

Google Flips a Switch and Page Speed Goes into Action

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At the beginning of this year, Google announced that July is the magic month where it will matter how fast a website page loads on a mobile or desktop device. We, the people, drove this algorithm change to Google's ranking process. When the internet was first started, humans were thrilled to wait as long as it took to hop online to connect with other people. However, as the novelty wore off, we wanted to access the internet faster and faster. With the dawn of smart hand-held devices, the same cycle unfolded. First, it was a thrill to be able to see a restaurant menu online from anywhere—not just at home or work. Waiting was okay at that point, but is no longer. Today, people expect information to load as fast on a mobile device as it does on a desktop.

Google has watched this trend for years. They've monitored how quickly people bail on a search result because it is loading too slowly. To keep people using Google, it needs to provide what people want—fast loading times. For about 18 months, Google has slowly nudged businesses to move to faster websites. Updating code, moving to improved servers, and creating websites that meet these faster requirements takes time. Google feels marketing companies and their clients have had enough time to implement these changes. The switch is ready to be flipped in July.

Is your business website ready? Here are a few quick tests to find out:

Test 1: <https://testmysite.thinkwithgoogle.com/intl/en-us>

This test determines the load time of a website on a mobile device. Three different pieces of information are provided. The first one is the loading time on a 3G network, along with the estimated visitor loss. This is the percentage of people who visit the site, will stop waiting and go back to search to try again, or quit altogether.

Google makes it simple with a green, yellow and red system. Green means good, yellow is caution, and red means work needs to be done.

18s
Loading time on 3G: **poor**

34%

Est. Visitor loss
(Due to loading time)

Example 1

3s

Loading time on 3G: **Excellent**

Low

Est. Visitor loss
(Due to loading time)

Example 2

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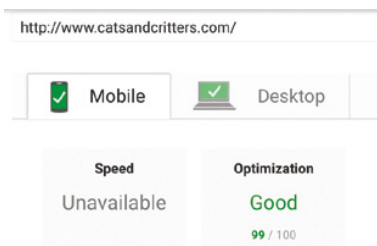
Next on the report is a comparison between the website and others similar to it in the same vertical, such as pets and animals. The first score is applied to a graph of other similar businesses. In our Example 1, where the load time of the website is 18s, it is now compared against others of its class to show how it ranks. This website example needs to roll up its sleeves and get modifications going. Example 2 shows a website that is meeting the new Google standards.

Finally, Google gives suggestions on how to improve the speed of the site if the score is low, or says the website looks to be in good shape. In either case, a button to click to receive a report from Google is an option for more details on the test results.

Test 2: <https://developers.google.com/speed/pagespeed/insights/>

This second test is for speed and optimization on a mobile and desktop. However, for veterinary websites, the speed aspect typically doesn't work because Google hasn't collected enough real-time data on these sites to illustrate the speed result. What is shown is the optimization score with a number and a color. Again, the goal is to have a practice's website show up as green in the test results.

Besides a score and color, the test gives suggestions on how to improve the performance of the website. However, do not be overwhelmed if it has zero meaning to you. It is meant for programmers of websites. The important takeaway is the knowledge of whether the business is in the green or needs assistance to achieve that status.



Next "Must-Do" Steps

If both tests score in the green, then the business is set and ready to go for the change rolling out. Nothing needs to be done. However, if yellow or red are shown in either or both tests, then a conversation with the company's website provider should happen. Ask them what the plan is to move the business's website into the green, and how soon

it will happen. The website provider has had 18 months to work on the shift that is happening now. Google will start dropping the slowest, worst offenders out of its key search result positions in the beginning. Over time, it will start tightening its parameters to show only the fastest loading sites first.

Don't panic if you are in the red. There is still time, but not much, to get in Google's good graces. Start today.

Beyond Indigo has been conducting internet marketing for 21 years. Our CEO and COO have each been working in marketing online for 23 years. Our team knows the old and the new, as well as how to generate revenue and tails through the door. We focus on results first and discuss costs second. We deeply know how Facebook and social media work, are Google AdWords Partners, and we know how to build Google mobile-friendly and fast websites. Need help creating a marketing plan? Call 877.244.9322, ext. 100, or go to <https://www.beyondindigopets.com/contact/>.

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Beyond Indigo is an MWI Animal Health Distinct Advantage™ program partner. To discuss how your practice can qualify for a free Distinct Advantage program membership, contact your MWI Territory Manager.

