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## Mobile-First Global Consumers, and Their Impact on Search

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Learn why companies must adapt to the mobile-first reality to thrive in international markets.

## Introduction

You probably know that smartphones are now the preferred online-connected device for most people around the world. But what you might not know is that they're fast becoming the *only* device these prospective customers use for researching and buying products.

Major global search engines—from Google to Russia's Yandex—have embraced this mobile-first reality. They're throwing away old approaches and **putting mobile search front-and-center**. That's great news for global customers...but bad news for companies stuck in a PC-first mindset.

The stakes are high. If you don't adapt to this new mobile-first reality and how it's revolutionizing Internet search, **your business stands to lose website traffic, conversions and revenue**—particularly in global markets.



## An Industry-Wide Pivot

The search-engine industry's shift to prioritizing mobile search began in earnest in May 2016. Then, Google announced that users conducting mobile-based searches **would receive different results** from those seen by desktop users.

About six months later, Google announced that its algorithm would indeed become mobile-first.

### Mobile-First Moves

Search engines around the world are changing their search algorithms to prefer mobile.

With its "Ice Bucket" algorithm update in 2014, **Chinese search giant Baidu** was the first search engine company to realize the opportunity.

In February 2016, Russian company **Yandex** launched its own efforts to prioritize mobile-friendly pages in search results.

Others are following suit, including Bing and Naver.

Google now ranks websites **primarily on the experience they deliver mobile users**, regardless if web searches originate from desktop PCs or mobile devices. When Google's engine crawls a website, it does so as if it were a smartphone.

If a site's content isn't easily accessible from a mobile device, **its authority will be negatively affected**.

Put another way: **Google rewards content creators that publish mobile (or mobile-friendly) sites**, and punishes those that do not. Brands are taking the hint.



## The Impact on Business

These changes to search are making a big impact on global websites.

Our organization analyzed the performance of over 40 translated websites—in over a dozen industries—since Google implemented changes to its algorithm for mobile search. We found:

- 1 Multilingual sites **that do not implement** Google’s mobile-friendly recommendations suffer when the algorithm is updated.
- 2 After one update, their mobile impressions dropped **an average of 36%**.
- 3 After the same update, sites that **complied** with Google’s recommendations saw a **40% lift** in mobile impressions.
- 4 These days, Google’s changes aren’t just impacting impressions. **They also affect overall organic traffic.**
- 5 Translated sites with strong mobile experiences **now have wildly improved SERP**, compared to before.

- 6 Sites that aren’t mobile-ready dropped have seen **precipitous drops in search results.**

While the most important signals to generate website authority will always be relevant content and structure, it’s clear that **adapting to the mobile-first future** is key to avoid losing search-rank authority to the competition.



## Future-Friendly Best Practices

If you’re serving customers with translated websites—and want those sites to rank well in global search engines—you must provide users with mobile-first, or mobile-friendly, experiences.

But to really move the needle in global markets, consider these additional best practices on the next page.

## To smartly serve customers in mobile-first markets, consider these best practices:

- ✓ **Make it quick:** Speedy load times are critical for mobile users, especially in emerging markets where networks are slower and data caps are lower. Use a content delivery network to mitigate this risk.
- ✓ **Streamline the checkout process.** Remove unnecessary steps from the process to ensure frictionless conversions. And support commonly-used payment methods in global markets.
- ✓ **Capture the “micro-moment.”** Mobile visitors use their devices in more specific contexts than desktop users, such as reading reviews or product specs. Find and use these “micro-moments” to guide the buyers’ journey toward conversion.
- ✓ **Optimize for mobile keywords.** People everywhere use shorter, more informal keywords when searching on their phones. Review your local keyword strategies and optimize them for mobile users, if needed.
- ✓ **Consider local specificities.** Every international market has a different transactional relationship with their mobile devices. Research the mobile behavior in your target markets, and design for those customers’ unique needs.

## Conclusion

Smartphones now dominate how people around the world communicate with each other, and access information about products and services.

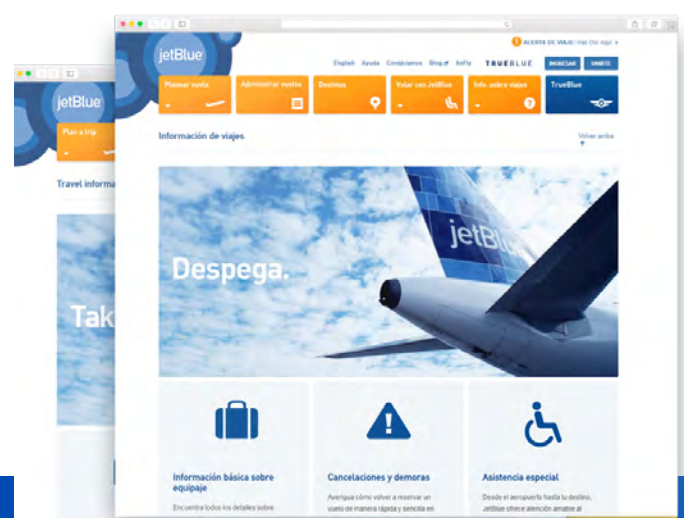
**For companies, the changes are felt most strongly in mobile search.** Companies that can’t adapt to Google’s (and other search engines’) prioritization of mobile-first search will find themselves left behind in regional search results. That will impact traffic, conversions and profits.

Now is the time to adjust your global marketing strategy, and your localized websites, for success in the age of mobile dominance.

## About MotionPoint

MotionPoint solves the operational complexity and cost of website localization. Unlike all other approaches, our technology and turn-key solution are built specifically for this purpose.

We translate, deploy, and operate multilingual websites, optimizing the customer experience across all channels.



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