How to increase page speed to improve SEO results



Page speed has been a part of Google's search ranking algorithms for quite some time, but it's been entirely focused on *desktop* searches until recently when Google began using page speed as a ranking factor for *mobile* searches as well.

Have you checked your page speed scores lately?

How do your speeds match up against your competition?

If your pages are loading slower than competitors, there's a chance you're taking a hit in the SERPs. While relevance of a page carries much more weight than page speed, it's still important to ensure your pages are loading fast for users and search engines.

Here are 5 ways to increase page speed and improve SEO results.

Compress images

Large image files can have a significant negative impact on page speed performance. Images often represent the largest portion of bytes when downloading a page. This is why optimizing images generally returns the biggest improvement in speed performance. Compressing your images using an image compression tool will reduce their file size leading to faster loading pages for both users and search engines, which in turn

will have a positive impact on your organic search rankings.

Leverage browser caching

Web browsers cache quite a bit of information, including images, JavaScript files and stylesheets. The benefit is that when visitors *revisit* your site, the browser doesn't have to reload the whole page. If your server does not include caching headers or if resources are only cached for a short period of time, then pages on your site will load slower because browsers must reload all of this information.

Google recommends setting a minimum cache time of one week (and preferably up to one year) for static assets, or assets that change infrequently. So, make sure you work with your web developer to ensure caching is setup for optimal page speed performance.

Decrease server response time

There are numerous potential factors that may slow down the response of your server: slow database queries, slow routing, frameworks, libraries, slow application logic, or insufficient memory. All these factors should be taken into consideration when trying to improve your server's response time.

The most favorable server response time is under 200ms. SEO marketers should work with their website hosting provider to reduce server response time and increase page speed performance.

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Enable Gzip compression

Your pages will load slower if your site has compressible resources that are served *without* Gzip compression. Gzip, a software application for file compression, should be utilized to reduce the size of files on your site such as CSS, HTML, and JavaScript (but not images).

You will need to determine which type of server your site runs on before enabling Gzip compression as each server requires a unique configuration, for example:

Again, your hosting provider can help you enable Gzip compression accordingly. You'd be surprised how much faster your pages load by having Gzip implemented.

Avoid multiple landing page redirects

Having more than one redirect from a given URL to the final landing page can slow page load time. Redirects prompt an additional HTTP request-response which can delay page rendering. SEO Marketers should minimize the number of redirects to improve page speed. Check your redirects and make sure you don't have redundant redirects that could be slowing load time.

Conclusion

SEO marketers must be analyzing and improving page speed. A great place to start is compressing images, utilizing caching, reducing server response time, enabling file compression, and removing multiple/redundant redirects.

I urge marketers to periodically use **Google's Page Speed Insights Tool** to check your load time and compare your website to competitors' sites. The tool also provides specific, recommended optimizations to increase your site's page speed performance.

As Google continues to favor fast-loading websites it’s crucial that SEO Experts take necessary steps to ensure your site’s pages are meeting (and beating) Google’s expectations. Today, improving page speed is an essential aspect of any successful SEO Program.

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