

## Search Off the Record - 61st 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.

[00:00:20] 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. Hi, John. Hi, Gary.

[00:00:28] **John Mueller:** [00:00:28] Hi, John. Hi, Gary.

[00:00:30] **Gary Illyes:** [00:00:30] Hi, John. Hi, Gary.

[00:00:32] **Martin Splitt:** [00:00:32] Can't you guys just be normal for once? Okay, whatever.

[00:00:33] **John Mueller:** [00:00:33] [laughs]

[00:00:36] **Gary Illyes:** [00:00:36] [chuckles]

[00:00:36] **Martin Splitt:** [00:00:36] Before we get into more weirdness...

[00:00:38] **Gary Illyes:** [00:00:38] Excuse me.

[00:00:39] **Martin Splitt:** [00:00:39] No, I won't.

[00:00:40] **Gary Illyes:** [00:00:40] My mother had me tested.

[00:00:42] **Martin Splitt:** [00:00:42] That was a mistake, apparently. You know of destructive testing? That clearly has happened.

[00:00:47] **Gary Illyes:** [00:00:47] [chuckles] Wow.

[00:00:51] **Martin Splitt:** [00:00:51] Where have I been? Oh, yeah. Now, in medias res, I actually will have you here because I want to talk to you about sites or pages not being indexed, and that's something that we keep getting questions and requests for, so I think we should talk about what to do when your site or when pages of your site are not indexed.

[00:01:13] **John Mueller:** [00:01:13] That sounds great. I love talking about indexation.

[00:01:16] **Martin Splitt:** [00:01:16] Who doesn't? Is it indexation? Is it indexing? Is it both?

[00:01:19] **John Mueller:** [00:01:19] Indexation. Definitely indexation. Right? Right?

[00:01:21] **Martin Splitt:** [00:01:21] Indexation.

[00:01:22] **Gary Illyes:** [00:01:22] It is indexation.

[00:01:23] **Martin Splitt:** [00:01:23] It's [speaking in German] <i>indexierung</i>. Yeah.

[00:01:25] **Gary Illyes:** [00:01:25] Okay, that's way too German.

[00:01:27] **Martin Splitt:** [00:01:27] I'm sorry. What are [the] things that you should do first when you think that your site or pages of your site aren't indexed? Also, what do you guys actually do when someone comes to you saying, "My site's not indexed?" How do you find out if that's true? Because I find that oftentimes it's not.

[00:01:49] **John Mueller:** [00:01:49] I think that's a big problem. Partially because it's sometimes hard to understand what the difference is between the different parts of Search. It's easy for someone to come and say, "My site is not being indexed," and actually is just not ranking well.

[00:02:05] And kind of understanding, "Well, oh, you mean this is a ranking issue, or is this actually an indexing issue?" That kind of a difference, I think, is really important and sometimes hard for people to know ahead of time.

[00:02:20] **Martin Splitt:** [00:02:20] Ah, so with "parts of Search," you mean like crawling, indexing-- or indexation, if you want-- and then ranking and serving? Is ranking and serving separate? Is that the same thing?

[00:02:31] **Gary Illyes:** [00:02:31] Well, it's technically the same thing.

[00:02:32] **Martin Splitt:** [00:02:32] Right, but how do I find out what it might be? Where do I go and look?

[00:02:37] **Gary Illyes:** [00:02:37] I would really check out Search Console because it has very useful functions that allow you exactly to check that out.

[00:02:46] Of course, you still have to understand the differences between crawling and indexing and serving, but it does give you a better idea in a simplified way of what's actually happening with your individual pages as well as your whole site.

[00:03:02] Basically, you can see how many of your pages are indexed and where we picked them up, for example, and that can be super helpful.

[00:03:10] Of course, there are also other ways that are less accurate, but I would strongly recommend Webmaster Tools Search Console because... [chuckles]

[00:03:20] **Martin Splitt:** [00:03:20] [chortles] Let it go.

[00:03:24] **Gary Illyes:** [00:03:24] I can't let it go. I cannot. Sorry. I'm not sorry.

[00:03:29] **Martin Splitt:** [00:03:29] [chuckles]

[00:03:30] **Gary Illyes:** [00:03:30] Yeah, as I said, there are other ways, but I would strongly recommend Search Console because that is the way.

[00:03:36] **John Mueller:** [00:03:36] Cool.

[00:03:37] **Martin Splitt:** [00:03:37] Okay.

[00:03:38] **John Mueller:** [00:03:38] So you would check in the indexation reportation?

[00:03:40] **Gary Illyes:** [00:03:40] Sure.

[00:03:42] **Martin Splitt:** [00:03:42] What would be an indication in the indexation reportation that a page is not crawled versus not indexed versus just not ranking?

[00:03:54] **Gary Illyes:** [00:03:54] Okay, now you threw us in the blue water.

[00:03:57] **Martin Splitt:** [00:03:57] I love doing that.

[00:03:59] **Gary Illyes:** [00:03:59] I haven't used Search Console for a very long time. [chuckles]

[00:04:01] **Martin Splitt:** [00:04:01] [laughs]

[00:04:04] **Gary Illyes:** [00:04:04] When I use Search Console, I usually use the URL Inspection tool.

[00:04:07] **Martin Splitt:** [00:04:07] Mm-hmm.

[00:04:09] **Gary Illyes:** [00:04:09] For my own sites, I don't particularly care for the other. Not "care for." I don't care about the other reports because they are just not useful for me. Most of my sites are test sites that I just want to see how Google or Bing or whatever will behave when I feed it something.

[00:04:28] For that, the URL Inspection tool is the one that I actually need because I can submit to indexing and then hope for the best. or I can look it up live-- well, sort of live-- whether something is indexed or not, like an individual URL is indexed or not.

[00:04:45] So yeah, that's the one feature in Search Console that I actually know and can talk about. The other things like the indexation and reportation is not on my list of fortes.

[00:04:52] **Martin Splitt:** [00:04:52] Mm-hmm. Okay, we're sticking with that forever now.

[00:05:02] **John Mueller:** [00:05:02] Okay. I was just making fun of indexation and reportation. Sorry. [laughs] Sorry to throw you under the bus.

[00:05:12] There is a report in Search Console for page indexing where you can see how many of your pages are being indexed and the reasons why they're not indexed. That would probably be a good place to start if you want an overview.

[00:05:27] **Martin Splitt:** [00:05:27] Mm-hmm.

[00:05:27] **John Mueller:** [00:05:27] Usually, I tell people to look at the individual pages in the Inspection tool, like Gary mentioned then because looking at a site overall is sometimes misleading compared to looking at individual cases.

[00:05:42] **Martin Splitt:** [00:05:42] Right. But if I have a site that is pretty new, and I see none of my pages are being indexed, and that might mean that there's something wrong on a site level rather than on a page level, right?

[00:05:56] **John Mueller:** [00:05:56] Yeah.

[00:05:56] **Martin Splitt:** [00:05:56] Also, does it mean that something is wrong in general if pages are not indexed?

[00:06:00] **John Mueller:** [00:06:00] I think it's a unique situation if nothing is indexed from a site.

[00:06:06] That's something where usually there are other kinds of problems that are associated with that because the most common case is, really, you have a website, and a lot of the content is indexed, and some of the content is not indexed. We look at that and say, "Well, that's the way it is. Meh."

[00:06:23] **Gary Ilyes:** [00:06:23] Yeah.

[00:06:24] **Martin Splitt:** [00:06:24] Yeah, not all pages are good, right?

[00:06:26] **John Mueller:** [00:06:26] Yeah, if nothing is indexed, then usually that points at other kinds of problems.

[00:06:33] **Gary Ilyes:** [00:06:33] For new sites, especially the home page, should be very simple to get indexed. If that doesn't get indexed, then that definitely points to some bigger problem.

[00:06:47] **Martin Splitt:** [00:06:47] Okay.

[00:06:48] **Gary Ilyes:** [00:06:48] Our systems are built such that homepages, like `<i>domain.com/,</i>` will get crawled pretty much first and get indexed first.

[00:07:01] If we don't-- don't even crawl it, which you can check from Search Console or your server logs-- then that definitely points to a bigger problem.

[00:07:13] **Martin Splitt:** [00:07:13] Okay, we keep saying different problems and bigger problems. What kind of problems could it be?

[00:07:19] **Gary Ilyes:** [00:07:19] There can be many, right? [chuckles]

[00:07:20] **Martin Splitt:** [00:07:20] I mean, okay, so there could be a technical problem, right?

[00:07:22] **John Mueller:** [00:07:22] [chuckles]

[00:07:24] **Gary Ilyes:** [00:07:24] Well, yeah.

[00:07:24] **Martin Splitt:** [00:07:24] If my server is not reachable from Googlebot hosts, then sure, that is a technical problem, I guess. Right?

[00:07:30] **John Mueller:** [00:07:30] That could be a reason why nothing is indexed. Sure, yeah.

[00:07:34] **Martin Splitt:** [00:07:34] Yeah. `<i>Robots.txt</i>` could be a problem if I misuse that, I guess.

[00:07:38] **Gary Ilyes:** [00:07:38] Yes.

[00:07:39] **John Mueller:** [00:07:39] Could be.

[00:07:40] **Martin Splitt:** [00:07:40] But is there other things that are nontechnical? Or is it just all some sort of technical glitch that I just need to fix?

[00:07:46] **Gary Ilyes:** [00:07:46] For the home page specifically... Let's talk about a home page because that's a more special place on your site.

[00:07:50] **Martin Splitt:** [00:07:50] Okay. I'll bite.

[00:07:56] **Gary Ilyes:** [00:07:56] We prefer for crawling and indexing, especially when it's a new site, so if we don't get your home page crawled and indexed, then definitely that points to a technical problem, especially if that's the first page that we should crawl because we can't possibly have an aspect of the quality of your content.

[00:08:12] **Martin Splitt:** [00:08:12] Mm-hmm.

[00:08:19] **Gary Ilyes:** [00:08:19] Once you have a few pages indexed, and we can assert the quality of the content and how the internet reacts, basically, to your site's presence on the internet, on the web, then we can make better assumptions about how the rest of the content is.

[00:08:36] But when you start off with a new site, a brand new site, and we can't even get the home page indexed, that's pretty much always a technical issue.

[00:08:49] **Martin Splitt:** [00:08:49] Okay, interesting.

[00:08:49] **John Mueller:** [00:08:49] Pretty much. I have, I think, two or maybe three cases where it wouldn't be, just to be contrarian.

[00:08:55] **Gary Ilyes:** [00:08:55] Okay. Oh. Okay.

[00:08:57] **Martin Splitt:** [00:08:57] [chuckles]

[00:09:01] **John Mueller:** [00:09:01] One is if you do... [chortles]

[00:09:02] **Gary Ilyes:** [00:09:02] Wait, wait, wait. Wait, wait! I want to guess. Can we guess?

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

[00:09:07] **Gary Ilyes:** [00:09:07] Martin, you start. [chuckles]

[00:09:09] **Martin Splitt:** [00:09:09] I start. If it's not a technical problem, then it's, for some reason, an empty page or just a page with an image or something, and we're like, "Yeah, nah?"

[00:09:19] **Gary Ilyes:** [00:09:19] Well, but that's still a technical problem, right? Because you have to...

[00:09:21] **Martin Splitt:** [00:09:21] No, not really because then it's a content problem. Technically, it's all correct, and you just don't have any content that we are interested in picking up, no?

[00:09:29] **Gary Ilyes:** [00:09:29] Okay. Okay, yeah.

[00:09:31] **John Mueller:** [00:09:31] Fine, fine, but maybe we would index that anyway.

[00:09:35] **Martin Splitt:** [00:09:35] Okay. Would we?

[00:09:36] **John Mueller:** [00:09:36] Probably with a bad title and no snippet.

[00:09:41] **Martin Splitt:** [00:09:41] [laughs] Okay, so it's not that. Okay, fine.

[00:09:44] **Gary Ilyes:** [00:09:44] We might even put up one of those, "Oh, the snippet is unavailable" things.

[00:09:48] **Martin Splitt:** [00:09:48] Hmm.

[00:09:48] **Gary Ilyes:** [00:09:48] Maybe it's blocked by `<i>robots.txt</i>` when it's actually not.

[00:09:51] **Martin Splitt:** [00:09:51] Hm.

[00:09:51] **Gary Ilyes:** [00:09:51] Okay?

[00:09:52] **John Mueller:** [00:09:52] Okay, second guess.

[00:09:53] **Gary Ilyes:** [00:09:53] I'm second guessing here.

[00:09:55] **Martin Splitt:** [00:09:55] I have an idea. Oh, no, that's a technical problem.

[00:09:57] **Gary Ilyes:** [00:09:57] Say it, say it. Say it because I have no idea.

[00:09:59] **Martin Splitt:** [00:09:59] No, no, no, it's a technical problem.

[00:10:00] **John Mueller:** [00:10:00] [chuckles]

[00:10:01] **Gary Ilyes:** [00:10:01] Oh, it's not linked.

[00:10:02] **John Mueller:** [00:10:02] Not linked.

[00:10:03] **Gary Ilyes:** [00:10:03] The site. We have no way to discover the URL of the home page.

[00:10:08] **John Mueller:** [00:10:08] Okay.

[00:10:09] **Martin Splitt:** [00:10:09] Isn't that a technical problem?

[00:10:10] **John Mueller:** [00:10:10] That's...

[00:10:12] **Gary Ilyes:** [00:10:12] Well, it's also a technical problem, yeah.

[00:10:13] **John Mueller:** [00:10:13] It's kind of technical, but yeah. Okay. More?

[00:10:17] **Gary Ilyes:** [00:10:17] All right.

[00:10:17] **Martin Splitt:** [00:10:17] I was about to say "canonicalization," but that's a technical problem, so was it that? No?

[00:10:21] **John Mueller:** [00:10:21] Okay. No.

[00:10:23] **Martin Splitt:** [00:10:23] Oh, damn it.

[00:10:24] **John Mueller:** [00:10:24] Well, I also thought about that because that sometimes also pops up. The things I was thinking of is you could submit your whole site for removal if you don't like it.

[00:10:35] **Gary Ilyes:** [00:10:35] Oh.

[00:10:36] **John Mueller:** [00:10:36] We see people do that all the time. It's like, "Oh, I tried to fix my site by removing it." You're like...

[00:10:43] **Gary Illyes:** [00:10:43] What?

[00:10:44] **John Mueller:** [00:10:44] Maybe That's why nothing is indexed. [chuckles]

[00:10:47] **Martin Splitt:** [00:10:47] That could be a quality improvement sometimes. [chuckles]

[00:10:49] **John Mueller:** [00:10:49] [laughs] The other one that I was thinking of is maybe you previously hosted so much spam on that site that the web spam team said, "This is not good. We're taking the whole thing out."

[00:11:03] **Martin Splitt:** [00:11:03] Okay, so what was it?

[00:11:05] **John Mueller:** [00:11:05] What do you mean "what was it?"

[00:11:07] **Martin Splitt:** [00:11:07] You said, "There has been website," or are we talking hypothetically?

[00:11:11] **John Mueller:** [00:11:11] The canonicalization?

[00:11:13] **Gary Illyes:** [00:11:13] Both of these issues show up in our inboxes every now and then.

[00:11:16] **Martin Splitt:** [00:11:16] Exactly.

[00:11:18] **Gary Illyes:** [00:11:18] I think less often nowadays for some reason, but it definitely used to show up a lot when I joined.

[00:11:26] **John Mueller:** [00:11:26] I guess another one with canonicalization could be that you're checking the WWW version of your site, but actually the non-WWW version is indexed.

[00:11:35] **Martin Splitt:** [00:11:35] Yup.

[00:11:35] **John Mueller:** [00:11:35] You're like, "Why is my site not being indexed?" It's like, "It is. You're just checking it wrong." [chuckles]

[00:11:39] **Gary Illyes:** [00:11:39] [chortles] You're holding it wrong.

[00:11:40] **Martin Splitt:** [00:11:40] Yup.

[00:11:44] There's also a fun one with `<i>hreflang,</i>` actually, where some people are having pretty much the same content.

[00:11:46] **Gary Illyes:** [00:11:46] Oh?

[00:11:52] **Martin Splitt:** [00:11:52] In certain markets, that is a problem, like Germany versus Austria and Switzerland where it's pretty much the same thing, just the price changes and/or the currency changes, but pretty much everything else is the same, and it's all German in language...

[00:12:06] ...then they have the markup to basically say, "These are three different regional versions of the German version of this product page," for instance, and yet we are like, "Let's canonicalize that into one thing," and then the reporting in Search Console uses the canonical.

[00:12:24] **Gary Ilyes:** [00:12:24] Oh.

[00:12:25] **Martin Splitt:** [00:12:25] Then they are like, "Oh, my god! The Swiss page fell out of the index!" Sort of yes, but sort of no.

[00:12:34] **John Mueller:** [00:12:34] It depends, you're saying?

[00:12:35] **Martin Splitt:** [00:12:35] Yeah.

[00:12:37] **Gary Ilyes:** [00:12:37] No!

[00:12:37] **John Mueller:** [00:12:37] [laughs]

[00:12:38] **Martin Splitt:** [00:12:38] [laughs]

[00:12:39] **Gary Ilyes:** [00:12:39] I hate that word.

[00:12:41] **John Mueller:** [00:12:41] It's two words.

[00:12:42] **Martin Splitt:** [00:12:42] It's two words. [chuckles] I hate the phrase. Okay.

[00:12:44] **Gary Ilyes:** [00:12:44] [Well, thanks]. Well, yeah, that's a good point with the canonicalization-- with the `<i>hreflang</i>` and canonicalization.

[00:12:51] **Martin Splitt:** [00:12:51] Mm-hmm.

[00:12:52] **Gary Ilyes:** [00:12:52] I forgot that we made a change in Search Console a few years back.

[00:12:57] **Martin Splitt:** [00:12:57] Mm-hmm.

[00:12:57] **John Mueller:** [00:12:57] There's also the `<i>noindex.</i>`

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

[00:13:00] **Gary Ilyes:** [00:13:00] That's technical. Come on, that's technical.

[00:13:02] **John Mueller:** [00:13:02] Sure, that's technical, but that's something I run across every now and then where people set up their WordPress site or whatever site they use, and they select that option. It's like, "I don't like search engines," and then afterwards, they realize, "Well, actually, I do like search engines a bit."

[00:13:22] **Gary Ilyes:** [00:13:22] [chortles]

[00:13:23] **Martin Splitt:** [00:13:23] I have a flashback, and I am wondering what the answer to this question is going to be.

[00:13:27] If I buy a domain afresh from some hoster, I usually get some sort of "This is work in progress. This site is under construction" kind of page that looks the same for all the URLs that have been bought through that hoster and haven't been pointed to a server yet that actually hosts the actual content.



[00:13:49] I'm guessing, I know that's technical probably, but I still would expect that to not be indexed. No? Will we index that?

[00:13:56] **John Mueller:** [00:13:56] It depends.

[00:13:58] **Gary Illyes:** [00:13:58] Oh, God.

[00:13:59] **John Mueller:** [00:13:59] [chortles]

[00:14:00] **Martin Splitt:** [00:14:00] [laughs]

[00:14:01] **Gary Illyes:** [00:14:01] [chortles] People will love this episode. Thinking through our pipeline, those pages would probably get caught by the soft error page detection thing that we have, and they wouldn't be able to get indexed...

[00:14:19] **Martin Splitt:** [00:14:19] Right.

[00:14:19] **Gary Illyes:** [00:14:19] ...because that happens before even canonicalization...

[00:14:21] **Martin Splitt:** [00:14:21] Right.

[00:14:23] **Gary Illyes:** [00:14:23] ...which kind of sucks, but you shouldn't expect those pages to get indexed, I guess...

[00:14:30] **Martin Splitt:** [00:14:30] True.

[00:14:30] **Gary Illyes:** [00:14:30] ...because you still need some content. Arguably, that's-- Well, not arguably, that's just not content. It's like "This is under construction."

[00:14:40] **Martin Splitt:** [00:14:40] Placeholder, I would say.

[00:14:41] **Gary Illyes:** [00:14:41] Why would we index that?

[00:14:42] **Martin Splitt:** [00:14:42] But I'm wondering if there are people out there who are like, "We bought this domain, and let's see if it gets indexed." It's like, "No, it doesn't because you didn't put anything there."

[00:14:52] On the other hand, you probably want to put something real quick anyway, so that's probably not an issue.

[00:14:55] **John Mueller:** [00:14:55] Yeah. Yeah, if you want something indexed, maybe you should make something to put in there.

[00:15:02] **Gary Illyes:** [00:15:02] Hm.

[00:15:03] **Martin Splitt:** [00:15:03] Okay, I have bought my new domain, and I have set up my site with some content, and I'm not seeing it indexed. Could it just be that it takes a little longer than I anticipated? How much is too long?

[00:15:17] **Gary Illyes:** [00:15:17] Seven years.

[00:15:18] **Martin Splitt:** [00:15:18] Hm. Okay, that's definitely too long. How much is not enough?

[00:15:21] **Gary Ilyes:** [00:15:21] [chuckles] Depending how well a site is linked or a page is linked, it can get indexed within seconds.

[00:15:30] **Martin Splitt:** [00:15:30] What?

[00:15:31] **Gary Ilyes:** [00:15:31] Yeah, for example, like some newsiest thing happens, like Eurovision, for example.

[00:15:40] **Martin Splitt:** [00:15:40] Mm-hmm.

[00:15:40] **Gary Ilyes:** [00:15:40] Then the team from Timbuktu just won the concert, but before that, no one was going to their site.

[00:15:48] Then suddenly, everyone is looking for that site. They are posting links to it everywhere on the internet. That will mean, to us, that we have to index that particular page, like the home page, very very fast.

[00:16:02] **Martin Splitt:** [00:16:02] Okay.

[00:16:02] **John Mueller:** [00:16:02] But Timbuktu is not a part of Europe.

[00:16:05] **Martin Splitt:** [00:16:05] Neither is Australia, and yet they...

[00:16:08] **Gary Ilyes:** [00:16:08] [speaking Germany] <i>Schweiz.</i>

[00:16:09] **Martin Splitt:** [00:16:09] No! Whoa, whoa, whoa. [speaking Germany] <i>Schweiz</i> is European.

[00:16:11] **John Mueller:** [00:16:11] [laughs] Oh, no. Now this is getting political. I'm sorry.

[00:16:17] **Martin Splitt:** [00:16:17] Wow.

[00:16:18] **John Mueller:** [00:16:18] I will not say anything.

[00:16:19] **Martin Splitt:** [00:16:19] But Australia, geographically, definitely is not part of Europe.

[00:16:22] **John Mueller:** [00:16:22] Well, Australia is right next to Switzerland. Come on.

[00:16:24] **Martin Splitt:** [00:16:24] [laughs] Cue angry comments. Also, let us know in the comments if you'd like us to say "it depends" a little more.

[00:16:32] **Gary Ilyes:** [00:16:32] I can answer that: No.

[00:16:34] **Martin Splitt:** [00:16:34] [chortles]

[00:16:35] **Gary Ilyes:** [00:16:35] But yeah, we can index stuff very fast if we need to, like if we see that there is a spike in interest for something, and then we can also take our damn time with it because sometimes it's just not obvious that something should be indexed, right?

[00:16:52] For example, my PhD publication, my PhD thesis is sitting somewhere on a web server. No one is interested in it. Why would we index it?

[00:17:00] **Martin Splitt:** [00:17:00] Mm-hmm.

[00:17:01] **Gary Ilyes:** [00:17:01] It might actually sit there until the ends of time because why would anyone look for it? Plus, it doesn't exist.

[00:17:09] **Martin Splitt:** [00:17:09] [chortles]

[00:17:14] **Gary Ilyes:** [00:17:14] But still, there are things on the internet that should not get indexed. Basically, the nth time, that's infinite, and then the minimum, that's seconds, quite literally.

[00:17:27] **Martin Splitt:** [00:17:27] Okay.

[00:17:29] **John Mueller:** [00:17:29] What if my content just isn't being indexed as quickly as I want it to be? I wrote about Eurovision and about the winner, and I'm pretty sure my blog post is the most unique take of all of the blog posts out there, but I need to get it indexed today. Otherwise, nobody will look at it.

[00:17:49] **Gary Ilyes:** [00:17:49] Nobody will look at it anyway, but I think it's worth adjusting expectations for most sites.

[00:17:51] **John Mueller:** [00:17:51] [chortles]

[00:18:01] **Gary Ilyes:** [00:18:01] Unless you are publishing something utterly unique and something that people are actually interested in, it's pretty hard to get stuff indexed. That's because the internet grew to a size where it's basically not indexable in its entirety.

[00:18:20] Back in the good old days when I was still young, and I was still eating cheese, I could find pretty much anything in the major search engines, be that Microsoft Live or Google or even AltaVista.

[00:18:35] Nowadays, there's just no reasonable amount of resources would be enough to get everything indexed, so search engines will have to make a cut somewhere...

[00:18:46] ...which means that the expectations of getting stuff indexed should be lowered from site owners' perspective, or they can bump up the quality of the content and how interesting and viral they can write, I guess.

[00:19:06] I don't mean check out the ten best potato peelers in Timbuktu for 2023 because that's probably not going to work.

[00:19:17] **Martin Splitt:** [00:19:17] [chortles] It's oddly specific.

[00:19:18] **John Mueller:** [00:19:18] If I have old, weird content, which I didn't pay enough attention to, should I delete that so that I can get my new content index better, or what should I do?

[00:19:29] I have five years of writing about different kinds of cheese bacteria, which I try to sell by mail order, but nobody was interested, and I would like to write about potato peelers now.

[00:19:45] **Martin Splitt:** [00:19:45] [chortles]

[00:19:45] **Gary Ilyes:** [00:19:45] Wow!

[00:19:46] **John Mueller:** [00:19:46] Should I delete the cheese bacteria content?

[00:19:49] **Gary Ilyes:** [00:19:49] I don't think it works like that. I don't think per site we have indexing quota.

[00:19:54] **Martin Splitt:** [00:19:54] Mm-hmm.

[00:19:55] **Gary Ilyes:** [00:19:55] No, wait, let me rephrase. I know that we don't have an indexing quota per site.

[00:20:00] **Martin Splitt:** [00:20:00] Okay.

[00:20:00] **Gary Ilyes:** [00:20:00] Basically, you could have your bacteria content plus your potato peelers on the same side and get all of them indexed, but we would still try to make sure that we have space for other kind of content as well in our index...

[00:20:18] ...which might mean that we will drop some of your content and others as well to make space for new stuff that people might be more interested in.

[00:20:29] But, of course, if we see that people are continuously linking to you, and you are getting, for example, new links...

[00:20:35] ...and we know that you haven't paid anything for those links because that's a bad thing, John, and you should stop doing that, then we might be more interested in keeping your content in our index versus the new potato peelers from Timbuktu.

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

[00:20:54] **Martin Splitt:** [00:20:54] But in Search Console, I can request indexing. I think all my Potato Peeler 2023 update content is fantastic. Is it a good idea to just go and click on request indexing for all of these articles? Will that nudge Google towards doing the right thing and indexing all my content?

[00:21:13] **Gary Ilyes:** [00:21:13] Oh, you said "the right thing."

[00:21:15] **Martin Splitt:** [00:21:15] I think it's the right thing. My potato peeler content is fantastic, you will have to understand.

[00:21:20] **Gary Ilyes:** [00:21:20] Are you, by any chance, biased?

[00:21:22] **Martin Splitt:** [00:21:22] No, never.

[00:21:25] **Gary Ilyes:** [00:21:25] Yeah, I think you are.

[00:21:26] **Martin Splitt:** [00:21:26] No. I'm objectively the best at writing potato peeler content.

[00:21:29] **Gary Ilyes:** [00:21:29] [chortles]

[00:21:30] **John Mueller:** [00:21:30] Does the function work in Search Console when you click the button? It's like, make number one indexation.

[00:21:36] **Gary Ilyes:** [00:21:36] What?

[00:21:36] **John Mueller:** [00:21:36] Rank number one, my potato peeler for 2023 indexation page. Does that function work?

[00:21:44] **Gary Illyes:** [00:21:44] I don't have to use it because my content is the highest possible quality. I don't write about potato peelers, but I'm writing about individual grape peelers...

[00:21:55] ...so yeah, my content gets indexed right away, no problem. I just go there to Search Console to check if it's in the index at all.

[00:22:03] **Martin Splitt:** [00:22:03] That's just the grape peeler conspiracy.

[00:22:07] **John Mueller:** [00:22:07] You're kind of saying for a normal website, assuming grape peeling were normal...

[00:22:13] **Gary Illyes:** [00:22:13] [chortles]

[00:22:14] **John Mueller:** [00:22:14] ...you wouldn't need to go to submit...

[00:22:17] **Gary Illyes:** [00:22:17] I think you're biased. I think at this point, you are just biased.

[00:22:20] **John Mueller:** [00:22:20] [laughs]

[00:22:21] **Gary Illyes:** [00:22:21] If potato peeling is a thing, then grape peeling should be a thing too.

[00:22:26] **John Mueller:** [00:22:26] Okay. Okay. Well, ignoring the specific topic, if you have a good website or a great website, then you wouldn't need to go to that tool and submit pages individually, is what you're saying?

[00:22:40] **Gary Illyes:** [00:22:40] Right, pretty much. I think it can be still useful sometimes just to test whether we would be able to index something because often--

[00:22:49] Well, not often, but sometimes it's just that you put something weirdo on your page, like "This content is not yet available," and then that tool can actually catch it and say-- or give you some error message. I don't actually know what it does.

[00:23:06] But for getting stuff indexed, I would just not use it unless I need to get this indexed right now where I have to check something.

[00:23:17] Then when I would use it, like if I have a breaking news story, and it's only me who has it, I know for certain that it's only me because that potato peeler down the street was struck by lightning in front of me and no one was around to report about it, then I would use it just to get in the search index as fast as possible, so Martin doesn't steal my story.

[00:23:40] **Martin Splitt:** [00:23:40] How dare you? I'm always up to date. All right, one last tangential-- One last question from my side on this, which is you said that you would use Google Search Console, but I know a lot of people are using the "site:" thing to see if...

[00:23:59] **Gary Illyes:** [00:23:59] No.

[00:24:00] **Martin Splitt:** [00:24:00] Wait, why? Isn't that exactly what it's made for? To see if my pages are indexed?

[00:24:03] **Gary Ilyes:** [00:24:03] No.

[00:24:04] **Martin Splitt:** [00:24:04] Why? What does it do then, if not that?

[00:24:07] **Gary Ilyes:** [00:24:07] John, tell him. Tell him off.

[00:24:08] **John Mueller:** [00:24:08] No, you. You. You.

[00:24:10] **Gary Ilyes:** [00:24:10] No, you tell him.

[00:24:10] **Martin Splitt:** [00:24:10] No, the site thing shows me the pages that are indexed, right?

[00:24:14] **Gary Ilyes:** [00:24:14] Some of the pages that are indexed.

[00:24:17] **Martin Splitt:** [00:24:17] Wait, why?

[00:24:18] **Gary Ilyes:** [00:24:18] Because it's not feasible to give you all the...

[00:24:20] **Martin Splitt:** [00:24:20] But Search Console can do it. Why can "site:" not do it?

[00:24:23] **Gary Ilyes:** [00:24:23] No, Search Console can give you the number.

[00:24:25] **Martin Splitt:** [00:24:25] Oh.

[00:24:26] **Gary Ilyes:** [00:24:26] Completely different beast.

[00:24:27] **Martin Splitt:** [00:24:27] Oh, but doesn't it... Okay. Oh.

[00:24:30] **John Mueller:** [00:24:30] Oh, so would you use "site:" as a rough way to check if anything is indexed?

[00:24:36] **Gary Ilyes:** [00:24:36] I would. I would also use it to check if I have keywords that I definitely don't want to have on my site...

[00:24:45] **Martin Splitt:** [00:24:45] Okay.

[00:24:45] **Gary Ilyes:** [00:24:45] ...like buy Viagra in a Timbuktan casino without prescription.

[00:24:50] **John Mueller:** [00:24:50] That's oddly specific. I've never had that problem, but okay.

[00:24:53] **Martin Splitt:** [00:24:53] Yeah.

[00:24:55] **Gary Ilyes:** [00:24:55] But yeah, you can check for really weird random keywords that you don't want to have, or you can also use Google Alerts for that. I think we kept telling people at one point to do that. It can be super super helpful because you get an alert almost immediately, but otherwise, I'm not sure I would use the "site:" for much.

[00:25:16] **Martin Splitt:** [00:25:16] Mm. Wow. Okay. That's hopefully interesting and useful for some people out there. I don't...

[00:25:21] **Gary Ilyes:** [00:25:21] On [onesie], on our search doc site, `<i>developers.google.com/search,</i>` sometimes I use it to find some of the localized versions of individual pages...

[00:25:23] **Martin Splitt:** [00:25:23] Mm-hmm.

[00:25:33] **Martin Splitt:** [00:25:33] That's neat.

[00:25:34] **Gary Ilyes:** [00:25:34] ...because it's simpler than clicking the language selector...

[00:25:38] **Martin Splitt:** [00:25:38] Hmm.

[00:25:38] **Gary Ilyes:** [00:25:38] ...and it gives me a pretty good list.

[00:25:40] **Martin Splitt:** [00:25:40] That's pretty nice, but not an exhaustive list, I guess.

[00:25:43] **Gary Ilyes:** [00:25:43] Checking for images...

[00:25:44] **Martin Splitt:** [00:25:44] Mm-hmm.

[00:25:45] **Gary Ilyes:** [00:25:45] ...like in image search or in the `<i>Images</i>` tab, you can use that to see what kind of images we have indexed because sometimes that can also get pretty nasty.

[00:25:53] **Martin Splitt:** [00:25:53] Mm.

[00:25:54] **Gary Ilyes:** [00:25:54] Like if you're using UGC...

[00:25:56] **Martin Splitt:** [00:25:56] Mm-hmm.

[00:25:57] **Gary Ilyes:** [00:25:57] ...or if you have a UGC site...

[00:25:59] **Martin Splitt:** [00:25:59] User generated, yeah. Mm-hmm.

[00:26:00] **Gary Ilyes:** [00:26:00] ...some of your users might not be that nice, and they might put up really nasty images that you don't necessarily want to host.

[00:26:05] **Martin Splitt:** [00:26:05] Yup. Okay, I see. Wow.

[00:26:09] **John Mueller:** [00:26:09] Okay.

[00:26:09] **Martin Splitt:** [00:26:09] All right. Now I understand what that is for. In that case, thank you so much for shedding a light on that. In general, thanks.

[00:26:17] **Gary Ilyes:** [00:26:17] And potato peelers.

[00:26:18] **Martin Splitt:** [00:26:18] [laughs] Thanks for both you, John and Gary, for your important insights on potato peelers. I'd say that's it for this episode. In the next episode, we're going to talk about how to pick a domain name.

[00:26:35] I'd like to thank all of you out there for listening in, and I hope that you had fun and learned something today. Yeah.

[00:26:42] ♪ [music] ♪

[00:26:46] **Martin Splitt:** [00:26:46] We've been having fun with these podcast episodes, and we hope that you, the listener, have found them both entertaining and insightful too.

[00:26:54] Feel free to drop us a note on Twitter <i>@googlesearchc</i> or chat with us at one of the next upcoming events that we go to if you have any thoughts.

[00:27:03] Of course, don't forget to like and subscribe. Thank you so much, and goodbye.

[00:27:08] **John Mueller:** [00:27:08] Happy indexation.

[00:27:11] **Martin Splitt:** [00:27:11] Gary?

[00:27:12] **Gary Ilyes:** [00:27:12] Oh. Oh, sorry. Bye. Bye. Bye.

[00:27:14] **Martin Splitt:** [00:27:14] [chortles]