Upgrade Your Website For Google's Page Experience Metric

MARKETING   INTERNET/WEBSITE

Google is updating their search engine optimization (SEO) algorithm to include a Page Experience metric that may dramatically impact your website's ranking. Launching in June, 2021, Google will be reviewing your website's user experience, or functionality, in addition to its content. User experience signals include how long it takes your website to load a page, how fast your website responds to an action like clicking a link or button, and how stable your page content is as it loads. These items comprise the Core Web Vitals that will determine your website's future Google ranking.

In addition to these Core Web Vitals, Google will incorporate existing metrics such as mobile-friendliness, safe browsing, secure site connection (HTTPS), and responsible use of pop-ups (a.k.a. interstitials – advertisements that load between two content pages) and banners in your website's Page Experience ranking. Understand that these metrics are based off a mobile-first approach, meaning your score will be based on how well your website performs on a mobile interface.

Page Experience Signals

Google has decided it's ranking algorithm will not only require you to have good content—you must also deliver that content in a user-friendly manner. That's what Google's new Page Experience update will assess. Here's what they're looking for:

- **Core Web Vitals:**

  - **Loading Times:** Measures how long it takes to load the largest content element on a page. This should not exceed 2.5 seconds. Research done by Google indicates that your conversion rate decreases with each second of extra load time.

  - **Interactivity:** Measures how long it takes for a browser to respond to a user interaction on the webpage (e.g. clicking a link or tapping a button). This First Input Delay (FID) should not exceed 100 milliseconds.

  - **Visual Stability:** Evaluates the layout stability of a page on your website as it loads. If you've ever been on a webpage about to click a link when suddenly the page shifts down and you end up tapping a completely different button, you know how frustrating layout shifts can be. Stabilizing the layout as it loads so the content doesn't shift is what Google is

looking for.

- **Mobile Friendly:** Not sure if your website is mobile friendly? Find out if it's up to Google's standards by using their Mobile-Friendly Test.

- **Safe Browsing:** Make sure your website is safe for users and doesn't contain malware or deceptive content such as undisclosed use of third-party services.

- **HTTPS:** Ensure a secure connection for visitors to your site.

- **No Intrusive Interstitials:** Pop-ups that cover the main content on the page will lower your Page Experience score. Make sure to use pop-ups responsibly such as for age verification, member logins, or authorizing cookie usage. Utilize a banner structure so they don't interfere with the user's ability to access the main content of the page.

Expand the Upgrade

Kill two birds with one stone when you upgrade your website for Google's Page Experience metric by incorporating the following changes that can also help boost your new patient conversions:

- **Video Testimonials:** Produce 5 videos (1 minute each) from patients discussing how much they love your practice and the services you provide and add them to the home page of your website. This is the best method to convince prospective patients to call and schedule an appointment.

- **Vaccination Status:** Patients are still concerned about COVID-19 and may be hesitant to return to your practice. Make them feel more comfortable about returning by advertising your team's vaccination status.

- **Promote Dental Needs:** The pandemic has increased the prevalence of bruxism, chipped teeth, TMJ, gum disease, and tooth decay. Make sure your patients know the importance of taking care of their oral health and the consequences to their overall health when they neglect dental treatment.

While you're at it, make sure to add, or enhance, these other website features to make your website more attractive and user-friendly:

- **Patient Forms:** In the era of social distancing, it's crucial to give patients the opportunity to complete new patient forms before their visit. It's also a huge time-saver—especially if your digital forms integrate with your practice management software. At the very least, have PDFs of new patient forms, records requests, and post-operative instructions that patients can print and fill out at their leisure before coming into your office.

- **Contact Us:** Make sure to have an online submission form for after-hours communication from patients that you'll receive as an email or live chat box.

- **Map:** You want patients to be able to find your office with ease, so make sure your website includes an interactive map with customizable directions.

- **FAQ Section:** Your staff knows the most frequently asked questions from patients, so save time for your team by posting these answers on your website.

- **Team Photos:** Include photos of staff members, their role, and a fun fact about them. Don't forget your bio as well, including your hometown, where you went to school, and your hobbies and interests. This allows patients to get to know you and your team before stepping into your office, making them feel more comfortable.

- **Office Photos:** Make it easy for patients to recognize your office by including photos of both the inside and outside of your office. If you're hesitant to showcase the interior of your office, it's time for an upgrade!

- **Phone Number:** Make sure it is displayed prominently on your home page. Ideally at the top in large, bold font.

- **Social Media:** If you use social media platforms as part of your practice's marketing strategy, make sure to connect your accounts to your website.

- **User-Friendly Interface:** Patients are going to be looking at your practice on all sorts of digital platforms, so make sure your website user experience is consistent across desktop, tablet, and smartphone interfaces.