

Responsive websites designed in Milton Keynes

Should your website be responsive?

Websites that are responsive will adapt themselves to suit the screen they are being viewed on, a tablet, a mobile phone, Laptop or desktop computer.

Google has deprecated the desktop Web. It's still here, but for Google it just got less important.

At least that's the implicit message in Google's recent [mobile search update](#). The company is now judging how "mobile-friendly" a site is and is using that metric to weight search results served to mobile devices.

This is the third update in Google's slow push for Web developers to start building mobile-friendly sites. First, Google announced that it would start calling out sites that used Flash and at the same time rewarding mobile-friendly sites. Initially, that was just a little label next to search results on mobile devices that told viewers the site was "Mobile-friendly."



Responsive Ready Website

Now mobile-friendliness has moved from visual alerts and promos to affecting actual page rankings.]

Web developers were apparently confused enough by the change that Google posted a [lengthy FAQ](#) along with its announcement last week.

Here's what the company says: "The mobile-friendly update will boost the rankings of mobile-friendly pages... in mobile search results worldwide. (Conversely, pages designed for only large screens may see a significant decrease in rankings in mobile search results.)" In other words, sites that work on mobile will outrank sites that don't when all other things are equal.

So what does a site need to do in order for Google to consider it "mobile-friendly"?

The company's guidelines suggest that the site start by avoiding any content that requires Adobe's Flash Player. That will probably sound obvious to most developers at this point, but don't forget that old YouTube and other video embeds were probably done with `<object>` tags, which means Flash Player. Google suggests updating to the more modern `iframe` embed method that's the default on most video hosting sites today.

The other three main criteria in Google's definition of mobile-friendly are making the site readable without zooming and ensuring that content doesn't need to be scrolled horizontally (in other words, the site scales to fit on mobile screens). The last one is something that will make anyone with large hands happy: sites need to place links far enough apart so that the desired link can be easily tapped. Fat fingers love white space.

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