

Search Off the Record - 67th episode

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

[00:00:29] **John Mueller:** [00:00:29] Hi!

[00:00:30] **Gary Illyes:** [00:00:30] Well, hello!

[00:00:31] **Martin Splitt:** [00:00:31] So the year is coming to an end. What a year it has been. Yeah. Where did it go? I don't know. Feels like we've just recorded our previous year's review.

[00:00:45] **Gary Illyes:** [00:00:45] Do you know that the older you get, the faster the years pass?

[00:00:50] **Martin Splitt:** [00:00:50] Sounds like a pseudoscience thing to say.

[00:00:55] **Gary Illyes:** [00:00:55] No, it's Gary science.

[00:00:56] **Martin Splitt:** [00:00:56] It's Gary science, then it must be true. Did you come up with that on Steve, or...?

[00:01:03] **Gary Illyes:** [00:01:03] No. I was just sitting there five seconds ago, and it just occurred to me.

[00:01:09] **John Mueller:** [00:01:09] So does that mean when you get older, it feels like the web is getting faster?

[00:01:15] **Gary Illyes:** [00:01:15] Actually, the opposite. The web is devolving.

[00:01:20] **Martin Splitt:** [00:01:20] What? No!

[00:01:21] **Gary Illyes:** [00:01:21] Yeah, true story.

[00:01:23] **Martin Splitt:** [00:01:23] How? What? Wait, elaborate.

[00:01:27] **Gary Illyes:** [00:01:27] I probably shouldn't.

[00:01:28] **Martin Splitt:** [00:01:28] Okay, good.

[00:01:30] **John Mueller:** [00:01:30] Then do it.

[00:01:34] **Martin Splitt:** [00:01:34] Can we talk about nice things? It's the end of the year. Give us some hope.

[00:01:40] **Gary Illyes:** [00:01:40] You are expecting hope from me?

[00:01:42] **Martin Splitt:** [00:01:42] Yes. I know how silly that sounds. This is how desperate I am at this point.

[00:01:48] **Gary Illyes:** [00:01:48] It's a good thing that we haven't worked together for like seven years.

[00:01:51] **Martin Splitt:** [00:01:51] [laughs] It's five. It's not even seven yet. It's more than five.

[00:01:58] **Gary Illyes:** [00:01:58] See, it's seven.

[00:01:59] **Martin Splitt:** [00:01:59] Fine. Let's talk a bit about our highlights, maybe, rather than lowlights.

[00:02:05] **Gary Illyes:** [00:02:05] Well, if we have to.

[00:02:06] **Martin Splitt:** [00:02:06] Yeah. For instance, when you published that, was it an article or was it

just a mention in the docs that we have a 15 megabytes request size limit? I was surprised to see how surprised people were about that. [laughs]

[00:02:22] **Gary Illyes:** [00:02:22] Okay, first question. How is that a highlight?

[00:02:25] **Martin Splitt:** [00:02:25] I just loved it so much. It was such a surprise. I was like, really? People are surprised that we have a request size limit, and it's ridiculously big. Like, 15 megabytes is more than 10 floppy disks.

[00:02:40] **Gary Illyes:** [00:02:40] I mean, some of your JavaScript is like 15 megabytes.

[00:02:43] **Martin Splitt:** [00:02:43] No, it's not. No, it's not.

[00:02:44] **Gary Illyes:** [00:02:44] Yes, it is.

[00:02:45] **Martin Splitt:** [00:02:45] No, it's not.

[00:02:46] **Gary Illyes:** [00:02:46] Yes, it is.

[00:02:47] **Martin Splitt:** [00:02:47] No, it's not.

[0:02:48] **John Mueller:** [0:02:48] [laughs]

[00:02:49] **Martin Splitt:** [00:02:49] The end of year countdown didn't even have any JavaScript.

[00:02:54] **Gary Illyes:** [00:02:54] No, well, yeah, there is no JavaScript there, but there's JavaScript otherwise.

[00:02:59] **Martin Splitt:** [00:02:59] No. I never wrote any JavaScript anywhere. Fight me.

[00:03:04] **Gary Illyes:** [00:03:04] Lies!

[00:03:05] **Martin Splitt:** [00:03:05] Okay, fine. That was a lie.

[00:03:08] **John Mueller:** [00:03:08] I mean, I think it's kind of understandable, because it's really hard to understand the nuance with some of the technology. And try to-

[00:03:19] **Gary Illyes:** [00:03:19] It's HTML.

[00:03:21] **John Mueller:** [00:03:21] But still, it's like, for average people, you look at the browser and that's like what you see. And you don't realize all of the individual files in between. And even if you did learn how to do HTML at some point, you always heard these stories like, oh, this bloat on the web, and pages are getting bigger and bigger and bigger. And it's like, ah.

[00:03:45] Then I think it's kind of understandable that people get a little bit worried or don't really understand what exactly might be counted there. It's also something where I notice in working with people outside of our group, that some of the basics around HTML are really hard to understand and to figure out, especially with modern web pages, which don't have this clear HTML structure when you look at it.

[00:04:19] **Martin Splitt:** [00:04:19] Yeah, okay, that's true. But I mean, HTML fundamentally is simple.

[00:04:24] **John Mueller:** [00:04:24] Well, it's like I was talking with someone, and we were talking about page titles. And I said, you can just look at the page title by looking at the source of a page. And then we opened up a random web page. And I wanted to show them, like, here's the title. And figuring out where the title is nowadays is kind of weird, because there's just so much stuff in the head, and so much compression, and kind of all of these optimizations that are happening. It's like, you can search for title, and it has like 50 mentions on a page. And you're like, oh, which one is it?

[00:05:02] **Martin Splitt:** [00:05:02] [laughs]

[00:05:03] **John Mueller:** [00:05:03] Explaining these basic things where when you make a web page from hand, you're like, oh, title is the first thing in the head. And it's like, done. When you look at what is actually on the web, it's so weird.

[00:05:16] **Martin Splitt:** [00:05:16] Mmm, on the other hand, that's a good thing because that means that more people are creating stuff on the web without having to deal with all the technical details.

[00:05:26] **John Mueller:** [00:05:26] Sure, but we tell people, this is how you make titles. And they're like, oh, I want to look at my titles, what they look like now. And they're like, how do you even check? Most you can go into your CMS and be like, well, my CMS says the title is this. But is that really the page title? Nobody knows.

[00:05:47] **Martin Splitt:** [00:05:47] Okay. Then I have a question for our listeners out there. And please do leave us feedback on this. How would you like us to deal with that? Are you experiencing that as well, that we are giving very technical guidance and you don't know how to implement that? Or are you happy with how we do it, or what is it? I'm just curious. I'm genuinely curious if we need to make our guidance less low-level-y. I know that you probably disagree, Gary.

[00:06:14] **Gary Illyes:** [00:06:14] Yes. Do you know where we live? [Developers.google.com](https://developers.google.com)?

[00:06:19] **Martin Splitt:** [00:06:19] Sure, but that's not necessarily our main audience. That's a technicality, no?

[00:06:24] **Gary Illyes:** [00:06:24] I mean, we can explain in our documentation where to locate the title tag, but it will still boil down to modifying the title tag or element, if we want to please John.

[00:06:36] **John Mueller:** [00:06:36] Yes, please. Element.

[00:06:39] **Gary Illyes:** [00:06:39] But otherwise, it's just a title element that you have to alter somehow. And then we can't possibly document every single CMS and how they can influence the title element individually. That's just not going to happen.

[00:06:56] **Martin Splitt:** [00:06:56] But maybe we can poke the CMS vendors to write better documentation about this or change the implementation so that it's more obvious what will be ending up in the page title.

[00:07:07] **John Mueller:** [00:07:07] That seems like a good strategy. Yeah. It's like, we will just encourage other people.

[00:07:12] **Gary Illyes:** [00:07:12] To work.

[00:07:13] **John Mueller:** [00:07:13] Yeah. Hopefully.

[00:07:14] **Gary Illyes:** [00:07:14] Delegate.

[00:07:15] **John Mueller:** [00:07:15] Hopefully it works out.

[00:07:17] **Gary Illyes:** [00:07:17] Scaling.

[00:07:18] **John Mueller:** [00:07:18] I don't know. I mean, I also think it's something where if you're working in SEO, you should be able to find a title element on a page. But it's also very hard. Like, how do you even get started on some of these things?

[00:07:33] **Gary Illyes:** [00:07:33] Have you tried Command+F or Ctrl+F?

[00:07:36] **John Mueller:** [00:07:36] Ctrl+F.

[00:07:39] **Gary Illyes:** [00:07:39] Yeah.

[00:07:39] **John Mueller:** [00:07:39] Search for title. Yeah. I mean, maybe we should tell people Control+Shift+U, or whatever the code is for the view source.

[00:07:52] **Gary Illyes:** [00:07:52] Mmm.

[00:07:54] **John Mueller:** [00:07:54] I know. I know. We could show the title in search results.

[00:07:58] **Martin Splitt:** [00:07:58] Oh, yeah. As long as we're not rewriting it, huh?

[00:08:03] **Gary Illyes:** [00:08:03] Are you just looking for pain points?

[00:08:06] **Martin Splitt:** [00:08:06] Oh, my God!

[00:08:09] **Gary Illyes:** [00:08:09] Oh no!

[00:08:10] **Martin Splitt:** [00:08:10] I'm sorry. I'm sorry.

[00:08:12] **Gary Illyes:** [00:08:12] Okay. So maybe the web creator ecosystem is evolving in the way that they are doing less low-level HTML and more like feeding content into tools, CMSs, something, somethings. I don't know. That's a good thing, I guess.

[00:08:29] **John Mueller:** [00:08:29] I don't think they're evolving that way. I think it's just more people involved. Because lots of people are making web pages, and I think it's cool to see new people involved as well. And it kind of shows that the web is not dead. SEO is not dead.

[00:08:46] **Martin Splitt:** [00:08:46] Maybe.

[00:08:47] **John Mueller:** [00:08:47] I mean, maybe next year. Who knows?

[00:08:51] **Martin Splitt:** [00:08:51] Let's not get ahead of ourselves, huh?

[00:08:53] **Gary Illyes:** [00:08:53] I mean, it happens every year. SEO is dead. And then next year, it's like, SEO is still alive, but this year is going to be dead.

[00:09:03] **Martin Splitt:** [00:09:03] So like, this year is the year of Linux on the desktop?

[00:09:09] **Gary Illyes:** [00:09:09] Voice search.

[00:09:11] **Martin Splitt:** [00:09:11] Voice search. It's all voice search.

[00:09:12] **John Mueller:** [00:09:12] No, no, Gary. We said no pain.

[00:09:15] **Martin Splitt:** [00:09:15] Okay, no pain.

[00:09:16] **Gary Illyes:** [00:09:16] And yet, you are paining us here.

[00:09:20] **Martin Splitt:** [00:09:20] Regarding reducing pain, Core Web Vitals. [laughs]

[00:09:24] **Gary Illyes:** [00:09:24] Nope.

[00:09:26] **Martin Splitt:** [00:09:26] Yes, come on. So it might be a little painful to see that your users are experiencing your website in a different way than you think they are, because you're on a modern phone on a fast connection and your users aren't. But I really like that we are about to introduce Interaction to Next Paint instead of first input delay into the Core Web Vitals next year. So we announced that this year. It's pretty cool. I like that.

[00:09:55] **John Mueller:** [00:09:55] So what is the difference?

[00:09:57] **Martin Splitt:** [00:09:57] Okay. So--

[00:09:59] **John Mueller:** [00:09:59] I'm like, I'm just this normal person. I hear Core Web Vitals, and I think, oh, I got 100% on those already.

[00:10:07] **Martin Splitt:** [00:10:07] Oh, God! Yeah. Remember that we are trying to figure out and measure how a user experiences a site or a page. And to do so, we have three metrics, or we currently have three metrics. One is the Largest Contentful Paint. So how quickly do I see most of the content on my screen instead of just a blank page? We have the infamous cumulative layout shift. So when I click on something, how likely am I that this is going to move away because something else pushes it away? And I click on the wrong thing, which is also super annoying when that happens.

[00:10:46] And then the third in the tribe, so to speak, is how long does it take from opening a page until I can

actually interact with a page? So if I'm on an online shop and I know exactly which product I want and the product shows up because the painting, the LCP, the Largest Contentful Paint, is really quick. But then I click on it and nothing happens for like a minute-- that is frustrating as well. So that's what first input delay was for. But we found that a lot of websites are optimizing for that. So you can click on something for the first time, and then it does a lot of work. And then actually, everything slows down, and the second click is slow. And that is frustrating.

[00:11:29] So to measure that better, the team came up with the Interaction to Next Paint. So between me doing something and something on the page responding to it, how big is that delay? And it's not a first. So it's not I push off all my long-running work at the beginning and then do it once the user started interacting to kind of circumvent measuring this metric. It's more like, how do I split up my work so that the website remains responsive and quick? I think that's a good thing.

[00:12:01] **John Mueller:** [00:12:01] Okay. That sounds cool. So I guess on e-commerce sites, that would be intern action to next payment?

[00:12:09] **Martin Splitt:** [00:12:09] [laughs] Probably.

[00:12:13] **John Mueller:** [00:12:13] I'm sorry. Okay. So that... I think, I mean, we announced that it's going to happen in March, I think.

[00:12:23] **Martin Splitt:** [00:12:23] I think March or something, yeah.

[00:12:25] **John Mueller:** [00:12:25] Yeah? So as far as I know in Search Console, that's already there. So we kind of have things lined up. And I guess people could look to see how their site is doing. Have you checked your sites, Martin?

[00:12:39] **Martin Splitt:** [00:12:39] I have. And surprisingly, I've seen a drop. Like, I apparently accidentally optimized for the wrong thing. So...

[00:12:50] **John Mueller:** [00:12:50] You shouldn't be optimizing for these metrics, Martin. You should be optimizing for your users.

[00:12:54] **Martin Splitt:** [00:12:54] Yeah, it should be useful and high quality. I know, I know. But it's good that I caught this so I know that I'm doing the wrong thing. So I can now do better. I vow to do better.

[00:13:05] **John Mueller:** [00:13:05] So you're going to optimize for the new metric, or...?

[00:13:07] **Martin Splitt:** [00:13:07] No, no, for my users.

[00:13:10] **John Mueller:** [00:13:10] Okay. I think it's challenging with Interaction to Next Paint and with Core Web Vitals in general, because you get these absolute numbers. And then it's very easy to say, I will need to target this exact number. And then I'm going to boost in search.

[00:13:29] **Martin Splitt:** [00:13:29] Oh, God!

[00:13:30] **John Mueller:** [00:13:30] Kind of like with keyword density, like sure you can measure it, but you shouldn't, I don't know, fixate on it.

[00:13:39] **Martin Splitt:** [00:13:39] No, build stuff for your users.

[00:13:43] **John Mueller:** [00:13:43] Cool, okay. So is that almost like a prediction for next year?

[00:13:50] **Martin Splitt:** [00:13:50] It's a bit of an outlook. I mean, who knows? We are aiming to launch it in March. We'll see if that happens.

[00:13:59] **John Mueller:** [00:13:59] Okay.

[00:14:01] **Martin Splitt:** [00:14:01] Yeah. But we launched stuff as well.

[00:14:04] **John Mueller:** [00:14:04] The other thing that I remember is we launched some robots.txt stuff, some user agents. How did that pan out? What was it, the GoogleOther?

[00:14:18] **Martin Splitt:** [00:14:18] Ah, so frustrating. Is it Google-Other and then Google Extended, or GoogleOther and then Google-Extended? Why?

[00:14:28] **Gary Illyes:** [00:14:28] I don't know. Our internal policy is just that it has to start with "Google," and then you can add whatever. And it just happened to be like this.

[00:14:40] **Martin Splitt:** [00:14:40] Okay.

[00:14:42] **John Mueller:** [00:14:42] Wow. I guess we'll have to get used to it.

[00:14:45] **Gary Illyes:** [00:14:45] Yes, Martin, get used to it.

[00:14:47] **Martin Splitt:** [00:14:47] No, never. [groans]

[00:14:53] **John Mueller:** [00:14:53] So, initially, people thought... I think GoogleOther was used for training, but now we have Google-Extended.

[00:15:08] **Gary Illyes:** [00:15:08] So GoogleOther happened because of historical reasons. So Googlebot has been around for what, 25 years almost or even more. And every single team at Google who wanted to crawl something from the internet could use the user agent Googlebot. But that meant that some of the Googlebot traffic was not actually related to Search at all, and GoogleOther is aiming to fix that and basically isolating Search traffic to Googlebot.

[00:15:50] Any other use cases, such as research, for example, but also some training, will and is already on GoogleOther or using GoogleOther. That is an actual crawler that you can see in your logs. And of course, you can control it with the user agent string or the user agent token GoogleOther. And then we have Google-Extended, which is just a product token. It's not an actual crawler.

[00:16:31] So Google-Extended will never show up in your, okay, never-- using absolutes like a big boy-- It should not show up in your access logs because it's not a crawler. It is just a product token that you can use in robots.txt to opt out from very specific ML APIs, ML training. I think it's Vertex AI and Bard. And it's basically whatever currently we have, plus the future generations of these models. Like foundation models, or base models, or whatever you want to call them.

[00:17:21] **John Mueller:** [00:17:21] So they're basically completely separate things.

[00:17:24] **Gary Illyes:** [00:17:24] Yeah.

[00:17:25] **John Mueller:** [00:17:25] It's a bad idea for me to just mention them together, because I'll probably confuse people. Sorry.

[00:17:31] **Martin Splitt:** [00:17:31] [chuckles]

[00:17:33] **Gary Illyes:** [00:17:33] I mean, so GoogleOther does or may be used for some training.

[00:17:44] **Martin Splitt:** [00:17:44] Unless you use the Google-Extended control.

[00:17:49] **Gary Illyes:** [00:17:49] Yes.

[00:17:50] **Martin Splitt:** [00:17:50] Okay.

[00:17:51] **Gary Illyes:** [00:17:51] But if Google-Extended or the GoogleOther crawl that is used for training is for Vertex AI or Bard, I expect that that list will grow over time, but currently it's just Bard and Vertex AI.

[00:18:08] **John Mueller:** [00:18:08] It's always exciting with new technology because it kind of evolves over time.

[00:18:13] **Gary Illyes:** [00:18:13] I mean, it's a ridiculously complex topic. You and I are working on some generative AI-related stuff and the complexities that come up in every single meeting that we have is just mind-blowing. Like the implications of a technical implementation that we might have over the publishing ecosystem is really, really widespread and very hard to anticipate.

[00:19:00] **John Mueller:** [00:19:00] Yeah. It sounds like we should have a podcast episode about this at

some point in the year when we can talk about it a little bit more. Because it feels like there's still a lot of stuff not quite finalized. And we did that proposal. And we're looking for feedback from the ecosystem. And it feels like things are moving very quickly. And at the same time, it's hard to pack them into some-- almost like some kind of documentation that we would use in a podcast.

[00:19:38] **Gary Illyes:** [00:19:38] Yeah.

[00:19:38] **Martin Splitt:** [00:19:38] Mmm...

[00:19:39] **Gary Illyes:** [00:19:39] And also, the bigger issue is that we shouldn't come up with our own solutions, right? Like, if we want to have just one central, not central-- bad word-- one specific control that allows publishers to choose whether they want to opt in or out of training, that shouldn't just be a Google thing. It should be discussed with the vast majority of the AI companies and agreed upon, and also by the publishers.

[00:20:24] **Martin Splitt:** [00:20:24] I was about to say, as a website owner, I don't want to have too much work opting in or out.

[00:20:31] **Gary Illyes:** [00:20:31] Yeah, and I mean, that's one of the problems that we brought up early on. Like, if we implement something or if we come up or suggest something that could work, that should not put more strain on publishers. Because if you think about it, like if you go through our robots.txt cache, you can see that we have about 4 billion host names that we check every single day for robots.txt. Now, let's say that all of those have subdomains, or subdirectories, for example. So the number of sites is probably over four, or very likely over four billion.

[00:21:16] **John Mueller:** [00:21:16] How many of those are in Search Console? I wonder.

[00:21:19] **Gary Illyes:** [00:21:19] John, stop it.

[00:21:21] **John Mueller:** [00:21:21] I'm sorry.

[00:21:22] **Gary Illyes:** [00:21:22] Anyway, so if you have like four billion domains, host names, plus a bunch more in subdirectories, then how do you implement something that will not make them go bankrupt when they want to implement some opt-out mechanism? It's...

[00:21:45] **John Mueller:** [00:21:45] It's complicated.

[00:21:46] **Gary Illyes:** [00:21:46] It's complicated. I know that people are frustrated that we don't have something already, but it's not something to rush, I think.

[00:21:59] **Martin Splitt:** [00:21:59] To take it lightly. Yeah.

[00:22:01] **Gary Illyes:** [00:22:01] Yeah.

[00:22:03] **John Mueller:** [00:22:03] Cool. Okay. So I guess the second prediction is almost like we will have more on this topic, or more discussions at least.

[00:22:15] **Martin Splitt:** [00:22:15] Yep.

[00:22:18] **John Mueller:** [00:22:18] Cool. Cool, cool, cool. Then, continuing with AI, we also have SGE that launched this year, which is a big thing.

[00:22:25] **Martin Splitt:** [00:22:25] Yes. But not in Switzerland.

[00:22:31] **John Mueller:** [00:22:31] Not in Switzerland, yeah. That's a long story. I mean, I don't know the decisions and how they're made. But it feels like there are regularly products and services that get launched in other countries, and then Switzerland is like way on the bottom. It's like this tiny country, and they're so picky and so many different languages. And I'm like, can't these Swiss people just speak English and become a part of the US?

[00:23:00] **Gary Illyes:** [00:23:00] You do have to do it gradually, right? Like, you can't just launch everywhere, because you have to keep in mind the-- or you have to be consistent with local regulations.

[00:23:14] **Martin Splitt:** [00:23:14] Yeah.

[00:23:16] **John Mueller:** [00:23:16] Well, I guess in Switzerland, we have a few regulations.

[00:23:21] **Martin Splitt:** [00:23:21] I mean, it's also very nice to think that we are launching gradually to keep an eye on what's happening with it, because as we just discussed, AI is a big topic. And with lots of potential comes lots of things that might not be fantastically great when we're not taking care, and I like to see that we are applying our AI principles.

[00:23:44] **Gary Ilyes:** [00:23:44] Yeah, yeah. I think that's one of the neatest things that we have when it comes to AI, like all the flashy things like SGE and Bard and whatnot, but all the work that went into the AI principles, that's really remarkable. On the other hand, we already launched in, what, seven languages at this point?

[00:24:12] **Martin Splitt:** [00:24:12] A bunch of countries. Yeah.

[00:24:14] **Gary Ilyes:** [00:24:14] 100, 120, or something like that. So that's nice.

[00:24:18] **John Mueller:** [00:24:18] That's pretty cool. Yeah.

[00:24:20] **Gary Ilyes:** [00:24:20] Yeah.

[00:24:21] **John Mueller:** [00:24:21] It's a complex thing. So with SGE, we also have Bard, which I think is everywhere now, right? Or is it in individual countries? I don't know.

[00:24:33] **Gary Ilyes:** [00:24:33] I have no idea.

[00:24:35] **John Mueller:** [00:24:35] Have you all used Bard for something exciting?

[00:24:40] **Martin Splitt:** [00:24:40] I've played around with it, but not for much, to be honest.

[00:24:46] **Gary Ilyes:** [00:24:46] [laughs] Every now and then, I use it for generating something that I can use to trick people.

[00:24:56] **Martin Splitt:** [00:24:56] What?

[00:24:58] **John Mueller:** [00:24:58] What?

[00:25:00] **Gary Ilyes:** [00:25:00] I don't know where I did a presentation, and I asked people to not tweet until I say that they're okay to tweet. And basically the first half of the presentation was just written by Bard.

[00:25:13] **Martin Splitt:** [00:25:13] No way!

[00:25:15] **Martin Splitt:** [00:25:15] Yeah, yeah.

[00:25:16] **John Mueller:** [00:25:16] But was it good or was it...?

[00:25:18] **Gary Ilyes:** [00:25:18] Wait, wait, I didn't edit anything. Like basically it gave me the the speaker notes plus like whatever goes on the slides. Actually, I was taking the points that it was giving me and putting it on the slide. And I was literally like word almost word by word just like saying whatever it was saying. That's why I didn't want people to tweet it. And many times it was really good. So, for example, we had these Search Console launches And then every now and then it will be like, "And then in 2023, we launched the Search Console Verification API." And then when I saw it, I was like, "No, we didn't!"

[00:26:06] **Martin Splitt:** [00:26:06] So did you just go anyway?

[00:26:09] **Gary Ilyes:** [00:26:09] Yeah, and I just put it in there. But that was exactly because I wanted to make a point, that AI will hallucinate. And at the moment, we don't have technology to reduce hallucinations to zero. You will always have some hallucinations with whatever we have today. And it went really well, I think. And the last time I used, that was, I think, actually yesterday, where it generated a full closing keynote, five-minute. Oh, and the interesting thing is that you can give it, like generate a five-minute closing keynote for an event about blah, blah, blah. Like you write a prompt. And it actually came out fantastic. I barely made any edits to it.

[00:27:06] **Martin Splitt:** [00:27:06] Whoa. Did it hallucinate in that?

[00:27:08] **Gary Illyes:** [00:27:08] No.

[00:27:09] **Martin Splitt:** [00:27:09] Whoa!

[00:27:11] **John Mueller:** [00:27:11] Okay.

[00:27:12] **Gary Illyes:** [00:27:12] But I mean, it was just like a more inspirational drama. So it's like not my style, where it's like, offend half of the internet.

[00:27:26] **John Mueller:** [00:27:26] Oh, you mean if you use Bard more, you'll offend people less?

[00:27:34] **Gary Illyes:** [00:27:34] Oh, yeah, I shouldn't use Bard.

[00:27:36] **John Mueller:** [00:27:36] Maybe you should. [chuckles]

[00:27:38] **Martin Splitt:** [00:27:38] This just in: Gary got nicer.

[00:27:40] **John Mueller:** [00:27:40] That's what I was thinking. It's like, I don't know. Maybe we can, I don't know? Well, okay. Fine. I use it every now and then to kind of brainstorm ideas. And I find it a little bit helpful, especially if I have to write something, where it's easier for me to take something and look at it and say, "Oh, this is bad. I will rewrite it," rather than to stare at a piece of paper and be like, "Oh, what should I write?"

[00:28:13] **Martin Splitt:** [00:28:13] That is true. I've used it for that, yeah.

[00:28:16] **John Mueller:** [00:28:16] I kind of like have it create a structure or write some stuff for me. And then I'm like, this is bad. This is bad. This is okay. This is bad. And then it moves forward a little bit faster. So it's pretty cool.

[00:28:29] **Martin Splitt:** [00:28:29] That's nice. That's true.

[00:28:35] **John Mueller:** [00:28:35] Cool. Okay.

[00:28:36] **Gary Illyes:** [00:28:36] What else?

[00:28:37] **John Mueller:** [00:28:37] What else? So in-person events you mentioned. I think we had a bunch of them this year again. That was cool, including one here in Zurich.

[00:28:48] **Martin Splitt:** [00:28:48] Yep. We did one here in October. That was really, really nice seeing so many new faces and faces we've already met before. It's always lovely. We had Brazil. We had Japan.

[00:29:04] **Gary Illyes:** [00:29:04] Oh, Japan was wonderful.

[00:29:06] **Martin Splitt:** [00:29:06] Yeah?

[00:29:07] **Gary Illyes:** [00:29:07] It was so good. It was so good.

[00:29:08] **John Mueller:** [00:29:08] Do you mean the food or...?

[00:29:10] **Gary Illyes:** [00:29:10] No, the people. The people.

[00:29:13] **John Mueller:** [00:29:13] You ate the people?

[00:29:16] **Gary Illyes:** [00:29:16] What? I don't eat people. What do you mean?

[00:29:20] **John Mueller:** [00:29:20] I'm sorry. Cool. Cool. Okay. Sounds like we should do more events. Another prediction for next year. Oh my gosh. We should.

[00:29:29] **Gary Illyes:** [00:29:29] Wait, wait, wait. But we should also go to external events. We should not abandon external events.

[00:29:34] **Martin Splitt:** [00:29:34] We've been to external events this year as well. And we will continue to do that. It was really nice meeting the Spanish community, for instance, in SEO at the Beach. That was lovely.

[00:29:48] **Gary Ilyes:** [00:29:48] Maybe we should do more meetups. Like when I go to an event, I usually try to organize like a small-- like up to five people just chat over a coffee.

[00:30:03] **Martin Splitt:** [00:30:03] Five people?

[00:30:05] **Gary Ilyes:** [00:30:05] Yeah. I mean, keeping it really cheap. It's always somehow inspiring and lots of good learnings. Oh, I hate that word, learnings.

[00:30:20] **Martin Splitt:** [00:30:20] I agree that it's really nice in the smaller groups, but I usually run meetup events around events that I go to as well, but it's a little larger, depending on the facilities that we have in the Google offices there. But yeah, if we don't have a Google office, then having a coffee with five people is a really good idea.

[00:30:38] **John Mueller:** [00:30:38] Yeah. We should meet more people.

[00:30:42] **Martin Splitt:** [00:30:42] Yep.

[00:30:43] **John Mueller:** [00:30:43] Cool. Okay.

[00:30:44] **Martin Splitt:** [00:30:44] So next year is probably your chance to say hi to us more.

[00:30:49] **John Mueller:** [00:30:49] Well, they can always say hi to us.

[00:30:51] **Martin Splitt:** [00:30:51] No!

[00:30:52] **John Mueller:** [00:30:52] Ideally, on the street. I had that in Brighton. It was kind of weird. I don't know. I talked to the guy afterwards. But I went for a run in the morning. It was early in the morning because I wanted to get some breakfast afterwards and go to the conference. And this person on the street stops me and is like, "Are you John? Can we take a photo together?"

[00:31:22] **Gary Ilyes:** [00:31:22] So basically it's your fault. Like, see, this is why I'm not running.

[00:31:27] **John Mueller:** [00:31:27] Oh, oh, this is why you're not running.

[00:31:29] **Martin Splitt:** [00:31:29] Why are you running? Why are you running?

[00:31:31] **John Mueller:** [00:31:31] What are you running from, John? Come back!

[00:31:36] **Martin Splitt:** [00:31:36] John, John, wait!

[00:31:38] **Gary Ilyes:** [00:31:38] Oh my God.

[00:31:41] **John Mueller:** [00:31:41] I think it's always fun taking photos with people and meeting people and hearing what they're working on. So it's not bad. It's just sometimes surprising.

[00:31:52] **Martin Splitt:** [00:31:52] It's surprising when it happens in your hometown. It happened to me in Zurich twice. Once in the tram, someone was staring at me. And I'm like, "Uh-oh, what's happening?" And it was like, "You're the guy who runs these conferences and stuff for Google here in Zurich, right?" I'm like, "Oh, hi, yes." And the second time when I was picking up t-shirts I printed, "You're the Google JavaScript guy, no?" I'm like, "Okay." "I saw your YouTube video."

[00:32:20] **John Mueller:** [00:32:20] Well, maybe if you're picking up t-shirts that say Google JavaScript on them.

[00:32:23] **Martin Splitt:** [00:32:23] No, they didn't. They were completely unrelated. [laughs] Oh my God, do you remember the Google Dance 2018 event that we did? With the balloons, where we had a co-worker of ours, Andre, try to bring a helium bottle to inflate the balloons on like an electric scooter. No, not an electric scooter, like a normal push. That was hilarious. And I was like, Andre, no. Let's not do that.

[00:32:56] **John Mueller:** [00:32:56] That seems like a really bad idea. How did? Oh my God.

[00:33:00] **Martin Splitt:** [00:33:00] It was a bad idea.

[00:33:02] **John Mueller:** [00:33:02] I hope this podcast is off the record.

[00:33:05] **Martin Splitt:** [00:33:05] I hope it's off the record.

[00:33:06] **Gary Ilyes:** [00:33:06] And it's the last of the year.

[00:33:09] **Martin Splitt:** [00:33:09] Ohhh!

[00:33:10] **Gary Ilyes:** [00:33:10] Oh.

[00:33:11] **John Mueller:** [00:33:11] Okay. Cool. Well, we have some predictions for next year, too. So good.

[00:33:17] **Martin Splitt:** [00:33:17] Do we?

[00:33:18] **John Mueller:** [00:33:18] Yes. We will go to 16 megabytes. [laughs]

[00:33:23] **Gary Ilyes:** [00:33:23] Oh, come on!

[00:33:25] **John Mueller:** [00:33:25] [laughs] Hashtag impact. Okay. Fine. Martin, take it away.

[00:33:35] **Martin Splitt:** [00:33:35] Okay. I think, as we already said, we will continue to work on guidance and control mechanisms for publishers regarding AI. I also think that this generative AI stuff is so new and so different that the ecosystem-- and we will continue to learn how to work with these tools. I think they are not necessarily a threat. They are a very useful set of tools that can make our lives easier. As you said, I'm using it to help me over empty page paralysis. When I have to write a new document, I have to write a new blog post, it takes me ages to get started. And then I hate everything, and I delete everything, and then it takes me ages to get the second one out.

[00:34:21] So I just have generative AI, generate a first draft, and then I go, "No, that's not what I want to say. No, that's not how I want to say it." And then it's a lot easier to do stuff, and I think we're going to see more of that. Like the content creators learning how to leverage AI rather than destroying everything with it, hopefully. I do think that we will hopefully have some guidance on how to use it responsibly and reasonably as well to help people get started with it and learn from others, as well as just making their own experiences. Another thing is that I guess our quality focus will continue. What do you think?

[00:35:05] **Gary Ilyes:** [00:35:05] Of course, yeah.

[00:35:07] **Martin Splitt:** [00:35:07] Are we there yet?

[00:35:08] **Gary Ilyes:** [00:35:08] No, more. More.

[00:35:09] **Martin Splitt:** [00:35:09] More quality. And I do hope that we will do more meetups and stuff. I definitely want to meet people. I'm pretty sure there will be another virtual unconference too.

[00:35:23] **Gary Ilyes:** [00:35:23] Maybe. Maybe. Hopefully.

[00:35:26] **John Mueller:** [00:35:26] And I think we're moving to GA5, right? Or GA6?

[00:35:30] **Martin Splitt:** [00:35:30] Ohhh!

[00:35:31] **Gary Ilyes:** [00:35:31] Martin, you should have stopped.

[00:35:33] **Martin Splitt:** [00:35:33] Oh, man! Oh, God!

[00:35:37] **Gary Ilyes:** [00:35:37] Stop him. Stop him.

[00:35:39] **John Mueller:** [00:35:39] I'm so sorry. I... yeah. I don't use GA at all. So it's-- I'm just trolling. Sorry.

[00:35:48] **Martin Splitt:** [00:35:48] Okay, unless you have something to add for our predictions for next year, I would then probably say bye-bye. And that's it for the episode.

[00:35:57] ♪ [music] ♪

[00:36:01] **Martin Splitt:** [00:36:01] We've been having fun with these podcast episodes, and we hope that you, the listener, have found them both entertaining and insightful, too. Feel free to drop us a note on Twitter @googlesearchc or chat with us at one of the next upcoming events that we go to, if you have any thoughts. And of course, don't forget to like and subscribe. Thank you so much, and goodbye! Bye-bye.

[00:36:26] **Gary Illyes:** [00:36:26] Bye-bye!

[00:36:27] **John Mueller:** [00:36:27] Bye-bye!

[00:36:28] ♪ [music] ♪