Google's Mobile First

By Michael Black

What is Mobile First?

- Mobile First means that Google will judge a site based on how it performs for the Smartphone version of Googlebot. This is a significant paradigm shift for Google.

- Google will base ranking on a site's mobile content.

- Google will show the mobile version of pages in search results, even on desktop. If you still have an m.site.com… sorry. You're way behind. Start a redesign to responsive Monday.

- Google will show the mobile version for the site's cache.

The Beginning

- In April 2015 Google rolled out a more aggressive mobile index.
- The new mobile index favored sites which performed well on mobile devices.
- SEOs dubbed this change MOBILEGEDDON.
- Mobilegeddon had a drastic impact on the ranking of non-mobile friendly sites in the mobile index.
- Mobilegeddon was not the Mobile First index which is coming this year.

The Beginning

- Mobilegeddon gave significant weight to mobile functionality.

- Mobilegeddon considered many factors of mobile friendliness with special emphasis on content accessibility and user interaction.

- Before Mobilegeddon, Google's algorithm only considered a few factors for mobile performance.

Mobilegeddon brought mobile friendliness into the spotlight.

What is Mobile First?

Google Webmaster Central Blog

Official news on crawling and indexing sites for the Google index

Mobile-first Indexing
Friday, November 04, 2016

To make our results more useful, we've begun experiments to make our index mobile-first. ***Although our search index will continue to be a single index of websites and apps, our algorithms will eventually primarily use the mobile version of a site's content*** to rank pages from that site, to understand structured data, and to show snippets from those pages in our results. Of course, while our index will be built from mobile documents, we're going to continue to build a great search experience for all users, whether they come from mobile or desktop devices.

What is Mobile First?

- Mobile First is not supposed to be a giant shake-up of results.
- Google has been refining and testing Mobile First for months. We've seen it turned off and on again.
- We've seen some tests with drastic changes in results, and some with little impact.
- We've seen a lot more visits of Smartphone Googlebot in server logs.
- The difference in mobile v. desktop results is shrinking.

What is Mobile First?

- Starting sometime in 2018, Google will no longer judge a site based on its desktop performance.
- All results will be displayed based on how a site performs for Smartphone Googlebot.
- This is the largest paradigm shift in Google's history.

Google's shift to Mobile First means mobile friendliness is no longer optional, it's a matter of survival.

Mobile First is Rolling Now

Some sites that follow best practices for mobile-first indexing are migrating now and will receive notifications in Google Search Console.

Google Analytics

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	Device Category	Acquisition			Behavior			Conversions eCommerce ▾		
		Users ↓	New Users	Sessions	Bounce Rate	Pages / Session	Avg. Session Duration	Transactions	Revenue	Ecommerce Conversion Rate
		361,612 % of Total: 100.00% (361,612)	303,320 % of Total: 100.00% (303,320)	661,706 % of Total: 100.00% (661,706)	58.88% Avg for View: 58.88% (0.00%)	3.91 Avg for View: 3.91 (0.00%)	00:02:45 Avg for View: 00:02:45 (0.00%)	5,241 % of Total: 100.00% (5,241)	$1,952,106.17 % of Total: 100.00% ($1,952,106.17)	0.79% Avg for View: 0.79% (0.00%)
☐	1. mobile	204,206 (56.65%)	172,619 (56.91%)	391,284 (59.13%)	66.39%	3.06	00:02:08	2,324 (44.34%)	$839,290.58 (42.99%)	0.59%
☐	2. desktop	111,056 (30.81%)	93,541 (30.84%)	189,322 (28.61%)	46.84%	5.32	00:03:37	2,244 (42.82%)	$854,424.35 (43.77%)	1.19%
☐	3. tablet	45,222 (12.54%)	37,160 (12.25%)	81,100 (12.26%)	50.73%	4.72	00:03:44	673 (12.84%)	$258,391.24 (13.24%)	0.83%

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How Many Mobile Users?

- If the number of mobile users are very low, compare mobile ranking to desktop ranking.

- You might not rank and that's why you have few mobile users.

- This could be an indicator of bad things to come for your site in Mobile First results.

Who Is Your Desktop User

- At work. Goofing off or researching for work
- Sitting at a desk
- Large screen(s)
- Full keyboard
- Mouse
- Less distracted by environment
- Full browser
- Lots of bandwidth and processor power

Who Is Your Mobile Device User
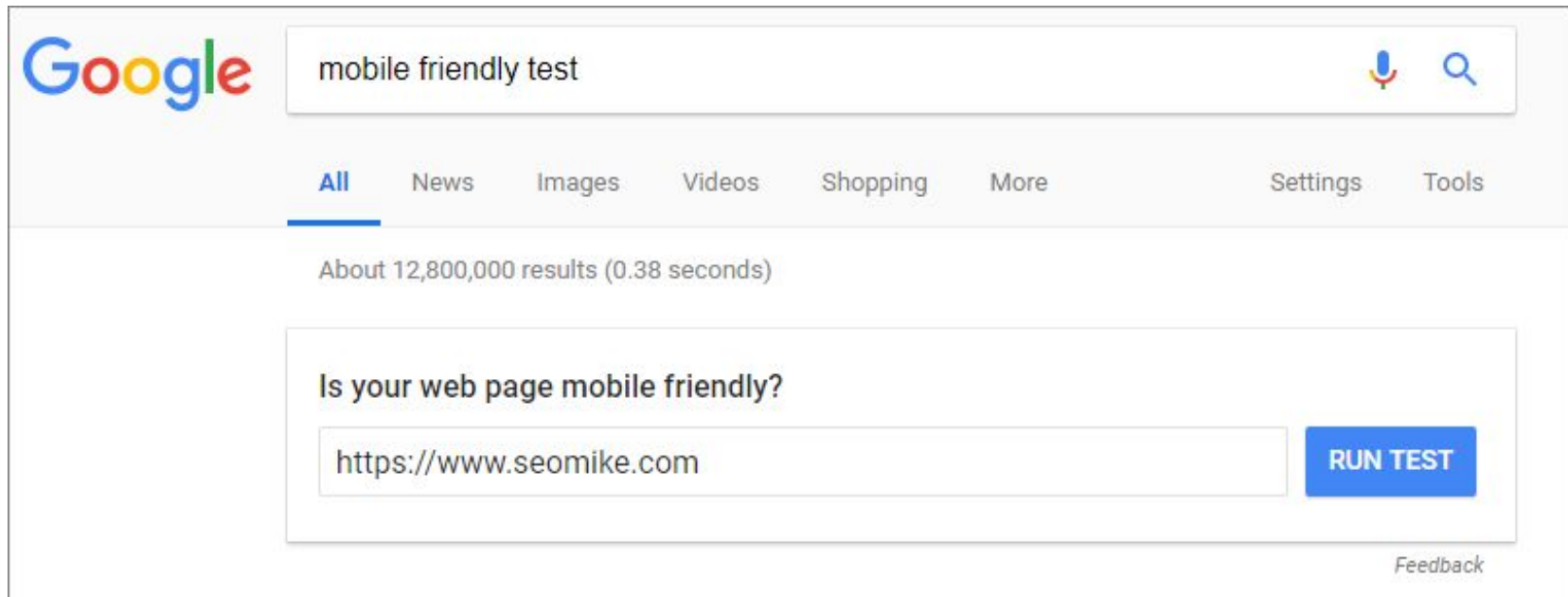
- Chilling on the couch, in bed, or goofing off at work
- Walking around, or worse, driving
- Traveling
- In the bathroom
- Very easily distracted by their environment
- Easily distracted by app notifications
- Very fickle
- A bit more likely to make impulse purchases.

Mobile Experience

- Smaller screens with less on-screen content
- Slower processors
- Less bandwidth (speed)
- Touch screen input
- Extremely limited multi-tasking
- In-app browsers (Reddit)
- Screen orientation

How Friendly is Your Site?

How Friendly is Your Site?

How Friendly is Your Site?

Tested on: Mar 13, 2018 at 8:37 AM

Page partially loaded

Not all page resources could be loaded. This can affect how Google sees and understands your page. Fix availability problems for any resources that can affect how Google understands your page.

How Friendly is Your Site?

Not-so-easy Optimizations

- Right-size images.

- Optimize render-blocking resources.

- Remove sliders (tons of large images).

- Never show content-blocking interstitials.

- Easy engagement / conversion (click to call).

Easy Optimizations

- Make conversion as easy as possible.

- Make your forms as small as possible.

- Integrate mobile pay.

- Clear, concise content.

- Use click-to-call links on your site.

- Contact info at the top and bottom of each page.

Mobile Friendly Title Tags

- What are title tags?
- No real difference in mobile results. Still the same width / pixel count.
- Keyword first, not brand name.
- About 55 characters.
- Yoast has a great preview for WP users.

Mobile Friendly Description Tags

- Description tag lengths are difficult to recommend for Mobile First results. It's a moving target. Every test we see treats them differently.

- Google changed how description tags are displayed recently. Length now varies from 60 – 320 characters, depending on device and listing location.
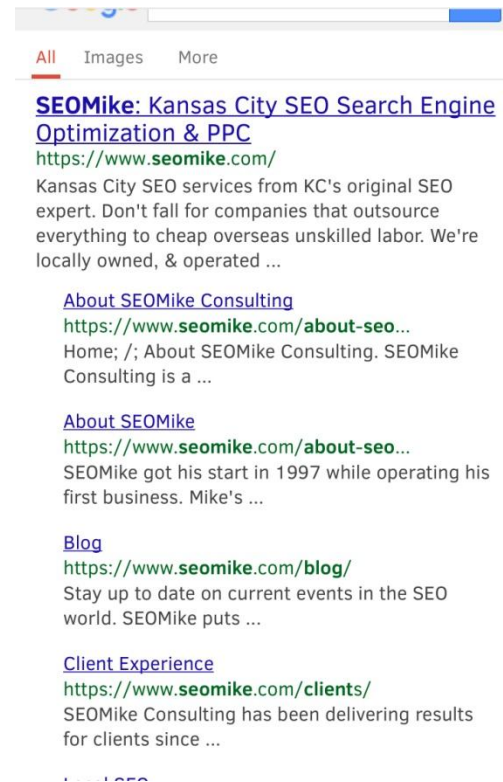
Mobile Friendly Description Tags

Your mobile description tag could be about 175 characters with spaces.
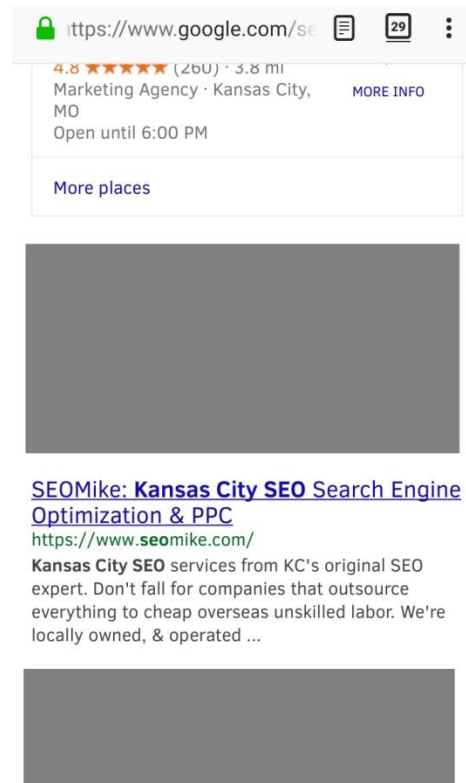
Mobile Friendly Description Tags

If your site has a listing that shows more pages as additional results, those descriptions get about 60 characters.

Desktop Description Tags

Your description tag on desktop results could be as long as 320 characters, including spaces.

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Description Tag Breakdown

Short Mobile   Long Mobile   Desktop
|--- 60 char ---| |---115 char ---| |--- 145 char ---|
Keyword   End on Phone   Keyword2 & CTA

Content Considerations

- Google will treat mobile content as they always have and consider H1s, structured data, etc. Your mobile version needs all of this.
- Don't strip content to fit the small screen. Make it expandable. Content hidden by default has been largely ignored until now, but not so in Mobile First if it's good for the experience.
- AMP does not count as "mobile friendly".

Speed Is Huge

- If all things are equal, faster sites rank better.
- Mobile devices don't always have full bandwidth. It depends on network, speed throttling, and signal strength.
- Google Analytics has information about how fast your site is for actual users.
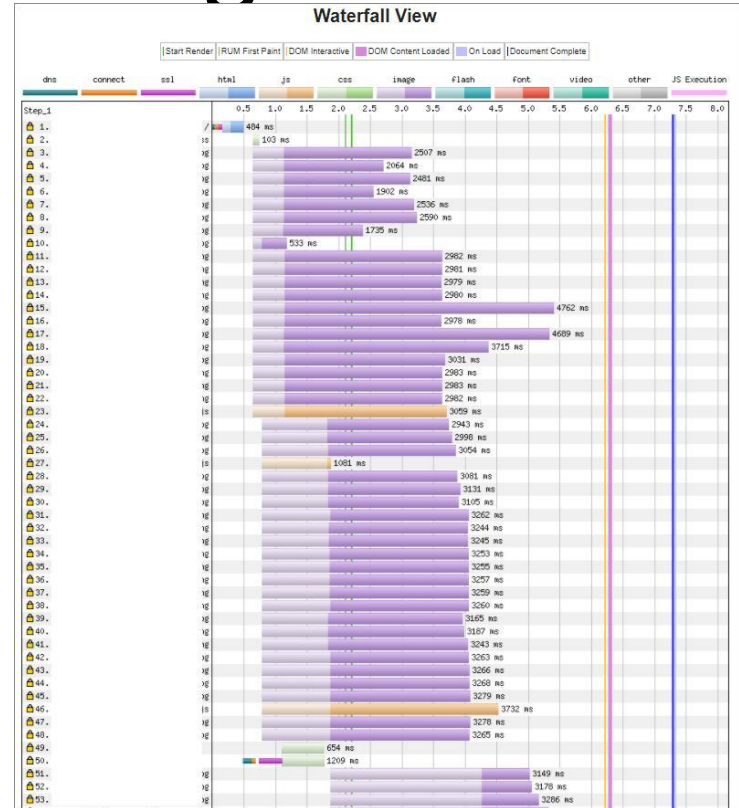
Speed Is Huge

- Google Analytics report on average load times for users.
- This client had over 1,300 visitors this day.
- Google only collected speed info on 14 of them.
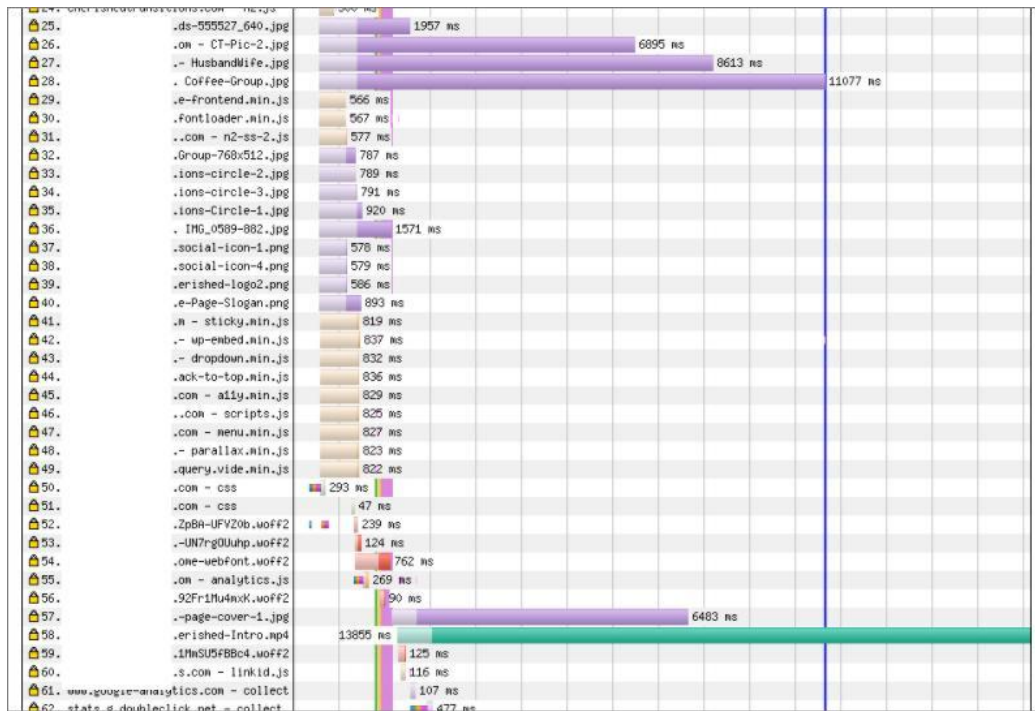- Info reported depends on sample size and is easily skewed.
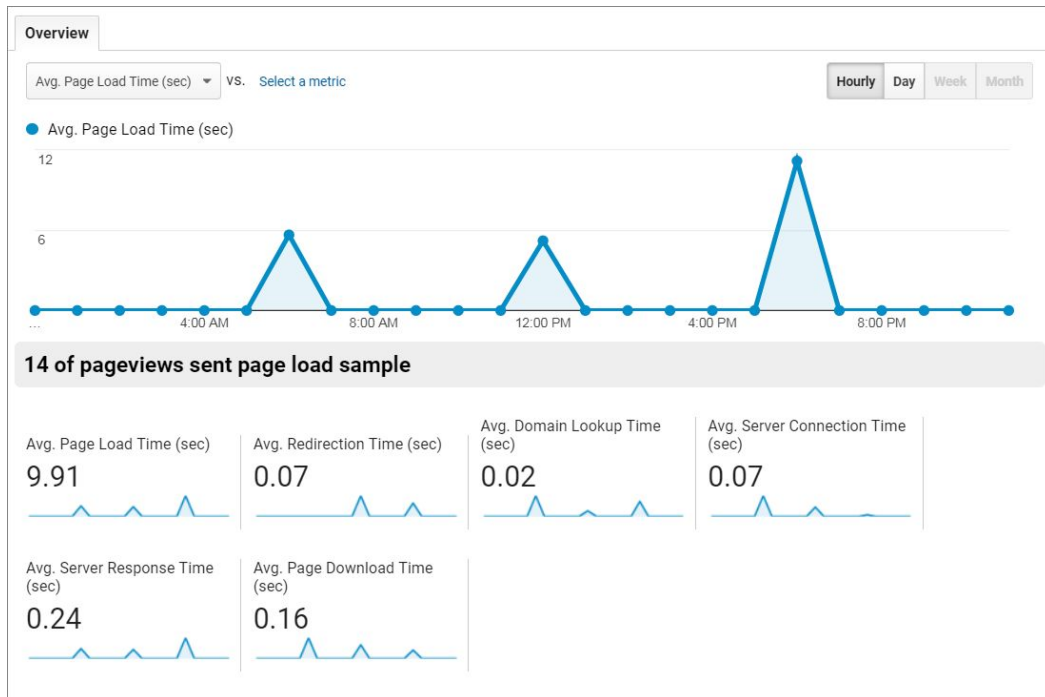
Speed Is Huge

- Check your site's speed using webpagetest.org.
- See details about individual resources loading on your page.

Speed Is Huge

- Long purple lines indicate large resources like images.

- The long green line is a video.

Mobile First is an Opportunity

Google's move to Mobile First indexing is a huge opportunity for you to rise above your competition by making your site focused, mobile-friendly and fast. Start now and get ahead of those who don't what is coming

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