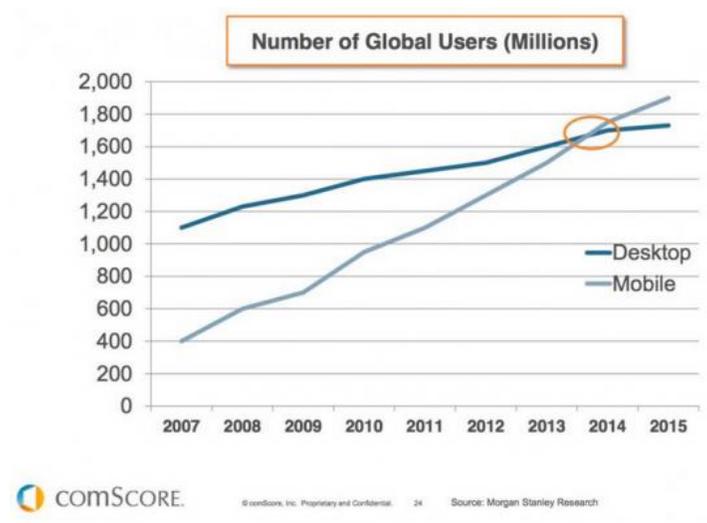


Introduction – Why Mobile?

With technology constantly growing and advancing, the average website now receives approximately 60% of its traffic from a mobile device.¹ Google reports that 94% of people with smartphones search for local information on their phones and 77% of mobile searches occur at home or work, places where desktop computers are most likely to be present. In 2014, the number of mobile users surpassed the number of those using a desktop. These statistics confirm the growing popularity and need for a company's mobile presence online, including the need for a well-constructed mobile website.



Updates to Mobile Search

In April 2015, Google introduced mobile-friendliness as part of their search algorithm. This update puts emphasis on sites designed for mobile search and gives priority to these pages in search results.

Google has also made a number of display updates for mobile search results, including separating results with a colored line and app indexing, where users will be served a link to a previously downloaded app if appropriate. Google now labels mobile friendly websites directly within search results. Having this label may help increase click through rates, as users know a mobile friendly website is more likely to load quicker and will be easier to navigate on their device. You may also see the word “slow” next to websites with long page load times.

Example

<https://www.example.com/>

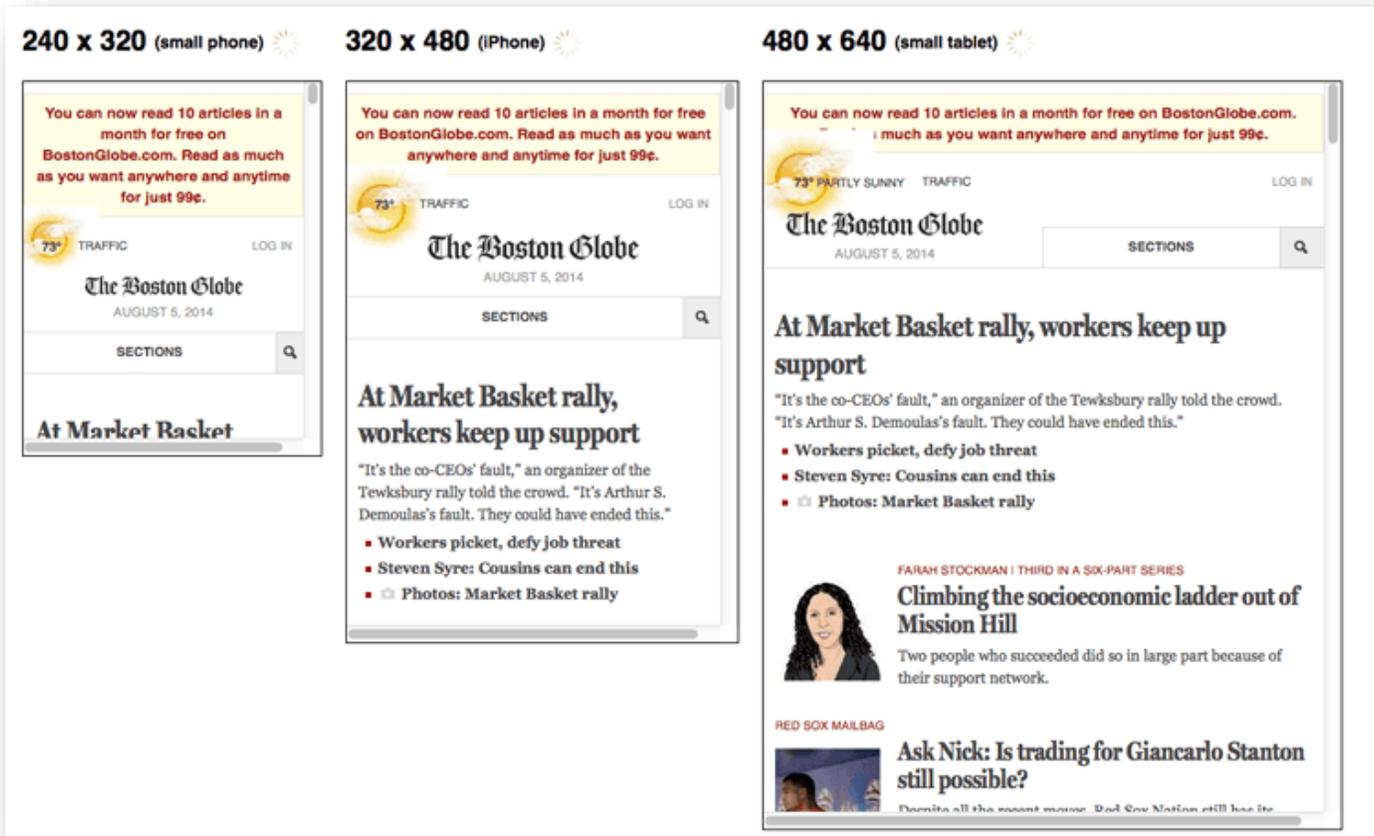
Mobile-friendly - This is an example of a website that is well-designed for mobile devices.

Google also has available a **Mobile Usability** report within Webmaster Tools and a [PageSpeed Insights](#) tool for mobile sites. This is a great start for understanding where your website currently stands in terms of mobile usability.

¹ <http://smallbiztrends.com/2014/07/online-traffic-report-mobile.html>

What is a Mobile Website?

The most common type of mobile website uses a “**responsive design.**” A responsive design website is a single website coded to “respond” to the device of a user. With this design, the website can adapt by changing the width of columns, text size, button spacing, etc. to offer optimal mobile viewing for the user.



Another type of mobile website is the “**M.**” site (m.site.com), which creates a separate mobile website. These sites are becoming less popular as they often provide a poor user experience and require much more coding to maintain. Mobile-only pages also need to build up their own reputation (content, links, etc.) because they do not receive shared indexing signals from an existing desktop version of the page.

Getting Started with a Mobile Website

What to Avoid When Optimizing and Designing a Mobile Site

As mobile becomes an important part of Google's ranking algorithm, it is imperative to start thinking about investing the time into developing a mobile website. Since a responsive design website is a single website coded for multiple devices, most SEO optimization comes from proper coding. Some basic guidelines on what should be avoided include:

→ Avoid blocked JavaScript, CSS, and image files

For optimal rendering and indexing, always allow Googlebot access to the JavaScript, CSS, and image files used by your website so that Googlebot can see your site like an average user. If your site's robots.txt file disallows crawling of these assets, it directly harms how well algorithms render and index your content. This can result in suboptimal rankings.

- *Use Fetch as Google in Webmaster Tools to see exactly how Googlebot sees and renders your content*
- *Check and test your robots.txt file*
- *Test your mobile pages with the Mobile-Friendly test within Webmaster Tools*

→ Unplayable Content

Remember, most mobile devices can't render flash. Unplayable content when featured on a page can be frustrating to a user and create a high bounce rate, which indicates to Google the page isn't relevant to searchers and ultimately will display it farther down in search results.

- *Use HTML5 standards for animations to provide a good experience to all your users.*
- *Use video-embedding that's playable on all devices.*
- *Consider having the transcript of the video available. This will make your site accessible to people who use assistive browsing technologies or who have browsers that cannot play a proprietary video format.*

→ Faulty Redirects

If you're using separate URL's for mobile and desktop pages, make sure your servers are configured to redirect mobile users to the mobile website. Additionally, make sure you're directing to the appropriate page. Incorrect configuration will not only confuse the searcher, but search engines as well.

- *Use Webmaster Tools. A message will be sent to the verified user if Google detects that any of your site's pages are redirecting smartphone users to the homepage. Google also shows any faulty redirects detected in the Smartphone Crawl Errors section.*

→ Slow Mobile Pages

There are many issues with the coding of a mobile website that may hinder its page speed. Things such as redirects and blocked JavaScript increase the time it takes to load a page, which will ultimately frustrate viewers resulting in a high drop off rate for conversions.

- *Use Google's PageSpeed Insights to determine your mobile website score and suggestions on improving speed.*

→ Avoid “Full Site” Labels

If you include a link to the desktop version of your website, label it as “desktop” and not “full” site. A recent study by Google suggests that when users see “full” site, they assume the site is simply condensed for mobile users and will choose the full (desktop) site instead.

Optimize for Crawling and Indexing

To help search bots crawl, index, and differentiate your mobile-site pages, make sure you:

- Create a mobile XML sitemap with a <mobile:mobile/> declaration after each URL listing and submit it to Google Webmaster Tools. This is only needed if your mobile website is separate from your desktop site.
- Never design your mobile site using pop-up windows or lightboxes that cannot be discovered through a sitemap crawl. Pop-ups on mobile devices can be frustrating to viewers.
- Make sure to implement rel=canonical, rel=alternate media and Vary: User-Agent HTTP Header tags as needed to tell Google when it should deliver a desktop version of your web page and when it should deliver a mobile version.
- Make sure to allow the Googlebot-Mobile user-agent to access your site.

Optimize for Page Load Speed

Because mobile devices process data slower than desktop computers, page speed becomes an important factor for mobile websites. To help your mobile site load faster:

- Focus on mobile image optimization to reduce load times.
- Follow the page speed optimization recommendations outlined in the [Mobile Analysis](#) portion of the Google Developers PageSpeed Insights page.
- Use front-end optimization strategies, such as mobile-optimized caching, to address mobile performance issues and get mobile pages loading faster.
- Regularly check your page speed using the Google PageSpeed analyzer tool.

Optimize Design for the Mobile UX

In the context of mobile optimization, design describes the elements of the web page the end-user sees, and user experience (or UX) describes the experience that design creates for the user, how they interact with elements on the page, how the elements on the page make them feel, whether the site is easy to use or frustrating, etc.

Google informs us that more than half of your inbound traffic is unlikely to return to your mobile site if they are met with a poor user experience. This means a large loss in conversions, revenue, and rankings.

To get your web pages designed and optimized for UX, we recommend starting with these considerations:

- **Consider: How do your buttons look, feel and function?**
 - Is your logo a button that makes it easy to get back to your home page?
 - Are your buttons finger friendly?
 - Have you placed your most important CTA button above the mobile fold?
 - How’s the UX of your mobile site search?
 - Is the site search visible above the fold in your mobile design?
 - Can you add filter elements to make searching your site on a mobile device easier?

- **How's the UX of your mobile site search?**
 - Is the site search visible above the fold in your mobile design?
 - Can you add filter elements to make searching your site on a mobile device easier?
 - Did you make sure it's impossible for search filters to return zero results?
- **Is your mobile experience optimized for task completion?**
 - Can your forms be simplified?
 - Can login requirements be simplified? Can users purchase as a guest?
 - Are your menus working for the user? Can you simplify them?
 - Would a third-party payment service make paying with a mobile device easier for your end user?
 - Do any of your forms or other windows open in a pop-up window or lightbox? If yes, fix this. Pop-up windows and lightboxes are bad for UX and SEO.
 - Does your user have to pinch, scroll side to side or zoom out to see your web pages? If yes, fix this. A user having to "zoom in or pan around excessively" is an example of bad user experience. Your mobile platform should deliver web content sized to fit mobile devices.

Facts About Mobile Search

Mobile Searchers Use Shorter Keywords/Keyphrases

Mobile devices take longer to type on, and therefore searchers often use shorter keywords. While shorter keyphrases are often more competitive, it's important to optimize for these phrases as best as possible. With the introduction of voice search on mobile devices, many queries are also becoming question related. Consider optimizing your page with questions in the headings.

Much of Mobile Search is Localized

A majority of mobile search focuses on a specific location (restaurant, retail store, movie, etc.). Make sure your location displays correctly in Google maps and the information Google pulls is accurate. Also, optimize your pages as best as possible for local search.

Mobile Results are Different

Mobile and desktop rankings aren't always the same. In fact, 62% of keywords have different ranks between desktop and mobile results.² Do your mobile-specific keyword research to determine what mobile searchers in your industry are searching for.

Use Schema

Much like desktop search, users more often click on search results that display rich snippets. These include images, reviews, pricing, nutritional facts, events, and more.

Rich Snippets

Great Grandma's Pasta Sauce - Table for Two
www.tablefortwoblog.com/great-grandmas-pasta-sauce/
 2 hrs 10 mins
 Great Grandma's Pasta Sauce is an authentic pasta sauce recipe passed down from four generations of Italians.



No Rich Snippets

10 Pasta Sauces to Freeze For Easy Weeknight Meals - The ...
www.thekitchn.com/10-pasta-sauces-to-...
 Sep 15, 2014 - All it takes is a double batch of pasta sauce, next time you cook one up. Eat half now and freeze the other half for later. Here are 10 recipes for ...

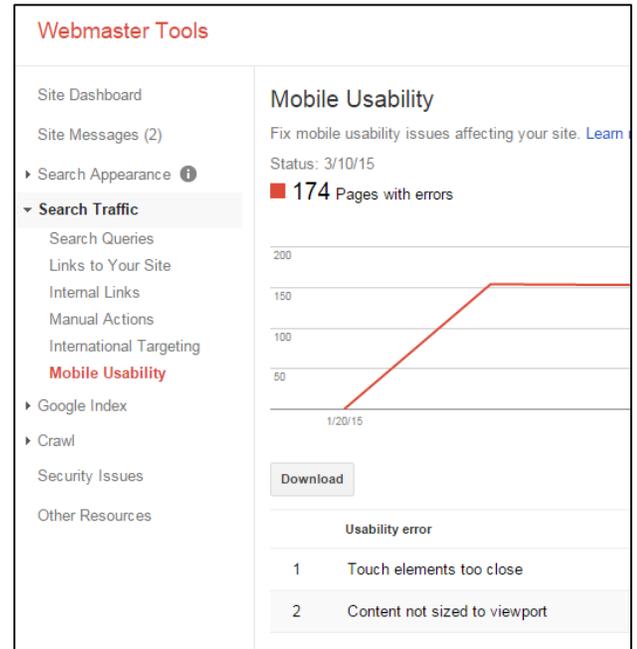
² <http://www.slideshare.net/SearchMarketingExpo/mobile-seo-comparing-approach-response-and-risk-with-data-by-jim-yu%20>

Tools and Resources for a Mobile Friendly Site

Developing a new website takes time and money. If a complete website update isn't an option, you can still use a number of Google tools for making small development fixes to help improve your mobile site score and page speed.

Mobile Usability Report

For quick fixes, use the Google Webmaster Tools Mobile Usability report for checking the issues Google sees on your website. Many of these issues are often related to sizing, such as touch elements too close and content not sized to viewport but may also include warnings such as the use of Flash, which mobile devices do not support.



Mobile Friendly Test

URL: <https://www.google.com/webmasters/tools/mobile-friendly>

The Mobile Friendly Test from Google gives great insight as to how Googlebot sees your page on a mobile device and whether it's mobile-friendly or not. Google also provides next steps to help website owners move in the right direction to make their website mobile-friendly.

Mobile-Friendly Test g+1

<http://www.example.com/>

Not mobile-friendly

Page appears not mobile-friendly

- ✗ Text too small to read
- ✗ Links too close together
- ✗ Mobile viewport not set
- ✗ Content wider than screen

PageSpeed Insights

URL: <https://developers.google.com/speed/pagespeed/insights/>

Page speed has become an important mobile ranking factor, as mobile devices don't often load pages as fast as a desktop. In fact, you may see the word "slow" next to the URL within mobile results to let users know the site may take time to load fully. The PageSpeed Insights tool from Google works for both desktop and mobile URLs and provides ways for website owners to increase their page speed score. 

PageSpeed Insights 8+1

<http://www.example.com/>

 Mobile

 Desktop

49 / 100 Speed

Should Fix:

Eliminate render-blocking JavaScript and CSS in above-the-fold content

[Show how to fix](#)

Enable compression

[Show how to fix](#)

Leverage browser caching

[Show how to fix](#)

Crawl Errors in Google Webmaster Tools

Google provides crawl errors for Smartphones within Webmaster Tools. To view these errors, navigate to Crawl > Crawl Errors and select Smartphone from the tab above the graph.



Sitemaps

You can upload a mobile sitemap within Google Webmaster Tools the same way you would a desktop sitemap. Navigate to Crawl > Sitemaps and upload your mobile sitemap. For mobile devices, you can create a mobile sitemap by using the sitemap protocol along with an additional tag and namespace requirement. A sample mobile sitemap that contains a single entry is shown below. This is only necessary for separate mobile websites.

```
<?xml version="1.0" encoding="UTF-8" ?>
<urlset xmlns="http://www.sitemaps.org/schemas/sitemap/0.9"
  xmlns:mobile="http://www.google.com/schemas/sitemap-mobile/1.0">
  <url>
    <loc>http://mobile.example.com/article100.html</loc>
    <mobile:mobile/>
  </url>
</urlset>
```

Mobile Analysis

Touch Elements to Close - <https://developers.google.com/speed/docs/insights/SizeTapTargetsAppropriately>

Content Not Sized to Viewport - <https://developers.google.com/web/fundamentals/layouts/rwd-fundamentals/size-content-to-the-viewport>

Flash Usage - <https://developers.google.com/web/fundamentals/look-and-feel/>