



# A Timeline of Google Algorithm Changes Since 2003

## Eliminating Metatag Stuffing

The metatag is meant to be the user's opportunity to read further about what the site has to offer. However, they also indicate to search engines when a site has relevant information to what the user is looking for. So, when people began stuffing metatags with keywords their audience was searching for, Google put an end to this tactic.

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### Metatag

## Updates to Supplemental Pages

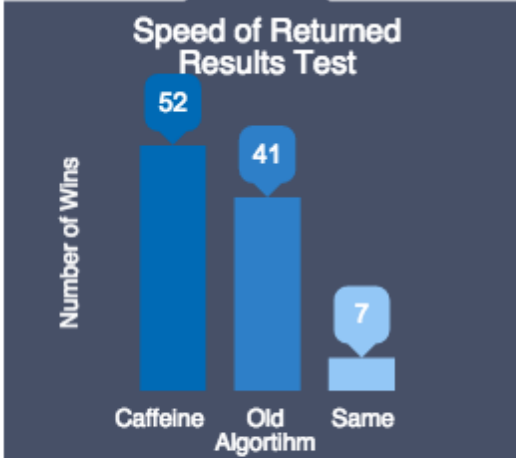
Supplemental pages were sites that were deemed by search engines as less important. They would show up in searches if there were not a lot of matches to the query, but with a marking letting the user know it that it was a supplemental page. In 2006, Google moved away from treating supplemental pages as though they were penalized and started giving them a fairer display.

## Unspecified Changes

A large-scale shuffle seemed to occur but the specifics were unclear. Some suspected Google was pushing its own internal properties but the evidence of that was limited.

## Introduction of New Indexing System

When you search Google, you're not searching the live web. Instead you're searching Google's index of the web. So when they introduced Caffeine, the new indexing system, they were able to provide fresher, faster and more comprehensive search results.



100 search terms were tested for the speed of returned results. This chart depicts the amount of times that caffeine was faster, the old algorithm was faster or they were the same speed.

## The Penguin Update

Google continued to crack down on black hat SEO. You were likely not one of the 3.1% of websites affected if you-

- Kept your keywords in check
- Diversified your link building
- Had fresh content
- Listened to your webmaster tools

## A Shift in Focus Toward Local Search

Google's Pigeon Update increased the ranking of local listings in a search, providing more useful, relevant and accurate local search results. The algorithm connected web search and map search in a more cohesive way.

### Sites that Benefitted

Hospitality  
Food  
Education

### Sites that Struggled

Job Listings  
Real Estate  
Movies

## Crackdown on Black Hat Tactics

In SEO terminology, black hat SEO refers to the use of aggressive SEO strategies, techniques and tactics that focus only on search engines and not a human audience, and usually does not obey search engines guidelines.

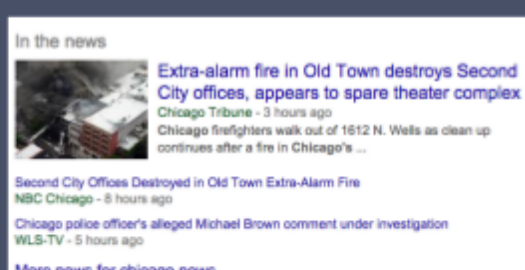
### Including:

- Link Manipulation
- Article Spinning
- Link Schemes
- Rich Snippet Markup Spam
- Automated Queries to Google
- Link Wheels
- Link Networks
- Link Farms

## The End of Link Farms

Building links is great, but not when they all are from a fake website that's sole purpose is to provide links for your site. This was the beginning of the shift toward the quality of links, not merely the quantity.

## Integrating News, Images, Videos & Local



While not your typical algorithm update, Google integrated traditional search results with News, Video, Images, Local, and other verticals, dramatically changing their format. The old 10-listing SERP was officially dead.

## Twitter is Included in Real-Time Feeds

Real-time tweets became included in certain SERPs, making it the first time social media became a big player in the SEO game. This integration was later retracted, only to be reintroduced in the beginning of 2015.

## Introduction of Panda

The change aimed to lower the rank of low-quality sites or thin sites. Search engine optimizers had learned how to make low-quality writing more visible than quality content so the update created a surge in the rankings of news websites and social networking sites, and a drop in rankings for sites containing large amounts of advertising.

This change reportedly affected the rankings of almost **12%** of all search results.

## A New Search Platform

Hummingbird was a new platform introduced to pay more attention to each word in a query, ensuring that the whole query and meaning behind the words were taken into account to provide more accurate results. It was the beginning of "conversational search."

## Mobiledgeddon

With the ever-increasing use of mobile devices, Google updated their algorithm to give priority to well sites that display well on smartphones and other mobile devices.

To find out if your site is up-to-date and in accordance with Google's algorithm, talk to an SEO expert today!

