# SeniorNet LI's New Website

On October 7, 2015 the SeniorNet LI website changed from working best on desktop computers to a *responsive web design* that works well for all computing devices with their varying sizes and configurations.

You may have heard of websites becoming mobile friendly to provide a good web viewing experience when using small mobile devices.  Frankly, just being mobile friendly isn't friendly enough in today's world.  We need to provide a good web viewing experience when using anything from small mobile devices to large desktop computers: a wide range of devices.  For this we need a responsive web design.

So what does a responsive web design mean from a practical point of view?  Well, depending on web browser settings and the size and shape of the device the website is being viewed on, be it on a mobile phone, a desktop or anything in between, the content of the web pages are automatically rearranged and resized to look their best

Why do we want our website to have a responsive web design?  We've lived with the old website design since 2010.  It was good enough for all those years, so why isn't it good enough now?  The answer is, it's all the pinching, scrolling, and zooming we would have to do to view our old website on a small mobile device.  So here's where we get to the three second rule, which, due to changing user expectations, is quickly becoming a two second rule. Well over half of the emails we send out are viewed on mobile devices and many result in click-throughs to our website.  It goes like this: If visitors arrive on a website and find that the website takes more than three seconds to load, a common problem with the slower access speeds of mobile phones on old websites, they'll get frustrated and leave.  In addition, if visitors view a web page and find that it is not friendly to their device, meaning the web page doesn't fit on their screen, or text and images are too small to view comfortably they're going to get frustrated and leave.  And who could blame them.

Google is the world's most popular search engine, which gives us another reason for using a responsive web design.  It's to satisfy Google's website ranking algorithm, which, since April of 2015, has ranked websites on how mobile friendly they are.  The more mobile friendly they are the higher the websites rank when people do a Google search for them.  This was the incentive many websites needed to become mobile friendly by converting their websites to a responsive web design.  They are helping improve the web for everyone while getting more visitors to their websites.  Sadly more websites still need to make the change to a responsive web design or come to terms with losing visitors who are using mobile phones and other small devices.

Here are some interesting points that may help you to get a feel for this subject:

**Mobile usage is exploding.**  *Mobile media time now exceeds 51% as compared to desktop / laptop and other connected devices.  SeniorNet LI cannot afford to lose any of these visitors to our website.*

**A positive user experience is a must.**  *According to Google's* Think Insights *on mobile, if users land on a mobile website and are frustrated or don't see what they are looking for, there's a 61% chance they will*

*leave immediately and go to another website (most likely the next one in their search results: a competitor's).  Also if they have a positive experience with a mobile website, a user is 67% more likely to buy a product or use a service.*

***A speedy responsive website is key.***  *Google* PageSpeed Developers *recommend that the entire page loads in under 2 seconds.  This is typically not possible while using a mobile device to load an old fashioned website that was designed for a desktop or a poorly designed one whose content is too large.  When users have to wait too long for a page to load, there's an extremely high chance they will leave your site.*

***What does our responsive web design mean for you?***  *When you view SeniorNetLI.org on your tablet or smartphone the text is readable, not teeny-tiny, and our web pages load more quickly.*

Our website's development and new content has been and continues to be directed towards driving traffic to our website, capturing viewer interest and ultimately increasing student enrollment in classes.  So visit our website at [SeniorNetLI.org](SeniorNetLI.org).  Browse its new pages and content to get accustomed to its more modern look and feel.  If you've been a regular user of the Internet, our website should feel right, no matter what device you're using.  If you're a newbie, it's a great place to start.  While you're there, make it your web browser's home page.  Every time our website is opened in a web browser it boosts our web activity as seen by Google Analytics and hence our website's ranking in Google search results.  If you're one of our teachers, please use our website when demonstrating the Internet in your classes.  It's free advertising for SeniorNet LI.

As you've seen, in 2015 our website took a big step forward.  It was redesigned to attract and capture the attention of seniors who are already up on technology, but want to learn more.  Also family members who are seeking a place and means for their parents and grandparents to learn about new technology will find our website to be a source of information and guidance about enrolling in courses and attending seminars.  In 2016, with a responsive web design to build on and the will to make it happen, our website can continue growing and doing more to promote SeniorNet LI online.

Sandie Baron
Your SeniorNet LI Webmaster