

5 REASONS TO CARE ABOUT WPO

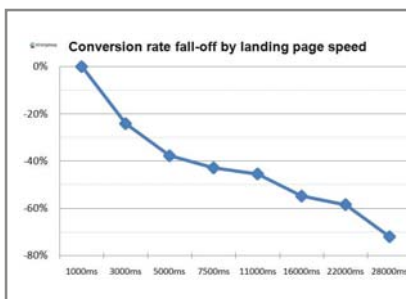
WHAT IS 'WPO'?

Website Performance Optimisation (WPO) is about speeding up the perceived download speed of your website's pages to increase webpage views, conversion and customer satisfaction.

Here are five reasons to care:

1. YOUR SITE WILL MAKE MORE MONEY IF IT'S FASTER

There is now a recognised three second rule: 57% of online shoppers will wait three seconds or less before abandoning the site.



<http://www.webperformancetoday.com>

"Younger visitors are less patient: 65% of 18-24 year olds expect a site to load in two seconds or less."

PhoCusWright and Akamai

"There is now a solid body of research from companies like Shopzilla, Amazon, Microsoft & Google, as well as research groups like Forrester and the Aberdeen Group, that your site's performance is a key factor in online success. Your page download speed directly affects your site conversion rate, and quite literally "every second counts."

"A 1-second delay in page load time equals 11% fewer page views, 16% decrease in customer satisfaction, and 7% loss in conversions."

Aberdeen Group

Site Confidence's current "benchmark" for performance is that a normal un-cached web page should begin to display to the user (what's called "initial render") after 750ms and be fully downloaded and ready for the user interaction after 3 seconds (aka "the three second rule").

2. YOUR USERS WILL BE LESS STRESSED

We all know from personal experience how frustrating it can be waiting for a web page to load.

In fact, there is now scientific evidence that shows that slow sites cause "web stress" – a need to concentrate harder on slow websites leading to agitation, frustration and stress.

So it's not surprising that people abandon slow websites and go elsewhere (research suggests that 40% go to your rivals, and 37% just give up).

So which would you prefer – happy customers who can complete their transactions in a timely fashion with no stress, or angry and frustrated users who vow never to return to your slow site?

"Brain wave analysis from the experiment revealed that participants had to concentrate up to 50% more when using badly performing websites, while facial muscle and behavioural analysis of the subjects also revealed greater agitation and stress in these periods."

<http://www.ca.com>

"77% of European consumers blame either website owner or the website host (which is in any case chosen by the website owner) when an online application fails. It also revealed that if consumers encounter problems online, 40% will go to a rival website and 37% will abandon the transaction entirely. Only 18% said they would report a problem to a company..."

<http://www.ca.com>

People abandon slow websites: 40% go to your rivals, 30% give up.



Brainwave analysis highlights agitation about bad performance

A faster site can rank higher in Google.

3. YOUR SITE WILL RANK BETTER IN SEARCH RESULTS

Everyone wants to rank higher in the natural (organic) search results in Google.

Well, site speed is important here too since faster websites rank higher in Google as speed is now a factor in SEO ranking. Whilst speed is only a small factor in your overall ranking every little bit helps!

The cost of customer acquisition from organic search results is normally significantly lower than other "paid for" online SEM and PPC channels, let alone classic "offline" channels like TV and print media, so the better SEO rankings will save you money too. "

Optimised caching strategies reduce bandwidth, which has a direct cost saving.

4. YOU'LL SAVE MONEY ON OPERATING COSTS

You may spend a lot of money on advertising to attract visitors to your site and convert them into loyal, paying customers... but if you have a slow website that drives customers away, then you are pouring that money down the drain. Improving your site's performance (and hence improving its conversion rate) will improve your SEO, SEM & PPC return on investment... enabling you to spend less and get more!

But beyond your marketing budget, you can save money on your direct IT operating budget too.

A well-optimised site only handles the requests it needs to handle... It relies on browser and proxy caches (and maybe even CDNs) to handle a lot of the static content which can be distributed and cached closer to the end-user. Optimised sites also rely on smart application caching strategies internally to reduce unnecessary calls to the application and database tier.

So that means that your servers have less work to do... which means lower CPU usage... which means lower power bills in your data centre.

Optimised caching strategies have another benefit – they reduce bandwidth in and out of your data centre, which has a direct cost saving. Seatwave.com managed to reduce their bandwidth utilisation by 40% with some simple caching optimisations, which will reap direct cost savings.

Shopzilla reduced their hardware by 50%.

5. YOU'LL REDUCE ON CAPITAL EXPENDITURE TOO

A well optimised site will also save money on capital expenditure too.

If your servers are doing less work for each request then equally each server can handle more requests... and hence you need fewer servers... which can equate to big capex savings (and concomitantly more opex savings for the running costs for the servers you didn't need to buy).

A performance re-design at Shopzilla enabled them to reduce their hardware by 50%. Seatwave were able to handle three times the site traffic on the same hardware after their performance improvement project. This has enabled them to postpone planned capital expenditure until the site growth can catch up with the increased capacity.

About Site Confidence

Site Confidence is the leading website performance company. For more information on our services please visit www.siteconfidence.com, call us on 0870 850 8520 or follow us on twitter @SiteConfidence.