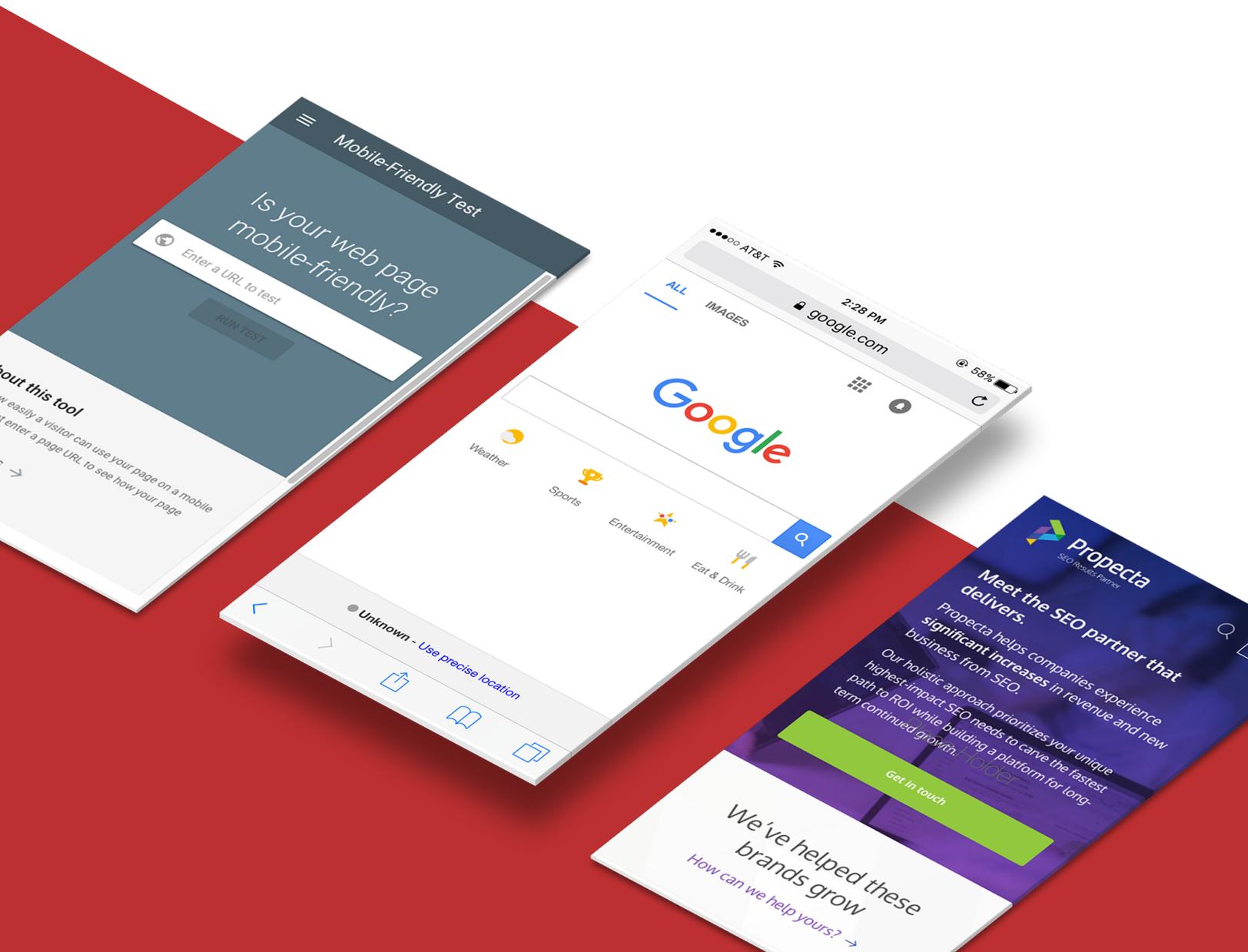


Mobile-First Indexing Audit Checklist



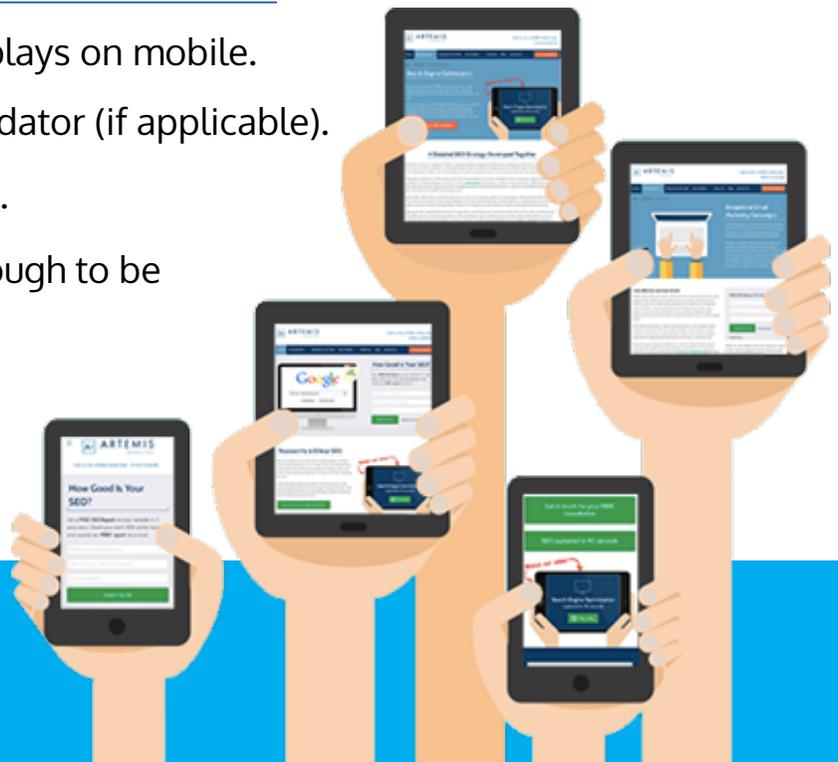
In November 2016, Google announced they were “experimenting” with mobile-first indexing and would be rolling it out slowly. The SEO implications are huge, and it’s more important than ever to make sure your website’s mobile experience is flawless.

The following checklist is what our SEO analysts use when auditing a site to see if it’s ready for the Mobile-First Index. By following this checklist you can make sure your mobile site is a boost, not a drain, on your SEO.

Overall Mobile Compatibility

First, make sure the site is compatible, overall, with mobile devices. You can use [Google’s Mobile-Friendliness Tool](#), but the best way is usually to test the site on a few mobile devices yourself.

- ✔ Mobile site does not show [intrusive interstitials](#).
- ✔ On-page video (if applicable) plays on mobile.
- ✔ Test apps with Deep Links Validator (if applicable).
- ✔ Javascript & CSS are crawlable.
- ✔ Clickable elements are big enough to be tapped with a thumb.



Sites with Responsive Design

Responsive design is the most popular way to serve content to mobile devices, but there are still some potential issues. Don't assume that responsive design means your site is automatically 100% compatible with mobile.

- ✔ @media queries or mobile stylesheet is functioning properly.
- ✔ Mobile view is optimized with viewport meta tag.
- ✔ There are no outstanding mobile usability errors in Google Webmaster Tools.

Sites that are Dynamically Served

If your mobile site is dynamically served for any reason, there are, of course, more issues that might prevent it from its best possible mobile performance. There are a few tools that can help here, such as [Google's Structured Data Testing Tool](#), but most of these potential red flags require manual review.

- ✔ Site does not contain any mobile usability errors.
- ✔ Vary-HTTP header is in place and is working correctly.



Sites with Separate Mobile Sites

Some companies opt to build entirely separate websites for mobile and desktop. In those cases, a different set of technical considerations needs to be in order to optimize mobile performance.

- ✓ Mobile users are able to access desktop site (and stay there).
- ✓ Rel=alternate/rel=canonical properly points to the mobile/desktop versions.
- ✓ Mobile users are able to access desktop site (and stay there).
- ✓ Mobile site is added to Google Search Console.
- ✓ Robots.txt is not blocking mobile website.
- ✓ Mobile handles https by default and efficiently (canonical/301/etc).
- ✓ Mobile site does not have excessive 404 errors.
- ✓ Structured data is served on mobile website version.



Website Speed

Load times on mobile sites are crucial, and becoming more so every day. Most consumers expect a mobile page to load in [two seconds or less](#), and Google [has set the bar](#) for ecommerce “website acceptability” at two seconds as well. Google emphasized the issue with its Mobile-Friendliness update, and then with the Accelerated Mobile Pages (AMP) project. Speed is important, and will affect how Google ranks your site.

- ✓ Run a mobile server load time speed test.
- ✓ Ensure that there are fewer than 60 HTTP requests.
- ✓ Make sure that your mobile version passes Google PageSpeed test.
- ✓ Use a CDN to deliver your content more efficiently.
- ✓ Images are optimized and load quickly.
- ✓ Javascript and CSS are compressed and externalized.
- ✓ HTML is compressed.
- ✓ The site is using page caching.

AMP

If you have decided to create AMP versions for even better mobile speed, there are separate considerations:

- ✓ AMP is installed and error-free.
- ✓ AMP versions for your site don't create duplicate content.
- ✓ AMP versions don't have unaddressed tracking issues or limitations.

Deep App Indexing

If your brand or company has an app, you should ensure that your mobile content can be shown in organic search, and that includes being able to allow the user to download the app seamlessly, without navigating to another site or app store. Setting up deep app links give you that functionality and more.

Here's how to do it:

- ✓ **1.** For Android, ensure that app content matches mobile landing pages and links to website's landing pages. For iOS, install CocoaPods, import the file to GoogleAppIndexing, and register app to Google's system. The site is using page caching.
- ✓ **2.** Publish deep app links, ideally, via the App Indexing API (for Android apps) to take advantage of the ranking boost.
- ✓ **3.** Verify Android app in Google Search Console and Google Play. For iOS, check by tapping on a universal link in Safari on a mobile device.
- ✓ **4.** Test setup using Google's Fetch as Google for Apps Tool.
- ✓ **5.** Validate deep app links in Google Search Console.
- ✓ **6.** Validate mobile app links in branded Google search results.

Users and buyers are increasingly mobile-first, and Google is following their lead. Staying competitive in mobile marketing, and in organic search in general, is going to require a flawless mobile experience.

If you would like some experienced, professional assistance applying this checklist to your website and your company's unique needs, contact us to talk about our Mobile-First Indexing Audit.

Tools for Mobile-First Indexing Audits

There are a number of online tools available to help measure, score, and improve a website to make it more mobile-friendly.

- ✓ [Universal Links Validator](#) by **Branch**
- ✓ [Mobile Phone Emulator](#)
- ✓ [Google Search Console](#) (formerly **Webmaster Tools**)
- ✓ [Structured Data Testing Tool](#) by **Google**
- ✓ [HttpWatch](#)
- ✓ [DeepCrawl](#)
- ✓ [GTmetrix](#)
- ✓ [Website Speed Test](#) by **Pingdom**
- ✓ [Mobile-Friendly Test](#) by **Google**
- ✓ [WebPagetest](#)

