

Google's Big Change to Focus on Mobile-Friendly Search

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Over time, people have been using their smart phones and mobile devices to conduct searches more and more. Why? Because they are handy. Even if we have a computer in the next room, we are more apt to pull up a search on our phone because it is in our hand. Because of this behavior, Google is making a change to its mathematical formula. The change is about the survival of Google.

Google changes to keep consumers using Google. How we search, where we go on the page on our device, and how long it takes us to make a selection of what listing to click, are all monitored by Google. As consumers, we now want search results on a mobile device as fast (or faster) than our laptop/desktops, and have what we view be mobile friendly. If we become frustrated with the result given by Google, then most likely we will go to another system (think Facebook, Yahoo and Bing) to search. Google then loses money – and this isn't good for Google.

To improve its search results, Google needs to encourage us to build mobile-friendly websites. To this end, Google has been “herding” us to the new system. It started in November of 2014, when Google began releasing modifications to its system and, ultimately, made a big announcement geared towards helping us change to mobile-friendly websites. For the modifications, Google came out with a new label that appears next to a search result letting a searcher know if a website is mobile-friendly or not. You can see in the picture that the Yelp listing is mobile-friendly and the Heritage Animal Hospital listing below it is not.

Take a quick moment now and pull out your smart phone. Do a search for veterinarians in your town and state. Look to see where your business falls on the page. When you find it, see if there is a mobile-friendly label in front of your listing. If you cannot find your website, then search for your hospital name directly. If your website is not listed, or does not show “mobile-friendly” next to your name, it is time for an update.

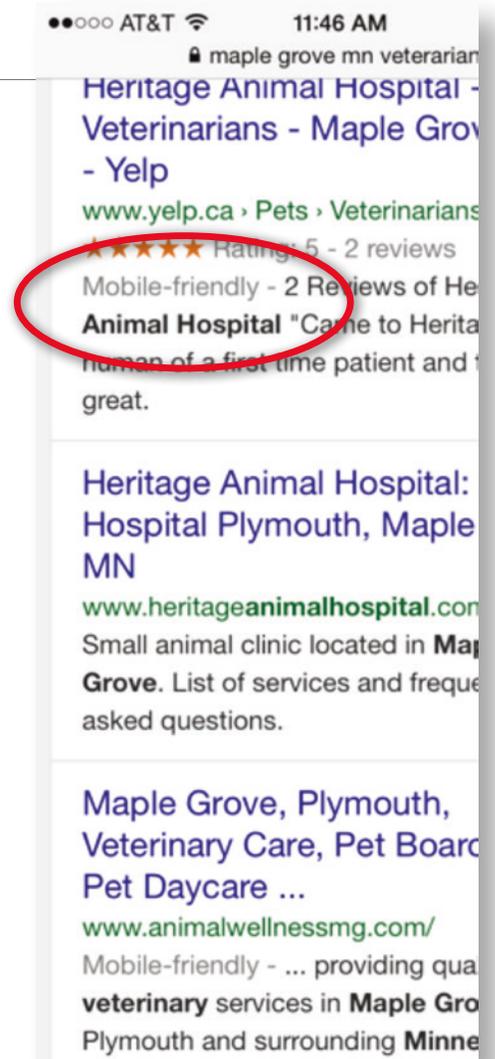
Next, Google made a tool for website owners to check if their website passes a mobile test. Google ONLY makes tools for website owners if it really wants compliance. To take the test,

please go to Google and type in “Google Mobile test,” or browse out to <https://www.google.com/webmasters/tools/mobile-friendly/>. Run your domain name through the test and see if it shows if it passes or fails. If your website passes the test, it will show a check mark in green. If it fails, then Google lists why the website failed the test. The test shows a mobile phone with how a website is viewed on a device. You can see the example of Beyond Indigo Pets on how Google displays the results of the test.

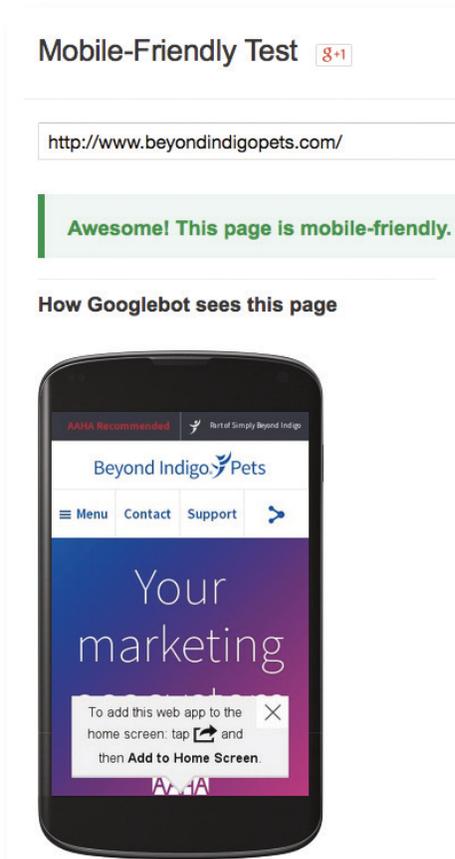
Then, on February 26th, Google sent out a notice that a big change will be happening on April 21st. To quote Google:

Starting April 21, we will be expanding our use of mobile-friendliness as a ranking signal. This change will affect mobile searches in all languages worldwide and will have a significant impact in our search results. Consequently, users will find it easier to get relevant, high quality search results that are optimized for their devices.

To get help with making a mobile-friendly site, check out our guide to mobile-friendly sites. If you're a webmaster, you can get ready for this change by using the following tools to see how Googlebot views your pages:



1. If you want to test a few pages, you can use the *Mobile-Friendly Test*.
2. If you have a site, you can use your *Webmaster Tools* account to get a full list of mobile usability issues across your site using the *Mobile Usability Report*.



You may read the full report here:

<http://googlewebmastercentral.blogspot.com/2015/02/finding-more-mobile-friendly-search.html>

What Can You Do?

The best advice is to follow the rules Google establishes. If you follow Google, you are rewarded in its search engine. If you fail to follow the rules, then there is a high chance of receiving a Google smack down. In this case, test your website in the Google Mobile Test. If your website passes, you are in the clear. However, if your website fails, you need to take steps to update your website to the new mobile coding that Google requires. A good best practice is to contact the company that manages your website now and see if they can update your website. If that path lacks an appropriate outcome, then it is time to look for a new website provider.

We Can Help

Beyond Indigo provides cutting-edge mobile websites that follow all of Google's rules. Besides websites, we offer digital marketing and consulting to veterinary practices of all sizes and specialties throughout the U.S., Canada, UK and Australia. Our marketing services range from marketing plans that simplify your marketing program, to social media marketing, search engine optimization and online reputation management. Our services are specifically designed for you. Our deep experience in the digital age (over 100 years combined) along with our ability to clearly communicate veterinary terminology in terms anyone can understand, will help your practice stand out and free you to practice medicine (our staff has advanced degrees and includes DVMs).

To experience Beyond Indigo's gold standard marketing and service for yourself, please call Melissa Neff at (877) 244-9322, ext. 100, or email at melissa@beyondindigo.com.

Questions about how your technology integrates with your marketing? Contact Nancy Dewitz at (877) 244-9322 ext. 332, or nancy@beyondindigo.com.

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Kelly Baltzell, MA is President and CEO of the Beyond Indigo family of companies, which she founded in 1997. Under her leadership, Beyond Indigo companies have developed all types of veterinary websites (small animal, exotic, specialty, equine, mixed animal) that now reach millions of people a year. Kelly's depth of experience, passion and visionary approach to the industry have made her an unparalleled leader in Internet marketing. Kelly was graduated from George Washington University with a degree in International Affairs & Economics and received her Master's degree in Counseling & Psychology from St. Mary's. Kelly is a proud parent, currently living with her family in Minnesota.