

2026 Google Search Quality Rater Guidelines: What Matters to Content Creators and SEOs

1. The Purpose of the Guidelines

Google's Search Quality Rater Guidelines (QRG) help human quality raters evaluate the usefulness, relevance, and trustworthiness of search results. While raters do not directly influence rankings, their feedback helps Google refine its Search algorithms and improve the overall user experience.

2. AI-Assisted Content Must Deliver Real Value

Google continues to support the responsible use of AI for content creation. However, content generated with little effort, originality, or added value—whether created by AI or humans—is considered low quality. AI should be used to enhance research, productivity, and content quality, not to mass-produce thin or repetitive pages.

3. E-E-A-T Remains a Core Quality Signal

Experience, Expertise, Authoritativeness, and Trustworthiness (E-E-A-T) remain central to content evaluation. Google prioritises content that demonstrates first-hand experience, expert knowledge, credible sources, transparent authorship, and a strong reputation. These factors are increasingly important in AI-powered search results.

4. Stronger Focus on Scaled Content Abuse and Spam

Google continues to crack down on manipulative SEO practices, including:

- **Scaled Content Abuse:** Publishing large volumes of low-value content using automation or AI.
- **Expired Domain Abuse:** Repurposing expired domains solely to manipulate search rankings.
- **Site Reputation Abuse:** Publishing low-quality third-party content on trusted websites to benefit from their authority.

These practices violate Google's spam policies and can significantly impact search visibility.

5. Greater Focus on User Intent and Satisfaction

The guidelines place even greater emphasis on whether content fully satisfies user intent. Pages that provide comprehensive, accurate, and actionable answers are more likely to be considered high quality, while content that is incomplete, misleading, or unhelpful receives lower quality ratings.

6. Continuous Updates for the AI Search Era

Google regularly updates the Search Quality Rater Guidelines to reflect changes in AI-powered Search, evolving spam tactics, and user expectations. Although quality raters do not directly determine rankings, their evaluations help shape future algorithm improvements, making the QRG an essential resource for SEOs and content creators.