



semantic



Basics

# Think mobile first

Workflow tips and ideas to shift  
your mentality and target the  
bulk of your website users.

Semantic Website Wins #3

Neil Lewin – April 2020

# Welcome

Semantic Website Wins is a new series of mini guides to help marketers optimise their website, learn something new, and make the most of these strange times.

Many of us are working from home or furloughed, so day-to-day work has reduced or stopped. We hope that you can use our guides to find website wins to use now, or in the future and also build your skills so that you're ready to bounce back stronger.

We'll be writing guides with advice, tips and ideas to help you optimise your website in the coming weeks. Of course, we're always happy to help with any questions and provide further support if you get stuck.

Just drop me a line I'll be back in touch:  
[neil@semantic.co.uk](mailto:neil@semantic.co.uk) or 02380 111 545.

In the meantime, stay safe, and stay positive.  
Neil

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P.S. Need some extra support?

We're offering free video-call consultancy sessions for leisure & tourism, sports, theatres and professional bodies impacted by Coronavirus.

We can cover SEO, conversion rate optimisation, technical or critical analysis of your site.

Just give us a call for more details on 02380 111 545.

# Think mobile

We know that across our client sites, mobile visitors make up at least 75% of the total number of sessions.

Research in the U.S. says that **47% of adults now mostly go online using their smartphones** (double the percentage from 2013, from [Pew Research](#)). Given the ever-increasing power of mobile devices, it's easy to imagine them becoming the primary, or only, computing devices that most people use. For many people, this is already the case!

Often though, we are blinkered by our big screens in the office and we forget to check how most of our users experience our websites.

We've worked hard to change that at Semantic, and hopefully these tips and checklists will help you too.

This guide is broken down into several key areas:

- Updating your workflow
- Adopting a Mobile Mindset
- Homepage review – the 5 second test
- Key usability checks

There's a long list of other optimisations that you'll need to consider, including SEO, pagespeed, and schema tags. Some of these are covered in other guides, and some are just fundamental building blocks of a website that would be too hard to retrofit. Let us know how you get on with the updates suggested here, we'd love to hear from you.

# Updating your workflow

Everything we do at Semantic is built to work best on mobiles. We make sure that any website development, feature or update is tested across current devices, and you should do the same.

For this to become ingrained into your process, it needs to be easy:

## Make your phone accessible

Get a cheap wireless charger, or phone stand. (the Anker ones are good)



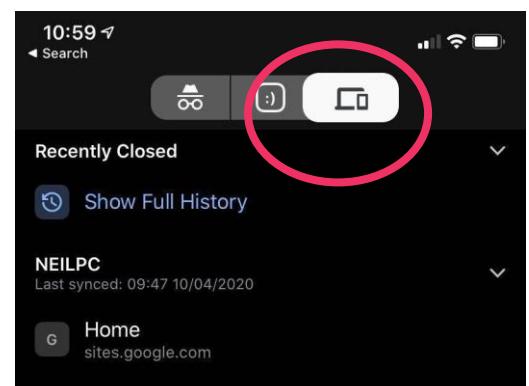
## Dial back your notifications

Avoid distractions, and keep your sanity! Turn off all non-essential notifications in your phone settings. Be ruthless. I keep only calls, calendar and individual whatsapp notifications (turn off group notifications!)

## Sync your browser

Sign in on Chrome on your desktop + phone, and it can sync your tabs.

Failing that, use a messaging app on your desktop and phone, so that you can message web page links to yourself (e.g. Whatsapp, Slack, Skype)



## Test on mobiles

For larger developments and features, generate screenshots of the pages on all the popular platforms. Browserstack's free screenshot tool is great for this. We use a full account for full interactive testing. Sign up for free at <https://www.browserstack.com/screenshots>

# Adopting a Mobile Mindset

Helping clients to understand their users has always been a key part of what we do. We have been running user testing sessions for many years now, and in that time, we have seen user patience decrease more and more.

As a rule of thumb...

*Users don't want to be on your site.*

We often forget this and think that just because it's our site/email/app that users will want to spend time with us. Unless you're Youtube or Facebook, this is unlikely.

Users are trying to solve a problem... so it's up to us to help them solve it as quickly as possible.

Mobiles have meant:

- Immediate information
- Minimal patience
- Desire for clear relevant content that's in context
- Content should be targeted based on time, location,

How can we use the full power of mobile to help users to show that we can help them quickly? Remember we can plug into phone functionality to enhance the user experience... that's cameras, location, maps, finding friends, email, push notifications and more...

**Brainstorm your marketing touch points**

Are they all optimised for mobiles... can you make more use of tech to deliver something more fun, unique, relevant or engaging?

# Homepage review – the 5 second test

One test we often like to run, is a 5 second test on a website homepage. This is where a user is shown the homepage for 5 seconds only, then asked to recall their first impressions of the site.

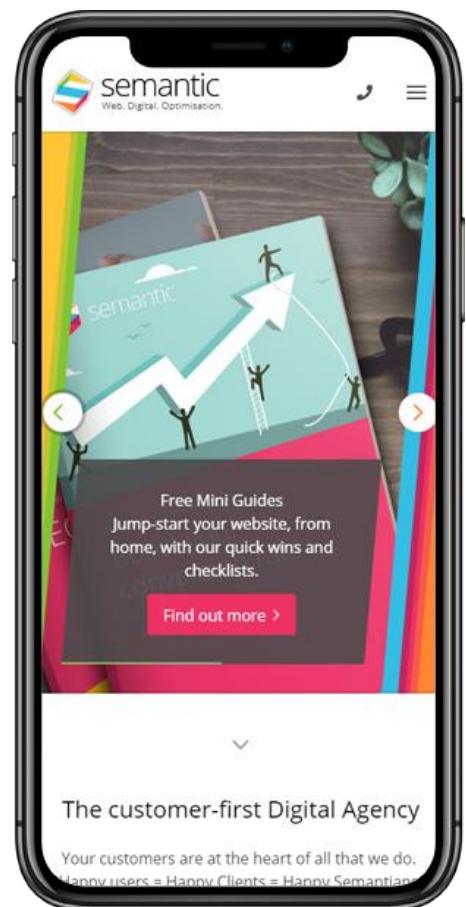
This is a useful test that you can do yourself, or try with friends or family members.

Of course, it needs to be done on your phone...

- Load up your homepage on your phone
- Imagine you are new to the site, or show it to someone that is, for 5 seconds.
- Get them to talk through their impressions of the homepage

This should cover a number of areas:

- Their first impressions
- Who does the site belong to?
- What's on offer?
- What's in it for them? i.e. is it relevant?



You may also uncover load-time issues. Typically sites should load in a second or less. If it's much more than this, then that'll impact how useful the test is. You might like to use a screenshot instead, if load-time is a problem.

- Note down 5-second test responses
- Make a note of any page speed issues and flag to your developer

# Key usability checks

Can we move beyond hamburgers?

This small 3 line symbol has become well-known for navigating on mobiles, but this only touches the tip of the iceberg.



Now that you've got your site loaded on your phone, it's a good chance to browse as a user and check for our top 10 mobile usability issues.

Take screenshots of any issues on your phone, and paste these into a Word document with your comments. Most issues will probably need developer support to fix, but it's good to get the discussion started.

## Top 10 mobile usability issues

### Header layout

What's your main call-to-action?

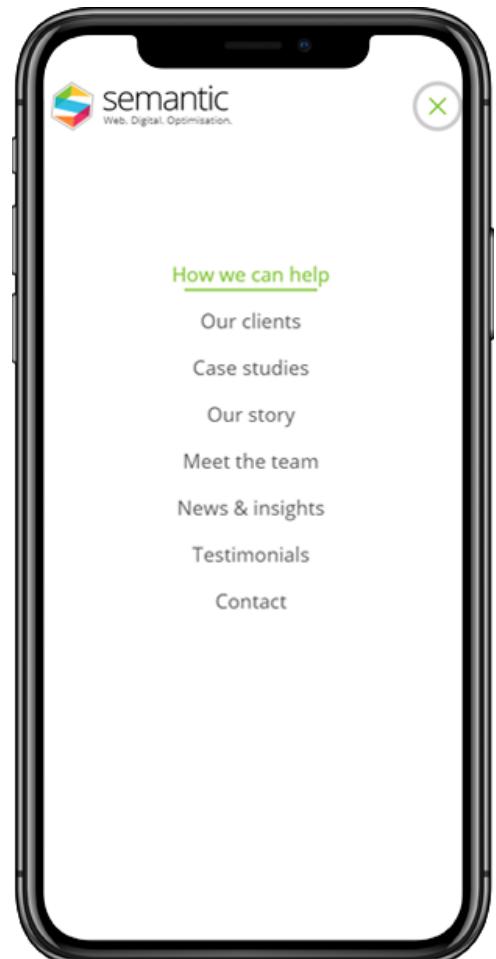
Does that match your main business objective (e.g. to drive sales)

### Spacing

Are key elements in the header, footer, navigation and pages far enough apart to avoid accidental taps? Is there enough white space?

### Menu functionality

Is it clear how to get to the main menu?  
Is it fast and responsive as you press it?  
Are elements laid out simply, with enough space?



## Orientation

Check the main elements of your site are usable when your phone is in landscape. We know from Analytics that most users stick with portrait for the web, but it's still important to check.

## Main feature areas

Is the image high quality and compelling? Remember the 'fold' is much higher now, so we need to work hard to encourage users to scroll further and explore more.

## Forms

Try submitting any important booking or contact forms, but leave a field blank. Often validation messages are clunky or off-screen on mobiles, so make sure yours are clear and visible.

## Text blocks and sections

Check through key pages and look out for any big walls of text. Often sites end up with big sections of hard-to-read text. Break up your paragraphs, use headings/bullets, and it'll make the text easier to read for everyone.

## Videos

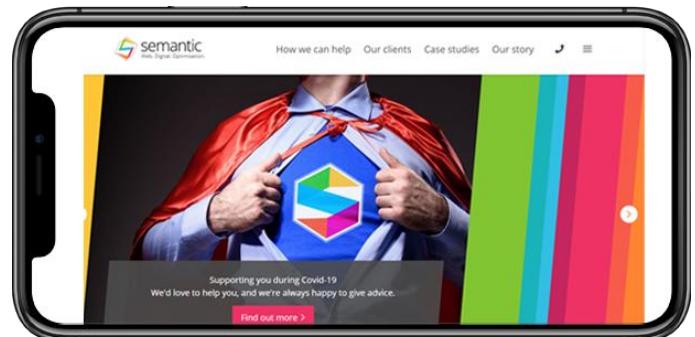
Ideally videos should play within the page. They can work well if autoplayed on homepages (without sound by default)

## Interactive elements

Check that interactive elements respond quickly on key devices.

## Browser/screen size issues

Check a variety of devices and screen sizes to catch other layout issues. Use the [Browserstack screenshot tool](#) to get started.



## Other enhancements to consider

Mobiles are so powerful now, that they can do just as much as desktops. You might like to note down ideas for further enhancements:

- **Horizontal scrolling**

This can be used for longer lists or product listings if the interface is clear (Audible.co.uk does this well)

- **Live chat**

Adding a chat bot or integrating with popular messaging services can help drive conversion rates and improve user satisfaction.

- **Magic sign in**

Entering usernames and passwords is a pain on mobiles.

Consider letting people email themselves a 'magic link' to jump into their account. Slack does this well with their app.

- **Mobile payments**

If entering passwords is a pain, then credit card details are super annoying to wade through on a phone. Challenge your payment provider to add Apple Pay and Android Pay. If they don't have a timeline on this, then consider moving (Stripe is good for this)

- **Location targeting and push notifications**

Tie into other more powerful mobile functionality to boost your marketing impact.

- **Schema tags**

Check with your developer to make sure your organisation, events, products and articles are tagged with Schema tags. These help with certain search engine listings, as well as Voice Assistant info (e.g. Alexa, Siri).

# Need a hand?

If you've followed along, then you'll be ahead of many companies when it comes to thinking mobile-first.

That's it for checking the basics. Hopefully you've found it useful.

Our next few guides switch gears to cover infrastructure and technical knowledge that's helpful for marketers. It's important to learn some of the key terms and approaches so that you can ask all the right questions on new projects and pitches.

Keep an eye on our blog and LinkedIn for more tips and updates. If you need a hand in the meantime, then we're always happy to help.

- Email me on [neil@semantic.co.uk](mailto:neil@semantic.co.uk)
- Call 02380 111 545
- Book a time in my diary to chat at <https://calendly.com/neillewin/>



Neil

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