

Why Homepage Carousels Are Bad for Users

What is a carousel?

A carousel (also called a slider or banner rotator) is that rotating image section at the top of many websites. It automatically cycles through different images, messages, or promotions every few seconds.

The Problems

People Don't See Them

Banner blindness is real - visitors automatically ignore anything that looks like an advertisement. Since carousels often look like ads, people's brains filter them out completely. Studies show that only 1% of visitors click on carousel slides, and 84% of those clicks are on the first slide.

They Move Too Fast or Too Slow

Carousels either change slides before people finish reading (frustrating) or move so slowly that impatient visitors leave before seeing other content. There's no "perfect" timing that works for everyone.

They're Confusing

When content suddenly changes while someone is trying to read it, it breaks their concentration. It's like trying to read a book while someone keeps flipping the pages. The constant movement makes it hard to focus on your actual message.

They Hurt Performance

Carousels require loading multiple large images at once, making your website slower. Slow websites lose visitors - 40% of people abandon a site that takes more than 3 seconds to load.

They're Terrible on Mobile

On phones, carousels are especially problematic. The tiny navigation dots are hard to tap, swiping can be unreliable, and auto-rotation often happens while people are still reading.

They Hide Important Information

If something is important enough to put on your homepage, why hide it behind other slides? The most crucial information should be visible immediately, not buried in slide 3 of 5.

What Users Actually Want

Clarity over cleverness. Visitors come to your website with a goal. They want to quickly understand what you offer and find what they need. A simple, clear message works better than a fancy rotating showcase.

Control over automation. People want to browse at their own pace, not have content forced on them by a timer.

Better Alternatives

- **Static hero image** with your most important message
- **Simple headline and subheader** explaining what you do
- **Clear call-to-action buttons** for key user actions
- **Grid layout** showing multiple offerings at once
- **Tabbed content** that users can control themselves

The Bottom Line

Carousels might look impressive to company executives, but they fail real users. They reduce engagement, hurt usability, and often hide your most important content. Your website will perform better with a simple, focused message that visitors can actually see and understand.

Remember: Good web design isn't about looking fancy - it's about helping people accomplish their goals quickly and easily.