

## Getting The Tag:

# Making 23 legacy websites mobile-friendly in six weeks

## The Mobile Missive

On **February 26, 2015** Google put down a directive:

*Get mobile by April 21, 2015  
or get lost in page 2 of search results.*

Google has decreed that in order to show up in mobile search results, your site must provide a base user experience in the mobile environment and must earn a mobile-friendly tag.

Why? According to Google we've reached the tipping point: more searches are conducted on a mobile device than on a computer, which means mobile-friendly search results are essential to every business.

VOLUME:  
**23 legacy websites**

TOTAL PAGES CONVERTED:  
**2,670**

DURATION:  
**6 weeks of development and Q/A**

TIMEFRAME:  
**3-6 days per site**

SUCCESS RATE:  
**100%**

## **The Task**

Our client manages hundreds of programmatic websites and landing pages on behalf of Universities. These schools rely on search rankings for enrollment growth, so dropping in search, especially mobile search, is not an option.

The task was clear: convert 23 traditional programmatic websites to mobile-friendly responsive design sites to beat the Google April 21, 2015 deadline.

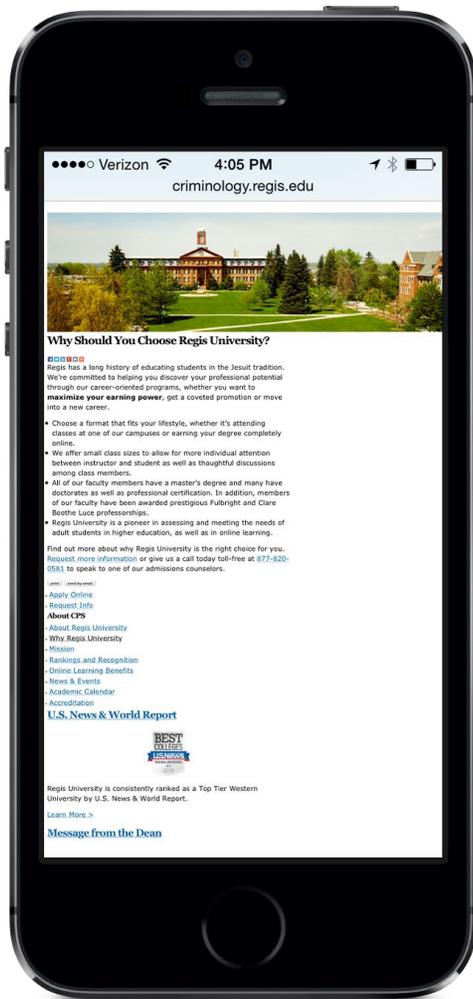
Our digital team has been developing mobile-friendly sites for several years, but this was a high volume conversion with an aggressive timeframe and lot of exceptions. Focus was paramount.

## **The Plan**

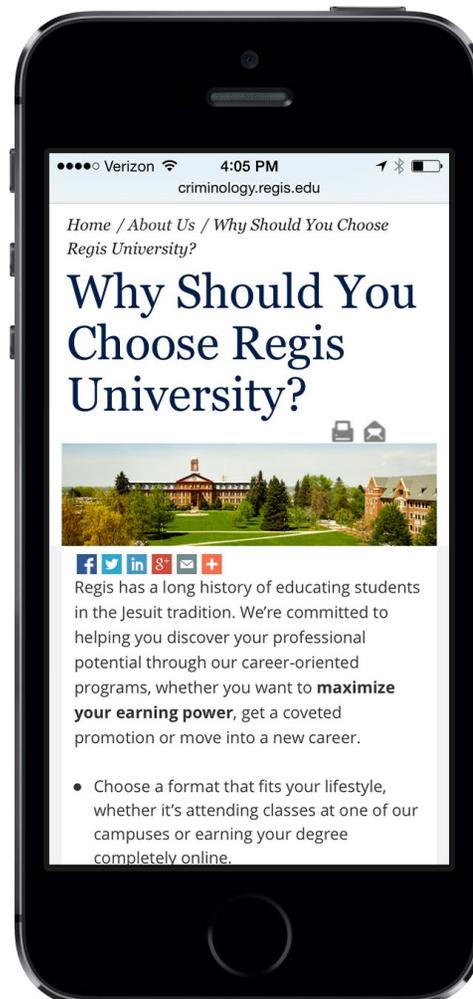
We approached this with a published plan, an iron clad schedule and great collaboration tools. Our team developed a two-phased optimization plan for each site. The first phase priority was to achieve Google's mobile-friendly tag; the second phase was to optimize user experience as best we could within the timeframe of the project. Daily milestones were published with complete transparency between our dev team and our client.

## **Mobile Tipping Point**

In May of 2015 Google confirmed more searches in the U.S. were conducted on a mobile device than on a computer.



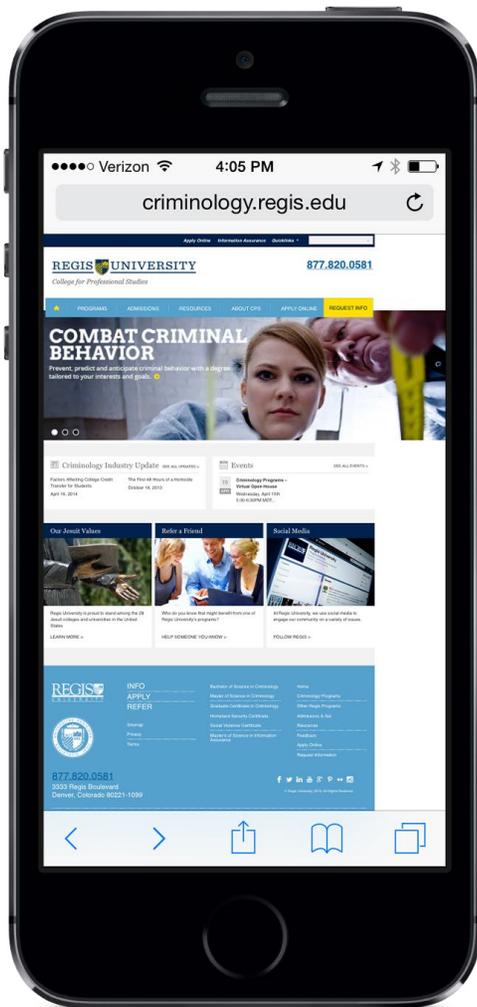
Before  
Responsive Design



After  
Responsive Design

## Phase One Priority Accomplishments:

- Added the proper viewport meta tag
- Resized elements on mobile to eliminate “pinch and zoom”
- Eliminated all horizontal scrolling
- Designed buttons optimized for the fingertip
- Adjusted text to be large enough to be legible on mobile devices



Before Responsive Design



After Responsive Design

## Phase Two Mobile Optimization:

- Implemented responsive image techniques to load different crops and sizes for different screen sizes (desktop, phone, tablet)
- Replaced static carousel images with CMS-editable HTML and CSS for easier updates and content management in the future
- Reformatted desktop style navigation with hamburger icon navigation

## Google Is Spot On With Web Standards.

In fact, you can test your website to see if it has the mobile-friendly tag.

Mobile-Friendly Test

http://onlinetaxllm.bu.edu/ ANALYZE

**Awesome! This page is mobile-friendly.**

**How Googlebot sees this page**  
This page uses 3 resources which are blocked by robots.txt.  
Does this screenshot look incorrect? [Learn how to let Googlebot view the page correctly.](#)  
[Show resources](#)

**Learn more about mobile-friendly pages**  
If you're interested in learning more about mobile sites, check out our [Webmaster's Mobile Guide](#) or the [Principles of Site Design](#) on Web Fundamentals.

**Do you use Google Webmaster Tools?**  
See how many of your pages are mobile-friendly by signing into your [Webmaster Tools](#) account.

**Give feedback**  
Encountered an issue with the test? Comments or questions about the results? Post to our [discussion group](#).



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## Is Your Website Mobile-Friendly?

**Take The Test**

## The Final Week

As the deadline approached, we wondered how the April 21st algorithm launch was going to roll out. Was there a specific hour that sites would be indexed? Was there a cut-off time? Did we have the whole day? As the days flew by, we noticed Google taking longer to return results from their “mobile-friendly test.” It became apparent that not even Google would be able to re-index every request for mobile results in 24 hours.

## The Finish Line

As we completed the last site on April 21, 2015 Google announced the algorithm would roll out over time, most likely taking a week to complete, and even then the changes would be ongoing. But all 23 sites were ready, mobile-friendly tags on all, with no drop in search results and much improved user experience.

## Need To Make Your Digital Properties Mobile-Friendly?

Whether you have an existing site that needs to be converted for mobile user experience or you need an entirely site, we provide efficient, effective web development solutions.



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