

How to Assess Your Dental Website Quality with Google Lighthouse

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You know that every dental practice needs a good website, and yours looks fantastic. Yet, appearances can be deceiving. Unless you happen to be a skilled webmaster, you probably have no idea how your website performs or how well optimized it is. Thankfully, Google offers a tool that can help. A Lighthouse audit takes just a few minutes and requires no technical expertise to perform.

What is Google Lighthouse?

Lighthouse is a free tool provided by Google that measures four important types of website metrics. The report is detailed enough to be quite informative to web designers and SEO (search engine optimization) professionals. Yet, it also provides basic performance scores that even the most non-technical layperson can understand.

How to audit your website

There are several ways to run a Lighthouse audit, and Google provides complete instructions for each. The recommended option for webmasters is through Chrome DevTools because it allows auditing authenticated websites and local pages. If you are simply checking a publicly available site, the simplest method is with a Chrome browser extension.

It only takes a few steps to run a Lighthouse audit via browser extension:

1. Install the Chrome web browser if you do not already have it.
2. Download and install Lighthouse from the Chrome Webstore. The icon will appear on your browser toolbar.
3. Visit your dental website using the Chrome browser.
4. Click the Lighthouse icon and select "generate report." Be patient because it takes a couple of minutes.

The big picture

Lighthouse reports make it easy to get an overview of your website's quality at a glance. The first thing you will see at the top of the page is overall scores (ranked from 0 to 100) of four main categories: performance, accessibility, best practices, and SEO. Above each category title is a number inside of a color-coded circle.

If you see four green circles at the top of the page, then you can relax. This means your website scored 90 or above in every category and likely has no serious issues. Yellow circles indicate a score of 50-89. These areas are underperforming and in need of improvement. Red can be considered a warning signal. Those categories scored below 49 and need attention ASAP.

Digging into details

The next step is determining the cause of any low scores and discovering where there is room for improvement. Lighthouse reports provide a detailed breakdown of metrics for each category, along with suggested improvements. Let's take a look at what each category represents:

- **Performance** – The primary focus here is speed, which is essential for search engine rankings as well as user experience. You will see results for metrics such as first contentful paint (when the first content loads), speed index (how quickly the page loads), and more. This section will also list some opportunities to improve performance.
- **Accessibility** – It is essential that everyone be able to use your website with ease. For example, the website should be friendly to keyboard navigation and include appropriate labeling for proper functionality of screen reading technology. This section shows problems that prevent ease of access and usability.
- **Best practices** – Here, you will see if your website adheres to basic standards such as using a secure protocol (HTTPS), correct image resolution, and appropriate doctypes. It also checks for errors, deprecated APIs, and other technical problems.
- **SEO (search engine optimization)** – This section will determine if your website is following Google's recommended techniques for optimization. It includes basic aspects of SEO such as meta tags, ensuring that Google's bots have access to all pages, appropriate font sizes, mobile-friendliness, and many others.

Conclusion

Whether your website was created in-house, or you hired a marketing firm, you need to know if it meets quality standards. No matter how many digital marketing channels you use, the website is the foundation of your online presence. A Lighthouse audit is a great way to find out if you have a

strong foundation.

About the Author:



Naren Arulrajah, President and CEO of Ekwa Marketing, has been a leader in medical marketing for over a decade. Ekwa provides comprehensive marketing solutions for busy dentists, with a team of more than 180 full time professionals, providing web design, hosting, content creation, social media, reputation management, SEO, and more. If you're looking for ways to boost your marketing results, call 855-598-3320 for a free strategy session with Naren. You may also schedule a session at your convenience with the Senior Director of Marketing – Lila, by clicking

<https://www.ekwa.com/msm/> or simply send a text to 313-777-8494.