

Mobile First: Data & Facts on mobile SERPs

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What is the study about?

Looking back over the last two and a half years of SEO, it was only a matter of time before Google officially proclaimed the Mobile First credo. It all started with the [mobile-friendly ranking update](#) in April 2015 followed by the official announcement by Google in November 2016 all as part of the testing phase of the Mobile First Index.

On 26.03.2018, Google finally rolled out the [mobile first index](#) and is now using the mobile version of a website for rankings. The search engine follows the idea of "user first" and wants to "(...) help mobile seekers to find what they are looking for."

For the increasing importance of mobile search, some factors are fundamental - not least the user behavior. For example, Google has seen more searches via smartphone in 2015 than on desktops in more than 10 countries - including the US and Japan.

Google also noticed this noticeable increase in smartphone search queries: even for B2B queries, they are currently seeing 50% of requests through mobile devices.



of B2B search queries today are made on smartphones. BCG expects that figure to grow to 70% by 2020.

This value should be even more pronounced in the B2C sector. For example, 60% of search queries related to travel destinations are done on mobile phones.

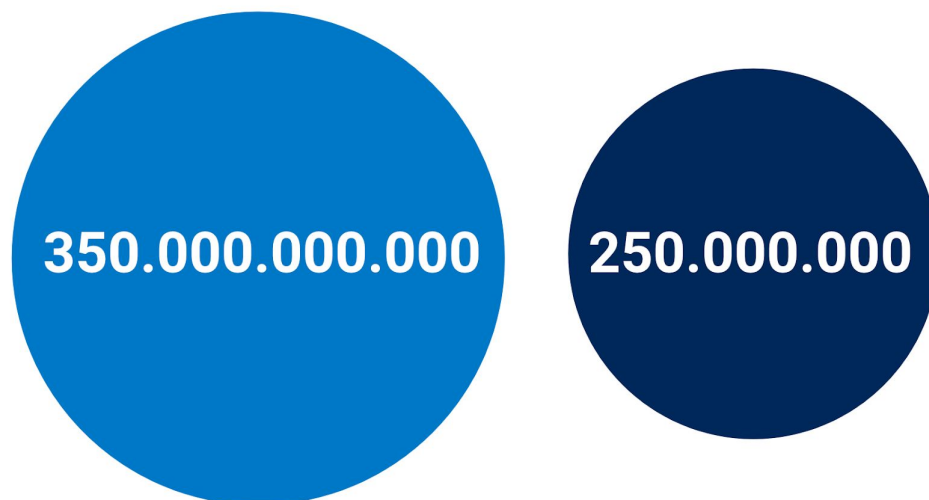


of queries for travel destination information come from mobile devices.

This is enough of a reason to take a closer look at the data around mobile traffic, click rates and the mobile Visibility Index.

Data Sources

To get a valid picture, the Data source should be comprehensive. For the following country comparison of the organic Google traffic for smartphones and desktop, we have thus evaluated over 350 billion impressions und 250 million clicks with the help of our Google Data API Search Console.



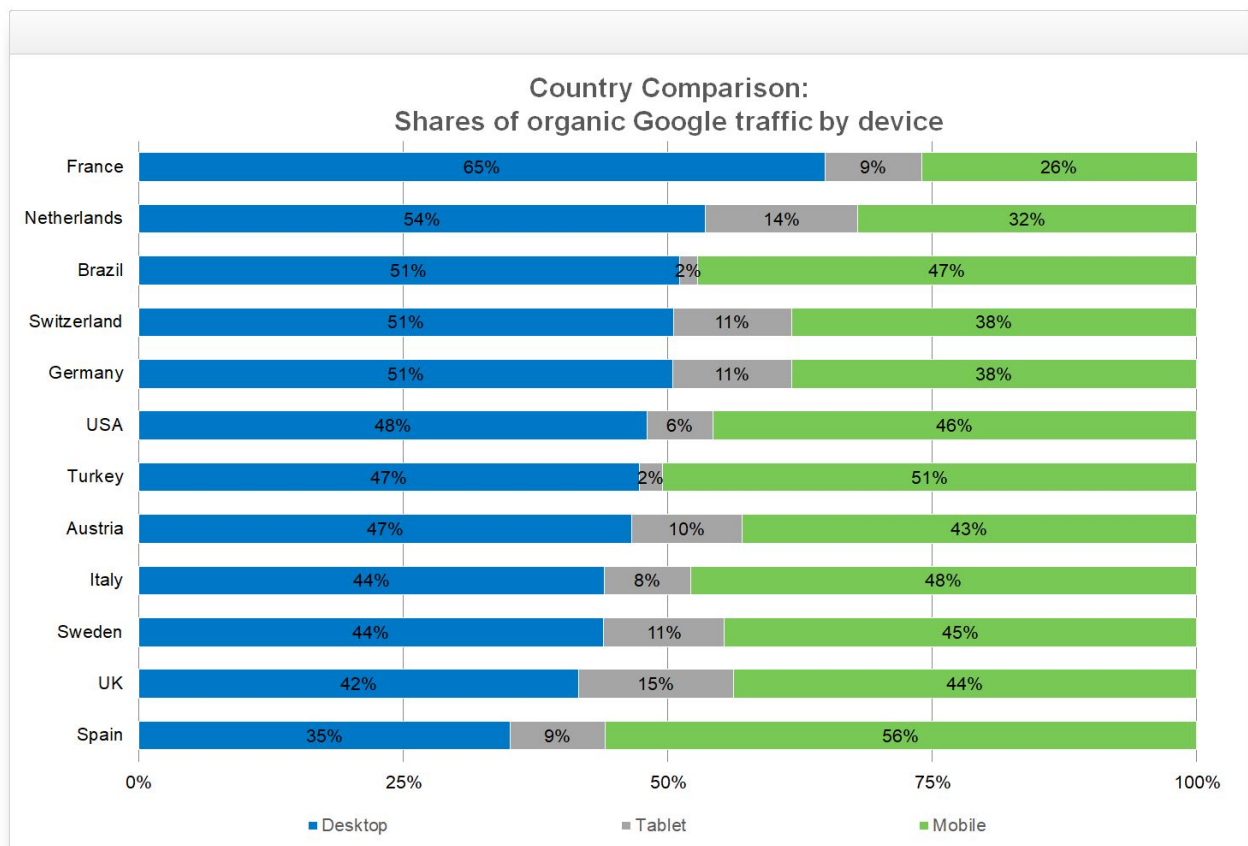
350.000.000.000 impressions & 250.000.000 clicks

Organic Google-Traffic: Mobile vs. Desktop

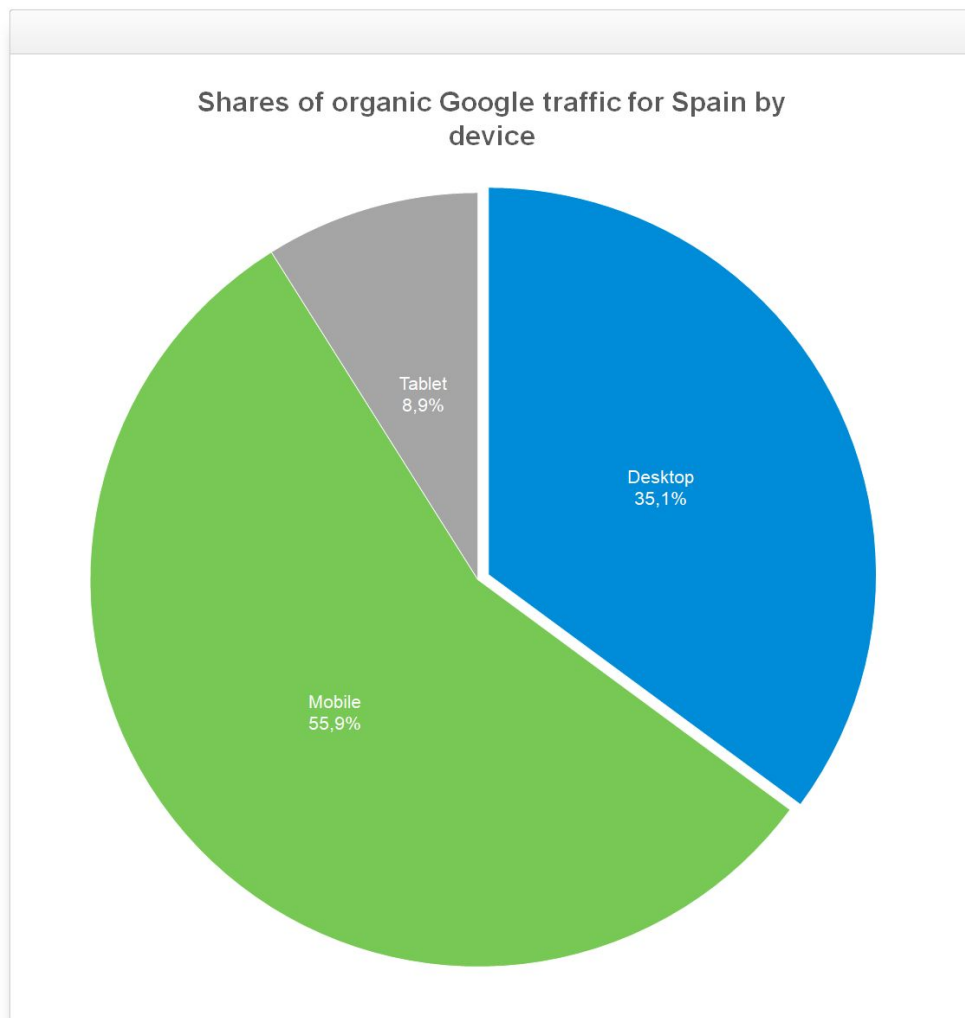
Which device does drive most of the organic Google traffic? There is a strong differentiation between countries and the respective user behaviour.

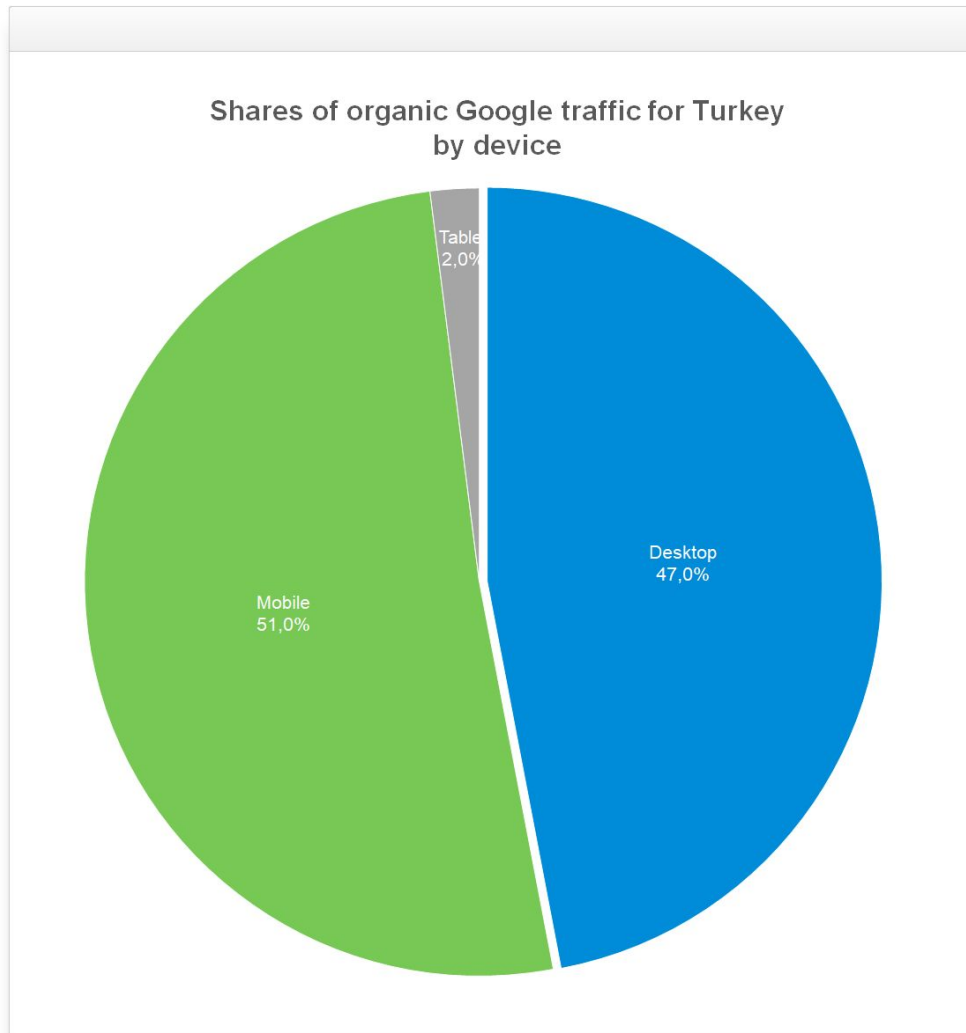
Country Comparison

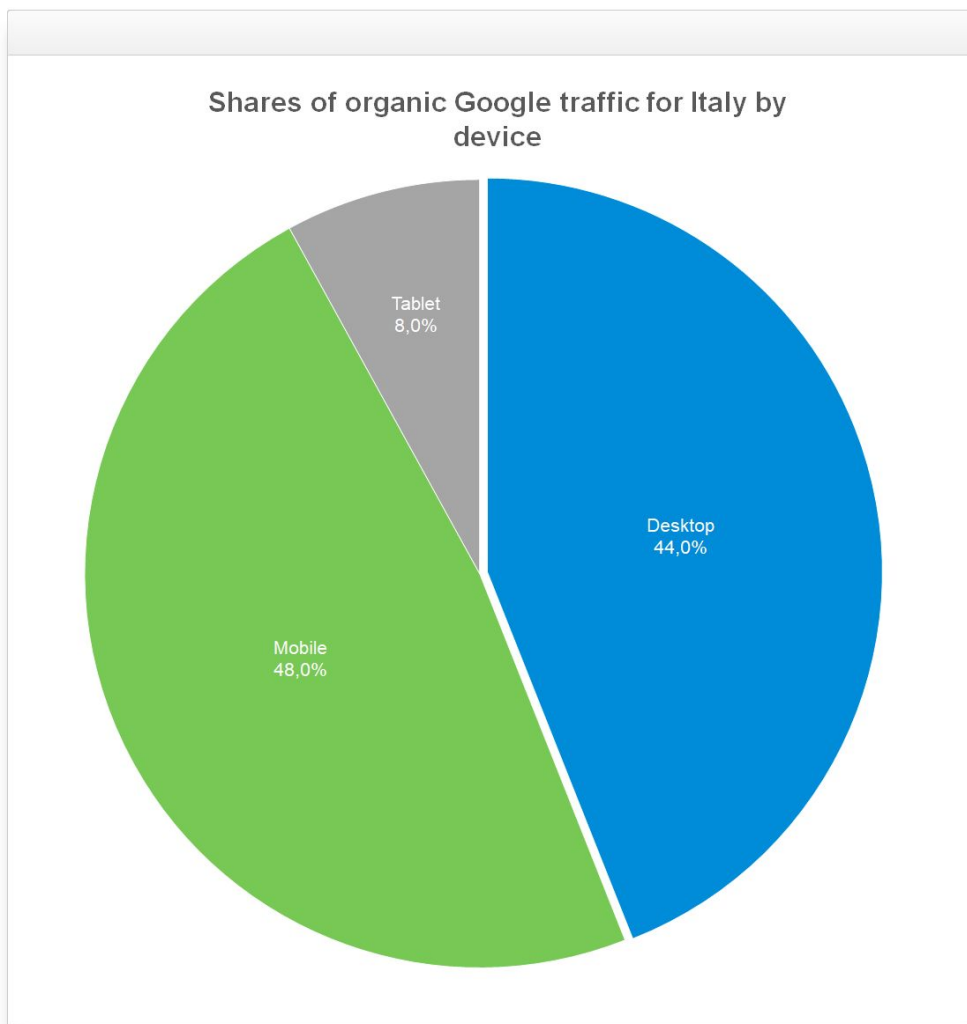
Let us first take a look at the organic traffic from smartphone, tablets and desktop across different countries for the year of 2017.



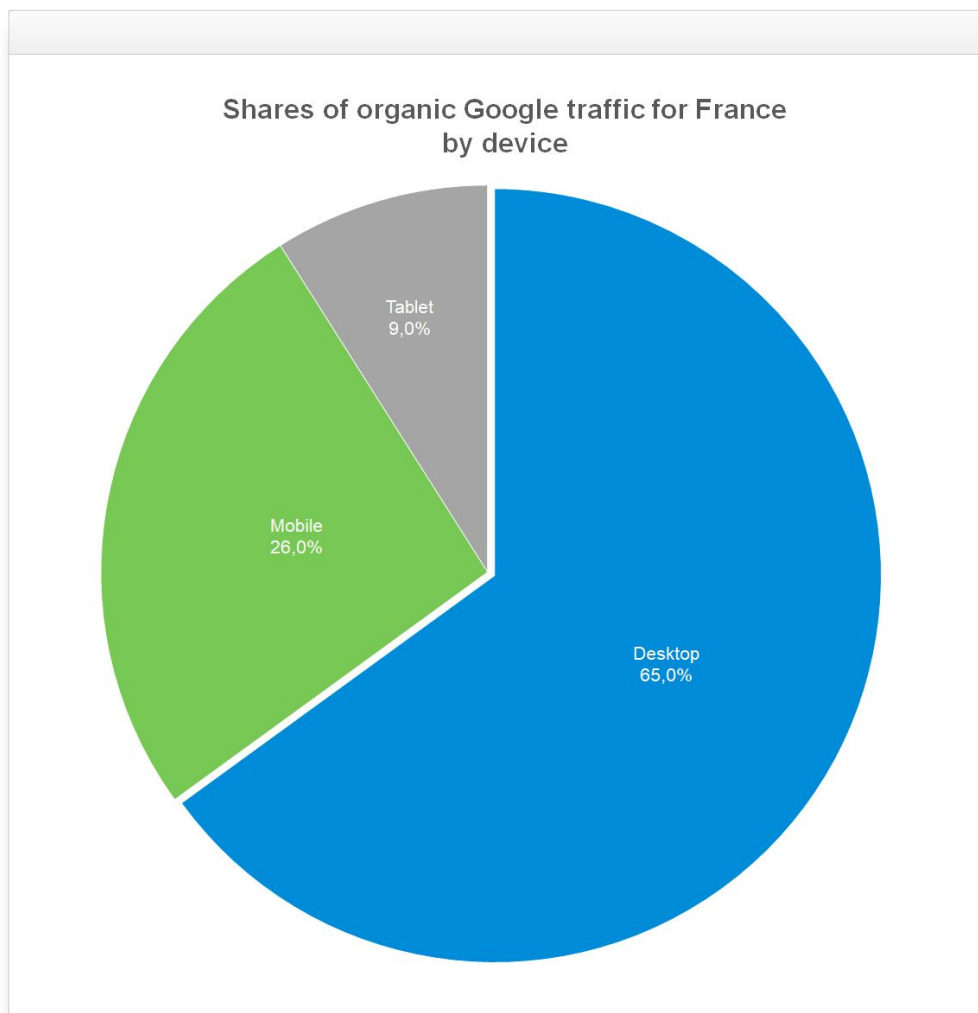
The Top 3 countries in which organic Google traffic from mobile devices is highest are Spain (56%), Turkey (51%) and Italy (48%).

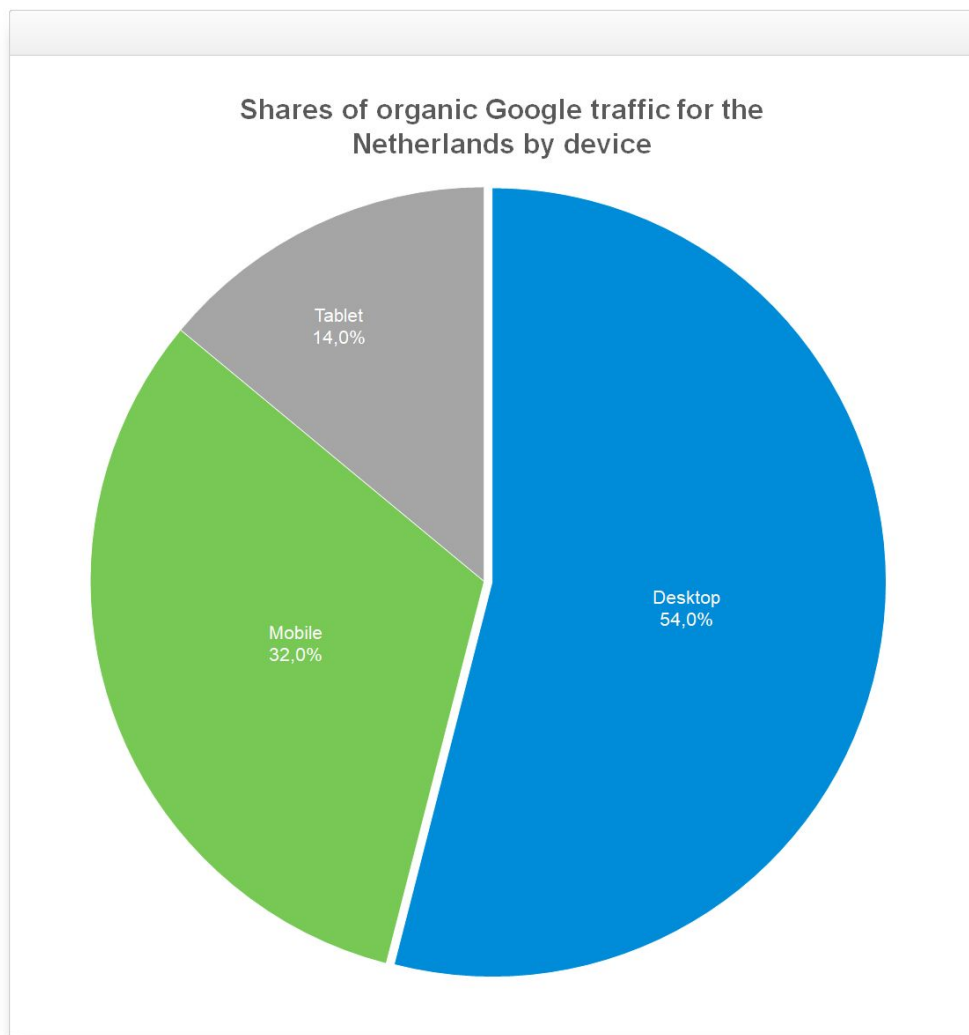


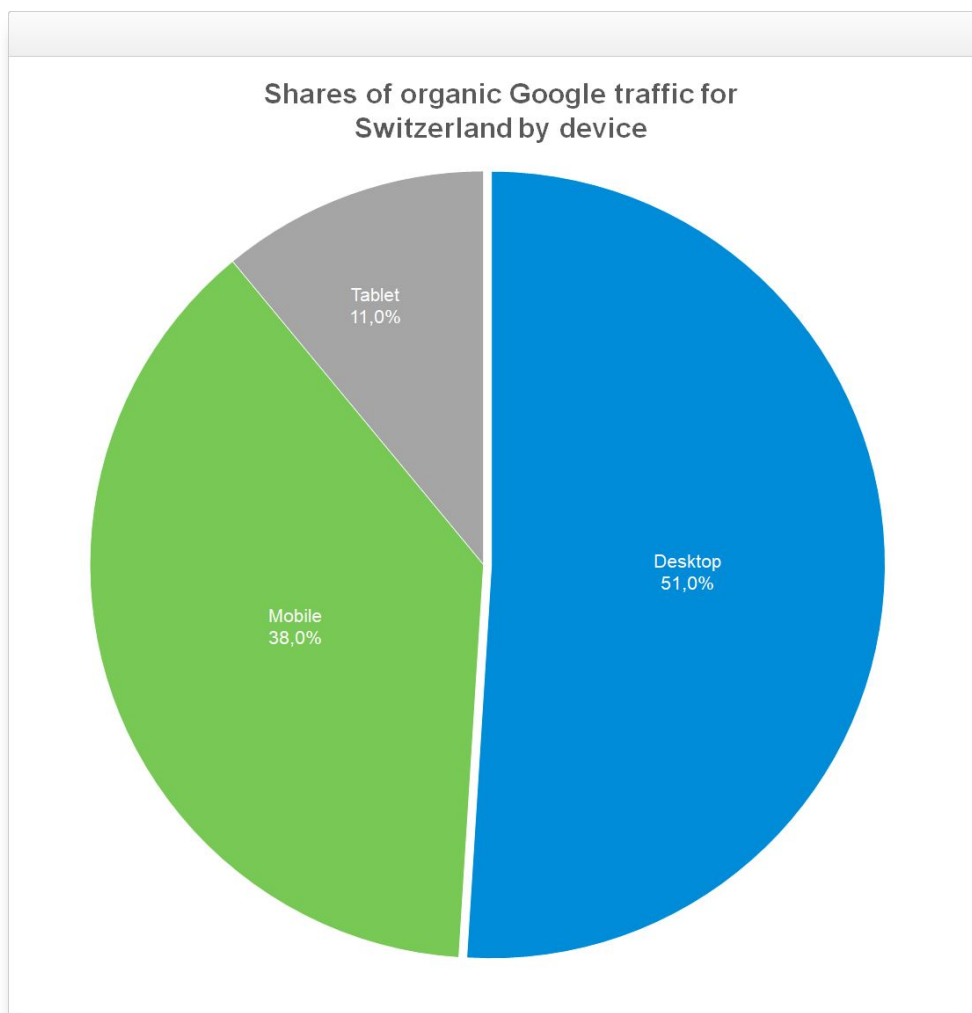




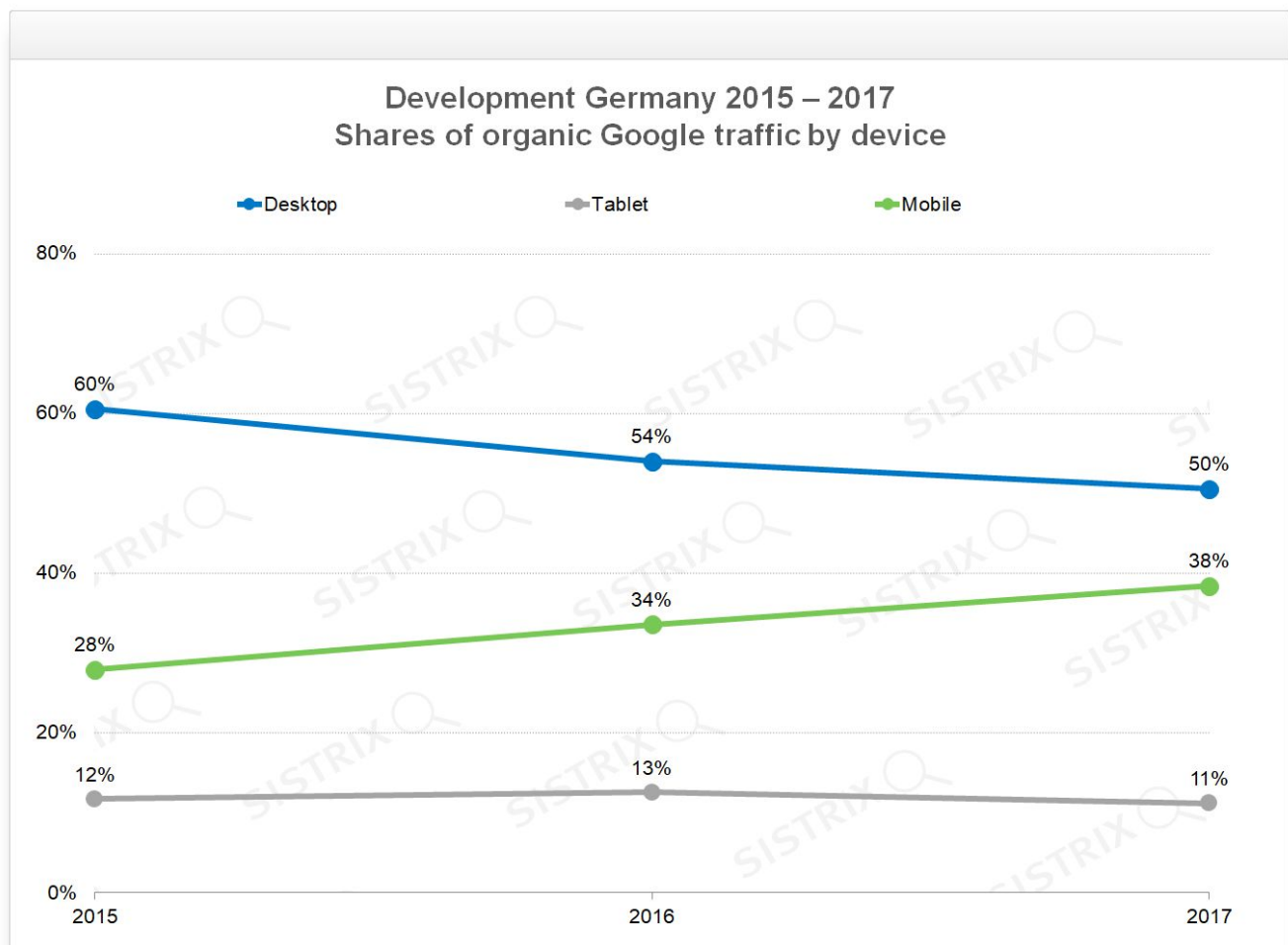
On the other hand we have France (26%), the Netherlands (32%) and Switzerland (38%), where organic Google traffic from mobile devices are the lowest.







The development (in Germany) of organic Google traffic, broken down by the three different device classes shows a noticeable shift from desktop traffic to mobile traffic, over the past two years.



Insights

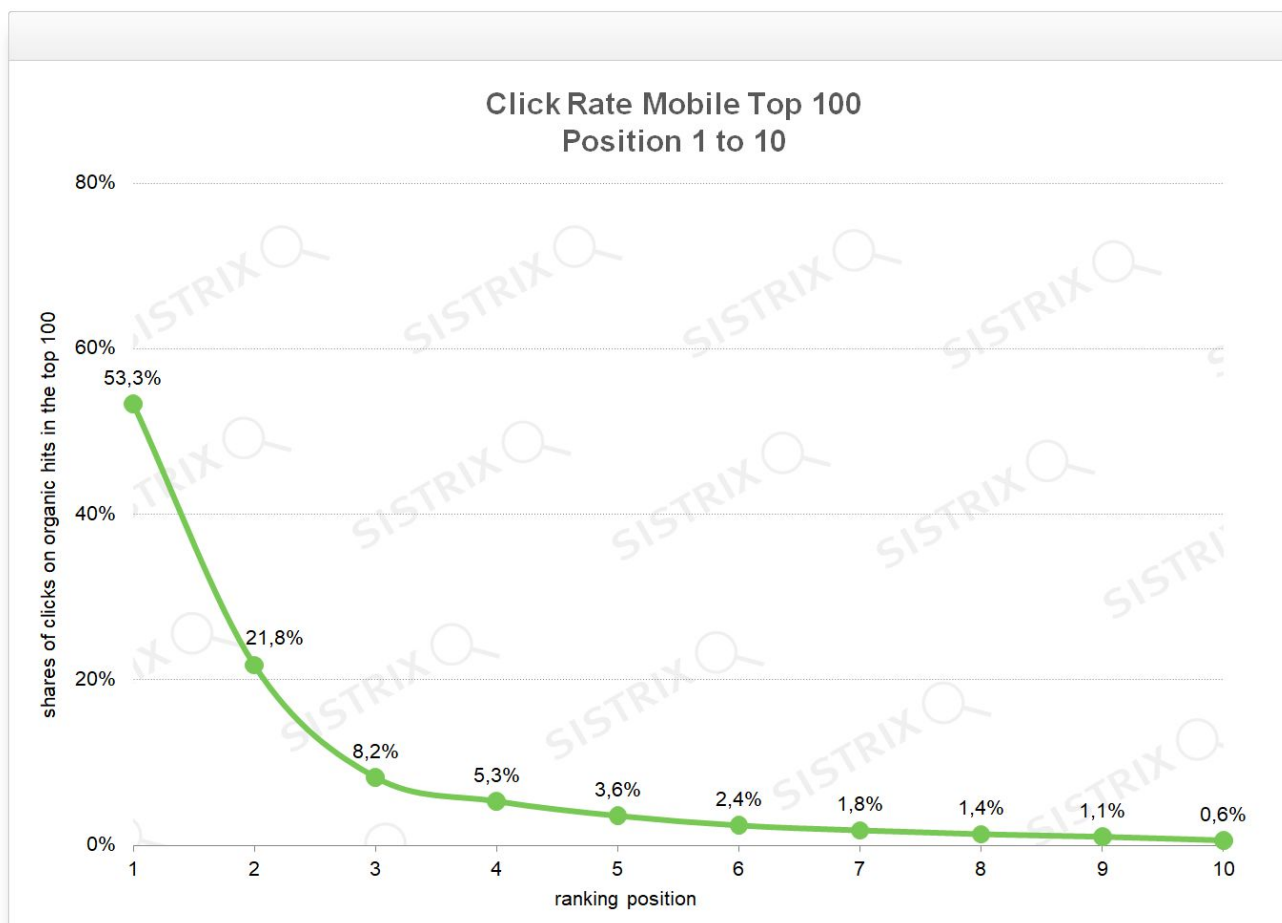
- In 7 of 12 countries, the Google traffic via desktop is larger than from smartphones
- In Spain the organic smartphone Google traffic eclipses the desktop traffic with 21%
- the United Kingdom shows the highest value in the category "organic Google traffic from tablets" with 15%

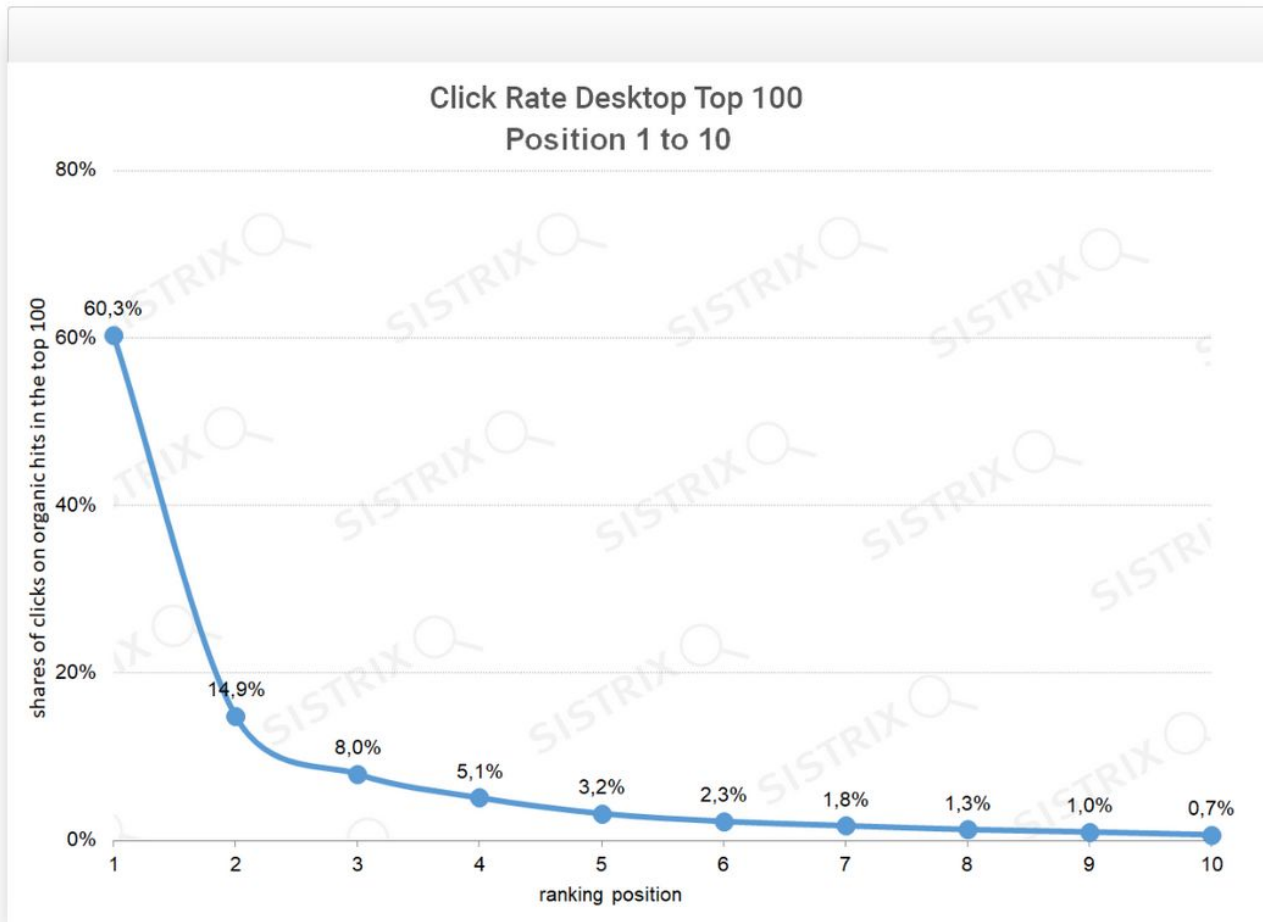
Click Rates: Mobile vs. Desktop

The click rates for individual SERP results always depend on the ranking position on Google. For this evaluation we analysed 250 million clicks.

Comparison Mobile vs. Desktop

If we look at the percentage of clicks made in the Top 10, one thing becomes apparent: Just as you would expect, more than half of the clicks go to position 1 - for both mobile and desktop.





For search queries on smartphones, the amount of clicks on position 1 is 53,3%. Clicks on position 1 on Google via desktop amount to 60,3%.

Position 2 on Google currently sees more clicks (21,8%) via mobile, than clicks on the same position via desktop (14,9%).

Insights

- The sum of clicks on the Top-10 results on Google via smartphone amount to 99,57%
- The sum of clicks on the Top-10 results via desktop amount to 98,7%

Domain Visibility: Mobile vs. Desktop

Is there a mobile index? No! There is only one Google index. In order to make sure that domains are visible in the mobile search on Google, a mobile-friendly website is unavoidable. The content of the page needs to be optimally shown and accessible for users on mobile devices.

The **four most important criteria** for mobile friendliness:

1. Avoid unusual software on mobile devices, such as Flash
2. The user can read the text shown without having to zoom
3. The size of the content is adjusted to fit the users screen, without them having to scroll horizontally or zoom
4. The spacing between links (buttons, navigation etc.) is large enough for users to comfortably click the link they want

Best Practice: Mobile Visibility

Many domains are already optimised to be mobile friendly - you can nicely see this in their Visibility Index development. Here we have a positive example



In this example of verivox.de, both Visibility curves (desktop & mobile) run nearly in parallel.

Worst Practice: Mobile Visibility

We see quite a different picture at cyclingweekly.com.



Here we can see that their mobile Visibility keeps a noticeable gap from their desktop visibility.

8 Mobile SEO Tips

We want to give you some hints on what you should take into consideration for the mobile version of your homepage:

1. Font size is too small

The size of the font you are using should not be so small that users are forced to zoom in.

2. Loading time too slow

In order to improve your user experience it is very important for the page to load quickly, more so when it comes to mobile.

3. Too much ads in the visible portion of the page

By using too much advertisement formats, such as interstitials or overlays, you are strongly degrading the user experience on smartphones: The user will often be kept from doing what they want (especially with interstitials). You should therefore refrain from using too much advertisements in the visible part of your page.

4. Irrelevant links to the desktop version

If you have separate mobile URLs, then your embedded links to the desktop version should have a certain degree of relevance.

Embedded links should therefore not all point to the start page for the desktop version, but lead to the fitting, relevant pages.

5. Use the viewport meta tag

By using the viewport meta tag, you can specify the size and scale of your page in a browser for each respective device. This makes sure that the page is also shown correctly on smartphones.

6. Keep the size of links & buttons in mind

Both the size and positioning of internal links, such as navigation links or buttons, should be taken into account. It is recommended to leave enough room between link elements for users to easily reach the right one. The size of these link elements should also be large enough.

7. Avoid unavailable content

Having content on your mobile page that is unavailable to users will negatively impact their user experience. Sometimes you will not be able to show certain content, such as videos or proprietary formats on certain smartphones because they are not supported.

8. Don't block Googlebot from JavaScript, CSS & pictures

Googlebot should always have permission to access JavaScript- or CSS-files and pictures you are using on the page. If this is not the case, it may directly harm how well your content can be rendered and indexed by Google's algorithms. Which can then result in less-than-stellar rankings.

About SISTRIX



Since its foundation in 2004, SISTRIX GmbH has been the leading provider of browser-based online marketing software in Germany. With the help of the SISTRIX Toolbox, the company has been helping numerous customers optimize their online marketing strategies for 10 years.

Due to the large database and history built over the years, the SISTRIX Toolbox can deliver decisive competitive advantages in daily use. The toolbox crawlers average over 500,000 pages per minute and find more than 250 billion links per month.



The SISTRIX GmbH and the SISTRIX Visibility Index worldwide are trusted as a meaningful key figure by high-reach media houses such as the New York Times, The Guardian, the Handelsblatt and SPIEGEL ONLINE.

Your Checklist

Homepage & Site Navigation

- ☐ Menus are short and sweet
- ☐ Call-to-Actions are front and center
- ☐ Easy to get back to the homepage
- ☐ Promotions don't steal the show

Site Search

- ☐ Site search is visible
- ☐ Use filters to improve search results
- ☐ Search results are relevant
- ☐ Guides users to better results

Ability to Convert

- ☐ Click-to-call is present
- ☐ Users can purchase as a guest
- ☐ User can explore before committing
- ☐ Easy to finish on another device

Form Entry

- ☐ Info entry is streamlined
- ☐ Uses toggles/dropdowns to simplify input
- ☐ Visual calendars used for data selection
- ☐ Form design is efficient (auto-fill)

Usability & Form Factors

- ☐ Entire site is optimized for mobile
- ☐ Don't need to pinch & zoom
- ☐ Product images are expandable
- ☐ Site avoids "full size" labeling

Sources

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