Guide mobile users accurately
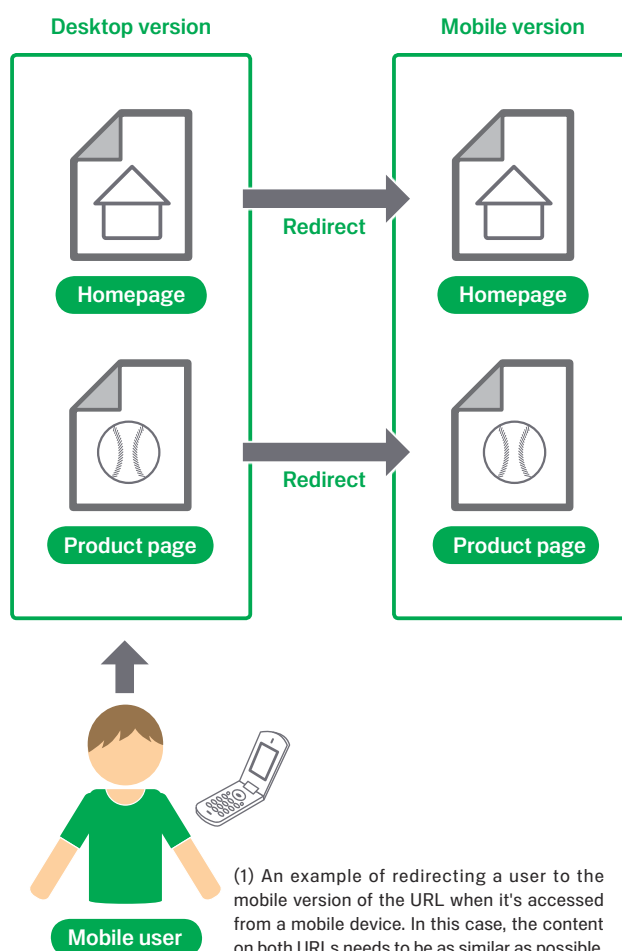
Running desktop and mobile versions of your site

One of the most common problems for webmasters who run both mobile and desktop versions of a site is that the mobile version of the site appears for users on a desktop computer, or that the desktop version of the site appears when someone accesses it on a mobile device. In dealing with this scenario, here are two viable options:

Redirect mobile users to the correct version

When a mobile user or crawler (like Googlebot-Mobile) accesses the desktop version of a URL, you can redirect them to the corresponding mobile version of the same page. **Google notices the relationship between the two versions of the URL and displays the standard version for searches from desktops and the mobile version for mobile searches**.

If you redirect users, please make sure that the content on the corresponding mobile/desktop URL matches as closely as possible (1). For example, if you run a shopping site and there's an access from a mobile phone to a desktop-version URL, **make sure that the user is redirected to the mobile version of the page for the same product, and not to the homepage of the mobile version of the site**. We occasionally find sites using this kind of redirect in an attempt to boost their search rankings, but this practice only results in a negative user experience, and so should be avoided at all costs.

On the other hand, when there's an access to a mobile-version URL from a desktop browser or by our web crawler, Googlebot, it's not necessary to redirect them to the desktop-version. For instance, Google doesn't automatically redirect desktop users from their mobile site to their desktop site; instead they include a link on the mobile-version page to the desktop version. These links are especially helpful when a mobile site doesn't provide the full functionality of the desktop version—users can easily navigate to the desktop-version if they prefer.

Desktop version   **Mobile version**

Homepage → Redirect → Homepage

Product page → Redirect → Product page

Mobile user

(1) An example of redirecting a user to the mobile version of the URL when it's accessed from a mobile device. In this case, the content on both URLs needs to be as similar as possible.

Glossary

Redirect
Being automatically transported from one specified web page to another specified web page when browsing a website.