the web, or something. Or like it's conveying some kind of idea, and should the alt text focus on the idea? Or like, "Oh, it's Googlebot with some friends."

[00:18:13] Or it's Googlebot... like putting spam into a computer, and then, being happy at the end. Like describing what is happening in there, so that you still sort of get the idea of what was meant to be there is, I guess, one of the things that... yeah, it confuses me.

[00:18:30] **John Mueller:** [00:18:30] Yeah. I mean from a personal point of view, I would definitely add alt text to these kind of images, because they're kind of unique and special.

It's not... I don't know... a floral background, or something like that. It's actually something where people spent a lot of time creating that image. And it's also something that people might want to find in the search results. So if you're searching for Googlebot, like we spend so much time creating all of these images, it will be nice to be able to be found for them as well.

[00:19:00] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:19:00] Exactly. The level of care in which we spend on the visual asset, we should also put the same level of energy into the words that describe that asset as well. Which I think is great. Another category of images is like the functional thing, which sometimes could be a button. Like it's a graphic that also functions as something.

[00:19:22] So should the alt text tell me what's about to happen? If you click this, then it's going to take you here? It could be like an image of something, that then also functions as a button. And do you describe the function, or like also it was, I don't know... like an arrow picture. And also, does it matter for SEO?

[00:19:42] **John Mueller:** [00:19:42] Yeah. I think...

[00:19:43] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:19:43] It could be like a logo.

[00:19:44] **John Mueller:** [00:19:44] For accessibility, that probably makes sense, to just do something around that. But for SEO, people are not going to search for the checkout button, or something like that.

[00:19:54] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:19:54] No. But maybe they would for the logo, or something like the logo. When you click it, it takes you to the homepage, or something. But it's also, "Oh, it's a logo." So do you say, "This is the logo for Google Search Central."

[00:20:08] **John Mueller:** [00:20:08] Sure.

[00:20:09] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:20:09] Or like what would be descriptive text. It's Googlebot in the logo, but is the thing that's most important to know about the image the fact that it's a logo? Or what the logo looks like? I guess from that angle, people are probably looking for the logo.

[00:20:23] **John Mueller:** [00:20:23] Yeah.

[00:20:25] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:20:25] Like what is the logo for X company, maybe?

[00:20:28] **John Mueller:** [00:20:28] Yeah. I mean it goes back to kind of that strategy that we're trying to avoid. What do you want to be found for?

[00:20:34] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:20:36] Yeah, but that's the most important question, I guess, because then it sorts of steers... I can get carried away with all these rabbit holes, so it sort of, I don't know, prioritizes what are the things that we should be thinking of, because you don't necessarily need to write all the things for these things, I guess.

[00:20:54] **John Mueller:** [00:20:54] Yeah.

[00:20:55] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:20:55] So another part where you could focus your attention, I guess, would be the filename. So words for the name of the image itself. How important is access? Like an area where I have not invested much effort, but I don't know, should we? What if I went and just changed all of the images on our site to have a different filename? To be more descriptive or, I don't know... put more words there too, like in addition to alt text?

[00:21:25] **John Mueller:** [00:21:25] We do recommend doing something with the filenames in our image guidelines. So having descriptive filenames is good, but I don't think you would see a significant change if you already do the other things around images, like the alt texts, the text surrounding the image. Those are really, really strong signals.

[00:21:45] And the filename itself is often... it's kind of from a technical point of view. This is what we called it, but it doesn't provide any real unique information, usually. Of course, if you don't do the alt text, or if you don't have good surrounding text, then, of course, the filename might be the only place where you mention what this image is about. But if you do the rest, then usually the filenames are okay.

[00:22:12] And the other thing with filenames, especially for images, is when we crawl images, we tend not to crawl them as often, because usually, they don't change a lot.

[00:22:23] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:22:23] Oh.

[00:22:24] **John Mueller:** [00:22:24] So that means if you change all of the filenames across the website,

then it's going to take a lot of time for Google's systems to see, "Oh, well, this is a new image, and we have to kind of look at it at some point." And to understand kind of that connection between the old image and the new one, that's something that's just going to take a very long time.

[00:22:46] So if you changed all of them at once, my guess is... I don't know, over a period of a couple of months at least, it'll be kind of annoying in Image Search in that we kind of drop the old ones first because they're no longer mentioned on the page and pick up the new ones in a really slow way. So that's something where I would try to only do that if it's really, really critical.

[00:23:12] Like when we did the transition from Blogger to the new set up for the blog posts. Of course, the images had to be moved as well. And at that point, it was like, "Sure." It was like, "Change the filename, move the image to a different URL." But otherwise, once they're moved on the site, and you're just like tweaking things, and it was like, "Oh, I have a new system for image filenames." I don't think that would make it better.

[00:23:39] That probably would have minimal effect, maybe no visible effect at all.

[00:23:44] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:23:44] For the amount of effort, yeah.

[00:23:46] **John Mueller:** [00:23:46] And everything drops out for a couple of months. It's no fun.

[00:23:50] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:23:50] And room for human error too. To like miss a broken link. If you need to go swap out, where are these images embedded and stuff. You could cause more problems with just a mistake of forgetting to update various places where those images were used. I can imagine things going wrong.

[00:24:09] So you mentioned the Blogger migration. You did that for the site. But I don't recall you updating the filenames. Do you remember if you updated them? Or you just ported them... I didn't think we did that.

[00:24:23] **John Mueller:** [00:24:23] I think we just ported them over. Yeah.

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

[00:24:25] **John Mueller:** [00:24:25] And...

[00:24:26] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:24:26] Too much effort.

[00:24:28] **John Mueller:** [00:24:28] Yeah. Previously, it was also... the images were hosted in various places. So sometimes on people's personal accounts and then it was a total mess. So porting them over was more work about like, "Well, where do we actually find these images?" and less about like, "Oh, we need to optimize the image filename."

[00:24:50] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:24:50] Yeah, just finding them and then porting them over to the new place and making sure we didn't break the blog post that is referencing that thing was already enough of a hurdle. But yeah, I do recall that like trying to track down... like you're doing this historical sleuthing. What did we even mean here? And can we go back and look in the way back machine? What did this blog post like back in the day?

[00:25:15] Also when people were embedding presentations and then hosting them on their personal site. How do we even go back-- and we were able to rescue some of this stuff, which is crazy.

[00:25:23] **John Mueller:** [00:25:23] Yeah.

[00:25:24] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:25:24] But, yeah, I think if you were to then start editing files, we would have given up. We were already like, "This is a lot to just go back and get the images, let alone rename it."

[00:25:35] **John Mueller:** [00:25:35] Yeah. I mean, there's also image sitemap files, which people sometimes use for that. Personally, I don't think this would change much, in our case.

[00:25:46] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:25:46] They wouldn't help with the crawling aspect, or speeding things up. Just, "Hey, we did a change." It's still going to take a long time.

[00:25:54] **John Mueller:** [00:25:54] Yeah, yeah.

[00:25:55] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:25:55] Yeah. Okay. Well, another type of image that we have on our site is cartoons. So we do have a couple of blog posts that are just... it's a series, it's a web comic series that I haven't gone through to add alt text yet because I'm not sure what should be in there. And this series is also is a Korean web toon, so we would need to then work with our Korean team to figure out what would we even put in there for text.

[00:26:24] But those pages, there's not much text around them. The bulk of the posts is the illustrations. It's a series of image, each panel, without much text. But I can imagine if we were wanting to optimize those posts for Image Search, we would need to put more text for like, "What text would we start to put there?"

[00:26:46] **John Mueller:** [00:26:46] I mean I would primarily look at accessibility there.

[00:26:50] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:26:50] Yeah.

[00:26:51] **John Mueller:** [00:26:51] And it might be that you look at these pages and you say, "Well, if someone can't look at these images, there's really nothing we can tell them there." Maybe we can put the script somewhere on the page as well to kind of make it possible for someone to at least understand what the joke is, or if there's a joke or some information on there.

[00:27:10] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:27:10] Yeah, because it's dialogue between characters. And would we put that as the alt text? For each panel, there's like 30 panels. And each one is like, oh, character is saying this and then another character responding... So what you're suggesting like as a transcript, that's sort of an interesting idea. Like a way to consume the information in a text-based way?

[00:27:31] **John Mueller:** [00:27:31] Yeah.

[00:27:32] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:27:32] And for Google to also know more information about like, "What is this page?" It's got a bunch of images on it.

[00:27:37] **John Mueller:** [00:27:37] Yeah. I think from an SEO point of view, I would focus less on the transcript, and more on the context of the whole page. And probably that's already given. There'll be a title, I don't know, that says "webtoon about this topic" in Korean. And that's what people will be searching for. It's not that they would be searching for a line from something that someone was saying in one of the panels.

[00:28:04] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:28:04] Right. Unless it's maybe some... maybe they're looking for like, "Oh, this specific episode from a Batman comic," or something that's well-known, and you wanted to find... you remembered the line or something. But I can't imagine someone having memorized our Search Console web comic. I know maybe somebody is looking for that.

[00:28:22] **John Mueller:** [00:28:22] Maybe.

[00:28:23] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:28:23] Maybe if we put it there, then they can find it, perhaps.

[00:28:28] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:28:28] Well, and another angle that we haven't gone to yet is aspect ratio. It's like providing multiple versions of an image. I don't think we have that yet on our site, but I can imagine that would be something we might consider for optimizing for various Search features. I know in our documentation, we sometimes ask for that.

[00:28:47] If you have multiple sizes, or multiple different croppings of things, then you can tell us which one is which. So maybe we would crop something differently for our blog posts. Is there a best practice for telling Google about multiple copies of something, like maybe rel=canonical?

[00:29:07] **John Mueller:** [00:29:07] You don't have to.

[00:29:09] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:29:09] You don't have to. Oh, okay, alright.

[00:29:10] **John Mueller:** [00:29:10] That I think is something that sometimes comes up from other people as well. For webpages, if you have multiple versions of the same page, like a mobile-friendly version and a desktop version, you would use a rel=canonical, and say these are the same thing. For images, you don't have to do that. Our systems try to recognize when the image is the same thing. And having multiple images indexed for one thing is perfectly fine.

[00:29:36] So if you're searching for a large image on a specific topic, then we should be able to find that. If they're searching for a small image and you've provided a small image, then you should be able to find that as well. So for images, the rel=canonical is essentially irrelevant. It's really more for web pages. And I don't think we even support it for images.

[00:29:58] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:29:58] Oh, okay. There's no way to actually even do that. People are asking about this, but functionally, it's not even possible?

[00:30:04] **John Mueller:** [00:30:04] Yeah. You don't even need to.

[00:30:05] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:30:05] You don't need to. Just add canonical as the alt text. Yeah, I mean I do think we're doing this in a couple of places. Sometimes we add a social image for a blog post in addition to the image that's on the page that we've cropped for sharing. There's an aspect ratio where it's like, "Oh, does it cut off if there's text on it?" or I don't know... some part that looks a little bit weird if we crop it smaller for our homepage, or social sharing, that kind of thing, then we provide too. Is it enough that the images are referenced on the same page?

[00:30:37] **John Mueller:** [00:30:37] Yeah.

[00:30:38] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:30:38] Google knows, like, "Ah, okay, these are related to this piece of content." That's it?

[00:30:42] **John Mueller:** [00:30:42] Yeah.

[00:30:44] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:30:44] No other connecting up we need to do?

[00:30:45] **John Mueller:** [00:30:45] I mean our systems look at the image and try to find visually similar images, and they kind of connect it like that. There's nothing special you need to do. And even if we don't recognize that it's the same image, like if one is really long, and the other one is really tall, they're separate images. They can be indexed separately. That's perfectly fine.

[00:31:04] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:31:04] Got to wrap it up. I mean, the future of images. There are so many things that I think are happening in terms of trends that images are going into. I guess maybe it's more of a design trend, like dark friendly mode type things, or cropping things with rounded corners, circular images, or just square, like the trends that we see in UI design I guess, then impact images. Also 3D.

[00:31:320] **John Mueller:** [00:31:30] 3D!

[00:31:31] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:31:31] Yeah. How do you see the future of images and SEO and what we might need to think about in experimental land?

[00:31:39] **John Mueller:** [00:31:39] I don't know. My feeling is images are pretty stable for the most part. Some of the things that change are more almost like attributes around the image. Like the dark mode thing. That's something where maybe at some point we would need to be able to figure out, "Well, this is the dark mode version of this other image that we already know about."

[00:32:02] But even that is kind of tricky. If you're in dark mode, and you're searching on Google images, you won't just want to see dark mode images, or do you just want to see the same images as you usually would. I don't know.

[00:32:16] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:32:16] I don't know. Or favicons, like dark friendly favicons versus providing multiple options about we'll use this one in this context versus use this other one, because I think that it like looks aesthetically better, I guess. Maybe it's more of a brand preference.

[00:32:32] **John Mueller:** [00:32:32] I guess. Yeah. I don't know. And 3D, I have no idea. There are also moving images, but we index those as videos.

[00:32:41] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:32:41] Oh, jifs?

[00:32:42] **John Mueller:** [00:32:42] Jifs!

[00:32:43] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:32:43] No. Gifs. The WebMP stuff or the WebP, that kind of thing?

[00:32:52] **John Mueller:** [00:32:52] Yeah.

[00:32:54] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:32:54] I guess we'll figure out how we will handle the 3D image land, if we ever come to that in the future. Well, that's it for this episode. In the next episode, we'll be chatting more about SEO things we've done on our site, Onesie.

[00:33:10] ♪ [music] ♪

[00:33:14] **Lizzi Sassman:** [00:33:14] We've been having fun with this podcast. And I hope you, the listener, have found it 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 we go to if you have any thoughts. And of course, don't forget to like and subscribe. Thank you and goodbye!

[00:33:32] **John Mueller:** [00:33:32] Goodbye!

[00:33:33] ♪ [music] ♪