

Why Google Puts Fast Websites First

What a perfect performance score actually buys you — in Google’s own words.

1. Google says it plainly: speed is a ranking signal

This isn’t SEO folklore. Google’s own documentation states it directly:

“Core Web Vitals are used by our ranking systems.”

— Google Search Central, [Understanding page experience in Google Search results](https://developers.google.com/search/docs/appearance/page-experience) · developers.google.com/search/docs/appearance/page-experience

Core Web Vitals are Google’s three speed-and-stability measurements, taken from real visitors to your site:

WHAT GOOGLE MEASURES	GOOGLE’S PASSING BAR	PLAIN ENGLISH
Largest Contentful Paint (LCP)	Under 2.5 seconds	How fast your page visibly loads
Interaction to Next Paint (INP)	Under 200 milliseconds	How fast the page responds when tapped
Cumulative Layout Shift (CLS)	Under 0.1	Whether the page jumps around while loading

Google has treated speed as a ranking factor since its 2018 “Speed Update” (Google Search Central blog, *Using page speed in mobile search ranking*), and folded it into the broader Page Experience signal in 2021.

A 100/100 Google Lighthouse score means a site doesn’t just pass these bars — it clears them with room to spare. (To be precise: Google ranks on the measurements above, not the Lighthouse score itself. The score is Google’s own report card showing how far above or below the bar you sit.)

2. Fast sites get crawled more — so new work shows up sooner

Google also rewards speed before ranking even happens, at the crawling stage:

“Making a site faster improves the users’ experience while also increasing crawl rate.”

— Google Search Central, [Crawl budget management for large sites](#)

In practice: when you publish a new project — the kind of portfolio page that wins your next client — Google finds and indexes it faster on a fast site.

3. What we've measured

+200%

Impressions for high-intent searches — the “custom home builder near me” and “luxury remodeler [city]” queries typed by people ready to hire — measured in Google Search Console across sites rebuilt to 100/100 Lighthouse scores.

Impressions are the top of your pipeline: every one is a homeowner who saw your name before your competitor's.

4. Speed keeps the visitors that ranking wins

Ranking gets the click. Speed decides what happens in the next three seconds:

- As page load time goes from 1 second to 3 seconds, the probability of a visitor bouncing increases **32%**. At 5 seconds, it's **90%**. (Google/SOASTA mobile page speed research)
- Google and Deloitte's *Milliseconds Make Millions* study found a **0.1-second** speed improvement lifted retail conversions **8.4%** — and lifted engagement most among luxury audiences.

A homeowner planning a seven-figure build is comparing you against two or three other firms in the same sitting. The site that loads instantly reads as the firm that has it together.

THIRTY-SECOND HOMEWORK

5. Don't take our word for it — test it

Google publishes its grading tool free at **pagespeed.web.dev**. It takes 30 seconds:

1. Enter your website's address. Note the four scores.
2. Enter your top competitor's.
3. Enter any site we've built.

That difference is what your next client feels before they ever call you back.

Locke Hollow Web Design

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Hand-coded websites for custom home builders, luxury remodelers, and fine craftsmen.

Built in Tennessee, serving builders nationwide. · Projects start at \$6,500

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