

How to Check if Your Guest Posts Actually Hit Google's Primary Index

You shipped a guest post, the publisher tagged it live six days ago, and the page exists. But **how to check if your guest posts actually hit Google's primary index** is a separate, messy technical step that most outreach workflows skip. The primary index is the canonical, surface-web corpus Google serves for regular organic queries. A page sitting in a supplemental or uncommitted crawl bucket does not do a thing for your rankings or link equity.

I've watched entire link-building campaigns burn three months of effort because someone assumed the placement was indexed when, in reality, it never left the "*Discovered - currently not indexed*" limbo. A link that isn't in the primary index might as well be carved into a pumpkin. This article cuts through the fluff and gives you the real verification signals, code-level approaches, and edge-case detection you need.

We'll move from the quick manual nudge to API-driven bulk checks, and I'll throw in a concrete audit where 43% of a client's guest posts were technically indexed but not actually in the primary index — a subtle, vicious difference. You'll walk away with the ability to kill the guessing.

The Index Chasm Nobody Wants to Talk About

Google maintains multiple internal data stores. The primary index is the one that matters for standard organic results. Even if a URL appears in the `site:` search operator or in the URL Inspection tool, it might reside in a secondary index, supplemental index, or a stale snapshot that hasn't undergone the full canonicalization pipeline. That secondary-index page produces zero Search Console clicks, generates no crawl-depth propagation of internal links, and passes no PageRank in any relevant timeframe.

The difference is brutally practical: a primary-indexed guest post responds to site-restricted queries (`site:example.com/page`), returns `Last crawl date` within a few days in URL Inspection, and shows an `Indexing allowed` state with `Page is indexed`. A page in the **discovered-not-indexed** or **crawled-not-indexed** state, or one that only appears in a raw `info:` URL search but yields no snippet, is a ghost placement. Ghost placements are the silent killer of outreach ROI.

Treat any guest post that doesn't trigger a cache date and a snippet in a ``cache:`` command as un-indexed for practical SEO purposes, regardless of what a dashboard says.

Manual Spot-Checks That Don't Lie

Before automating anything, you need to know how a clean primary-index inclusion looks under your own eyes. These are the three manual methods I rely on, in order of decreasing trustworthiness.

- **URL Inspection API via Search Console** — Hit the Google Search Console URL Inspection tool for the exact canonical URL. The field ``indexStatusResult.coverageState`` must read ``"Indexed, submitted and indexed"`. If you see `"Submitted and indexed"`. but no cached version and zero Search Console impressions after two weeks, the URL likely never truly entered the primary serving cluster. Screenshots from the UI sometimes lag; the API call is more honest.`
- **The direct ``cache:`` operator** — Type ``cache:https://publisher.com/your-guest-post/`` into Chrome's address bar (not just Google search). If it returns a 404, the page isn't in the primary cache tier. Even if ``site:`` shows the URL, a missing cache is a common pre-index or deindex queue symptom.
- **Live test with a performance tool** — Run the URL through [Lighthouse](#) or WebPageTest with a mobile user-agent. If Googlebot can render it but still won't index it in primary, you'll see mismatches between the DOM snapshot and the server response. Missing critical resources is a huge culprit.

The ``site:`` operator is noisy. Many people count a green tick in ``site:`` as success, but that query often pulls from inconsistent data centers. I've seen domains where ``site:`` returned a page that wasn't actually indexed when checked via the API. Use ``site:`` only as a negative check; if it does NOT appear, you've got a real failure.

Automated Verification for Bulk Guest Posts

When you're auditing 50 or 500 guest posts, manual checks don't cut it. You need programmable signals that answer one binary question: **Is this URL in the primary index right now?** Below are two reliable API paths, one using Google's own endpoint and one using a third-party aggregator that handles rate limits at scale.

Search Console URL Inspection API (Direct)

The cleanest signal comes from <https://search.google.com/search-console>'s Inspection API. You'll need OAuth 2.0 credentials with the scope <https://www.googleapis.com/auth/webmasters.readonly>. The endpoint only accepts one URL per request, but batching with asynchronous calls in Python makes it usable for a few hundred URLs.

```
```python import json, requests from google.oauth2 import service_account from google.auth.transport.requests import Request SCOPES = ['https://www.googleapis.com/auth/webmasters.readonly'] credentials = service_account.Credentials.from_service_account_file('service-account-key.json', scopes=SCOPES) credentials.refresh(Request()) url = 'https://www.example.com/guest-post-title/' payload = { 'inspectionUrl': url, 'siteUrl': 'sc-domain:example.com' } headers = { 'Authorization': f'Bearer {credentials.token}', 'Content-Type': 'application/json' } resp = requests.post('https://searchconsole.googleapis.com/v1/urlInspection/index:inspect', headers=headers, data=json.dumps(payload) ) data = resp.json() state = data.get('inspectionResult', {}).get('indexStatusResult', {}).get('coverageState', '') print(f'{url} -> {state}') # Desired: "Indexed, submitted and indexed" ```
```

If the response returns "Discovered - currently not indexed" or "Crawled - currently not indexed", your guest post is not in primary. The real gotcha: sometimes the API lies about "Indexed" but the coverage state timestamp is 30+ days old. Always cross-check the `lastCrawlTime` field; if it's older than your placement date, you're looking at a zombie record.

## Bulk Index Checking via SpeedyIndex API

Google's API is rate-limited to about 600 queries per minute per project, but the real pain is OAuth setup per property. When I need to check 10,000 URLs across different domains (like a backlink inventory), I use the [SpeedyIndex Google Index Checker API](#), which proxies and caches index status calls without per-domain verification hassles. Their endpoint returns a JSON map with `indexed: true/false` plus a detected snippet status.

```
```bash curl -X POST "https://api.speedyindex.com/v1/bulk-check" \ -H "Authorization: Bearer YOUR_TOKEN" \ -H "Content-Type: application/json" \ -d '{ "urls": [ "https://publisher.io/my-guest-post", "https://another-site.com/article-42" ] }' ```
```

The response includes "primary_index": true only when the page is in Google's primary serving index, not just discoverable. I've seen pages that pass `site:` but still return `false` here — that's the ghost indexation pattern. The tool's methodology is documented in a deep dive on [how to check if Google indexed a URL](#).

:::warning When bulk checking, never trust the indexed count from a list of URLs provided directly to the API without also verifying the canonical URL. If the publisher added a trailing slash or changed the slug after you submitted, you might be checking a non-canonical version that never indexes. Always fetch the live response `` and `rel="canonical"` before adding URLs to the check queue. :::

Ghost Indexation and the Primary Index Trap

Here's where real-world audits get ugly. A page can appear in Search Console's Coverage report as "Indexed", have a `lastCrawl` date, and still generate zero organic impressions for an exact-match query of its own title. That page frequently lives in a supplemental tier — sometimes called the *tier-2 index*.

How to spot it? Open the URL Inspection API response again and look for `robotsTxtState` and `mobileUsabilityResult`. If `robotsTxtState` is `ALLOWED` but `mobileUsabilityResult` is empty or `TEST_FAILED`, that signals Google couldn't fully process the page for primary serving. I've seen this triggered by JavaScript-hefty guest posts where the content was loaded via `IntersectionObserver` and Googlebot never painted the full text. The crawl succeeded, the index entry existed, but the primary index rejected it because of low rendering fidelity.

Another frequent trap: a canonical cross-domain mismatch. The publisher sets `` pointing to their own version, and suddenly your guest post is a duplicate. The primary index selects the canonical; your URL stays in the supplemental index with a `Duplicate, submitted URL not selected as canonical` status. You'd only notice this by checking the inspection result's `canonicalUserResult` field.

```
``mermaid flowchart LR A[Guest Post URL] --> B{URL Inspection API} B --> C[coverageState == Indexed] B --> D[Not indexed / Crawled not indexed] C --> E{lastCrawlTime & mobileUsability} E -- "recent & passed" --> F[Primary index likely] E -- "old or failed" --> G[Supplemental / Ghost index] D --> H[Investigate noindex, canonical, block] G --> H F --> I[Log as confirmed placement] ``
```

Real Guest Post Audit: A Blunt Walkthrough

A client last quarter had 72 guest posts placed across 18 different domains over seven months. We extracted all final URLs, stripped UTM parameters, and verified each page returned `200`. Then we hit the SpeedyIndex bulk endpoint with all 72. Result: 31 came back `primary_index: true`; 41 came back `primary_index: false`. That hit rate (43% confirmed) is depressingly normal.

Of those 41 not in primary, we dug deeper: - 12 had `noindex` tags added weeks after publication (the publisher's CMS auto-applied a `noindex` to all posts older than 90 days — a policy nobody disclosed). - 9 had canonical tags pointing to the publisher's homepage because of a template error. - 7 were JS-rendered and the main text node wasn't in the initial HTML. Googlebot rendered them, but too slowly; the primary index just ignored them. - The rest had crawl budget exhaustion: the domains were giant news sites with millions of URLs, and the guest post URLs were buried in `/tag/` and never recrawled after the initial discovery.

We fixed the `noindex` and canonical issues, requested re-crawls via the Google Indexing API for the fixed URLs, and two weeks later verified 76% had moved into primary. That 76% recovery didn't happen because we "improved content quality." It happened because we stopped assuming and started checking the index placement signal brutally.

Frequently Unasked Questions

Does a guest post indexed in primary guarantee link equity transfer?

No. It only guarantees the page *can* pass signals. If the publisher's internal link structure puts your post six clicks from the homepage and all navigation links are nofollow, the PageRank injection is near zero. Primary indexation is the entry ticket, not the payout.

Accelerate Your SEO with Rapid Indexing 

The API says "Indexed" but `site:` still doesn't show it. What gives?

`site:` is a convenience operator, not an API-level truth. It can miss freshly indexed pages for days. Trust the inspection response and monitor impressions in Search Console. If impressions remain zero for three weeks, you're dealing with the ghost pattern again.

Should I use the Google Indexing API to request re-indexing of guest posts?

Only if the URL is already verified in your Search Console property, which it won't be because the domain belongs to the publisher. You'd need the publisher to give you API access. Third-party indexers like [SpeedyIndex](#) circumvent that by submitting through proprietary crawl-triggering networks, but they're not an official Google API. Use them with awareness of the risk.

What's the difference between the supplemental index and "Crawled, not indexed"?

The latter means Google decided not to include the page at all, often due to quality or

duplicate signals. Supplemental means it's technically an index entry but not the one served to users. In practice, both result in zero organic visibility.

Don't Ship Content You Can't Measure

The whole guest post industry runs on trust-me signals: spreadsheets full of live links, screenshots of the article, maybe a `site:` search grab. That's like buying a house after looking at the front door from Google Street View. You need to build index verification into your post-publication checklist as a non-negotiable step.

Programmatically check the primary index status. If it's not there, escalate to the publisher or renegotiate. A guest post that never enters Google's primary index delivers the same SEO value as a PDF on a memory stick in a drawer. Measure the one thing that actually matters, and you'll stop paying for phantom placements.

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