Google Search ranking updates: the new principles, notice rules and feedback process

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Short answer: Google Search ranking updates are changes to the systems and policies that order results, and on 24 November 2026 Google added a ranking section to Search Central that sets out its ranking principles, when it gives notice, and how site owners can submit feedback. The pages say all systems, from classic ranking to generative AI, evaluate results on usefulness, and that feedback does not lead to manual adjustment of single URLs. It matters because it gives SEO teams an official process to follow after an update.

TL;DR The short version

- On 24 November 2026 Google added a ranking section to Search Central setting out its ranking principles, when it gives notice of updates, and how site owners can send feedback.
- It says every system, from classic ranking to generative AI, judges results on usefulness, and feedback does not lead to manual changes for single URLs.
- After an update, compare affected pages against the principles and use the official feedback route rather than guessing.

Read online, listen to it, or change the text size: https://blogs.iictp.org/google-search-ranking-principles-updates-feedback-explained

What did Google publish?

Three new documentation pages: Our principles for ranking results, How to stay informed on Google Search ranking updates, and Submit feedback about ranking changes in Google Search. Google says the aim is to bring ranking, notice and feedback information into one place.

How ranking is described

- **Users come first:** Search prioritises helpful, reliable information made to benefit people.
- **One standard for all result types:** web listings, carousels, images, videos and AI Overviews are judged on utility, meaning how useful the result is for the query.
- **Automation:** systems decide whether a feature appears and where. Google says it does not manually adjust rankings except to meet legal obligations or apply its content policies.
- **Testing:** changes are evaluated against the publicly available Search Quality Rater Guidelines.

What is new for site owners: notice and feedback

Google says it gives notice when an update brings actionable policy requirements or may cause broad ranking shifts, such as core updates. It also gives advance notice for changes that significantly affect UK users, in line with the fair ranking conduct requirements of the UK Competition and Markets Authority. Confirmed updates, start dates and completion notices appear on the Search Status Dashboard, which has an RSS feed.

How the feedback process works

- Verified site owners use the Submit Feedback button in Search Console during significant updates.
- Include the update as a hashtag, for example #NovemberCoreUpdate2026 for an update with that name.
- Useful evidence: a performance report snapshot, exact queries with country and language, your affected URLs beside the URLs you think rank wrongly, the impact and timing, and why results fail searchers.
- Engineering teams review submissions in aggregate.
- Manual actions have a separate reconsideration request in the Manual actions report.

Limitations and open questions

- Submitting feedback does not change the ranking of your URL.
- Principles are high level; they do not disclose signals or weights.
- The UK notice rules apply to changes affecting UK users and do not create the same advance notice everywhere. Sources were read on 26 November 2026. Products, rules and standards change, so check the linked originals before you rely on any detail.

How to respond to a ranking update

1. Subscribe to the Search Status Dashboard feed and the documentation changelog.
2. Annotate your analytics with the rollout start and completion dates.
3. Wait until the update is marked complete, plus at least a week of data, before judging impact, as Google advises.
4. Compare queries, page groups, countries and devices to find where losses concentrate.
5. Improve the affected content for usefulness and accuracy, then send feedback with evidence if results look systemically wrong.

What it means for SEO teams and agencies

- Put the one-week-after-completion rule into client reporting so nobody rewrites a site mid-rollout.
- Keep a template for evidence packs: queries, locale, URLs and dated screenshots.
- Separate three cases with different fixes: a ranking update, a policy manual action and a technical fault.
- Do not promise clients that a feedback submission will restore rankings.

Frequently asked questions

- **How do I know when Google Search ranking updates happen?** Check the Search Status Dashboard or subscribe to its feed.
- **When should I analyse traffic after an update?** Google advises waiting until completion plus at least a week of post-rollout data.
- **Can Google manually boost my page after feedback?** No. Feedback does not result in manual ranking adjustments for individual URLs.
- **Are AI Overviews judged differently?** Google says they are evaluated on the same utility criteria as other results.

Related reading

- Back button hijacking spam policy FAQ
- Google's generative AI controls
- Search Analytics API: new filters
- TPBOK standard

Related credential: Certified Technical Practitioner. Explore the exam facts and syllabus.

Sources and further reading

1. Google Search Central. Our principles for ranking results. Added 24 November 2026. developers.google.com/search/docs/ranking/principles-for-ranking-results
2. Google Search Central. How to stay informed on Google Search ranking updates. Added 24 November 2026. developers.google.com/search/docs/ranking/stay-informed
3. Google Search Central. Submit feedback about ranking changes in Google Search. Added 24 November 2026. developers.google.com/search/docs/ranking/submit-feedback

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