

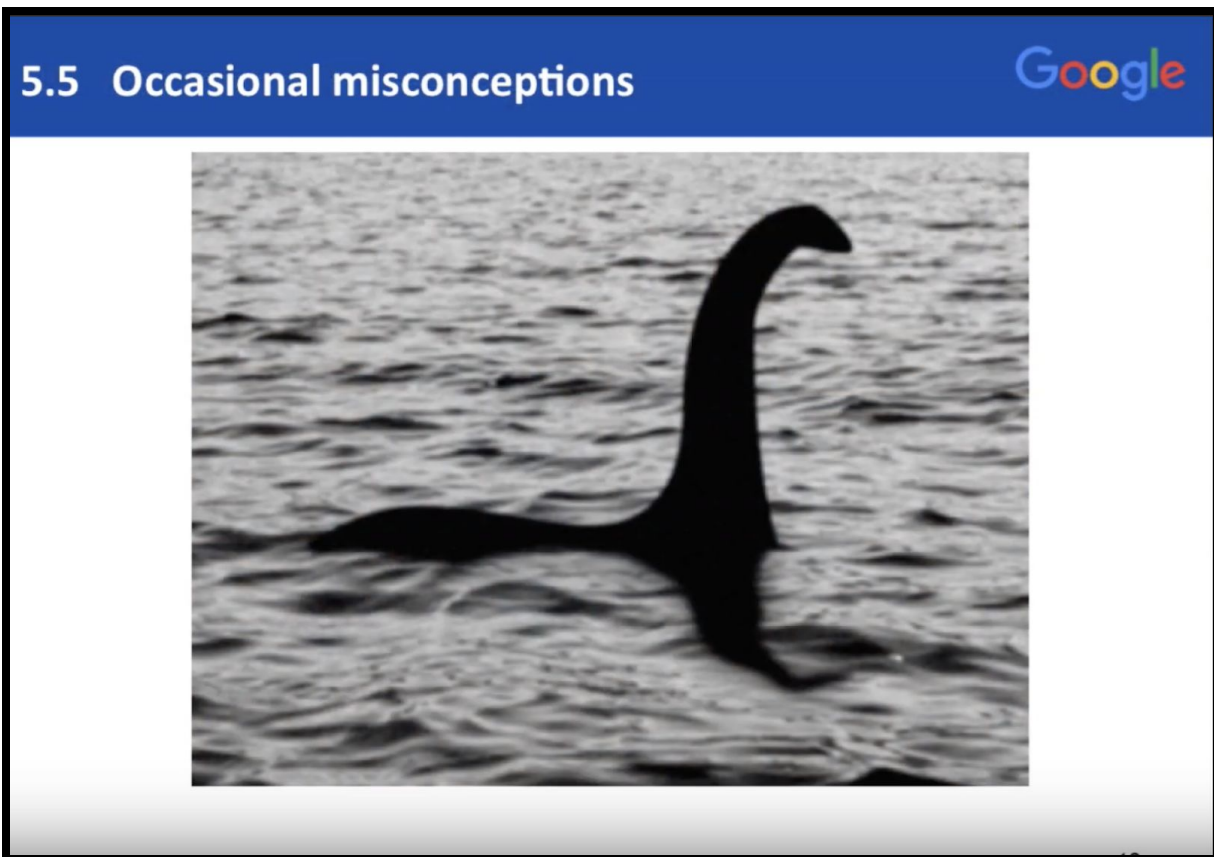
Lesson 5.5: Occasional Misconceptions

[Access Lesson 5.5 slides here](#)

Contents:

Review of common misconceptions in online search

This is lesson 5.5 and it's about occasional misconceptions, and by misconceptions I mean misunderstandings that we have about how the search engine works or about how search works more broadly. I don't mean overt hoaxes like we see in this picture of the Loch Ness monster.



That's not what I mean, what I'm more interested in in this lesson is understanding how ranking works, how the search ecology works and what you understand about that.

5.5 Occasional misconceptions



- Custom search engine / join tools:
does NOT imply Google vetting

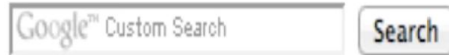


So for instance, one of the things you should know is that oftentimes you'll see logos as we see here you see the Google logo here as part of a custom search bar. What it's actually doing is the equivalent of the site colon operator we saw earlier so if you go to a website you know foo.com and you see a custom search engine with the Google logo it's important to know that Google actually doesn't have a connection with that company so it has nothing to say about the quality or credibility of foo.com. It is only providing the custom search service for that site.

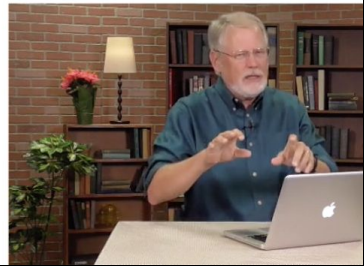
5.5 Occasional misconceptions



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does NOT imply Google vetting



[site:foo.com]

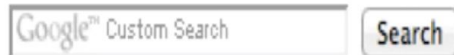


It's important to note, Google is indexing this site, it has crawled the site, it is exactly the same as if you do [site:foo.com]. But it's not saying this is a credible site.

5.5 Occasional misconceptions



- Custom search engine / join tools:
does NOT imply Google vetting



- Sites with Google ads are also not vetted by Google



Likewise, the advertising you may see on a particular web site that's actually provided by Google again doesn't have anything to say about the content of that site itself. So what this means is that the way Google ads work on another web site is that they say to Google here's a bunch of content on this page, what's the best ad to put on this page? Google serves that ad but Google is not warranting or it's not saying anything about the content or credibility of that particular site. It's an important distinction again to make, it's a common misconception which is why we're talking about it.

5.5 Occasional misconceptions



- Custom search engine / join tools:
does NOT imply Google vetting



- Sites with Google ads are also not vetted by Google
- Rank order \neq authoritativeness (it's just regular rank!)



Now another thing to remember, we've said this before, but it bears repeating: the rank order, that is the order in which the results appear on the search results page is not the same as the authoritativeness of that result just because that result is number one. What that means, pay attention, what it means is that Google has judged this one link to be the most relevant to your query. It takes the query you've typed, looks at all the web pages in the world and says this is the most relevant and the second one is the second most relevant, third one was third most relevant. That's not the same as saying they're true or they're even a good deal. What they're saying is with respect to the relevance, these results appear one, two, three and so on. I think it's an important distinction to remember.

5.5 Occasional misconceptions



Now, another thing to know is that sometimes you'll get this kind of thing like we see here. This looks like a video from CNN. In fact, it's a great video, it's a funny video of Pope Francis apparently doing a magic trick. Do not be deceived by the logo on the lower right. The problem with logos is that anybody can do a screen grab or they can just copy the image and put it into their website. This is an important thing to remember: just because you see the logo you don't know necessarily that this webpage or this website is actually from that logo provider. So in particular, news providers like CNN or ABC or CBS or whatever often will have their logos shall we say misappropriated. So you'll see them occasionally warranting, giving false credibility to a webpage, to a piece of content. So when you're looking at a page like this, make sure it's really coming from where you think it's coming from. In this case it's not from CNN, it's a very funny video, edited by someone else. You can go figure it out but it's not who you think it is. So now what I would like you to do is to look at the problem for the lesson and see if what you know now doesn't put you in a better position to assess the value, straighten out the misconception you might have had about the page you're seeing.