

MOBILE SEO

For Your Web Presence

Data-Driven Insights, Monitoring and Reporting for SEO + Social + Content



In this guide you will learn:

1. What is Mobile SEO & Why Does It Matter?
2. How to Optimize for Mobile SEO
3. Understanding Mobile Web Presence Analytics

What is Mobile SEO & Why Does it Matter?

Over the past several weeks, we have been discussing Google's major announcement regarding their mobile SEO algorithm update. As of April 21, the World's leading search engine began updating its organic search algorithm, specifically making it easier for searchers to find mobile-friendly web pages, sites and content.

For marketers, this means you are more likely to boost awareness of your business if your website is mobile-friendly.

“Starting April 21, we will be expanding our use of mobile-friendliness as a ranking signal. This change will affect mobile searches in all languages worldwide and will have a significant impact in our search results. Consequently, users will find it easier to get relevant, high quality search results that are optimized for their devices.”

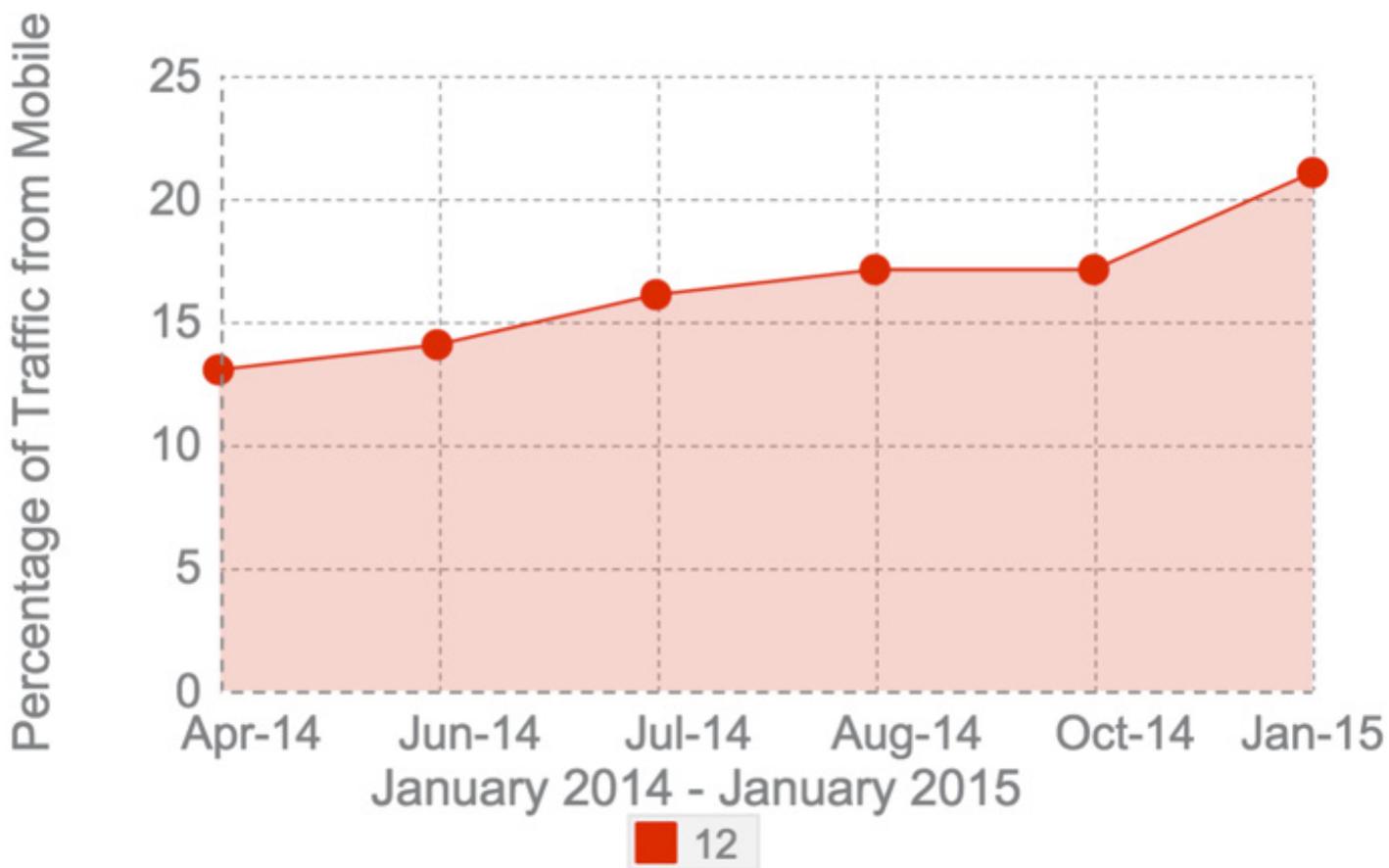
– Google Webmaster Team



Increased Traffic Trend from Mobile Devices

The idea of a mobile-based ranking factor should not come as a surprise to any marketer who pays close attention to their traffic data. In a majority of industries, there has been a steady increase in the percentage of traffic coming from mobile devices.

In looking at data collected in gShift's Web presence analytics software, we were able to identify the following increase in average traffic from mobile devices across the more than 6,000 web presences we track.



Within one year, we saw the percentage of traffic coming from mobile devices increase from 14% in January 2014 to 21% in January 2015. This is an average taken across our clients' sites and includes a wide variety of industries.



What is Mobile Search

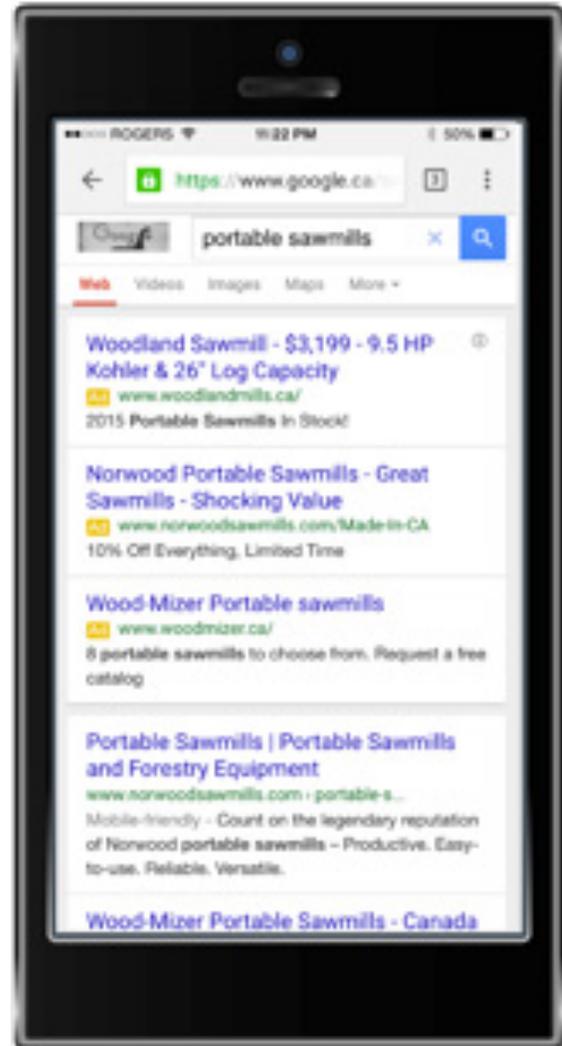
Mobile search refers specifically to the search queries conducted on mobile devices versus a desktop, laptop or tablet. In many cases, the user experience remains the same or at least the content is similar in all environments.

As a searcher, you simply launch your browser of choice and complete a search in any search engine, such as Google, Bing, etc. Even the Google interface is relatively the same on both mobile and desktop.

However, for marketers, the experience may be very different. Many organizations have struggled to understand whether or not Google serves up their site differently in desktop versus mobile device search results.

If a search is done by the same person, using the same keyword and in the same location with the only variable being their device, does Google deliver different search results?

The mobile SEO algorithm change makes it very clear it will depend on the quality and usability of the websites indexed.



“Voice search is also having a direct impact on marketers factoring Mobile SEO into their content strategies.”
- Chris Adams, CTO and co-founder of gShift

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Why Does Mobile SEO Matter?

While many digital marketing teams have a strong understanding of the importance of technical SEO basics and strategies, the need to have their web presences optimized for mobile search may not be as apparent.

It could be argued, if your traffic from mobile is minimal, you don't necessarily need to invest too much time in optimization. However, as we can see an increase in traffic from mobile across a wide variety of industry sectors, it will likely become more relevant for nearly every web presence. You may also consider your mobile traffic is low BECAUSE your site is not showing up in mobile search results thereby lessening your chances of receiving mobile visitors.

If mobile search traffic is a concern for your web presence strategy, this update from Google has likely moved mobile SEO further up your priority list. By optimizing your website and content for mobile devices, you are increasing your discoverability when someone does a search from their smartphone or other mobile device.

“As mobile searches continue to eclipse those on the desktop, digital marketers are keenly aware of the importance of having a well defined mobile strategy. Yet they also know it must align with the needs of their target audience and complement their other strategies, such as social and content marketing.”

~ Krista LaRiviere, CEO and co-founder of gShift

gTIP

Review your traffic by device regularly to ensure you have good visibility on any changes in trends from your visitors. As your audience behaviors change, you will want to be changing along with them.



How to Optimize for Mobile SEO

When considering optimization for mobile devices, you really have to look outside of simply updating your website. While it is an important step, there are many other aspects to consider.

Responsive Does Not Equal Mobile-Friendly

The idea of mobile-friendliness comes from how easy the site is to navigate and use on a mobile device. This includes how the site functions, how images appear and the overall user experience. While a responsive design/theme may resize your site to fit a mobile screen, it does not ensure the usability of your site has been improved.

Many sources agree having a responsive site is still the best choice for a mobile-friendly site. However, you need to take the time to go through your site page-by-page on various mobile devices. Look for ease-of-use to get from one section of the site to another.

Ask yourself a series of questions as you go through the content. How long do the pages take to load? Is the menu easy to use and does it expand properly? Review all of your images. Do they resize properly and are they still visible enough to carry out the message you are intending? Double check any forms, downloads or multi-media content to ensure they all display and function as they should.

gTIP

Exploring your site on a mobile device should be done on a regular basis and after any new content is added. Use a variety of makes and models of devices in order to ensure the content is well-received on all screen sizes.



Technical Mobile Checklist

Getting your website up to code for mobile usability and friendliness can be a major undertaking. As you start to review all of the changes you can make, you may find the list seems never-ending.

To be clear, the technical changes required for mobile SEO could fill a separate guide! That being said, some key items should be on your initial checklist:

- Do you have a content management system like Wordpress? If so, use a mobile-friendly theme.
- Make sure your site fits in mobile viewports.
- Make sure the font on your site is legible on smaller screens.
- Make sure the buttons on your site are clickable.
- Minimize the use of HTML & CSS.
- Avoid Javascript, where possible.
- Avoid heavy images, which can slow down page load times.
- Use browser caching to speed up page loading.

gTIP

If you decide to go “mobile-only” (i.e. use mobile.website.com), you will need to ensure the new content you are creating is optimized as it will be new content to be indexed by Google.

For a more in-depth look at everything to consider when tackling mobile SEO from a technical perspective, we recommend [this comprehensive infographic on Search Engine Land](#).

You should also review the [Webmaster’s Mobile Guide](#) provided by Google, which will review your current site, provide actionable insights and best practices, since they’re the ones setting the ground rules.



Alternatively, utilize the Google Webmaster Tools mobile check to see if there are any immediate actions you should move onto your priority list.

Google systems have tested 250 pages from your site and found that 100% of them have critical mobile usability errors. The errors on these 250 pages severely affect how mobile users are able to experience your website. These pages will not be seen as mobile-friendly by Google Search, and will therefore be displayed and ranked appropriately for smartphone users.

Fix this now:

- 1** Find problematic pages
View a report of the non-mobile-friendly pages found on your site, and the issues discovered. [Inspect mobile issues](#)
- 2** Learn about mobile-friendly design
There are a variety of techniques you can use to make your site mobile-friendly. Specifically, look for information about the issues brought up in Webmaster Tools. [Follow our guidelines](#)
- 3** Fix mobile usability issues on your site
Fix the issues preventing your site from being mobile-friendly.

Not sure how to proceed?

- If your site is built with software like Wordpress or Joomla (also known as "Content Management System" or CMS), read the [easy steps to make a CMS mobile-friendly](#).
- Read more about [building mobile-friendly websites](#) on our Developer site.
- Ask more questions in our [Webmaster Central Forum](#) —mention message type [WNC-451500]



Publish Content Beyond Your Site

Make sure your content is published in other places on the Web. Don't put all of your eggs in one basket with your website. Expand your reach with content shared directly onto social platforms, file-sharing networks and through guest blogging opportunities. Use relationships you have within your business and public relations to share content with others in your industry.

This is not only smart marketing for any content distribution strategy, but also ensures your content lives elsewhere in the event you experience a negative impact from Google's mobile algorithm change. This gives your outwardly distributed content a chance to still be seen and engaged with on other platforms.

**Publish + Socialize
= Content Distribution**



Understanding Mobile Web Presence Analytics

A key to having a great mobile SEO strategy begins with properly understanding the data available regarding mobile devices and your web presence. There are a number of mobile metrics you should be tracking in order to make informed, smarter decisions around your website and content.

Content Performance in Search Results

When talking about mobile SEO, the most important metric is arguably how your website and content is actually ranking in mobile search engine results. Do you know where your web presence currently ranks in mobile search engine results for your keywords? If not, you should. Having a snapshot of how your web presence is currently performing on a mobile-based search engine will help you to better understand what, if any, impact Google's algorithm change has on your discoverability.

Top Keyword Positions

Keyword	†	††
band mills	1	1
best portable sawmills	1	1
portable bandmills	1	50+
portable saw mills	1	1
band sawmills	3	1
bandsaw mill	4	2
bandsaw mills	4	4
portable band sawmill	50+	1
bandmills	2	1

†Google United States St. Louis, Missouri
††Google United States

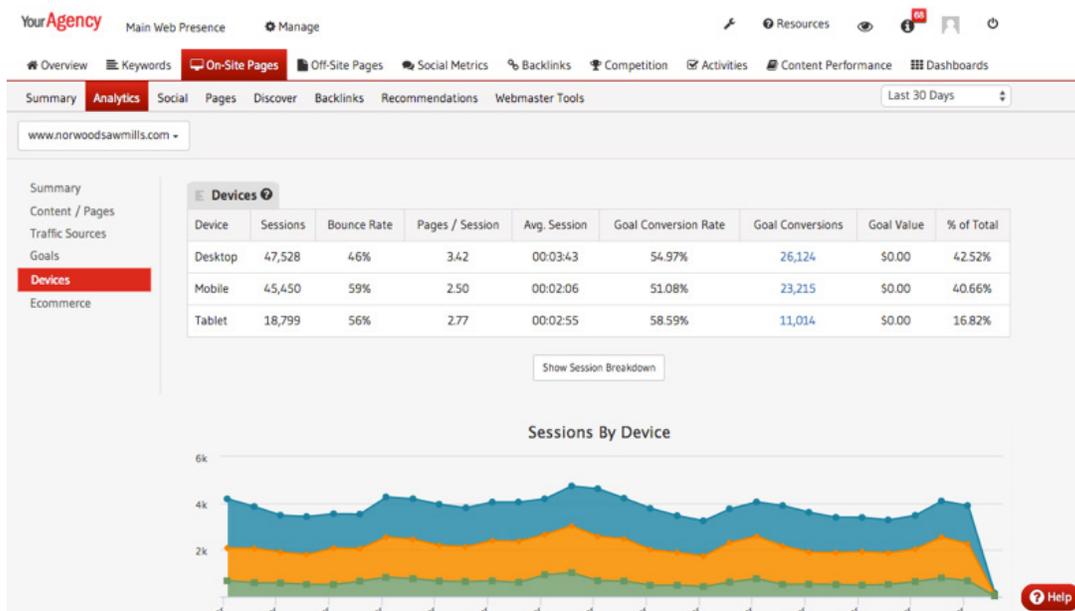
Reviewing this data will also show you if there are any differences between mobile and desktop rank at an individual keyword level. Having this insight will enable you to identify clear mobile SEO wins and losses and to focus your efforts on specific keywords and content.

Website Traffic by Device

It was not all that long ago when we were all looking at total traffic as one generalized number. There may have been data to show where visitors were coming from, but not what devices they were using to get there. Any organization, which continues to look at its traffic as a single metric today, is missing out on major insights.

It is important to know just how much traffic is coming to your website from various devices. Google Analytics breaks this down into three categories; desktop, mobile and tablet. Be clear on what percentage of traffic to your site is coming from mobile and tablet devices.



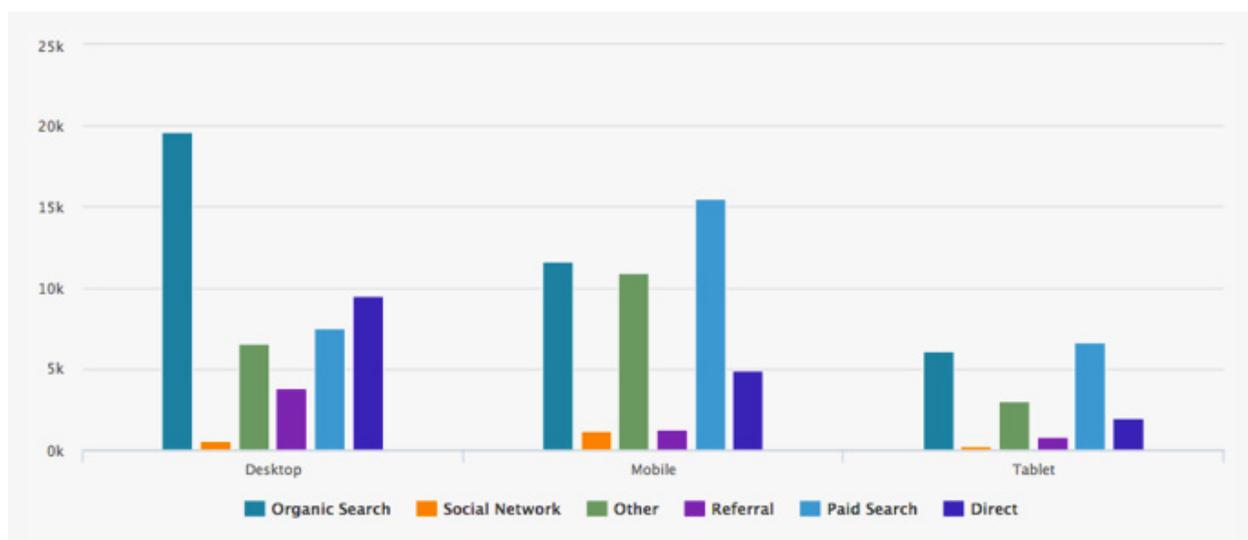


Use data to understand where your areas of focus should be and to support the changes required. However, do not ignore non-mobile traffic simply because of an announcement from Google.

Mobile Traffic by Channel

Looking at your traffic by channel helps to identify where your mobile visitors are coming from. As you start to track this data over a number of weeks, you will begin to see some trends you can use to develop an informed content marketing strategy for each channel.

For instance, you may find you have an increase in social traffic from a mobile device versus desktop. This may lead you to make sure you are sharing some content in an easily digestible, shorter format which will be more consumable on mobile devices.



If you run paid advertising campaigns, this data can be crucial to understanding how well your ads are performing on mobile devices. If you find your paid search traffic from mobile is lower than expected or resulting in a poor conversion rate, you will want to take a look at your mobile ads, as well as the content the ads are pointing to.

“Since there are many roads leading customers to your door, savvy digital marketers are carefully and regularly assessing their results across all of their channels so they can effectively map and execute successful, cross-channel and cross-device campaigns.”

~ Krista LaRiviere, CEO and co-founder of gShift

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About gShift

gShift's industry leading Web Presence Analytics Software Platform helps Brand and Agency teams efficiently understand and improve on the impact and engagement of a organization's content across its web presence. gShift's software infrastructure has been collecting and storing web presence data since 2009. More than 10,000 brands in 24 countries benefit from gShift's insight data and software, as they optimize their time to improve the discoverability and the sharing of their content. gShift placed 29th on the PROFIT HOT 50.

For more information, please contact us at [1-888-743-5960](tel:1-888-743-5960) or sales@gshiftlabs.com