

## **Presentation: Does Google Hate AI-generated Content?**

They say that transparency is the cornerstone of a healthy, satisfying, and lasting relationship. So why hasn't anyone told Google that yet? (wry smile)

Being in a relationship with Google is kind of like being with someone who constantly says, "Everything's fine. We're good." Then one day, you come home to find they've thrown everything you own out of the window.

For example, raise your hand if your site took a hit from the March 2024 Google update last year? A lot of us, right? At the time, we thought, Where did this come from? Why is this happening? And did Google just break up with me?

My name is Madeleine Lambert, and as the Director of Marketing and Sales at Originality.ai, I'm here to tell exactly where it came from, why it happened, and what you can do to guarantee Google doesn't break up with you again.

At Originality.ai, we equip content marketers, creators, and agencies with the tools they need to navigate today's rapidly evolving content game, where AI plays a bigger role than ever. Our platform offers AI detection, plagiarism detection, fact-checking, grammar and spelling, and a new patented predictive SEO content optimization tool to help marketers create high-quality, trustworthy content.

Which brings us to the biggest question that forward-thinking SEOs, marketers, and content creators have been asking me repeatedly for over a year...

### **Slide 2**

When will the robots take over? And are you a robot?

I'm kidding. The question is, can Google detect AI-generated content, and if so, does it penalize it? And what happens when Google's own AI Overviews begin citing other AI-generated sources—does that create a cycle of AI citing AI, and how does Google handle that risk?

### **Slide 3**

The answer to these questions can be found in a series of studies we conducted to analyze just that. By the end of this talk, you'll see where Google stands on AI content, the risks of AI citing AI, and why your SEO strategy needs a more cautious approach.

Let's dive in.

### **Slide 4**

Google rolled out its major update on March 5th 2024 with a clear goal: to crack down on manipulative SEO tactics and low-quality content. Which we all know is excessive. . It introduced new manual action penalties to reduce what they call 'unhelpful content' by 40%. Why 40%? Who knows, maybe they felt that nuking over half the internet was a little too aggressive.

### **Slide 5:**

There were three main types of abuse Google targeted with the update. (raise hand) Now show of hands, and be honest, who, like me, has dabbled in some abusive tactics before? (Scan the audience\*) Okay, if you're too shy to raise your hands, that's fine, I can see it in your eyes (point to your eyes and individual audience members' eyes). We've all done it, so you'll get no judgment from me.

The first type of abuse was...

## **.1- Scaled Content Abuse**

This referred to the mass publication of low-quality content at scale. And no, it wasn't just limited to TMZ. Google's goal was to reduce the volume of unoriginal, thin, or unhelpful content flooding search results—content that added little value to users and degraded the quality of the SERPs.

This effort was part of their broader aim to promote useful, trustworthy content over pages designed primarily to manipulate search rankings. Way to go, Google. We can applaud you for that.

---

## **2. Expired Domain Abuse**

They also cracked down on the practice of repurposing expired domains purely for ranking advantage.

These domains often came with an existing backlink profile, which made them attractive for manipulating search.

The update aimed to ensure that domain history wasn't being exploited to surface low-value or unrelated content.

---

## **3. Site Reputation Abuse**

Lastly, Google addressed what's known as site reputation abuse or Parasite SEO - when otherwise reputable websites host third-party content that doesn't align with their purpose or quality standards.

This tactic involved leveraging a trusted domain to publish low-value or promotional content, and the update introduced enforcement measures to curb this behavior.

Which just goes to show that people will find just the cutest ways to game the system, won't they?

---

In summary, the March 2024 update focused on restoring content quality and user trust in search results. The emphasis was on reducing manipulative tactics—regardless of the tools used—and promoting authentic, helpful, and relevant content instead.

Now...If only Google had given us the heads-up, so we all wouldn't have ended up with a box of tissues, crying, and asking ourselves, "Was it something I did?"

#### **Slide 6:**

Given these parameters, we conducted two studies to understand...

- 1- What sites were impacted by the March update and
- 2- Did AI-generated content play a major role in Google's Actions?

#### **Slide 7:**

In our first study, we set out to identify websites that had received manual actions during the March 2024 update. Content sites that had previously enjoyed steady organic traffic, but were subsequently deindexed by Google. The goal was to understand what kind of sites, content, or patterns might have triggered these penalties.

#### **Slide 8:**

**We started with a pool of 79,000 websites.** You know, just a few. And for each site, we checked whether it was currently **indexed in Google**. If a site was no longer indexed, we used **Ahrefs** and **SimilarWeb** to verify if it had organic traffic as recently as **February 2024**. For sites that met these criteria—recent organic traffic but now

deindexed—we concluded they were likely affected by the **March 5th manual action update**. As I explain it to my kids, they got an ouchie.

### **Slide 9:**

We found that just over 1,400 websites, or 2% of sites, had a manual action applied to them out of 79k websites that we checked in March 2024.

### **Slide 10:**

Here we can see a histogram of Ahrefs Domain Ratings for the sites with manual action- you can see that they were typically LOW DR sites. So, low domain ratings on these sites.

### **Slide 11:**

And there was definitely a characteristic trend where all websites similarly had :

- SEO keyword stuffing
- Low Domain Authority
- Listicles and generic blog posts
- Product reviews and affiliate content
- Low-quality news aggregation ( Parasite SEO)
- And were the type of sites whose content would give you a stomach ulcer as soon as you opened them.

### **Slide 12:**

However, there were a few examples of sites that didn't fit this trend- some that we identified had over 1 million organic visitors per month that went to zero pretty much overnight. Double ouchie.

**Slide 13:** It was particularly hard on Niche Site owners- if you or a friend ran a niche site, this would have been you last March needing some comfort. Don't you see the sadness you've inflicted upon the people, Google?

**Slide 14:**

So while study #1 identified which websites were affected by Google's **March 2024 manual action update**, we wanted to take our analysis a step further.

(raise hand) Show of hands, who here feels that Google targeted and penalized AI-generated content? Yup, what I'm going to share. Study #2 will show you that they've got AI in their sights and they're trigger-happy.

**Slide 15**

We used our AI Checker to conduct a more detailed investigation into the prevalence of AI-generated content on these penalized sites.

**Slide 16:**

**We found that 100% of the websites** that received a manual action showed clear signs of using AI-generated content in their articles. You hear that ChatGPT? They're coming for you.

**Slide 17:**

Of the 14 websites we analyzed in-depth, **7 had over 90% of their sample articles** flagged as AI-generated. So half of the impacted sites appeared to have published exclusively AI-generated content.

**Slide 18:**

However, we wanted to test a larger sample size and gather even more data, so we...

1. Identified 200 sites with the most traffic that were deindexed
- 2 Identified around 200 recent articles per site
3. Checked for AI content on over 40k URLs using **Originality.ai AI detector's API**

### **Slide 19:**

What we found was that - 151 sites out of the 175 that we analyzed had very clear signs of AI content. Some sites seem to have taken a mixed approach to both AI and human-written content, while some of the sites were clearly showing nothing but AI-generated content. In fact, 51 of the sites or ~30% of the sites, were pure AI-generated content. Which begs the question, where's the creativity, people? Come on.

### **Slide 20:**

This graph represents the % of suspected AI articles on Deindexed sites.

### **Slide 21:**

So...Was AI Content to Blame for Sites Being Deindexed By Google?

Conclusion is a resounding yes-after analyzing 200 sites and over 40k URLs with our AI checker, it is clear that the vast majority of sites that received a manual action were likely using AI content on their site.

### **Slide 22:**

So let's pause and ask the big question: *why the heck does Google care so much about AI-generated content?*

### **Slide 23**

I'd hypothesize two main reasons:

First, an existential threat.

If AI-generated spam floods Google's results, users lose trust. And beyond that, why even bother going to Google at all if you can go straight to an LLM and get the same answer, instantly? *Why not just Ask Jeeves? Oh right, Jeeves is dead... You young people in here probably don't even know who Jeeves is...*

Google knows that if their search results become indistinguishable from AI their entire business model is at risk.

## **Slide 24**

Second, the looming risk of model collapse.

We're already seeing AI citing AI in Google's own Overviews. In fact, about 1 in 10 citations are AI-generated. What does that mean? It means that the system is increasingly learning from itself, not from human knowledge.

## **Slide 25:**

Our research shows 23% of citations in AI Overviews are AI-generated and often pulled from sources *outside* the organic results, where Google normally enforces higher standards.

So what happens? AI starts citing AI. Then the next model learns from that. And then the next one learns from that. It's like a snake eating its own tail! Instead of referencing real, authoritative, human-written sources, the loop keeps recycling machine output.

This is exactly what leads to *model collapse*:

- Small mistakes get repeated until they look like "facts."

- Nuance, creativity, and human perspective disappear.
- Information online becomes flatter, less trustworthy, and less diverse.

And here's the kicker: the only way to break this loop is with real, human-created content. Without fresh human input, models don't have new knowledge to learn from.

That's why, if you're serious about ranking long-term, you can't rely on spinning up AI pages at scale.

Google **HAS** to reward human-authored content to protect itself from like....not existing... and from model collapse. Which means *your edge is your originality!*

### **Slide 23:**

So it's safe to say we can count on Google routinely cracking down on AI-generated content from here on out.

Having said all that, Google, can you please end your passive-aggressive communication style? It's hurting our relationship. Stop saying, "Everything's fine. We're good." Stop saying "AI content is okay *if* it's helpful," and then turning around and saying, "This update isn't about AI." And honestly....why did it take my team four separate studies, thousands of dollars, scraping massive amounts of your data just to figure this all out?

Why all the games, Google? Can't we just be honest and direct with each other? We don't want you to break up with us in a text message over something we would have happily changed to improve our relationship.

Please try to be a little more transparent, Google. People aren't just losing rankings—they're losing their livelihoods. These updates have real-world consequences. The lack of clarity is hurting our chemistry and undermining what could be a beautiful relationship. Don't leave us in the dark, trying to guess what you're upset about. Just tell us, and we'll change. That's all.

## **Slide 26:**

### **So, What Can Content Creators and Publishers Take Away From This?**

As we've seen, Google's recent actions send a clear message: quality and authenticity matter more than ever.

AI-generated content can be powerful—it gives us efficiency, scale, and speed. But without human oversight, originality, and real value, it becomes a liability. The risks of penalties, lost rankings, and eroded trust are very real.

To stay ahead, content marketers should prioritize the ethical use of AI by:

- Using AI as a tool, not a replacement for human creativity and critical thinking.
- Adding genuine value with every piece of content and aligning with Google's quality standards.
- Investing in quality control to protect credibility, authority, and trust.

At the end of the day, *human originality is what breaks the loop*. It's what protects us from model collapse, and it's what Google is signaling it will continue to reward.

For those who want to dive deeper, we've produced multiple studies tracking how AI is reshaping the internet and search. You can find them and more strategies for navigating these challenges on our YouTube channel and on my deck, which is publicly available.

If you've enjoyed this talk, please give us a thumbs up and subscribe to our youtube or give me a shout on linkedin! Thank you so much for your time and attention!