AIRNITE

ZERO DAY

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Third-party content, borrowed reputation: Google's rule against “site reputation abuse”

Since 2024, Google has been taking action against websites that rent out their good reputation to third-party content. In November 2024 the rule was tightened: even oversight by the site owner no longer protects. What this means for companies and SEO.

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SOFTWARE. SECURITY. CODE.

// THE SITUATION IN NUMBERS

3	5 May 2024	19 Nov 2024	EEA
new spam policies	**enforcement from**	**rule tightened**	**separate handling**
expired domain, scaled content and site reputation abuse (Google, 5 Mar 2024)	for site reputation abuse (Google Search Central)	first-party involvement no longer protects (Google)	according to the current policy, separate classification in the EEA instead of a manual action

Typical patterns: a well-known news site with a section full of coupon codes, a specialist portal with bought gambling content, a club website with loan advertising. For a long time, you could make money from a domain's good reputation by renting it out to third-party content. Google calls this **site reputation abuse** – and has been acting against it since 2024.

// What happened?

On 5 March 2024, Google announced a core update to Search and three new spam policies: against **expired domain abuse**, against mass-produced content (**scaled content abuse**) and against **site reputation abuse**. For the last rule, Google gave site owners two months; it has been enforced since **5 May 2024**.

Originally, the rule targeted third-party content published with little or no first-party oversight. On **19 November 2024**, Google tightened it: no amount of first-party involvement changes the fundamentally third-party nature of such content. Since then, site reputation abuse has been defined as publishing third-party pages to take advantage of the host site's ranking signals – **regardless of whether the site owner is involved or oversees the content**.

// How does it work?

The business model is simple: over the years, a website has built up trust with Google through its own content. A third party pays to publish its own pages on that domain, such as coupons, comparisons or affiliate texts that have little to do with the core of the website. These pages then rank better than they ever could on their own domain.

The current version of the policy describes the case as third-party content published mainly because of the ranking signals the host has earned with its own content. According to the policy, Google handles violations outside the EEA with manual actions; within the EEA, such pages are classified separately.

// Who is affected?

Mainly large, strong domains that have handed sections over to partners: media houses, portals, associations, universities. But medium-sized companies can be affected too, for example if they publish paid guest posts unrelated to their own offering or hand over subdirectories to agencies.

Not all third-party content is a problem. What matters is whether it is on your domain mainly because your domain ranks well – or because it is genuinely relevant to your visitors and your offering.

// What should you do now?

Companies should know what third-party content is on their website and honestly assess whether it fits their offering. Whatever does not fit should be removed or blocked from search engines. Partnerships need clear agreements. In the long run, only one thing pays off: your own expert content. The checklist below sums up the steps.

// How does Airnite help?

In an **SEO audit**, Airnite checks your website for risks under Google's spam policies and cleans up with you. On the **SEO journey**, we build up your own knowledge content step by step that ranks in the long term. In **consulting**, we assess partnerships and guest post offers before they become a risk.

> Note: the basis is Google's own publications. The impact on individual websites depends on the specific case. Research status: 21 November 2026.

Checklist: what to do now

[+] Record every area of your website where third parties publish content: guest posts, partner pages, coupon or comparison sections.

[+] Check whether this content fits the core of your website or is there mainly because of your ranking strength.

[+] Remove third-party content that does not fit your offering, or block it from search engines.

[+] For partnerships, agree in writing who supplies content, who is responsible for it and how it is labelled.

[+] Regularly check Search Console for manual actions and noticeable drops in individual directories.

[+] Rely on your own, expert content instead of bought reach.

How Airnite helps

- SEO & Visibility – Visible on Google and in AI answers.
- The SEO Journey – From invisible to found.
- Consulting – An outside view of your plans and projects.

How clean is your website in Google's eyes?

Airnite checks your website for content that could breach Google's spam policies – from guest posts to partner and coupon pages to mass-produced text – and develops a content strategy built on your own expertise.

Request an initial call · Send an email · Via WhatsApp

Contact

Questions about this article? Message us on WhatsApp: +49 174 6834842

Read online: https://airnite.de/en/magazine/google-site-reputation-abuse-spam-policy/

Sources

Every fact in this article is based on the sources below. Primary sources are marked.

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