Google has just released an update that will prioritise mobile-friendly websites. It is indeed widely known that online audiences are moving to smartphone and tablet computers. At Dental Focus, we have seen massive shifts in the online audience over the last few years to the point now where most clients see a minimum of 55 percent of their organic audience visits from mobile devices.

Websites and marketing campaigns achieve higher conversions when they are mobile optimised. The diagram below shows a marketing campaign we are running at the moment. In this project, we invested heavily in Google pay per click and 95 percent of conversions were via mobile.

To qualify this trend further, consider that desktop sales have started to decline significantly since 2005. After 2013, the growth in purchases of mobile devices (mobiles, tablets and phablets) has continued to outgrow desktop sales. Google focuses on its users and anyone who wants to have a presence on Google is directed to follow its guidelines to serve these users. In this instance, such users are dentists’ existing and prospective patients. Therefore, it is really important that your website delivers to their online expectations or Google will not present your website to them.

For your website to be mobile friendly, there are specific factors to which it must adhere. The website must not make use of any mobile-incompatible animations created with software like Adobe Flash. This appears as a black space in a mobile screen and serves no purpose. The text on your website should be readable on mobile devices without the user needing to resize or zoom. Responsive websites will automatically adjust to serve readability factors.

User experience has always been a core area from Google’s perspective, and mobile-friendly websites have links separated sufficiently to allow a user to make a selection with ease. Google provides a platform to check whether websites are mobile friendly. Just type in your website address at www.google.com/webmasters/tools/mobile-friendly.

There is no reason to panic if your website is not ready yet; however, expect to lose more customers to businesses with mobile-friendly websites, as they will be favoured by Google. The company has such a massive job to do reading the entire Internet, it is unlikely you will start suffering from 12.01 a.m., but you can expect to see your rankings diminish over time, especially on a mobile device search.

Your presence on Google is directly affected by your competition, so if your practice is in the middle of nowhere with limited competition you will live another day, but surely it is time that you start to think how to best serve your audience before it is too late.

To Naz Haque, aka the Scientist, is Operations Manager at Dental Focus, UK. He has a background in mobile and network computing, and has experience supporting a wide range of blue-chip brands, from Apple to Xerox. As an expert in search engine optimisation, Naz is passionate about helping clients develop strategies to enhance their brand and increase the return on investment from their dental practice websites. He can be contacted at naz@dentalfocus.com.