

# Why Speeding Up Your Website Is More Essential Than Ever Before

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Like Maverick and Goose in the iconic film “Top Gun,” do you feel the need – the need for speed?

Well, I hope you do. Because in 2018, you don’t need to be a U.S. Naval aviator (or enjoy Kenny Loggins songs) to appreciate the importance of speed. You just need to have a website that you hope will rank well in search results, generate traffic and convert well.



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Lots of elements factor into how successful a website is for business purposes, but one of the most critical right now is page speed. That’s because Google – the market leader (by far) in online search, has made this criterion a huge priority in 2018.

More specifically, July 2018 is a big deadline to speed up your website – but more on that in a bit.

Google now expects the content on business websites to load quickly, which is essentially what we mean by page speed. To be more specific, page speed equates to “page load time,” which means how long takes to fully display the content on a specific page.

And why is that so incredibly important right now for your funeral home website?

Let’s start by setting aside for a moment how important it is to Google and just focus on user experience (which tech types like me also call “UX,” because acronyms are fun).

Here’s the nutshell: Slow website speed kills conversions. According to a survey by Kissmetrics, about half of visitors now expect website content to load in two seconds or less. More than 40 percent of visitors will abandon a website if the content takes more than three seconds to load.

That’s where consumer expectations are in 2018. Three seconds might not sound slow at first, but try counting out those seconds (one one-thousand, two one-thousand, three one-thousand) when you first visit a website. You’ll appreciate how slow that feels in modern terms.

Unfortunately, some older websites for funeral homes, particularly independent ones, don’t meet that mark. And that’s just the minimum expectation. Again, most consumers expect content to load within two seconds.

Per the survey, every extra second it takes for content to load reduces conversions about 7 percent. So if your content takes three seconds longer to load than it should, you’re losing more than 20 percent of potential conversions on your funeral home site.

## Here’s Where Google Comes In

So you already have user experience problems if your content loads too slowly. That’s just half of the equation. The other concern – and it’s a big one – is that slow-loading content also hurts you with Google.

Google has been factoring page speed into its organic search rankings for a while, but it's really ramped up that factor in 2018, in particular because so many people now visit websites on mobile devices. While mobile load speed previously was largely immune from Google's concerns, the search giant will be making it a major ranking consideration in July. This goes hand in hand with Google's "mobile-first index," which makes the mobile performance of your website Google's baseline for how it determines rankings.

In other words, there's no time to lose: Your site needs to be fast, and you must work quickly to make it fast. Speed is the word of the day in every sense.

Google is calling this new "ranking signal" its "Speed Update," which could have been more creatively coined, but we're not going to tell Google what to do.

So why is this happening? Well, Google is constantly tweaking its ranking algorithms, so it's not exactly a surprise. But whenever it does so, its objective is to reward (with better rankings) websites that are providing the best experience to users.

The faster content loads, the better the experience. Now that people in every demographic are researching business services (including death care) more on mobile devices than on desktop computers, Google knows the mobile experience is top priority going forward.

### **PageSpeed versus Page Speed**

Those terms look alike, but they're slightly different.

I already covered the latter term at length. As to the former, it refers to PageSpeed Insights. That's a free Google tool to measure the performance of a page for mobile and desktop devices. It uses that performance to assign your site a score.

PageSpeed Insights doesn't provide an exact indicator of page speed on your site, but it's quite beneficial. By following the suggestions provided by the tool, your content will load faster, and thus your site is more likely to be ranked higher in local search and other rankings.

Go to PageSpeed Insights at <https://developers.google.com/speed/pagespeed/insights> to see how your funeral home website fares. It's as simple as typing in your site URL once you get to the page.

The tool will provide a numerical score on a 100-point scale. It also will display a variety of optimization suggestions for how your content can load faster.

If your score isn't impressive, don't waste time: Discuss the issue with your website provider ASAP. If the provider doesn't act immediately to get your page speed up to snuff, that's a big problem.

This issue can't wait. Your funeral home website could be facing a serious drop in local rankings if its speed doesn't make the grade. Do whatever you need to make that happen.

*Visit [www.funeralhomeprofits.com](http://www.funeralhomeprofits.com) to get a free copy of Welton Hong's Book "Making Your Phone Ring with Internet Marketing."*