**Troubleshooting Tips for a High Bounce Rate**

Google has stated that they *do not* use bounce rates metric to rank websites. Regardless of whether that is true (and there is some evidence to support that Google does use bounce rates as a ranking factor), this metric is still a priority for pleasing the most important visitors to your site: people.

A high bounce rate can mean one of two things, one good and one bad:

**The good**: Users have arrived at your site and found what they were looking for. Mission accomplished and they move on. If that’s the case, you’ll notice you have a lot of return visitors.

**The bad**: Users arrived at your site and discovered it was not relevant to what they were looking for, they didn’t like the site, or they didn’t feel compelled to do anything after reading.

There are a whole host of reasons you could have **the bad** high bounce rate, some having to do with SEO and others relating to your website design. In this article we’re going to deal with the design elements.

***Is your bounce rate really that high?***

Quicksprout recently published an [excellent infographic](http://www.quicksprout.com/2014/04/17/how-to-decrease-your-bounce-rate/) about bounce rates and identified averages for different type of websites:

Content-led (e.g. Buzzfeed): 40-60%

Lead Generation (e.g. local lawyer): 30-50%

Retail (e.g. House of Fraser): 20-40%

Service (e.g. Skype): 10-30%

Landing pages (e.g. information page): 70-90%

If your rates fall above of those parameters or you would like to bring them down to the lower end of the range, ask yourself the following questions to help you troubleshoot the issue.

# Have I tested my site’s user experience?

It’s 2014 and people are not forgiving about low quality sites, even compared to five years ago. Design quality influences perceived credibility, which can affect bounce rate.

***Make navigation intuitive***. Make it easy for users to find what they are looking for by providing an easy-to-use navigation bar and search form.

***Easy to read***: Keep the colour scheme consistent and use readable fonts. You should [embrace white space](http://creativebysoap.co.uk/blog/7-habits-highly-effective-web-design/) to draw the eye to important areas of the page and avoid overwhelming the reader.

***Keep it simple and distraction-free***. There is no need for pop-ups (unless what you are offering is worth the potential for irritation to the user) or automatically playing audio or video. It just gets in the way of what your goal really is – a conversion.

# Have I optimised for the share?

Take a page out of Buzzfeed’s book: make your content easy to share. They look for the exponential increase in visitors rather than keeping the same ones.

***Share buttons should be easy to find***. Have your designer incorporate share buttons where they are most likely to be used, which you can find out through A/B testing.

***Don’t require logging in to share or comment***. Make it simple to engage with your content. People will leave your page if it takes more than a couple clicks to leave a comment or post your content to social media.

# Does my site load quickly and is it mobile-friendly?

A fast, responsive website is a top priority and good designers will do this as a standard service. If your site doesn’t look good on mobile or takes too long to load on any device, you will be losing readers or potential customers.

***Lazy load your content.*** Have your designer incorporate infinite scrolling into your site. That allows the mobile device to defer loading content until they are actually needed.

***Increase size of targets for mobile users***. Few things are more frustrating than trying to tap on a small search bar or clicking on the wrong thing because the button was too small.

# Are my calls-to-action clear?

Maybe users are getting to the bottom of your landing page and they don’t know what to do. Make it clear what you want their action to be.

***Use design elements to make CTAs stand out***. Bigger fonts, different colours, or anything that stands out to draw the eye. Decide what every page has been designed to do and then make it clear to your visitors how to do it.

***Need help troubleshooting your website’s bounce rate? Get in touch today!***