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Mobile-first indexing: what Google checks on the phone version of your site

Google Search & Indexing

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Mobile-first indexing: what Google checks on the phone version of your site

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For some years now Google has stored and judged mostly **the phone version** of your pages. It is called *mobile-first* indexing. In practice: if the site looks good on a computer and bad on a phone, the bad one is the one that counts. The good news is that most current themes already adapt; what fails is usually something hidden or cut from the small version.

What Google compares

What to check	The typical problem
The same content on both versions	A menu or text that only shows on the computer. What is not on the small version is as if it did not exist.
The viewport tag	Without `<meta name="viewport" content="width=device-width, initial-scale=1">`, the phone shows the computer page, shrunk.
Readable text and tappable buttons	Tiny letters and links jammed together, hard to tap with a finger.
Images and video that can be reached	Images that load only on a click, or formats the phone cannot open.
CSS and JavaScript not blocked	A robots.txt that forbids the style folders: the robot sees a broken page. See **robots.txt and sitemap.xml**.
Structured data and the same titles	The small version missing the data or carrying another title.

Seeing the site the way Google sees it on a phone

1. **Open the site on your own phone**, in a browser, and go through the home page, an inner page and contact. It is the cheapest test and the most revealing.

2. **In Search Console, use URL Inspection.** Paste the address and run the live test: it shows a screenshot of how Google (phone version) sees the page and what was blocked. See **checking that Google can see your site**.

3. **Measure speed on the phone tab.** PageSpeed Insights shows the phone result first. See **measuring your site speed and reading the numbers**.

4. **Fix what the screenshot shows**: missing content, small text, overlapping elements.

Speed and position: what to say honestly

Speed is measured on the phone, and it is the speed the visitor feels. Google uses page experience as *one* signal among many, and says itself that good content counts for more. So treat speed so visitors do not give up, not to "climb on Google". The measurements and what causes them are in **Core Web Vitals** and **what actually makes a difference when the site is slow**.

Be careful with old guides.
Some mention mobile test tools and a mobile usability report that Google has since retired. Use URL Inspection and PageSpeed Insights, which exist today.

Hiding content in tabs or accordions is accepted
on the phone version: Google reads it. What cannot happen is for it not to be there at all. Pop-ups that cover the whole page on opening also annoy visitors, and that shows in the results.

NEED A HAND?

Does the site only error out, or take very long, on a phone? Tell us the address and the phone model and we will see what the server answers.

Open a support ticket →

SEE ALSO

Checking that Google can see your site →

- Core Web Vitals in plain words
- Checking your Sitejet site on phones before publishing
- WordPress hosting

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