

UPDATE: TRAVEL INDUSTRY NEEDS TO BE GOOGLE MOBILE FRIENDLY



Google goes further with their continuous process of optimization. Their latest ongoing endeavor involves bettering algorithms in mobile searches. Estimated to have an effect on 40 percent of related searches, the aptly named Mobile-Friendly Algorithm Update will become active from April 21st 2015. Since then, mobile friendly websites will get higher rankings.

The Impact on Hoteliers and Their Businesses

Considering the fast-paced and drastic changes in mobile technology from the last couple of years, many users have taken to using the gadgets for many purposes, one of which involves the booking of hotel rooms. **In 2014 alone, mobile bookings registered a 36 percent growth.** Out of the total, 21 percent of the bookings came by way of smartphone or tablet. The same stands true for 17 percent of room nights and 15 percent of the revenue.

In light of recent figures, the algorithm update can be considered crucial for hoteliers that care about revenue. More than 90 percent of results from a search engines are accessed from the first page of the list, meaning that websites should be optimized according to the new algorithm update.

The Risk of Not Being Mobile-Friendly

While search engine ranking is already a complex process, the addition of the new mobile algorithm update will take the focus away from desktops and onto gadgets. Websites that are mobile-friendly will have a great advantage over the others and show up high in Google's rankings, while those that aren't will slide into Internet obscurity.

According to the Google Webmaster Central Blog, the new algorithms will take both the front and the back end into consideration when assessing a website and **will prioritize towards those that are well configured for mobile display and use.** Google issues many updates and they do it quite often, but this one is considered to have a significant impact, much like 2011's rollout of Google Panda.

A Look at the New Criteria

- Text that can be read on mobile by default configurations
- Fast download speeds on mobile
- Content that is sized within the screen limits to avoid scrolling too much
- Easy tapping of links achieved by proper positioning
- Common software for mobiles (unlike Flash)

After April 21st, 2015, Google will issue badges for the mobile friendly websites and assess them with a pass or fail system. The more the front and back end correspond to what the new algorithm update entails, the higher the website will score in Google rankings, the more visible it will be to users and, when it comes to hoteliers, potential guests and customers.

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