

# Top Website Evaluation Tips

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It's not unusual for someone to judge the effectiveness of a website by the initial perception of the design or simply the like or dislike of the navigational structure. Basing the effectiveness of a site on aesthetics is comparable to judging the quality of a book by its cover.

As marketers, we go deeper when determining the health of a website. But it's not just us, Google does too when determining whether to serve up a website in response to an organic search. To help you evaluate your site to ensure it's working hard for you, we've compiled a checklist of the top five elements that can impact the user experience and effectiveness of your site.

## 1 Responsiveness

If you spend most of your time on a desktop, chances are you have not checked your site on other devices such as mobile and tablets. Years ago, websites were designed for desktop-first with little thought to the mobile experience. Google is now indexing sites from a mobile-first perspective, meaning they are evaluating part of your score based on the smallest device size possible. It is more important than ever to provide a good, responsive layout. Responsiveness refers to your site's ability to correctly display and provide an optimal experience regardless of the size of the device being used to view your website. If your site is not responsive, the user-friendliness of your site will suffer.

## 2 HTTPS

Security when browsing and shopping online is more important now than ever. And, savvy customers know how to detect a secure site by looking for sites that are using an SSL certificate to provide encryption between your browser and the server. Hypertext Transfer Protocol Secure (HTTPS) is the secure version of HTTP, and it protects users against attacks that can result in the theft of personal information. Along with your customers, Google and all major browsers, also place a significant emphasis on the presence of an SSL certificate for the connection. If your site is still using HTTP, it's worth exploring a conversion to HTTPS.

### **3 Site Speed**

Does your website load in a reasonable amount of time? Generally speaking, this is between 3 and 5 seconds. Most automated tools prefer under 3 second load times. When load time increases above the 3 to 5 second threshold, the user experience suffers, bounce rates increase, and conversion rates decrease. Additionally, Google uses site speed to rank pages. The lower the rank, the lower your page will appear in search results. If your site speed is an issue, check the size of the image and videos embedded on the site.

### **4 On-Page SEO Analysis**

Search Engine Optimization (SEO) is a big topic. While many people think SEO primarily pertains to the inclusion of the right keywords and phrases in your copy, there are other SEO standards that are less visible but equally important. It's important to check for the presence of basic and extended SEO elements.

Basic:

- Title tag
- Meta description
- Main heading (h1)
- Correct structure and nesting of additional heading tags (h2 - h6)
- Alt and title tags on images

Extended:

- Open graph meta tags
- Schema markup
- Other structured data
- Good use of semantic html5 elements
- Number of third-party cloud hosted libraries referenced

### **5 Broken Link Check**

It may not seem like a big deal, but broken links on your website can have a big impact. Broken links are frustrating and can negatively impact the user experience, increase bounce rates, and lead to lost revenue. Having too many broken links will also impact how search engines view your site, lowering your rank and decreasing the chances your site will appear in search results. Routinely check internal links to make sure all pages can be correctly accessed. Check for exceptionally large numbers of broken references to internal and external pages that could indicate much larger errors.

**If you need help evaluating your website, contact our team at [info@scheffey.com](mailto:info@scheffey.com) or 717.569.8274 for a free initial consultation.**

