

Google Quality Raters' Review for

[site logo]

Performed by





Introduction

Google's Quality Raters' Guidelines have been around for quite a few years. They are a large document that is given to thousands of people whom Google hires as contractors. The goal of these guidelines is to teach these "Quality Raters" how to assess the overall quality of a website.

It is important to note that the Quality Raters have no direct impact on the websites that they are analyzing. If they think that a particular website is a low quality one, that website will not be directly demoted. Instead, what happens is that the information gained from these raters is given to Google's engineers to help them create better algorithms to assess quality on the web.

It is believed that there are several thousand Quality Raters and that each one of them is evaluating a large number of sites. It is also believed by many that their findings are used to train machine learning algorithms.

You can find these guidelines here:

<https://static.googleusercontent.com/media/www.google.com/en//insidesearch/howsearchworks/assets/searchqualityevaluatorguidelines.pdf>

The document is huge...around 160 pages. It contains many examples of high and low quality sites. It also contains specific examples of what Google considers measures of high and low quality.

The purpose of this report is to assess your website through the eyes of one of Google's Quality Raters. You will see several questions, followed by a screenshot of the relevant section of text from the guidelines and then our thoughts on how your site compares.

Is the Site's Purpose Clear?

Google's quality guidelines say the following:



2.2 What is the Purpose of a Webpage?

The purpose of a page is **the reason or reasons why the page was created**. Every page on the Internet is created for a purpose, or for multiple purposes. Most pages are created to be helpful for users. Some pages are created merely to make money, with little or no effort to help users. Some pages are even created to cause harm to users. The first step in understanding a page is figuring out its purpose.

Why is it important to determine the purpose of the page for PQ rating?

- **The goal of PQ rating is to determine how well a page achieves its purpose.** In order to assign a rating, you must understand the purpose of the page and sometimes the website.
- By understanding the purpose of the page, you'll better understand what criteria are important to consider when evaluating that particular page.
- Websites and pages should be created to help users. Websites and pages that are created with intent to harm users, deceive users, or make money with no attempt to help users, should receive the **Lowest** PQ rating. More on this later.

If your site's purpose is not clear to someone who is a stranger to your business, then this is not good.

Is the site's purpose clear?

[Insert notes here on whether or not the site's purpose is clear. Refer to the accompanying ebook for further instructions on how to do this.]

Is the site likely to be considered a YMYL page?

YMYL stands for "Your Money or Your Life". If Google considers your site a YMYL site, it is likely going to be held to a higher standard of quality.

On February 7, 2017, there was a significant core quality update that affected a large number of sites. A good number of sites that saw a significant drop in traffic starting in February or March of 2017 appear to have been affected by this algorithm change. A large number of these sites were YMYL sites that were lacking in some aspect of quality.

The following are generally automatically considered YMYL sites:

- Sites giving medical advice.



- Sites giving legal advice.
- Sites giving financial advice.
- Sites that allow purchase of products or services.

Here is what the QRG have to say about YMYL pages:

2.3 Your Money or Your Life (YMYL) Pages

Some types of pages could potentially impact the future happiness, health, or financial stability of users. We call such pages “Your Money or Your Life” pages, or YMYL. The following are examples of YMYL pages:

- **Shopping or financial transaction pages:** webpages that allow users to make purchases, transfer money, pay bills, etc. online (such as online stores and online banking pages).
- **Financial information pages:** webpages that provide advice or information about investments, taxes, retirement planning, home purchase, paying for college, buying insurance, etc.
- **Medical information pages:** webpages that provide advice or information about health, drugs, specific diseases or conditions, mental health, nutrition, etc.
- **Legal information pages:** webpages that provide legal advice or information on topics such as divorce, child custody, creating a will, becoming a citizen, etc.
- **News articles or public/official information pages important for having an informed citizenry:** webpages that include information about local/state/national government processes, people, and laws; disaster response services; government programs and social services; news about important topics such as international events, business, politics, science, and technology; etc. Please use your judgment and knowledge of your locale. Keep in mind that not all news articles are necessarily considered YMYL.
- **Other:** there are many other topics that you may consider YMYL, such as child adoption, car safety information, etc. Please use your judgment.

We have very high Page Quality rating standards for YMYL pages because low quality YMYL pages could potentially negatively impact users’ happiness, health, or financial stability.

Is this site a YMYL site?

Is it clear which content is main content and which is supplemental content on important pages?

Main content is the part of the page that directly helps it achieve its purpose. Supplemental content is everything else. Examples of supplemental content include the following:



- Navigation links
- Sidebar information
- Footer information

2.4.1 Identifying the Main Content (MC)

Main Content is any part of the page that directly helps the page achieve its purpose. Webmasters directly control the MC of the page (except for user-generated content). MC can be text, images, videos, page features (e.g., calculators, games), or it can be user-generated content such as videos, reviews, articles, etc. that users have added or uploaded to the page. Note that tabs on some pages lead to even more information (e.g., customer reviews) and can sometimes be considered part of the MC of the page.

Type of Page and Purpose	MC Highlighted in Yellow
News website homepage: the purpose is to inform users about recent or important events.	MC - News Homepage
News article page: the purpose is to communicate information about an event or news topic.	MC - News Article
Store product page: the purpose is to sell or give information about the product. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Content behind the Reviews, Shipping, and Safety Information tabs are considered to be part of the MC.	MC - Shopping Page
Video page: the purpose is to allow users to view a video.	MC - Video Page
Currency converter page: the purpose is to calculate equivalent amounts in different currencies.	MC - Currency Converter
Blog post page: the purpose is to display a blog post.	MC - Blog Post Page
Search engine homepage: the purpose is to allow users to enter a query and search the Internet.	MC - Search Engine Homepage
Bank login page: the purpose is to allow users to log in to bank online.	MC - Bank Login Page

2.4.2 Identifying the Supplementary Content (SC)

Supplementary Content contributes to a good user experience on the page, but does not directly help the page achieve its purpose. SC is controlled by webmasters and is an important part of the user experience. One common type of SC is navigation links that allow users to visit other parts of the website. Note that in some cases, content behind tabs may be considered part of the SC of the page.

Is it clear which content is the main content and which is supplemental content on important pages?

Are ads and sponsored content clearly labelled as such?



2.4.3 Identifying Advertisements/Monetization (Ads)

Ads may contribute to a good user experience. Advertisements/Monetization (Ads) is content and/or links that are displayed for the purpose of monetizing (making money from) the page. The presence or absence of Ads is not by itself a reason for a **High** or **Low** quality rating. Without advertising and monetization, some webpages could not exist because it costs money to maintain a website and create high quality content.

There are several different ways to monetize a webpage, including advertisements and affiliate programs. See [here](#) for more information on website monetization. Note that monetization on mobile pages may be more subtle than monetization on desktop pages.

The most common type of monetization is advertisements. Ads may be labeled as "ads," "sponsored links," "sponsored listings," "sponsored results," etc. Usually, you can click on the links or mouse over the content to determine whether they are Ads, as they often refer to a URL outside of that website. Ads may change when you reload the page, and different users may see different Ads on the same page.

Webmasters can choose to display Ads on their page (such as by joining an [advertising network](#)), but they may not always directly control the content of the Ads. However, we will consider a website responsible for the overall quality of the Ads displayed.

Copyright 2017

10

Important: For the purpose of this guideline, we will consider monetized links of any type to be "Ads." See [here](#) for different types of website monetization.

Type of Page and Purpose	Ads Highlighted in Red
News article page: the purpose is to communicate information about an event or news topic.	Ads - News Article
Video page: the purpose is to allow users to view a video.	Ads - Video Page
Blog post page: the purpose is to display a blog post.	Ads - Blog Post Page
Store product page: the purpose is to sell or give information about the product.	No ads - Shopping Page

Are ads and sponsored content labelled as such?

Is it clear who is responsible for the content of the site?

Google wants to see that it is obvious who is responsible for the site's content. While it *can* be acceptable for a site's owners to remain anonymous, this is not recommended.

Here is what the QRG have to say:



2.5.2 Finding Who is Responsible for the Website and Who Created the Content on the Page

Every page belongs to a website, and it should be clear:

- Who (what individual, company, business, foundation, etc.) is responsible for the website.
- Who (what individual, company, business, foundation, etc.) created the content on the page you are evaluating.

Websites are usually very clear about who created the content on the page. There are many reasons for this:

- Commercial websites may have copyrighted material they want to protect.
- Businesses want users to know who they are.
- Artists, authors, musicians, and other original content creators usually want to be known and appreciated.
- Foundations often want support and even volunteers.
- High quality stores want users to feel comfortable buying online.

Most websites have “contact us” or “about us” or “about” pages that provide information about who owns the site. Many companies have an entire website or blog devoted to who they are and what they are doing, what jobs are available, etc. Google and Marriott are both examples of this, and there are many others:

- [Google Official Blog](#)
- [Marriott Blog](#)
- [Southwest Airlines Blog](#)
- [Netflix Tech Blog](#)

Often a business or organization is responsible for the content of a website, not an individual person. The IBM Corporation is responsible for the content on [ibm.com](#). The Cleveland Clinic is responsible for the content on [clevelandclinic.org](#). An individual is not responsible for the content on these websites, even though many individuals contributed to creating and maintaining the content. In these cases, we will view the business or organization as responsible for the content on every single page, as well as maintenance of the website.

On some websites, users create the MC of many pages, while the business or organization itself maintains the website. The company Facebook is responsible for the Facebook website, but individuals create the content on their personal Facebook pages. The company Wikipedia is responsible for the Wikipedia website, but individuals create article content. Other websites with user-generated content include YouTube, Twitter, other social networking websites, other article publishing websites, Q&A websites, forums, etc. For these websites, you must look at each page to determine the author(s) or creator(s) of the content on that page.

Finally, there are some websites that show licensed or syndicated content. This means that the website has paid money or has some business relationship with the creator of the content. In these cases, we will consider the website itself to be responsible for the licensed or syndicated content, even if it wasn't created by the website.

Having an ‘About Us’ or ‘Contact Us’ page lets Google and users gain a further understand the scope and context of your website. This makes it clear who runs the site and who is creating the content, helping determine which individuals are responsible for certain sections of the site.

Is it clear who is responsible for the site?

Is there an obvious way to contact the site?

Google instructs the Quality Raters to determine whether it is possible for users to contact the site owner or business. This can be tricky as some site owners want to remain anonymous.



If a site has no obvious contact information, this can potentially be seen as a sign of low quality.

2.5.3 Finding About Us, Contact Information, and Customer Service Information

Many websites are interested in communicating with their users. There are many reasons that users might have for contacting a website, from reporting problems such as broken pages, to asking for content removal. Many websites offer multiple ways for users to contact the website: email addresses, phone numbers, physical addresses, web contact forms, etc. Sometimes, this contact information is even organized by department and provides the names of individuals to contact.

Is there an obvious way to contact the site?

For a shopping website, is there obvious information on payment terms, refund policy, etc?

I found it interesting that Google specifically asks their Raters to look for this information. It makes sense to me though as this type of information really should be found on any legitimate shopping website.

I would complete this section for any site that sells products.

For shopping websites, we'll ask you to do some special checks. Look for contact information—including the store's policies on payment, exchanges, and returns. Sometimes this information is listed under "customer service."

Is there obvious information on payment terms, refund policy, etc.

(Note, you can enter N/A here if this is not a shopping site)



What off-site reputation information is available?

Did you know that the things that people say about your business, off of your website is used as a ranking factor? At the SMX conference in the fall of 2017, Google's Gary Illyes commented twice that off-site sentiment is important.

Most likely, negative comments across the web like this are only a problem if there is obvious widespread concern. If you have a few negative reviews online, you are probably not at risk for an algorithmic demotion.

Here is what the QRG say:

2.6 Website Reputation

A website's reputation is based on the experience of real users, as well as the opinion of people who are experts in the topic of the website. Keep in mind that websites often represent real companies, organizations, and other entities. Therefore, reputation research applies to both the website and the actual company, organization, or entity that the website is representing.

A website's reputation can also help you understand what a website is best known for, and as a result how well it accomplishes its purpose. For example, newspapers may be known for high quality, independent investigative reporting while satire websites may be known for their humor.

Many websites are eager to tell users how great they are. Some webmasters have read these rating guidelines and write "reviews" on various review websites. But for Page Quality rating, you must also look for outside, independent reputation information about the website. When the website says one thing about itself, but reputable external sources disagree with what the website says, trust the external sources.

Your job is to truly evaluate the Page Quality of the site, not just blindly accept information on one or two pages of the website. Be skeptical of claims that websites make about themselves.

2.6.1 Reputation Research

Use reputation research to find out what real users, as well as experts, think about a website. Look for reviews, references, recommendations by experts, news articles, and other credible information created/written by individuals about the website.

Stores frequently have user ratings, which can help you understand a store's reputation based on the reports of people who actually shop there. We consider a large number of positive user reviews as evidence of positive reputation.

Many other kinds of websites have reputations as well. For example, you might find that a newspaper website has won journalistic awards. Prestigious awards, such as the Pulitzer Prize award, are strong evidence of positive reputation.

When a high level of authoritativeness or expertise is needed, the reputation of a website should be judged on what expert opinions have to say. Recommendations from expert sources, such as professional societies, are strong evidence of very positive reputation.

Reputation research is necessary for all websites you encounter. Do not just assume websites you personally use have a good reputation. Please do research! You might be surprised at what you find.



2.6.2 Sources of Reputation Information

Look for information written by a person, not statistics or other machine-compiled information. News articles, Wikipedia articles, blog posts, magazine articles, forum discussions, and ratings from independent organizations can all be sources of reputation information. Look for independent, credible sources of information.

Sometimes, you will find information about a website that is not related to its reputation. For example, pages like [Alexa](#) have information about Internet traffic to the website, but do not provide evidence of positive or negative reputation. You can ignore this information since it's not helpful for Page Quality rating.

What evidence can be found regarding off-site reputation?

Is there reputation information available from Yelp, BBB, Google Shopping or Amazon?

This section is similar to the last section. If a business is listed in Yelp, BBB, Google Shopping or Amazon, this can be a sign of a legitimate business. If you have no listing in these areas, but their competitors do, then this is something that should be improved upon.

Look for articles, reviews, forum posts, discussions, etc. written by people about the website. For businesses, there are many sources of reputation information and reviews. Here are some examples: [Yelp](#), [Better Business Bureau](#) (a nonprofit organization that focuses on the trustworthiness of businesses and charities), [Amazon](#), and [Google Shopping](#). You can try searching on specific sites to find reviews. For example, you can try [ibm site:bbb.org] or ["ibm.com" site:bbb.org].

Is there any reputation information available from Yelp, BBB, Google Shopping or Amazon?



Is there any evidence of the site/company being involved in fraud or financial wrongdoing?

Negative reviews are bad enough. But, if it is really obvious that your client has a history of fraud or financial wrongdoing, this can affect your rankings as well. We don't know exactly how Google measures this, but it is definitely mentioned in the QRG:

It is also important to read the reviews because the content of the reviews matter, not just the number. Credible, convincing reports of fraud and financial wrongdoing is evidence of extremely negative reputation. A single encounter with a rude clerk or the delayed receipt of a single package should not be considered negative reputation information. Please use your judgment.

Is there evidence online of fraud or wrongdoing for this company?

Are there any on-site testimonials, user engagement, etc. that could be indicative of a good reputation?

Google likes to see that people are saying good things about a company, even if it is on your own website. Here is a quote from a [guide that Google has](#) on making a high quality site:

- **Credible:** Show your site's credibility by using original research, citations, links, reviews and testimonials. An author biography or testimonials from real customers can help boost your site's trustworthiness and reputation.

In terms of user engagement, an active comments section can be a sign of good engagement too. Gary Illyes from Google was asked about this on Twitter:



Jennifer Slegg @jenstar · 27 Apr 2016



@methode The same applies to comments on blog posts, correct? Esp since we do see content in comments ranking (and helps show authority).



3



2



Gary "鯨理" Illyes ✓

@methode

Following



Replying to @jenstar

@jenstar yep. In general if we see that there's a healthy, thriving community on a site, that can help a lot

12:44 AM - 27 Apr 2016 from Zurich, Switzerland

Is there evidence of a positive on-site reputation?

Is this a YMYL site with no external reputation?

Not every site has external reputation information available. If every site needed a reputation in order to rank well, we would never see new sites ranking. However, if your site is considered YMYL then it likely will not rank well unless external information is available. The reason for this is that Google does not want to be prominently displaying financial, medical, legal or other important advice from a site or business that no one has ever heard about.

Reputation research is also critical for information pages and news websites, particularly those on YMYL topics. The lack of any reputation information at all for a YMYL website may be a reason for a **Low** rating.

Is this a YMYL site with no external reputation



Is there evidence of strong E-A-T (Experience, Authority & Trust) for this site and its authors?

E-A-T is one of the most important parts of Google's assessment of quality for many sites. If your site is a YMYL site, then E-A-T is extremely important.

Many sites saw drops on February 7, 2017 or with other core quality updates had serious E-A-T problems. For example, a site was previously ranking highly for queries about a number of prescription medications. However, the site had no one on staff with medical E-A-T. Another site was a site that gave business advice and coaching. The content was good, but the lack of E-A-T from the authors was quite obvious. This site dropped on February 7, 2017 as well and their rankings were overtaken by a couple of sites whose authors had extensive business schooling and were often quoted in authoritative business publications like Forbes and Inc.

Lack of E-A-T is a serious issue. In some cases, this can't be fixed. However, some sites have successfully seen great ranking improvements by improving upon their E-A-T.

Here is what the QRG say about E-A-T:

3.2 More about Expertise, Authoritativeness, and Trustworthiness (E-A-T)

The amount of expertise, authoritativeness, and trustworthiness (E-A-T) that a webpage/website has is very important. MC quality and amount, website information, and website reputation all inform the E-A-T of a website.

Keep in mind that there are “expert” websites of all types, even gossip websites, fashion websites, humor websites, forum and Q&A pages, etc. In fact, some types of information are found almost exclusively on forums and discussions, where a community of experts can provide valuable perspectives on specific topics.

- High quality medical advice should come from people or organizations with appropriate medical expertise or accreditation. High quality medical advice or information should be written or produced in a professional style and should be edited, reviewed, and updated on a regular basis.
- High quality news articles should contain factually accurate content presented in a way that helps users achieve a better understanding of events. Established editorial policies and review processes are typically held by high quality news sources ([example 1](#), [example 2](#)).
- High quality information pages on scientific topics should represent well-established scientific consensus on issues where such consensus exists.
- High quality financial advice, legal advice, tax advice, etc., should come from expert sources and be maintained and updated regularly.
- High quality advice pages on topics such as home remodeling (which can cost thousands of dollars and impact your living situation) or advice on parenting issues (which can impact the future happiness of a family) should also come from “expert” or experienced sources that users can trust.
- High quality pages on hobbies, such as photography or learning to play a guitar, also require expertise.

Some topics require less formal expertise. Many people write extremely detailed, helpful reviews of products or restaurants. Many people share tips and life experiences on forums, blogs, etc. These ordinary people may be considered experts in topics where they have life experience. If it seems as if the person creating the content has the type and amount of life experience to make him or her an “expert” on the topic, we will value this “everyday expertise” and not penalize the person/webpage/website for not having “formal” education or training in the field.

It’s even possible to have everyday expertise in YMYL topics. For example, there are forums and support pages for people with specific diseases. Sharing personal experience is a form of everyday expertise. Consider [this example](#). Here, forum participants are telling how long their loved ones lived with liver cancer. This is an example of sharing personal experiences (in which they are experts), not medical advice. Specific medical information and advice (rather than descriptions of life experiences) should come from doctors or other health professionals.

Think about the topic of the page. What kind of expertise is required for the page to achieve its purpose well? The standard for expertise depends on the topic of the page.

E-A-T is most important for YMYL sites. However, I do believe that every site should do everything they can to demonstrate their E-A-T.

Does this site have good E-A-T?



If this is an eCommerce store, how is the E-A-T in regards to products?

If a site sells products that are expensive or represent a major investment it is important that good Experience, Authority and Trust is demonstrated. Having a good reputation on and off site as well as a helpful customer service department is key in maintaining E-A-T.

Important: E-A-T ratings for product results need extra care and attention.

Often, the results for product queries are YMYL pages. Users need high quality information from authoritative sources when researching products, especially when products are expensive or represent a major investment/important life event (e.g., cars, washing machines, computers, wedding gifts, baby products). When buying products, users need websites they can trust: good reputation, extensive customer service support, etc. Results for product queries may be important for both your money and your life (YMYL)!

Does this site have appropriate product E-A-T

Are there any pages that have obvious signs of low quality?

The Quality Raters are given very specific instructions on what to look for on individual pages of a site in terms of reputation.

A page is considered low quality if any of the following are true:

6.0 Low Quality Pages

Low quality pages are unsatisfying or lacking in some element that prevents them from achieving their purpose well. These pages lack expertise or are not very trustworthy/authoritative for the purpose of the page.

If a page has one of the following characteristics, the **Low** rating is usually appropriate:

- The author of the page or website does not have enough expertise for the topic of the page and/or the website is not trustworthy or authoritative for the topic. In other words, the page/website is lacking E-A-T.
- The quality of the MC is low.
- There is an unsatisfying amount of MC for the purpose of the page.
- MC is present, but difficult to use due to distracting/disruptive/misleading Ads, other content/features, etc.
- There is an unsatisfying amount of website information for the purpose of the website (no good reason for anonymity).
- The website has a negative reputation.



Are there pages on the site that have issues with low quality?

Is there medical, financial or legal advice that should be kept up to date?

The QRG mention that sites offering medical, legal and financial or other YMYL advice should be regularly kept up to date.

Is there any obvious evidence of YMYL advice that should be kept up to date?

For eCommerce stores, is the shopping cart working? Are there other parts of the site that don't work properly?

For eCommerce sites, Google instructs the Quality Raters to actually put an item in the shopping cart to make sure that it is working. A shopping cart that is not working properly can be a sign of low quality.

For each page you evaluate, spend a few minutes examining the MC before drawing a conclusion about it. Read the article, watch the video, examine the pictures, use the calculator, play the online game, etc. Remember that MC also includes page features and functionality, so test the page out. For example, if the page is a product page on a store website, **put at least one product in the cart to make sure the shopping cart is functioning.** If the page is an online game, spend a few minutes playing it.

Are there parts of the site that don't function as they should



Is there evidence that most pages on the site have one of the following:
time, effort, expertise, talent/skill:

The Quality Raters are instructed to assess individual pages to determine whether they are of high quality. It is important that articles have a good amount of content in them. This doesn't necessarily mean that you need to have a certain number of words on the page. But, it does mean that you should have enough words on the page to be extremely useful to people.

When the Raters are assessing the quality of the content, they're instructed to not only read the content on the page, but also look at the pictures, watch videos, play games if they're there and more.

They're wanting to see that this page had a lot of time, effort, expertise, and talent/skill put into it.

4.2 A Satisfying Amount of High Quality Main Content

The quality of the MC is one of the most important criteria in Page Quality rating, and informs the E-A-T of the page. For all types of webpages, creating high quality MC takes a significant amount of at least one of the following: **time, effort, expertise, and talent/skill**. For news articles and information pages, high quality MC must be factually accurate for the topic and must be supported by expert consensus where such consensus exists.

For each page you evaluate, spend a few minutes examining the MC before drawing a conclusion about it. Read the article, watch the video, examine the pictures, use the calculator, play the online game, etc. **Remember that MC also includes page features and functionality**, so test the page out. For example, if the page is a product page on a store website, put at least one product in the cart to make sure the shopping cart is functioning. If the page is an online game, spend a few minutes playing it.

The purpose of the page will help you determine what high quality content means for that page. For example, **High quality information pages should be factually accurate, clearly written, and comprehensive**. High quality shopping content should allow users to find the products they want and to purchase the products easily. High quality humor or satire should be entertaining, while factual accuracy is not a requirement as long as the page would be understood as satire by users.

The amount of content necessary for the page to be satisfying depends on the topic and purpose of the page. A **High** quality page on a broad topic with a lot of available information will have more content than a **High** quality page on a narrower topic. Here are some examples of pages with a satisfying amount of high quality MC.

Is there evidence that most pages have a good amount of time, effort, expertise, talent/skill



Is there obvious evidence of low quality main content?

Qualities like time, effort, expertise, and skill which help establish E-A-T are important in determining the page quality. If those qualities are lacking from the MC that content may be considered low quality leading to the page to be given a low quality rating.

Low quality content can be a bit subjective. We don't know exactly how Google determines what content is low quality. Much of this is may be machine learned. However, Google does give us some examples of the types of things that would be considered low quality content:

6.1 Low Quality Main Content

One of the most important criteria in PQ rating is the quality of the MC, which is determined by how much time, effort, expertise, and talent/skill have gone into the creation of the page, and also informs the E-A-T of the page.

Consider this example: Most students have to write papers for high school or college. Many students take shortcuts to save time and effort by doing one or more of the following:

- Buying papers online or getting someone else to write for them.
- Including inaccurate information, such as making things up, stretching the truth, or creating a false sense of doubt about well-established facts.
- Writing quickly with no drafts or editing.
- Failing to cite sources, or making up sources where none exist.
- Filling the report with large pictures or other distracting content.
- Copying the entire report from an encyclopedia, or paraphrasing content by changing words or sentence structure here and there.
- Using commonly known facts, for example, "Argentina is a country. People live there. Argentina has borders."
- Using a lot of words to communicate only basic ideas or facts, for example, "Pandas eat bamboo. Pandas eat a lot of bamboo. Bamboo is the best food for a Panda bear."

Unfortunately, the content of some webpages is similarly created. We will consider content to be **Low** quality if it is created without adequate time, effort, expertise, or talent/skill. Inaccurate or misleading information presented as fact is also a reason for **Low** or even **Lowest** quality ratings. Pages with low quality MC do not achieve their purpose well.

Keep in mind that we have very different standards for pages on large, professionally-produced business websites than we have for small amateur, hobbyist, or personal websites. The quality of MC we expect for a large online store is very different than what we might expect for a small local business website.

All PQ rating should be done in the context of the purpose of the page and the type of website.

Important: Low quality MC is a sufficient reason to give a page a **Low** quality rating.

Is there evidence of low quality main content on pages?



Are there pages with an unsatisfying amount of main content?

Again, for MC to be seen as high quality the page should look like a considerable amount of time, effort, expertise and talent/skill have been put into its creation. It is important to note here that the word count of a page is not always important. If you have a page that contains only a few words, but searchers are finding it useful, then this can be acceptable.

What we're looking for here is obvious evidence that a page does not contain enough information to be helpful.

Here is what the QRG say:

6.2 Unsatisfying Amount of Main Content

Some Low quality pages are unsatisfying because they have a small amount of MC for the purpose of the page. For example, imagine an encyclopedia article on a very broad topic such as World War II that has just a few paragraphs.

Important: An unsatisfying amount of MC is a sufficient reason to give a page a Low quality rating.

Is there evidence of pages with an unsatisfying amount of content?

Are there distracting or disruptive ads?

As mentioned previously, Google understands that many websites need ads in order to make money. But there are some types of ads that can be annoying to users and can result in a lower assessment of quality:



6.3 Distracting/Disruptive/Misleading Titles, Ads, and Supplementary Content

Some **Low** quality pages have adequate MC present, but it is difficult to use the MC due to disruptive, highly distracting, or misleading Ads/SC. Misleading titles can result in a very poor user experience when users click a link only to find that the page does not match their expectations.

6.3.1 Ads or SC that disrupt the usage of MC

While we expect Ads and SC to be visible, some Ads, SC or [interstitial pages](#) (i.e., pages displayed before or after the content you are expecting) make it extremely difficult to use the MC. Pages that disrupt the use of the MC should be given a Low rating. A single pop-over Ad with a clear close button is not terribly disruptive, though may not be a great user experience. Here are two examples of situations we consider to be disruptive:

- Ads that actively float over the MC as you scroll down the page and are difficult to close. It can be very hard to use MC when it is actively covered by moving, difficult-to-close Ads.
- An interstitial page that redirects the user away from the MC without offering a path back to the MC.

6.3.2 Prominent presence of distracting SC or Ads

Users come to webpages to use the MC. Helpful SC and Ads can be part of a positive user experience, but distracting SC and Ads make it difficult for users to focus on and use the MC. Here are some examples of prominent and distracting SC or Ads:

- Some webpages are designed to encourage users to click on SC that is not helpful for the purpose of the page. This type of SC is often distracting or prominently placed in order to lure users to highly monetized pages. [Here](#) is an example of a page with highly distracting SC in the right-hand column under the label "Top Posts & Pages." [Here](#) and [here](#) are more examples of pages with some very prominent and distracting SC images and/or Ads.
- Either porn SC or [Ads containing porn on non-Porn pages](#) can be very distracting or even upsetting to users. Please refresh the page a few times to see the range of Ads that appear, and use your knowledge of the locale and cultural sensitivities to make your rating. For example, an ad for a model in a revealing bikini is probably acceptable on a site that sells bathing suits. However, an extremely graphic porn ad may warrant a **Low (or even Lowest)** rating.

Is there evidence of distracting or disruptive ads on the site?

Are there ads that could deceive the user into clicking?

Providing the end user with an enjoyable experience means that advertisements should be well defined and easy to recognize. Any efforts attempting to trick visitors to click ads will lead to user frustration and therefore should be given a low quality rating.

Google has an algorithm to detect deceptive ads. An example would be an ad that says, "Download" enticing a user to click it thinking that they will download their software, but in reality they don't realize that they are clicking an ad.



6.3.3 Misleading Titles, Ads, or SC

It should be clear what parts of the page are MC, SC, and Ads. It should also be clear what will happen when users interact with content and links on the webpage. If users are misled into clicking on Ads or SC, or if clicks on Ads or SC leave users feeling surprised, tricked or confused, a **Low** rating is justified.

Here are some examples of misleading Titles, Ads or SC:

- At first glance, the Ads or SC appear to be MC. Some users may interact with Ads or SC, believing that the Ads or SC is the MC. [Here](#) is an example.
- Ads appear to be SC (links) where the user would expect that clicking the link will take them to another page within the same website, but actually take them to a different website. Some users may feel surprised or confused when clicking SC or links that go to a page on a completely different website.
- Ads or SC that entice users to click with shocking or exaggerated titles, images, and/or text. These can leave users feeling disappointed or annoyed when they click and see the actual and far less interesting content. [Here](#) is an example of a page with shocking/exaggerated titles, images, and text in the Ads and SC.
- Titles of pages or links/text in the SC that are misleading or exaggerated compared to the actual content of the page. This can result in a very poor user experience when users read the title or click a link only to find that the page does not match their expectations. [Here](#) is an example of a page with a misleading/exaggerated title.

Summary: The **Low** rating should be used for disruptive or highly distracting Ads and SC. Misleading Titles, Ads, or SC may also justify a **Low** rating. Use your judgment when evaluating pages. User expectations will differ based on the purpose of the page and cultural norms.

Is there evidence of deceptive ads on the site?

Are any of the following signs of low quality content present?

Similar to tricking users to click ads, websites that attempt to impersonate more well known pages or misrepresent facts with the intention of deceiving users are considered extremely low quality pages.



Here are some examples of **Lowest** websites or webpages with deceptive page purpose:

- A website pretends to be or mimics the look of a well-known store, bank, online service, or social network, but instead exists to **"phish"** or steal passwords or personal information (for example, government ID number, bank account information, personal medical data, etc.). We also consider this type of website to have a malicious purpose.
- A webpage claims to be a survey, perhaps offering money or a prize, **but instead exists to steal passwords or personal information** (for example, government ID number, bank account information, personal medical data, etc.). We also consider this type of website to have a malicious purpose.
- **A webpage or website that impersonates a different site** (e.g., copied logo or branding of an unaffiliated site, URL that mimics another site's name, etc.).
- **A webpage or website looks like a news source or information page, but in fact has articles with factually inaccurate information** to manipulate users in order to benefit a person, business, government, or other organization politically, monetarily, or otherwise.
- **A non-satirical webpage or website presents unsubstantiated conspiracy theories or hoaxes as if the information were factual.**
- A webpage claims to offer an independent review or share other information about a product, but is in fact created to make money for the owner of the website without attempting to help users. For example, the MC may contain intentionally misleading or inaccurate information created with the sole purpose of getting users to click on monetized links or buy the product.
- A website claims to be the personal website of a celebrity, but the website is actually created to make money for the owner of the website without the permission of the celebrity. For example, the page may have false testimonials for a product and is created for the sole purpose of getting users to click on monetized links or buy the product.

Is there evidence of extremely low quality content?

Is there any of the following evidence of Lowest Quality Main Content?

The Lowest Quality MC are essentially pages that serve no useful purpose. These pages may contain content created specifically for SEO purposes, plagiarized content or intentionally misleading users on topics of significance.

7.4 Lowest Quality Main Content

In this guideline, we'll judge the quality of the MC by thinking about how much time, effort, expertise, and talent/skill was involved in content creation.

If very little or no time, effort, expertise, or talent/skill has gone into creating the MC, use the **Lowest** quality rating. If the content is misleading or inaccurate in a way that may harm or deceive users, also use the **Lowest** quality rating.

All of the following should be considered either lowest quality MC or no MC:

- No helpful MC at all or so little MC that the page effectively has no MC.
- MC that consists almost entirely of "keyword stuffing."
- Gibberish or meaningless MC.
- "Auto-generated" MC, or MC that was otherwise created with little to no time, effort, expertise, manual curation, or added value for users.
- Misleading or inaccurate informational content about YMYL topics.
- Pages or websites that appear to be deliberate attempts to misinform or deceive users by presenting factually inaccurate content.
- Pages or websites with factually inaccurate content that may harm or deceive users, regardless of their purpose or intent.
- MC that consists almost entirely of content copied from another source with little time, effort, expertise, manual curation, or added value for users.

Pages with lowest quality MC should be rated **Lowest**.

Is there evidence of pages with this type of low quality?

More on pages copied from another source.

Content doesn't have to be copied word for word in order to be considered low quality. Here is what the QRG say about scraped content:

7.4.5 Copied Main Content

Every page needs MC. One way to create MC with no time, effort, or expertise is to copy it from another source.

Important: We do not consider legitimately licensed or syndicated content to be "copied" (see [here](#) for more on web syndication). Examples of syndicated content in the U.S. include news articles by AP or Reuters.

The word "copied" refers to the practice of "scraping" content, or copying content from other non-affiliated websites without adding any original content or value to users (see [here](#) for more information on copied or scraped content).

If all or most of the MC on the page is copied, think about the purpose of the page. Why does the page exist? What value does the page have for users? Why should users look at the page with copied content instead of the original source?

Important: The **Lowest** rating is appropriate if all or almost all of the MC on the page is copied with little or no time, effort, expertise, manual curation, or added value for users. Such pages should be rated **Lowest**, even if the page assigns credit for the content to another source.



7.4.6 More About Copied Content

All of the following are considered copied content:

- **Content copied exactly from an identifiable source.** Sometimes an entire page is copied, and sometimes just parts of the page are copied. Sometimes multiple pages are copied and then pasted together into a single page. Text that has been copied exactly is usually the easiest type of copied content to identify.
- **Content that is copied, but changed slightly from the original.** This type of copying makes it difficult to find the exact matching original source. Sometimes just a few words are changed, or whole sentences are changed, or a “find and replace” modification is made, where one word is replaced with another throughout the text. These types of changes are deliberately done to make it difficult to find the original source of the content. We call this kind of content “copied with minimal alteration.”
- **Content copied from a changing source, such as a search results page or news feed.** You often will not be able to find an exact matching original source if it is a copy of “dynamic” content (content that changes frequently). However, we will still consider this to be copied content.

Important: The **Lowest** rating is appropriate if all or almost all of the MC on the page is copied with little or no time, effort, expertise, manual curation, or added value for users. Such pages should be rated **Lowest**, even if the page assigns credit for the content to another source.

Is there obvious evidence of hacked or spammed pages?

Google does not want to show users hacked content. Sometimes Google can algorithmically pick up hacked content and give site owners a manual warning in Google Search Console. But, I have found that quite often Google doesn’t pick up on hacked content. Still, I do think that even without a GSC security warning, the machine learning algorithm may be able to determine that hacked content is present and demote this content.

7.7 Hacked, Defaced, or Spammed Pages on a Website

Some websites are not maintained or cared for at all by their webmaster. These “abandoned” websites, especially websites that have become hacked, defaced, or spammed with a large amount of distracting and unhelpful content, should be rated **Lowest**.

A hacked or [defaced website](#) is a site that has been modified without permission from the website owner(s). Responsible webmasters should regularly check their websites for suspicious behavior and take steps to protect users.

We’ll consider a comment or forum discussion to be “spammed” if someone posts unrelated comments that are not intended to help other users, but rather to advertise a product or create a link to a website. Frequently these comments are posted by a “bot” rather than a real person. Spammed comments are easy to recognize and may include Ads, download, or other links. Webmasters should find and remove this content because it is a bad user experience.

While a specific page on a website may have a large amount of spammed forum discussions or spammed user comments, it does not mean that the entire website contains only spam.



If your website has thousands of pages indexed it is possible that hackers have attempted to create pages, posts or left links that benefit them.

Is there evidence that the site has hacked content?

Does the site have Q&A or Forum pages? If so, is the E-A-T of the participants generally good?

Forums can be awesome sources of good user generated content. But, they can also be chock full of low quality content. Google considers forum posts to be low quality if they have no answer. Forum pages can also be places where a lot of spam resides as covered in the previous section.

Assessing the E-A-T of forum posters can be tricky. Google doesn't expect each poster to have a medical, legal or financial degree. I believe that what they're looking at here is whether the forum posters have helpful posts. If many of the posts in a forum are gibberish or spammy, then this can be a sign of low quality.

10.3 Ratings for Forums and Q&A pages

Ratings for forum and Q&A pages can be challenging. The most important aspect is the E-A-T of the participants in the discussion, which can be difficult to judge. Keep in mind the following:

- The Main Content on forum and Q&A pages includes both the question as well as the answers/responses and resulting discussions.
- Rate forum and Q&A pages from the point of view of a user who visits the page, rather than a participant involved in the discussion.

Is there evidence of low quality forum pages?



Conclusions

(Include a summary of your findings here.)