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Is Your Website Ready for Mobilegeddon?

The grace period is over. If you haven't updated your website to a responsive design that is optimized for devices of all sizes, your online ranking is in jeopardy.

The writing has been on the wall for about two years that mobile phones were taking over local search. Around May 2015, it was announced that more than half of all Google searches were performed on mobile devices. By August 2016, that number approached 60 percent.

In response to the undeniable proliferation of mobile search, Google is adding a key component to their search algorithms: mobile-first indexing.

What is Mobile-First Indexing?

The name is fairly straight-forward! Instead of analyzing and judging a website based on its full-screen, desktop/laptop appearance, Google will now make its primary evaluation of a site based on how it appears and performs on a mobile device.

Because the majority of online searches are now conducted using phones, Google is adjusting their algorithm to place primary importance on mobile devices. Computer and laptops are taking a back seat from a ranking relevancy standpoint.

Many orthodontic practices have updated their websites in the last year or two. Those who already updated should have nothing to worry about, as long as the on-site SEO has been applied correctly. However, this algorithm change could levee harsh ranking penalties against practices that have not updated their website for several years, as well as practices that have outdated secondary mobile solutions or no mobile solution at all.

How Do I Prepare for Mobile-First Indexing?

The biggest factors on mobile search heading into 2018 are load time and access to information. Your site needs to

load quickly, offer useful information, and be easy to use on a phone.

If a site is slow to load, it will receive low marks for visitor engagement and mobile performance. Remember that many mobile searches are conducted while the user is connected to a cellular network or shoddy WiFi; modern sites need to load fast and work seamlessly.

Another vital component of mobile-first indexing is simple, intuitive site navigation. You can't force consumers to squint, scroll, and scan for important information, because they just won't do it. People today are impatient and expect instant gratification. Make it fast, make it easy.

One of the biggest culprits of slow load time is large images. When images are optimized for the Internet, they need to be compressed and/or resized with mobile users in mind. Images that look great on a computer might not look so great on a phone. Business owners need to plan and test their websites with mobile users in mind.

What Will Happen if My Website Isn't Updated?

Outdated websites could drop significantly in the search results. Among the roughly 200 ranking signals used by Google to evaluate a website, some of the most important are authority, relevance, and site design.

If a website is not optimized for mobile, then it loses relevance. As its relevancy score drops, so does its authority as a valuable website to be included in the search results. Failure to update your website could result in a domino effect that causes your ranking to fall way behind your competitors.

by **Mary Kay Miller**

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My Website is Already Responsive – What's Next?

A website is never fully complete; there is always room for improvement. Test your website on every brand of phone and tablet you can get your hands on. Look for quirks or flaws in the design that might only show on certain devices. Also, test your website in multiple browsers such as Chrome, Firefox, and Internet Explorer.

You may also want to ask your webmaster if your site has schema markup, which is code that goes on a website to help search engines return more informative results. Schema markup is the driving force behind rich snippets appearing in search results.

In today's consumer marketplace, the website is where you make your first impression with potential patients, and it is also your most powerful selling tool. An outdated website tells prospective patients that your practice and your treatment modalities are outdated, too. Don't make this mistake! Update your website and keep those new patients coming in.☺

About the Author



Mary Kay Miller is an Internet Marketing Consultant for the orthodontic profession specializing in, WordPress Website Design, SEO, Reputation Marketing, Local Search Strategies, and Exclusive Web 2.0 services.