

Continual Internet Changes are Overwhelming

By Matthew A. Perosi

In September this year, I had the pleasure of spending a weekend with the Kansas Jewelers Association. During the Q&A of my seminar, they asked how I keep up with the overwhelming amount of continual Internet changes.

The Internet has turned into an ever-evolving ecosystem of interconnected technology. In order to keep up with the latest trends in Website development and online marketing, I subscribed to daily emails from several Internet marketing and technologies news sites. Some of these news websites even hold in-person conferences around the world a few times a year.

A good Internet professional has to follow the latest announcements from Google and Facebook. Even though these two companies are competitors, they both agree upon—and are heavily promoting—mobile trends. Every daily news email I receive has at least one mobile related headline.

Mobile headlines and services were also the highlights at the Search Marketing Expo (SMX) in New York in October this year. Many of the SMX announcements included software to help track mobile websites, mobile ads, phone calls from smartphones, and the best practices for designing mobile websites.

It was reported at SMX that 81% of Facebook users are mobile, using either the mobile website or smartphone app. At SMX, Google presented a study showing that 83% of consumers are more likely to visit your store in person if they can find what they are looking for on your mobile website.

Google's study also revealed that consumer behavior favored uniquely designed mobile websites. This revelation goes against the current popular responsive website design. Responsive sites show the same Information, but they display it differently on desktops and smartphones. The Google employees on stage also mentioned that consumers are growing less patient when it comes to non-mobile websites.

I wanted to compare my own recent data, specific to the jewelry industry, to what Google's survey reported at SMX. Here I'm comparing some numbers for mobile, tablet, and desktop from September 2013 and 2014:

Category	Year	% of Users	Bounce Rate
Desk top 	2013	63.9	30.2
	2014	57.4	56.1
Smart Phone 	2013	24.6	47.7
	2014	31.2	55.4
Tablet 	2013	11.4	37.2
	2014	11.3	45.9

In September 2014, more than 42% of website visitors were using both smartphone and tablet devices. That's up from 36% in September 2013. The second column in that table shows the bounce rate, which is the measure of how many people immediately left your website after arriving. According to these bounce rate measurements, it looks like users are simply less patient across all devices, not just mobile, compared to last year. I see this as a trend of overall lower consumer patience with regard to all websites. Just like TV commercials appeal to short attentions spans, we can all use Google much faster now to search for another choice, rather than wasting time looking at a displeasing website.

The best way to combat these rising bounce rates is to redesign your desktop and mobile websites with usability and customer intent in mind. Google realizes that mobile users have faster needs and they will attempt to surface the most relevant information about your store. Most of the time a mobile user simply needs your phone number, address, and store hours, so Google has made it relatively easy for you to keep that information updated.

Google now includes store hours right in local search results with little hints like "open now," or "opening soon," or "closing soon." That's a great feature to tap into; just make sure your store hours are accurate in your Google account. You can navigate your way over to google.com/mybusiness to access your business account and edit your store hours, but you should also fill in a complete description of the services you provide, the designer lines you carry, and the communities you serve. All of that will help with your search visibility.

For those of you with weekly fluctuating hours between Thanksgiving and Christmas, I suggest that you update your store hours every Sunday or Monday. Keep those store hours updated to prevent disappointing a customer who's relying on their smartphone to display them accurately. It will increase your business.



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Matthew Perosi reports the latest Internet trends and methods that are most relevant to the jewelry industry in his 5-day per week newsletter, available through jwag.biz. Tap into the more than 1,100 free newsletters to guide you towards better usage of websites, social, and mobile. Matthew invites your feedback and questions at matt@jwag.biz or 973.413.8211. Many questions from TRJ readers have turned into great newsletter topics.