

# H Grant Designs: The Ultimate Guide to Core Web Vitals - 67840

In the early days of the Web, it was relatively easy to boost your rankings through tactics such as keyword stuffing and link farms. Those practices are now considered black-hat, and SEO is now a vastly complex task. Unfortunately, this means that even high-quality websites will struggle to rank. It's harder than ever to get your business in front of the right eyes.

Now, Google is changing the game again, but this time, they are rewarding digital marketers who have focused on quality rather than SEO tricks. Core Web Vitals is a new element of Google's algorithms that focuses on page experience in addition to content. What does this mean for your SEO strategy?

## What is Google Core Web Vitals?

Google says their goal is "to ensure people get the most helpful and enjoyable experiences from the web." Most of today's users expect three main things when they land on a webpage: mobile-friendliness, safe browsing, and fast loading. Anything that interrupts these elements, such as pop-ups, lack of an SSL certificate, or layouts that shift as the page loads, is problematic.

These factors already indirectly impacted page rankings, because Google measures how much time users spend on a site. If enough users "bounce" due to non-responsive design or a slow loading time, Google will penalize that site. Now, with the Core Web Vitals update, those factors are directly included in search rankings.

The Google Core Web Vitals include:

**Largest Contentful Paint (LCP):** This measure of loading time refers to how quickly meaningful information is initially shown to the user. The contentful paint is what appears "above the fold" when a page loads. According to Google, this needs to happen within 2.5 seconds.

**First Input Delay (FID):** Websites should be interactive, which means that as soon as the user is ready to take an action, the page should respond. The FID refers to how long it takes for a page to process user input. The longer the time, the worst the experience. Google recommends that the FID should be no longer than 100ms.

**Cumulative Layout Shift (CLS):** This metric refers to the visual stability of a page, i.e. how quickly the final layout is rendered. In poorly designed responsive sites, users may go to click on an element only to have it shift out of the way. Google's benchmark for CLS is within 1/10th of a second!

While mobile-friendliness, website security, and lack of pop-ups or other "intrusive interstitials" are not technically Core Web Vitals, they are still important factors in the overall page experience that Google is rewarding: what they call Page Experience Signals.

## How Will Core Web Vitals Affect Your Marketing and Development?

UX designers, web developers, and digital marketers all need to collaborate on SEO. Many companies leave it up to the marketers, but that's no longer an option. If you haven't yet, make UX

designer part of your team. Map out the user process for each part of your site. The content, design, and code all need to work together to meet the Core Web Vital benchmarks listed above.

## **Why are the Core Web Vitals Important?**

Over the last few algorithm updates, Google has made it clear that they prioritize the user experience above all else. With so many competing pages, content and keywords are no longer enough to earn a high ranking. Google will rank the page that offers the most stable, convenient user experience in addition to high-quality content.

Already, SEO specialists who leveraged good UX as part of their strategy have seen higher conversion rates. That said, Core Web Vitals are still only part of the picture. If you meet all the benchmarks but still have poor content or a fuzzy user journey, you may not see an improvement. But if your site is neck-and-neck with competitors or you're simply trying to reduce your bounce rate, implementing the Core Web Vitals could be game-changing. Google has found that sites meeting its benchmarks see 24% less abandonment.

## **How Can Your Website Meet the Core Web Vitals Benchmarks?**

If any of your site's Core Web Vitals' metrics are below Google's recommended threshold, here's what you can do:

**Largest Contentful Paint (LCP):** If your loading time is longer than 2.5 seconds, look at where your CSS and JavaScript are hosted — and how much of it you have. The more that a browser has to download, the longer it will take. Minify your CSS, render your scripts on the server side rather than the client side, and compress any large images.

**First Input Delay (FID):** Similar to LCP, bloated code and client-side rendering can cause delays when a user tries to interact with your page. Streamline those files, and be sure that no key page elements are hidden behind others (or below the fold).

**Cumulative Layout Shift (CLS):** The number-one reason that elements move around after loading is that the device can't initially tell the size of them. Use HTML to declare the size, and avoid animated elements such as sliding banners.

## **Wrapping Up**

The Core Web Vitals update is good news for marketers and SEO specialists who care about a great experience for their website visitors. However, you will likely need to work closely with your developers to achieve the benchmarks. This is also an excellent opportunity to streamline your site's user journey and cut down on frivolous page elements.

For expert assistance in websites that are mobile-, Google-, and user-friendly, reach out to H Grant Designs.

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