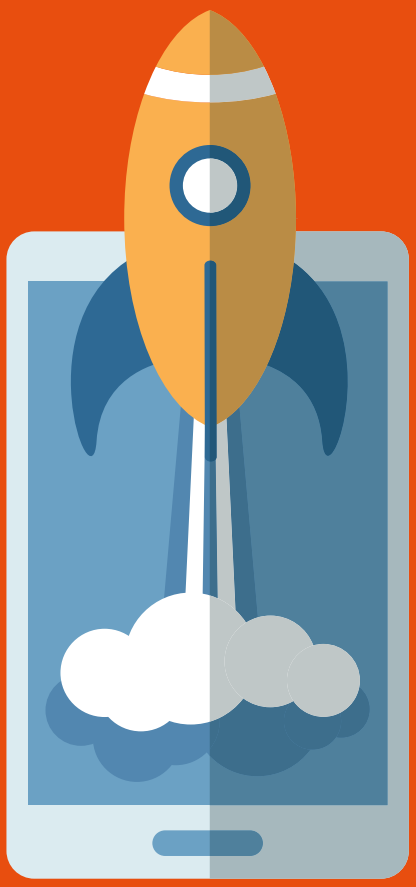
hallam

SEMRUSH

11 Growth Tactics for Your Ecommerce Business

Step-by-Step Case Studies and Data-Driven Best Practices



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About Hallam

Established in 1999, Hallam is one of the UK's leading providers of digital marketing services. Its mission is to help national and international business be more successful online.

An accredited Google Premier Partner, Hallam provides digital marketing services to B2C and B2B companies. Clients include the United Nations, Speedo, Suzuki and Saint-Gobain.

- Search Engine Optimisation (SEO)
- Pay Per Click Advertising (PPC)
- Web Design
- Digital PR
- Content Marketing
- Ecommerce Services
- Social Media
- Digital Marketing Strategy
- Conversion Rate Optimisation (CRO)
- Digital Marketing Training

Shortlisted in no fewer than 16 categories at the Drum Recommended Digital Agency Awards 2018, the team won the Grand Prix Best Agency in the 49-99 staff bracket based solely on client reviews. Other accolades include two nominations at the Google Premier Partner Awards EMEA, two wins at the UK Digital Experience Awards, and two nominations at the European Search Awards for the Best Large SEO Agency and Best Large PPC Agency.

About SEMrush

SEMrush is an online visibility management and content marketing SaaS platform ensuring businesses get measurable results from online marketing. Trusted by over 4,000,000 marketing professionals, SEMrush offers solutions for companies in any ecommerce industry to build, manage, and measure campaigns across all marketing channels. With more than 40 tools for search, content, social media and market research data for more than 143 countries, SEMrush is now a must-have solution for all companies serious about online.

SEMrush in Numbers

4,000,000+
users

40+
tools

10.6
billion keywords

10.8
trillion backlinks

450
million domains

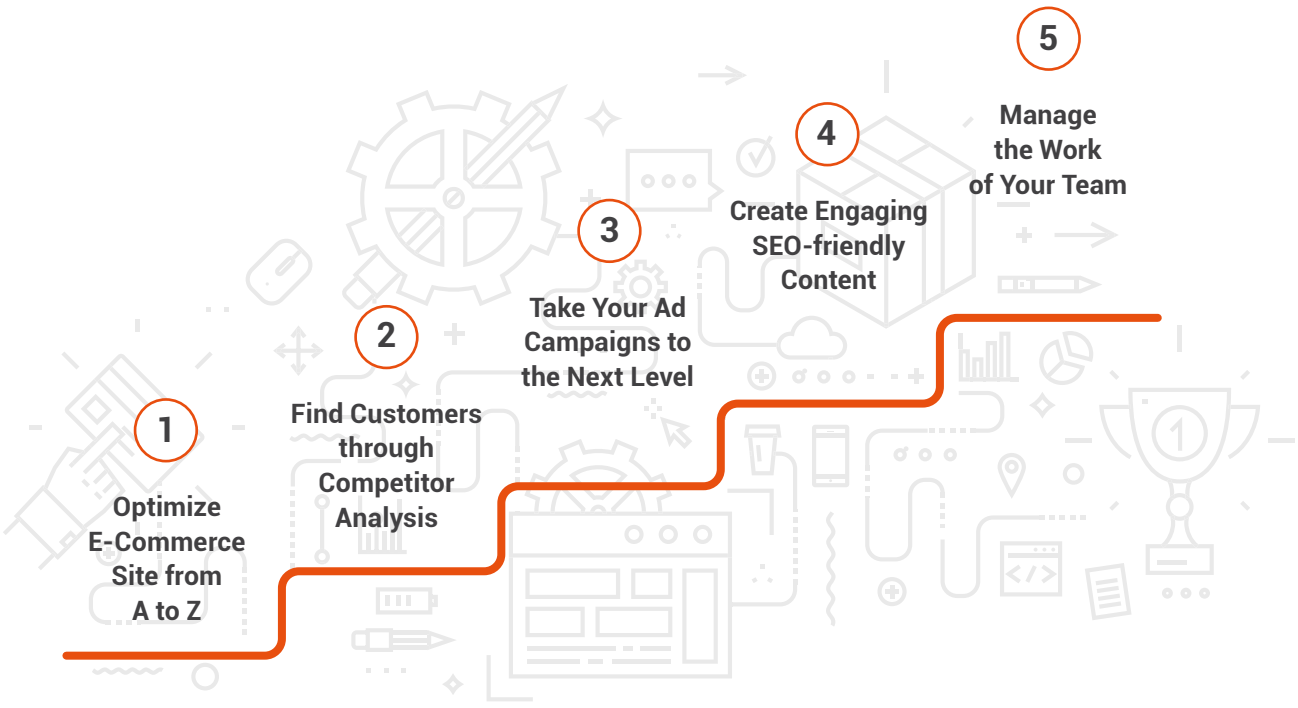
143
databases

SEMrush for Ecommerce

Solutions to Grow Your Business

E-commerce is a highly competitive environment. To surpass your competitors, you need to optimize your product pages thoroughly, set up ad campaigns with surgical precision and stay alert about customer reviews. The good news is that most of these tasks can be delegated to SEMrush tools.

Simple Workflow



Get All You Need to Boost Your Ecommerce

Save your time and budget with 40+ tools in one package

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Trusted by

PHILIPS ebay LUSH FRESH HANDMADE COSMETICS boohoo

Introduction

In the last few years, competition online and in the SERPs has only intensified, and for businesses to succeed, it's crucial that they're aware of the strengths and weaknesses of their own marketing efforts, so they can continue to improve.

To help you best evaluate your performance when compared to the competition, and flag common problems and areas for improvement across the board, we've utilized the SEMrush toolkit. This has allowed us to gather and analyse data from 8,000 ecommerce sites, including their online activity.

Specifically, we looked at the following:

- How ecommerce companies have optimized their sites for mobile — especially now that mobile is leading the way in search.
- SERP features ecommerce businesses should take advantage of.
- Backlink strategies ecommerce sites are using to help to win the best positions.
- Technical SEO considerations that increase site speed and enhance user experience.
- How ecommerce sites are successfully implementing AMP, and combining this with PWAs.
- Optimization of images for visual search and conversion rates.
- Schema markup for product pages that will improve site performance.
- User buying habits, and how ecommerce sites can predict these patterns.
- How to utilize the right emotional triggers to increase sales.
- How to choose the attribution model that best represents the distribution of conversion value.

It's vitally important to keep your websites, and your SEO and PPC strategies up to date. This ebook was written to help you do exactly that. We hope that you find this data and the insights we've gleaned from it to be helpful in developing and improving your digital marketing and site development strategies moving forward into 2019.

Research Methodology

We started off with a sizable and wide-ranging set of data, gathered from more than 8,000 of the most visited ecommerce websites in countries including the US, the UK, Spain, Italy, Germany and France, among others. In order to avoid calculation errors, we didn't collect data for countries where Google is a secondary search engine (China, Korea, etc.)

The ecommerce sites in our research represent 13 different industry categories:

1. Sports & Recreation
2. Children
3. Food
4. Electronics
5. Health
6. Home & Garden
7. Clothing
8. Books
9. Furniture
10. Flowers
11. Jewelry
12. Music
13. Travel

Using SEMrush data, we culled the following information for each category:

- Total mobile and desktop traffic*
- Types of backlinks**
- Follow vs. nofollow backlinks**

For the ecommerce sites researched as a whole, our data analysis revealed:

- The most common mistakes made on mobile versions of websites**
- Ecommerce SERP Features***
- Top anchor texts**
- Technical issues related to crawlability, HTTPS implementation, international SEO and page load speed**
- Canonicalization**
- Hreflang tags**
- AMP implementation*
- Image alt attributes**
- Schema markups implementation**
- Emotional triggers in ads**
- Most searched items on Black Friday****

* Total mobile and desktop traffic, AMP implementation: data collected for August 2018.

** The most common mistakes made on mobile versions of websites, ecommerce SERP features, types of backlinks, follow vs. nofollow backlinks, top anchor texts, technical issues, canonicalization, hreflang tags, image alt attributes, schema markups implementation, emotional triggers in ads: data collected for October 2018.

*** SERP features: SERP features change daily and correlate heavily with overall Google SERP volatility, hence we decided to only show the data for October 2018. Data here is based on the percentage of SERPs where this feature appears in top 20 results.

**** Most searched items on Black Friday: data collected for November 2017.

Research Results at a Glance

When collecting and analyzing data from more than 8,000 of the top ecommerce sites online, we learned a great deal about the different factors affecting their success, including user behavior and what these sites are doing to get results across the board.

Free Shipping

is the most popular emotional trigger used to encourage purchasing

Go to page 89

46%

the avg. percentage by which mobile beat desktop

Go to page 16

89.3%

of the websites haven't implemented AMP pages

Go to page 65

47.88%

of the websites haven't implemented any schema markup

Go to page 80

61.7%

of the search results display Reviews SERP feature

Go to page 33

73.4%
of all backlinks are follow backlinks
Go to page 48

82%
the score mobile websites received for crawlability
Go to page 54

55.8%
of the websites have issues affecting the performance of their AMP pages
Go to page 66

19%
of the websites utilize hreflangs
Go to page 61

89%
the score mobile websites received for HTTPS implementation
Go to page 54

15.6%
of the websites have missing image alt tags
Go to page 74

44%
of the websites don't use canonical tags
Go to page 58

89%
the score mobile websites received for international SEO
Go to page 54

0.64 sec
the avg. page loading speed
Go to page 55

PS4
was the most searched for item on Black Friday in 2017
Go to page 90

Key Takeaways

1. **Increase site speed.** Your site loading speeds will impact user experience and your SERP rankings, so ensure that your mobile site is fast-loading.

2. **Add schema markups to your mobile site.** This improves visibility in the mobile search engines. Use product schemas to present product information to interested customers quickly, add reviews and rating schemas to highlight testimonials and help you sell more.

3. **Prioritize mobile.** More traffic is coming from mobile devices than desktop, and your site must be properly indexed to be competitive in the SERPs. Have a fully responsive site that is mobile-optimized.

4. **Pay attention to 4xx errors, slow loading speeds, and issues with mixed content.** These significantly impact a site's mobile performance in a negative way, and were the most common errors we found on the top ecommerce sites.

5. **Gaining featured snippets is a great tactic for ecommerce sites.** To maximize your chances of appearing for the high-value and high-volume terms, ensure that your site has clear organized information architecture, and that subcategories have concise crawlable text that Google will be able to serve as a featured snippet.

6. **Share reviews on your product listings.** When trying to boost visibility in competitive SERPs, reviews on product listings can give a website the edge, as positive ratings are known to increase click-through rates from search results.

7. **Optimize your images.** By investing in excellent product photography and correctly optimizing images with keyword-focused alt tags, your images stand a better chance of appearing in the SERP image packs, and potentially increasing click-throughs to your website.

8. **Pay attention to your competitors' tactics and analyze which backlink types are most represented.** By following their example, you will effectively grow and build a diverse backlink profile for your own site and stay competitive.

9. **Utilize hreflang tags to optimize your site for international SEO.** They explain what language and territory content certain pages are targeting. Fewer than 20% of ecommerce sites currently have them in place, so if you're targeting international audiences, you should be one of them.

10. **AMP is essential in helping web pages load faster on mobile devices.** This is key to significantly improving user experience. Faster load times increase the likelihood that users will stay on your site, engage with it, and potentially purchase from it.

11. **Use emotional triggers like "free shipping" to create urgency and increase impulse purchasing.** This can work for true impulse buyers, but also for those who have been researching your product and who are waiting for a deal to strike.

12. **Even with "impulse purchases", customers are doing at least preliminary research to evaluate their options.** They may decide on a whim to buy that PS4 on Black Friday, but they might also do a few quick searches to see who has the best deal instead of just purchasing on the first site they see. Having as much transparent information posted as possible will help win these customers.

13. **Choose the right attribution model.** For most businesses, this will mean ditching the Last Click attribution model, as it fails to take account of all events leading up to the conversion, and thus doesn't give an accurate portrayal. Using Linear or Position Based models will take multiple touchpoints into account and give you more accurate reporting.

14. **Offer product recommendations on your sites.** Use internal linking and featured products sections to show visitors additional items they might like. This increases the likelihood that they'll buy more than one item.

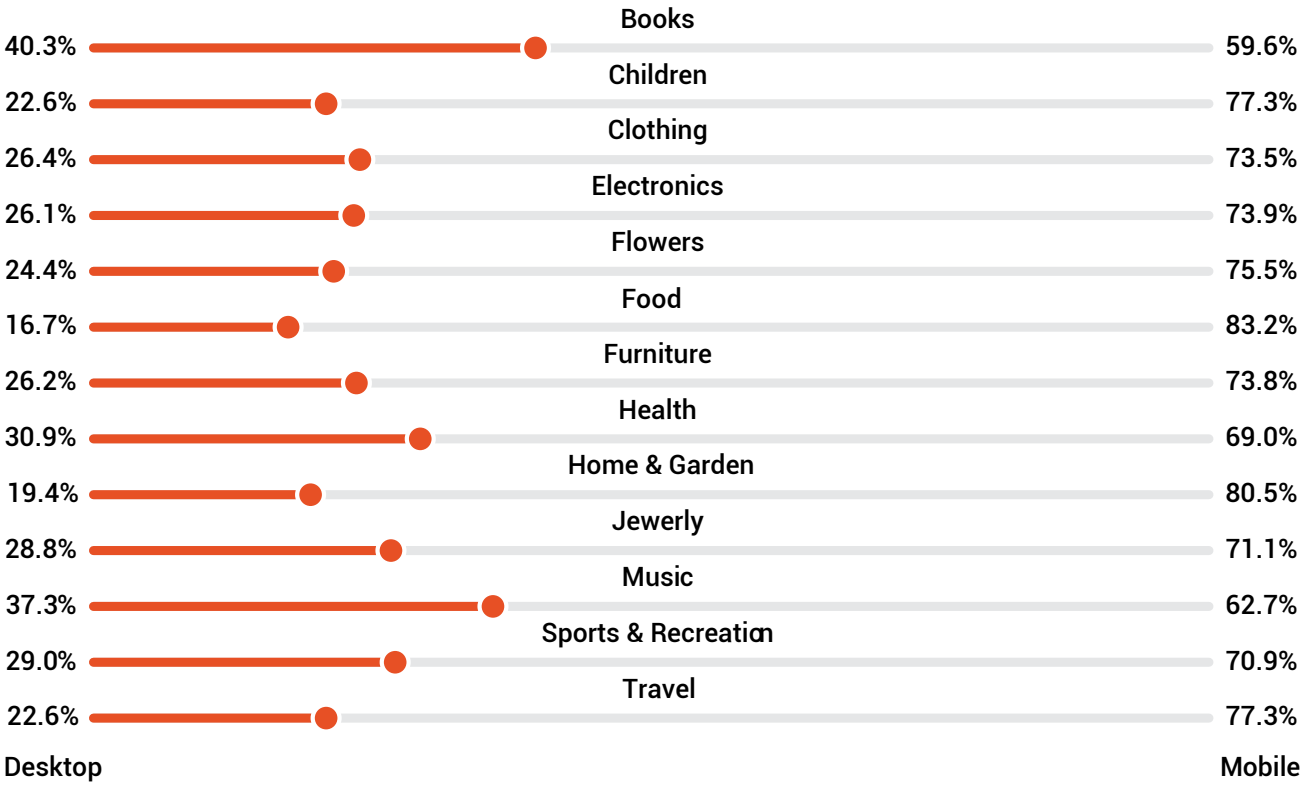
Desktop vs. Mobile Traffic

Desktop vs. Mobile Traffic

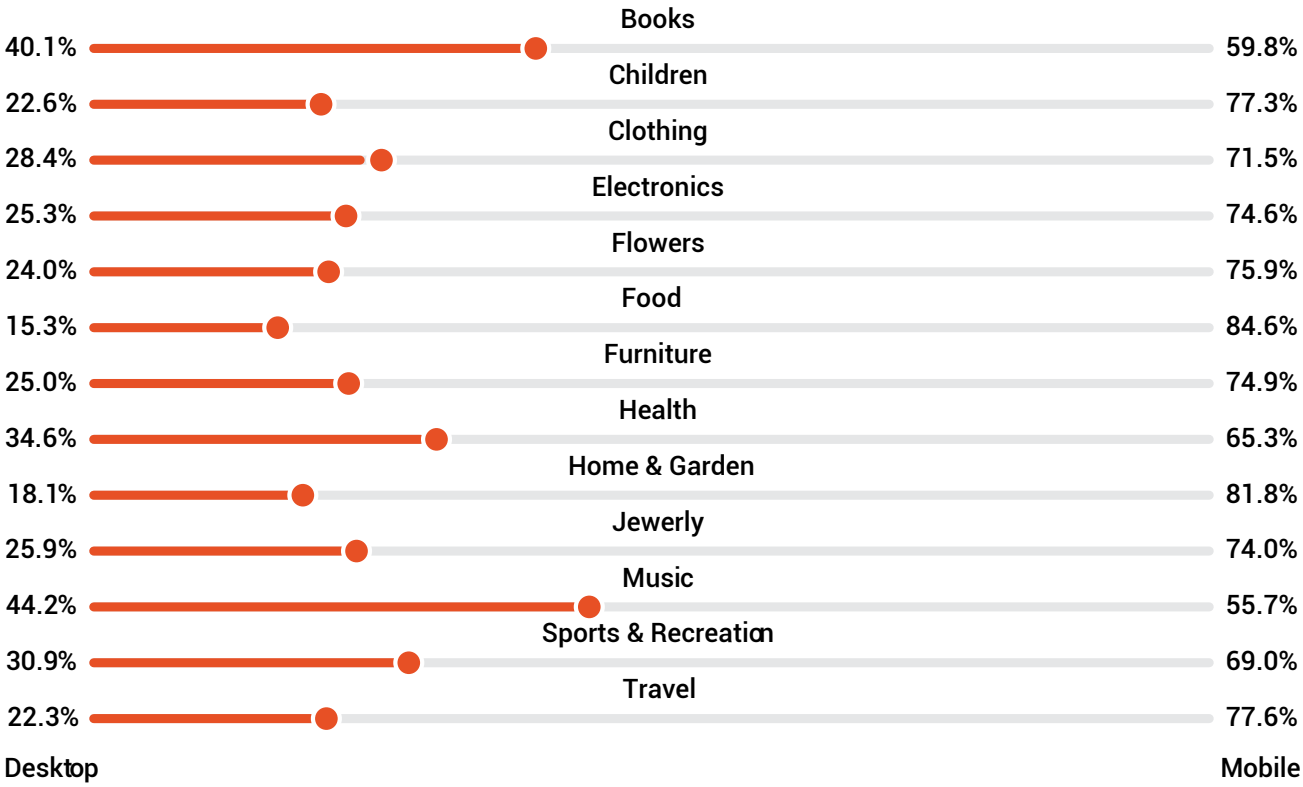
Over the past few years, the "desktop vs. mobile traffic" debate has been prominent. We've known that mobile traffic has been increasing significantly in this time, but has it actually surpassed desktop traffic?

We wanted to find out which kind of traffic ecommerce businesses were seeing more of, and whether this varied across different industries. Using SEMrush's new Traffic Analytics, we evaluated overall ecommerce traffic, and compared mobile and desktop traffic for each specific industry.

Total Traffic for Ecommerce, Global



Total Traffic for Ecommerce, the UK



Our research clearly indicated that mobile traffic is dominating ecommerce overall, regardless of the individual industry or the country in which the searches originated.

When we looked at 13 popular ecommerce categories all together, we found that mobile beat desktop in total traffic by approximately 46%.

This trend is more prominent in some industries than others. The food industry was exceptionally high in mobile traffic, which makes sense as users are likely to search for "restaurant near me" when on the go, for example.

But this does not mean that desktop traffic is irrelevant; the books industry still had 40.3% of its traffic coming from desktop users, and for the music industry that figure was 37.3%. Mobile clearly matters a great deal, but in certain industries substantial amounts of traffic are still coming from desktop users.

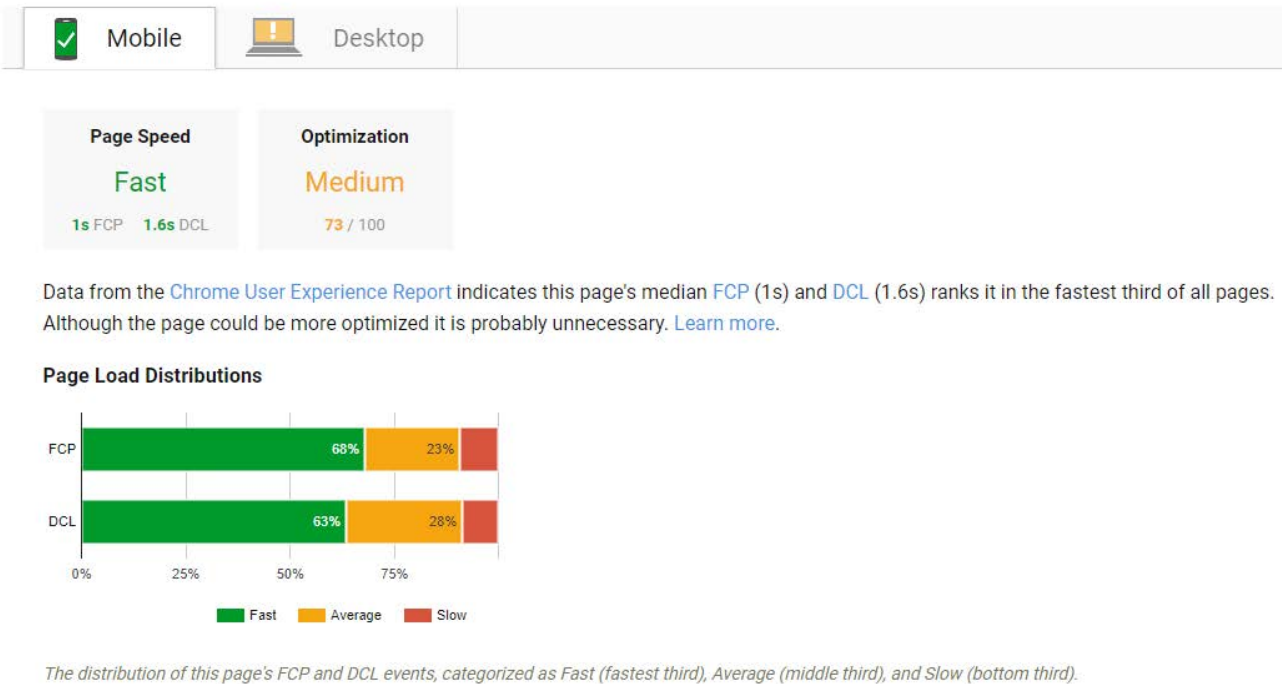
Case Study: Why Mobile and Desktop Both Matter

In research undertaken for this study, it was demonstrated that mobile traffic can account for as much as 75% of total traffic share. Hallam measured this against their ecommerce clients, to see if the results were similar.

Kerry's Fresh distributes fruit and vegetable boxes to homes and businesses across the East Midlands in the UK. Over the last six months, 50% of their total traffic came from mobile devices, compared to 41% from desktops, and 9% from tablets.

However, while mobile users browsed the various products on offer, the number of visits they made to the basket and checkout pages were considerably lower than for desktop users. This was evident when Hallam compared revenue — 8.35% of total revenue over the last six months was generated from mobile users, whereas desktop users accounted for 86.29%.

This is similar to another ecommerce powerhouse, Housing Units, a furniture and home decor company based in Manchester. While mobile traffic here was significantly higher than desktop (50.83% versus 26.27%), the amount of revenue generated by each channel was similar (35.75% for mobile, and 37.94% to desktop), showing that, proportionally, desktop users spend more than mobile viewers. It's also worth pointing out that desktop and mobile traffic alone don't make up the full 100% of traffic; 22.99% of traffic is coming from tablets, and 5.36% of sales came from tablets.



The distribution of this page's FCP and DCL events, categorized as Fast (fastest third), Average (middle third), and Slow (bottom third).

How to Optimise for Mobile Traffic

Both mobile and desktop channels are extremely important, and you'll want to increase traffic from both. However, while you probably optimize your desktop site on a regular basis, your mobile version may be neglected. Let's take a look at the main ways in which you can optimize your mobile channel, to increase traffic to your site.

Increase your site speed

In July 2018, Google confirmed that page speed will be a ranking factor for mobile searches. You can check your page speeds with Google PageSpeed Insights, and use Google's Mobile Speed Scorecard to compare your mobile website with competitors.

Increasing page speeds for your mobile site is similar to how it's done for desktop. Google PageSpeed Insights can help you track what you need to change and will point out areas that can be improved, such as:

- Optimising your images
- Minifying your code
- Reducing your number of redirects
- Using browser caching

For more information on why page speed is so important, head over to Chapter 5.

Consider Implementing AMP

Accelerated Mobile Pages (AMP) help to load your mobile website's pages as quickly as possible, which in turn helps you to rank higher on Google's search results, driving more traffic to your website.

For ecommerce sites, implementing AMP on your homepage and product pages will enable them to load almost instantaneously. If you have a WordPress site, you can set up AMP easily with the official plugin. You can find out more about AMP in Chapter 6.

Include all information

In the past an ecommerce company might have had a mobile site that was just a stripped-back version of its desktop site. Today this won't help you. To build your mobile traffic you need to make sure that all the information found on your desktop website is included on your mobile website, such as:

- Content: This should be SEO optimized with relevant keywords and internal links, and include images, alt text and videos.
- Meta Data
- Structured Data
- Hreflang Tags

If your mobile website is on a separate host, you'll need to ensure your server has the capacity to handle the increased crawl rate.

Property	Expected Type	Description
Properties from Product		
additionalProperty	PropertyValue	A property-value pair representing an additional characteristics of the entitity, e.g. a product feature or another characteristic for which there is no matching property in schema.org. Note: Publishers should be aware that applications designed to use specific schema.org properties (e.g. http://schema.org/width, http://schema.org/color, http://schema.org/gtin13, ...) will typically expect such data to be provided using those properties, rather than using the generic property/value mechanism.
aggregateRating	AggregateRating	The overall rating, based on a collection of reviews or ratings, of the item.
audience	Audience	An intended audience, i.e. a group for whom something was created. Supersedes serviceAudience.
award	Text	An award won by or for this item. Supersedes awards.
brand	Brand or Organization	The brand(s) associated with a product or service, or the brand(s) maintained by an organization or business person.

Add Structured Data

Adding structured data to your mobile website through schema.org can help to make your products more visible on the mobile SERPs. Rich snippets will highlight important information about your products, which can help to increase your mobile traffic. We would recommend adding the following rich snippets to your ecommerce mobile site:

- Product Schema: This indicates to Google that it's a product page, and will show basic information such as brand, color, material and model.
- Reviews and Rating Schema: Testimonials can help to sell a product, and this will highlight your credibility and trustworthiness.
- Price Schema: This makes it easier for browsers to see how much your products cost, before they decide to click through.
- Product Availability Schema: This will let users know if you're out of stock of the product they want to purchase. This can help to reduce your soft bounces if users are clicking off your website because the product they wanted to buy is out of stock.

For more information about implementing structured data, head over to Chapter 8.

What It Means to You as a Marketer

Marketers need to embrace the fact that mobile now dominates search traffic, and that their sites must be adapted if they haven't been already. This doesn't mean that desktop is irrelevant; it's not, many purchases are still being made from desktops. But most ecommerce businesses have incredible desktop sites and barely functional mobile ones. You should make it a priority to have a fully responsive, mobile-optimized site that's ready to take on all that mobile traffic.

This is just an introductory excerpt

You can download the full version here:

https://www.semrush.com/ebooks/11-growth-tactics-for-your-ecommerce-business/