



Google 'grenade' could hurt SME online trading

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Irish SMEs will be hit hardest by a change in how Google displays search results as they continue to lag way behind in their online and mobile presence.

The search engine giant has brought into effect changes to its algorithm that sees businesses whose sites are not deemed as mobile-friendly relegated further down in its search results.

Google's algorithms, which rely on more than 200 unique clues as to what you are looking for, are the computer processes and formulae that take your questions and turn them into answers.

The move, which came into effect yesterday, is designed to move in line with the ever-increasing number of mobile and tablet users, according to Google, as well as the increased competition its facing.

Digital Marketing Institute founder and director, **Ian Dodson**, says small and medium sized enterprises here will be hardest hit as the "grenade sitting under us" explodes and businesses realise the effect the changes could have on them.

"SMEs will be punished most and quickest by these changes. Most small businesses think as the internet as an IT function, it's not. They need to move their online focus to the marketing and customer service side of their business," he said.

Consumers have moved way ahead of businesses in terms of e-commerce and SMEs are now being given a very clear warning from their customers and business groups, he added.

A range of training opportunities are available at little cost from the likes of the Small Business Association, however, Mr Dodson said.

A guide to mobile-friendly sites is available at <https://developers.google.com>, including a test which shows whether or not your website makes the cut.