

Google Core Web Vitals

0 poor URLs 0 URLs need improvement 303 good URLs

375

Speed Insights

Driving Mobile Dominance

The 2026 Automotive Mobile PageSpeed Study

8/9/23



Core Web Vitals Assessment: Passed

After analyzing 250,000 local searches across 250 U.S. markets, the data is clear: Your mobile website speed directly impacts your dealership's bottom line.

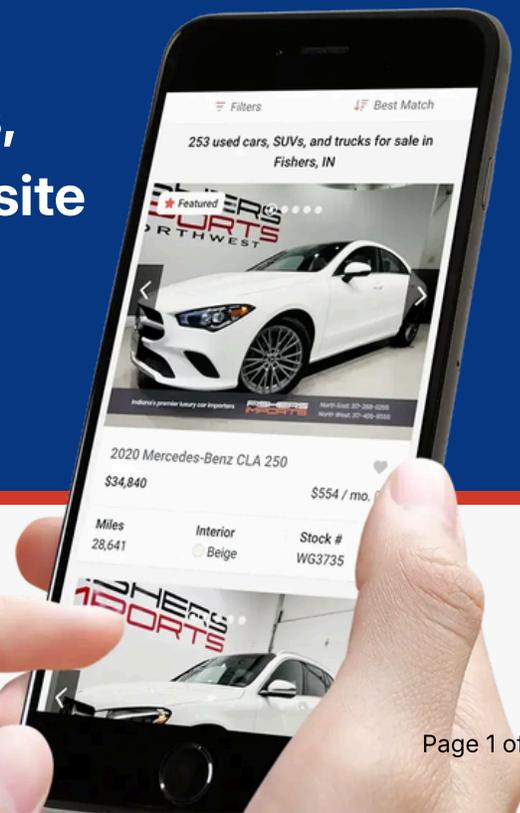


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About the Author



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Douglas Karr is a globally recognized search engine optimization strategist and marketing technology pioneer. As the Principal SEO at Overfuel, he leads high-impact digital transformations, leveraging decades of technical expertise to help brands dominate search landscapes and drive measurable growth.

Beyond his leadership at Overfuel, Douglas is the founder and publisher of Martech Zone and the author of *Corporate Blogging for Dummies*. His influence as an author and consultant extends across international borders, having served as a strategic advisor to some of the world's most iconic brands, including GoDaddy, Salesforce, Dell, and Angi.

A frequent keynote speaker and industry veteran, Douglas is renowned for his ability to translate complex search algorithms into actionable business intelligence. His work focuses on the intersection of technical SEO, content authority, and conversion optimization, ensuring that organizations don't just rank—they lead.

The Digital Front Door:

The Strategic Imperative of **Mobile Performance**

In 2026, the traditional automotive "front door" of glass and steel has been decisively superseded by the mobile screen. While the physical handshake remains the final step in the transaction, the journey to the showroom is now dictated by digital performance. Mobile speed is no longer a technical metric relegated to IT departments; it is the primary filter of consumer intent. For the modern dealership, mobile page performance is the most critical lever for business growth, market share acquisition, and long-term dominance.

The modern automotive buyer's journey is defined by a thumb-driven discovery phase. This high-funnel browsing determines the initial consideration set. While research may eventually migrate to a desktop for deeper analysis, the mobile experience acts as the ultimate gatekeeper for all subsequent Vehicle Detail Page (VDP) interactions. Any friction at this stage results in immediate "mobile invisibility," which manifests across three critical strategic dimensions.



The Three GAPS



VISIBILITY

Dealers aren't visible to car buyers during the critical discovery phase.



VOLUME

Dealers aren't visible in the highest volume searches of car buyers.



VALUE

Dealers are failing to engage the most qualified, ready-to-buy customers.

The transition from a generic search to a high-intent VDP interaction is incredibly fragile. When mobile latency occurs, that connection is severed, and the consumer pivots to a competitor. This behavior establishes a direct, unyielding correlation between technical speed and search engine visibility.

The Physics of Ranking:

Correlating Mobile Speed with Organic Visibility

There is a definitive, strong statistical relationship between technical performance and search engine placement. In the current automotive landscape, the "speed gap" is a decisive factor in ranking hierarchy. High-performing sites do not merely offer a better user experience; they dominate the top of the Search Engine Results Page (SERP) with mathematical regularity.

Score Composition by Rank Position

This stacked bar chart shows how PageSpeed score tiers distribute across each organic rank position. By default only the Good tier is shown to highlight how top-scoring pages concentrate at higher rank positions. Use the checkboxes below the chart to toggle Needs Improvement and Poor tiers on for a complete view of the composition at each position.



Good-scoring URLs make up 14.4% of results at #1 vs 10.7% at #10. Correlation between rank and Good-tier share: $r = -0.922$ (very strong) — higher-ranked positions have a greater share of Good-scoring URLs.

- **Categorical Statistical Correlation:** The Pearson correlation between rank position and the share of "Good" scores is $r = -0.932$.
- **Ranking Variance Mastery:** The r^2 value of 0.868 signifies that nearly 87% of the variance in ranking positions is explained by mobile performance metrics.
- **The 1.4x Probability Factor:** URLs in the #1 organic spot are 1.4x more likely to possess a "Good" PageSpeed score (90+) compared to those in position #10.

Analysis from the Overfuel Dealer Search Intelligence platform confirms that technical performance is the single most influential variable under a dealership's direct control. For dealership principals, the tipping point represents a clear path to market arbitrage. Moving a site from the *Poor* or *Needs Improvement* tiers into the "Good" (90+) tier delivers an immediate, quantifiable ranking advantage.

Key Finding:

The Performance Rank Jump: Moving a site from "Needs Improvement" (weighted average rank 5.75) to "Good" (weighted average rank 4.90) results in a 0.85 rank position improvement. In the hyper-competitive top-10 landscape, this jump represents a significant strategic win in visibility.

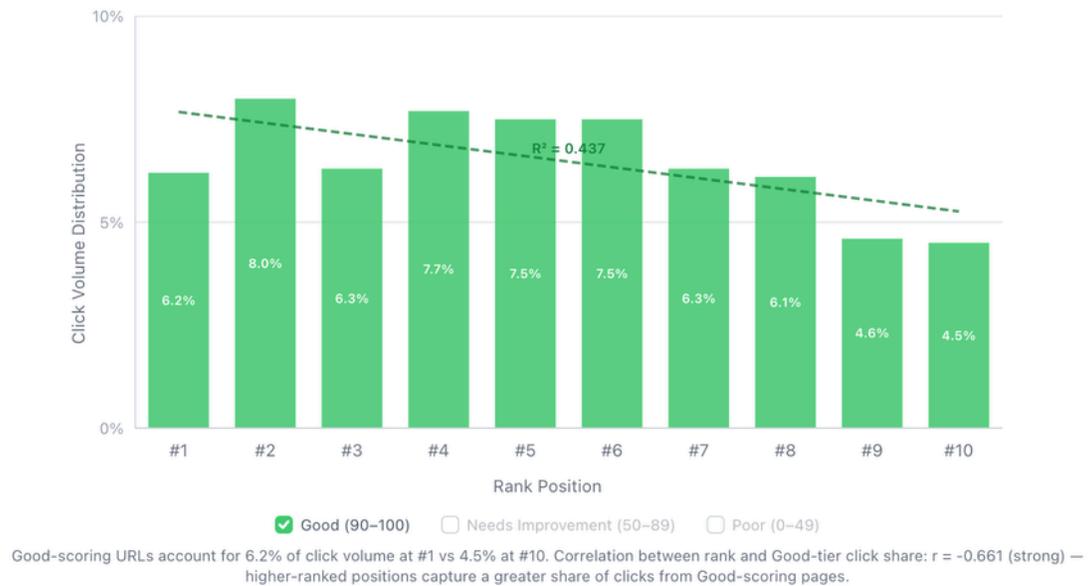
Amplifying Click Volume:

How **Mobile Speed** Drives **Traffic Dominance**

Ranking at the top of Google is only the first step; the true impact of mobile page speed is measured in the sheer volume of traffic it unlocks. In the automotive search landscape, traffic distribution follows a "winner-takes-all" dynamic. Higher-ranked pages capture a disproportionate share of click volume, shifting the focus from simple visibility to total market share.

Click Volume Distribution by PageSpeed Score

This chart shows how estimated organic click volume distributes across PageSpeed score tiers at each rank position. Estimated clicks are derived from national search volume proportioned to each location's metro population, then adjusted by position-specific CTR, device type (mobile loss), and AI Overview presence. By default only the Good tier is shown — toggle the other tiers to see the full composition.



The data reveals a steep drop-off in shopper visibility as you move down the search engine results page. Position #1 alone receives more clicks than positions #3 through #10 combined, ultimately capturing roughly 22 times the traffic of position #10. Because higher-ranked positions capture a significantly greater share of clicks from high-performing pages, even a small ranking improvement driven by better page speed translates into substantially more traffic.

Key Finding:

Fast mobile speeds drive higher rankings, which exponentially amplify your click volume. The #1 spot captures 22x the clicks of the #10 spot, making technical speed a direct driver of your dealership's total web traffic.

The Revenue Engine:

Concentrating Economic Value at the Top of Search

Not all clicks are created equal. The traffic generated at the very top of the search engine results page carries significantly greater economic value due to the highly competitive nature of high-position keywords. By translating click volume into dollar value—representing the equivalent paid search spend required to acquire the same traffic—we can see exactly how technical performance impacts a dealership's bottom line.

Click Value Distribution by PageSpeed Score

This chart translates click volume into dollar value by multiplying estimated clicks by each keyword's cost-per-click (CPC). It reveals which PageSpeed score tier captures the most economic value at each rank position — showing the potential return from improving page performance for high-value keywords.



Good-scoring URLs account for 8.0% of click value at #1 vs 5.3% at #10. Correlation between rank and Good-tier value share: $r = -0.778$ (very strong) — higher-ranked positions capture a greater share of click value from Good-scoring pages.

Better PageSpeed scores strongly correlate with capturing this high-value traffic. Pages that load fast and rank high don't just get more eyes; they attract the most qualified buyers. Good-scoring URLs hold the highest weighted average rank position (4.90) compared to lower-scoring tiers, ensuring that technical speed investments yield the highest possible return by capturing traffic you would otherwise have to pay a premium for in paid search.

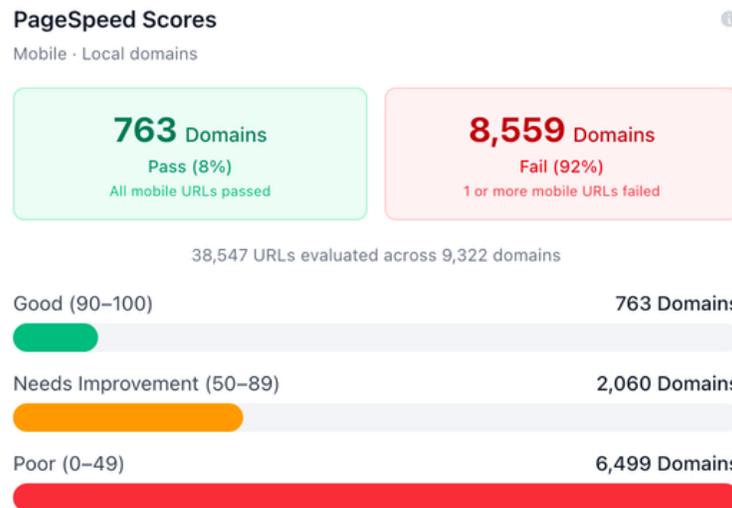
Key Finding:

Improving mobile speed to capture top search positions concentrates your dealership's share of high-value traffic, directly increasing the economic value and profitability of your organic search presence.

Seizing the Speed Gap:

The Opportunity and ROI of Performance

The automotive search landscape is currently flooded with mobile pages that deliver a frustrating user experience. An astonishing **92% of local dealership domains fail** to meet Google's basic mobile performance requirements, with nearly 70% operating entirely in the "Poor" tier. For the forward-thinking dealer, this widespread technical friction represents an incredible, untapped opportunity. Because passing scores are so rare, optimizing your mobile speed provides an immediate competitive advantage, allowing you to dominate local search rankings, traffic volume, and economic value while the rest of the market lags behind.



Capitalizing on this speed gap unlocks exponential returns as you climb the search results. Moving from the bottom of page one to the top triggers a massive volume multiplier—position #1 alone captures roughly 22 times the clicks of position #10, and more traffic than positions #3 through #10 combined. Beyond sheer volume, this climb creates a significant value multiplier. Top-ranking positions command the most competitive, intent-driven keywords, concentrating your share of the highest CPC traffic. By simply outperforming the slow-loading majority, you secure the most lucrative, ready-to-buy shoppers at a fraction of the equivalent paid search cost.

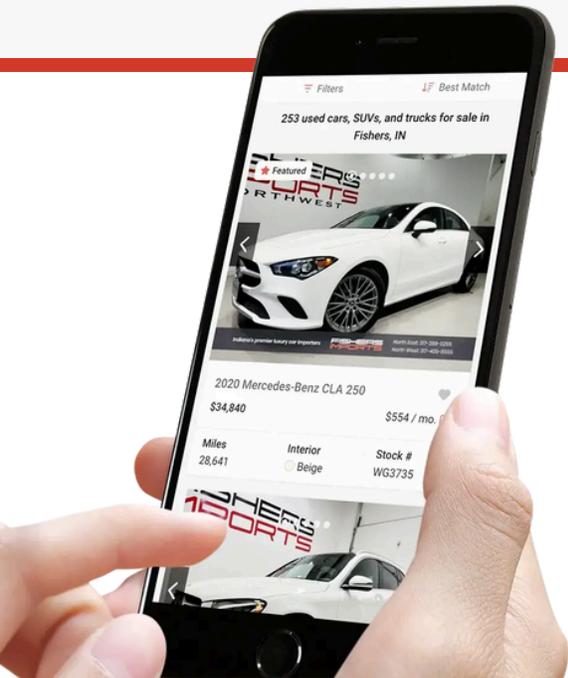
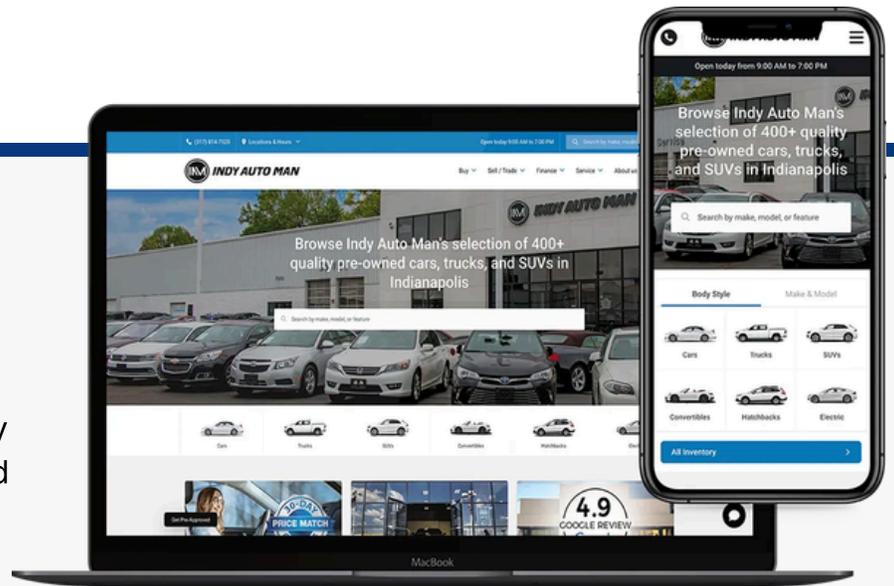
Key Finding:

With 92% of local domains burdened by poor mobile speeds, achieving technical excellence immediately differentiates your dealership. This speed advantage unlocks exponential volume and value multipliers, turning technical performance into your strongest lever for market dominance.



The fastest, most reliable websites for dealerships

Power your online showroom with automotive's first no-code website platform with unmatched speed, natively integrated digital retailing, and advanced visitor-level analytics.



Fuel more sales with a modern, mobile-first design

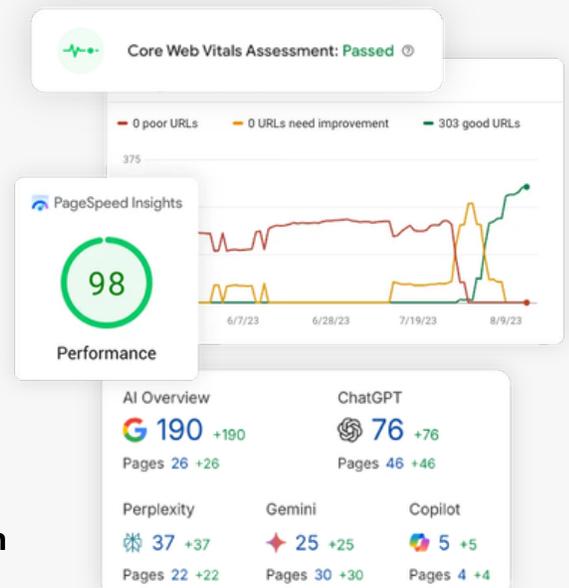
Consumers typically visit only 1-2 dealerships before making a car purchase. That's because they conduct most of their research online and only visit the dealership they intend to buy from. Over 70% of that online research is done on a mobile device.

A mobile-first website is critical to getting them to your showroom. Better mobile shopping experience, better marketing ROI.

Outrank competition with technical SEO, AI Platforms, and AI Overviews (AIO) optimization

Most website vendors talk a big game about SEO, but 79% of dealer sites actually fail Google's speed standards. Even more don't present structured data for optimal AI visibility. These technical gaps force dealers to waste thousands on expensive SEO firms and outdated content just to keep up.

Overfuel's platform and in-house expertise have been shown to increase organic traffic by upwards of 300%.



Data Collection Methodology:

The following describes the end-to-end data pipeline, collection parameters, and analytical framework used to produce this report. It is provided for transparency and reproducibility.

Search Query Universe

The 50 highest-volume, intent-driven search phrases for the Auto Dealerships market segment were selected for analysis. Each search phrase is classified by Search Type (new-vehicle or used-vehicle), Keyword Type (generic, make-specific, vehicle-type, or commercial), and Vehicle Segment. This taxonomy enables granular filtering to isolate performance patterns within specific query categories.

Geographic Sampling

Each search query was executed across 250 geographic locations, selected from the top U.S. markets by population. This geographic breadth ensures results are not biased toward a single regional market and reflects the localized nature of Google search rankings.

SERP Data Collection

To ensure unbiased data integrity, searches were conducted by generating unique, stateless requests that utilize encoded location parameters and clean proxy rotations, effectively bypassing the distortions of user search history, cached cookies, and session biases to capture a clean version of the local results. Structured data was extracted from each SERP including organic listings, local map pack entries, paid advertisements, People Also Ask boxes, and Knowledge Graph panels. Data was collected for the batch period identified as February 2026. Only organic (non-paid) results in positions 1–10 are included in the PageSpeed analysis.

PageSpeed Score Acquisition

Each unique URL discovered in organic SERP results was submitted to the Google PageSpeed Insights API (Lighthouse v11+). Scores were collected for both mobile (simulated Moto G Power on a throttled 4G connection) and desktop (simulated desktop environment with no network throttling) device profiles. Scores range from 0 to 100 and are classified per Google's thresholds: Good (90–100), Needs Improvement (50–89), and Poor (0–49). In "All" device mode, each URL uses the worst score between its mobile and desktop result, reflecting the minimum performance a visitor would experience. Scores are rolled up to the domain level: a domain passes only if every URL on that domain scores 90 or above. If any single URL fails, the entire domain is marked as failing.

Domain Classification

Domains were classified into Local and National categories. Local domains are those not identified as national or corporate entities — they may operate one or multiple locations but are regional in scope. National domains represent large-scale corporate or franchise entities with a nationwide presence. This classification enables separate analysis of performance characteristics, as national organizations often differ significantly in technical infrastructure and page performance.

Analytical Framework

Scores are aggregated by organic rank position (1–10) and evaluated using three complementary methods: (a) tier distribution — the percentage of URLs at each position falling into Good, Needs Improvement, and Poor categories; (b) central tendency — mean and median scores per position; and (c) Pearson correlation between rank position and the proportion of Good scores. The primary metric is % Good — the proportion of URLs at each position scoring 90 or above. This tail metric reveals differentiation that averages and medians obscure, since roughly 65% of all URLs score Poor regardless of rank. Statistical significance is evaluated at $p < 0.05$ with $df = A$ 95% confidence interval for r is computed via Fisher's z -transformation to convey the margin of error.

Click Volume & Value Estimation

Each organic result is assigned an estimated click volume and estimated click value to quantify the economic impact of ranking position. National monthly search volume for each keyword is proportioned to the local market using the ratio of metro population to U.S. adult population. The localized volume is then multiplied by a position-specific click-through rate (CTR) derived from the [First Page Sage 2026 desktop CTR study](#), with adjustments for two factors: (a) Mobile loss — mobile searches yield lower CTR at every position; mobile loss percentages are derived from the [seoClarity 2025 mobile vs. desktop CTR study](#) and applied when the SERP was collected on a mobile device; (b) AI Overview (AIO) presence — when an AI Overview appears on the SERP, CTR is reduced by position-specific percentages derived from the [Ahrefs AIO impact study](#), reflecting the click absorption effect of generative AI results. Click value is computed as estimated clicks multiplied by the keyword's cost-per-click (CPC), representing the equivalent paid search spend required to acquire the same traffic. CTR tables, mobile loss percentages, and AIO impact factors are all configurable in the SERP CTR Settings page.

Limitations & Caveats

- PageSpeed Insights scores are lab-based (synthetic Lighthouse audits), not field data. Real-user performance may vary.
- Scores can fluctuate between individual runs due to server load, CDN variability, and third-party script behavior. However, the scale of this analysis — 92,029 scored organic results across 50 search phrases and 250 geographic locations — provides sufficient statistical volume to smooth out per-URL noise and surface reliable aggregate trends.
- Click volume and value estimates are modeled from national search volume, population ratios, and industry CTR studies — they represent directional magnitude, not exact traffic counts. Actual clicks depend on SERP features, snippet quality, brand recognition, and user behavior.
- The analysis is limited to the configured search universe and geographic sample; findings may not generalize to other verticals or markets.

Data collected and analyzed by the Overfuel Dealer Search Intelligence platform. Batch period: February 2026. Device mode: Mobile only.