

Google data shows Page Speed update resulted in 15-20% speed increases among slower sites

Google shared some data around the aftermath of launching its Google Speed Update officially in July 2018. After Google giving site owners notice of the update in January of 2018, Google saw that the slowest one-third of traffic had performance metrics improve by 15% to 20% in 2018. In contrast, it saw zero improvements in 2017.

What was the Speed Update. The Google Speed Update was first announced in January 2018 as a way to reduce the rankings of very slow mobile pages in the search results. Webmasters, SEOs, developers and site owners then had several months to react and improve their web site performance before the algorithm update rolled out in July 2018.

It appears sites took the update seriously and worked to improve web site speed on mobile and desktop. Google also provided tools and reports Google to measure their site speed, get suggestions on improvements and implement those suggestions.

The results. Google shared the following results around speed improvements it saw a year later:

- For the slowest one-third of traffic, we saw user-centric performance metrics improve by 15% to 20% in 2018. As a comparison, no improvement was seen in 2017.
- We observed improvements across the whole web ecosystem. On a per country basis, more than 95% of countries had improved speeds.
- When a page is slow to load, users are more likely to

abandon the navigation. Thanks to these speed improvements, we've observed a 20% reduction in abandonment rate for navigations initiated from Search, a metric that site owners can now also measure via the Network Error Logging API available in Chrome.

- In 2018, developers ran over a billion PageSpeed Insights audits to identify performance optimization opportunities for over 200 million unique urls.

More work to do. I asked one of the main Google players around speed, Ilya Grigorik if he can now retire. Ilya Grigorik is a Web performance engineer at Google and is passionate about speed and performance improvements to the web ecosystem. He said while there have been big improvements, "there is still the other 2/3rds that need a lot more attention."

Here is his response to me on Twitter:

alas, there is still the other 2/3rds that need a lot more attention.. that said, this was a huge milestone and win for the web in 2018 and I'm excited about all the great work ahead of us – stay tuned.

– Ilya Grigorik (@igrigorik) April 4, 2019

Why it matters. While Google's originally messaging around the Speed Update was that it would only impact a small percentage of queries and only impact web pages that "deliver the slowest experience to users," SEOs, webmasters, site owners, etc. clearly responded to the potential that their organic traffic would suffer by having slow site speed. I would suggest you don't need to a perfect score in the PageSpeed Insights tool, but you should look to continually improve.

About The Author



Barry Schwartz is Search Engine Land's News Editor and owns RustyBrick, a NY based web consulting firm. He also runs Search Engine Roundtable, a popular search blog on SEM topics. <http://feeds.searchengineland.com/~r/searchengineland/~3/ktqY1nGMTyM/google-data-shows-page-speed-update-resulted-in-15-20-speed-increases-among-slower-sites-314942>