

POOL SERVICE WEBSITE SPEED CENSUS

ONLY 1 IN 25 POOL SERVICE WEBSITES ON GOOGLE MAPS IN FOUR FLORIDA METROS SHOWS ITS MAIN CONTENT WITHIN 2.5 SECONDS IN A PHONE TEST

A Lighthouse lab test of 126 independent pool service websites listed on Google Maps in four Florida metros, on a simulated mid-range phone and mobile network, median of three runs, Oct 30, 2026.

THE FINDING

PHOTO WEIGHT PREDICTS THE PHONE-TEST LOAD TIME ABOUT TWICE AS WELL AS THE PLATFORM: 28% OF THE SPREAD VS 14%.

110 Florida pool service websites from Google Maps with platform data, Lighthouse mobile lab test, Oct 30, 2026; rank-based share of variance in LCP. Image weight leads in 95% of 2,000 resamples; the interval for the difference (−2 to +29 points) touches zero, so this is a strong tendency, not a settled ranking.

CONTENTS

01 Key findings 3

02 Method: Google’s own lab test, run three times per site 4

03 Sample and coverage 4

04 Layout and code mostly pass; the main picture is late 5

05 Photo weight tracks the wait more closely than the platform does 6

06 Every platform group misses the line on its typical site 8

07 Where the weight comes from, and what Lighthouse flags first 9

08 Fast sites are not better set up to get the call 11

09 Limitations 12

10 What an owner can do with this 13

11 Sources 14

12 About this research 15

01 KEY FINDINGS

8.1 s	4%	82%	2.6 MB
median time until the main content shows	meet Google's 2.5 s "good" line	pass both layout-shift and blocking-time checks	median page weight

1 **5 of 126 sites show their main content within 2.5 seconds.**

On a simulated mid-range phone, the median site needs 8.1 s before its largest element (usually the top photo) appears; 83% take longer than 4 seconds, Google's "poor" line, and 40% longer than 10 seconds. Share meeting 2.5 s: 4% (95% CI 2%–9%).

2 **Load time is the one test most sites fail.**

87% pass the layout-shift check and 91% the blocking-time check (our lab stand-in for responsiveness). 79% of sites fail on load time alone.

3 **Photo weight predicts the wait about twice as well as the platform.**

Sites in the lightest quarter for image weight show their main content in a median 5.2 s; the heaviest quarter in 15.1 s. Even the lightest quarter misses 2.5 s on its typical site (3 of 32 make it), so lighter photos alone rarely get there. Image weight accounts for 28% of the spread in load time, the platform for 14% (n = 110). Within WordPress alone, sites with images in modern formats load in 6.1 s vs 13.0 s.

4 **Every platform group misses the line on its median site.**

Median load time runs from 3.5 s (Custom code (Vercel), n = 8) to 11.4 s (Other platforms, n = 22). Wix pages carry the most JavaScript (1.5 MB median); GoDaddy builder pages are the lightest (1.0 MB) and still take 6.1 s.

5 **Fast sites are not better set up to get the call.**

Between load time and the conversion-readiness score from Report No. 01 (its features, without its speed pillar) we find no detectable link: Spearman ρ = 0.03 (95% CI -0.16 to 0.21, n = 110). Speed and the first screen are two separate jobs.

6 **Sites found outside Google Maps do better, but most still miss.**

Of 75 websites found through Florida's state registries, 12 (16%, 95% CI 9%–26%) meet 2.5 s, against 5 of 126 (4%) in the Maps sample (Fisher exact p = 0.007). The registry group is statewide and includes licensed pool builders, so it is a check on the Maps sample rather than a like-for-like comparison.

02 METHOD: GOOGLE'S OWN LAB TEST, RUN THREE TIMES PER SITE

We ran **Lighthouse**, the open-source test behind Google's PageSpeed Insights, on the homepage of every site in the frame. Each site was tested three times in a fresh browser; we report the median run for the performance score and the median of each metric across runs. The settings are the Lighthouse mobile defaults, which PageSpeed Insights also uses [5]: a simulated mid-range Android phone, a slow 4G-class connection and a four-times slower processor. Because the slowdown is simulated rather than imposed, results are comparable across sites and repeatable, but they are **lab data**, not the experience of real visitors.

SETTING	VALUE
Tool	Lighthouse 12.8.2 (Node), mobile form factor, performance + accessibility + best practices + SEO
Browser	Chrome for Testing 153.0.8010.12, headless
Throttling	Simulated: 150 ms round trip, ≈1.6 Mbps down / 750 Kbps up, 4× CPU slowdown
Screen	412 × 823 CSS px, device scale 1.75 (Lighthouse default phone)
Runs	3 per site, median; 126 of 126 measured sites had all three runs succeed
When, where	Oct 30, 2026, between 20:25 and 22:11 UTC, from the Netherlands

We use Google's published thresholds. **LCP** (Largest Contentful Paint) is when the biggest thing on the first screen appears; "good" is 2.5 seconds or less, "poor" more than 4 seconds [1][2]. **CLS** measures how much the page jumps while it loads; good is 0.1 or less [1]. **INP**, Google's responsiveness metric, can only be measured with real visitors tapping the page, so it is **not measured here** [1]. In its place we report **TBT** (Total Blocking Time), the lab metric Google calls a reasonable proxy for INP but not a substitute; good is under 200 ms [3][4]. We do not lean on server response time (TTFB): measured from Europe it is inflated for US-hosted sites.

Platform comes from the Report No. 01 crawl (page signatures); groups under eight sites are pooled. 16 measured sites whose homepage the crawl did not load (robots.txt rules, blocks, errors) have no platform; they count in every Lighthouse figure but are left out of the platform comparison, which uses the other 110. **Which factor explains more** = share of variance in ranked LCP per factor on those 110 sites (rank-based R^2), with 2,000 bootstrap resamples. **Conversion link** uses Report No. 01's index *without* its "Mobile & speed" pillar (which contains LCP, TBT and CLS): reach, trust, answers and price, weights 25/20/20/15.

03 SAMPLE AND COVERAGE

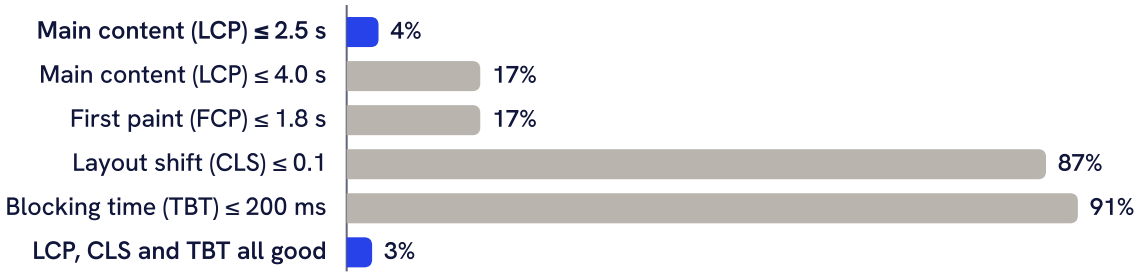
The frame is the same as in Report No. 01: 167 independent pool service businesses with their own website, listed on Google Maps in the Tampa Bay, Orlando, Fort Lauderdale and Fort Myers areas (collected Oct 27, 2026). National chains, franchises and directories are excluded. We tested the web address exactly as it appears in the listing. 126 sites (75%) produced a valid result in all three runs; the other 41 failed every run.

OUTCOME (FRAME: 167 SITES)	SITES	SHARE
Measured (3 of 3 runs)	126	75%
Refused our test (HTTP 403 or bot wall)	18	11%
Address does not resolve, 404 or server error	16	10%
Security certificate invalid or expired	3	2%
Loaded, but nothing painted in the test	4	2%

The 18 refusals are most likely firewalls that block visitors from outside the US; a Florida homeowner would probably see these sites, so they are missing from our figures, not broken. The 19 sites that do not resolve, return an error or show a certificate warning (11% of the frame) would fail for anyone. The frame leans toward Tampa Bay (79 of 126 measured sites) because of how the listings were collected; Orlando 24, Fort Lauderdale 16, Fort Myers 7. A second frame of sites found through state registries is shown for comparison in section 04.

04 LAYOUT AND CODE MOSTLY PASS; THE MAIN PICTURE IS LATE

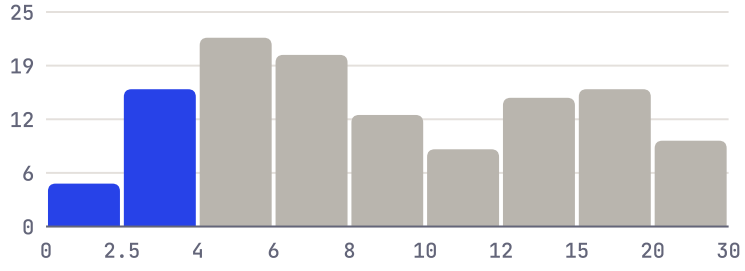
Most sites pass the layout and blocking checks; almost none show their main content in time



Share of 126 sites meeting each lab threshold. LCP = largest element on the first screen; FCP = first anything on screen; TBT = lab stand-in for responsiveness.

Source: Ruberio Lighthouse census, Oct 30, 2026; thresholds web.dev [1][2][4].

83% of sites take longer than 4 seconds



Number of sites by time until the main content appears (median of 3 runs); blue = within 4 s. Values above 30 s are counted in the last bar.

Source: Ruberio Lighthouse census.

The first thing on screen arrives in a median 3.1 s; the main content follows a median 4.6 s later. For that stretch a visitor looks at a page that has started but has not shown what it is about.

The spread is wide: the middle half of sites lands between 4.8 s and 13.8 s. The Lighthouse performance score, a 0–100 summary of five lab metrics, has a median of 68; 11 sites reach the green band of 90 or more.

METRIC (MEDIAN OF 3 RUNS)	25TH PCT.	MEDIAN	75TH PCT.	MEDIAN, 95% CI
Main content appears (LCP)	4.8 s	8.1 s	13.8 s	7.0–9.7 s
First paint (FCP)	2.0 s	3.1 s	4.0 s	2.7–3.3 s
Blocking time (TBT, INP proxy)	0 ms	34 ms	91 ms	12–43 ms
Layout shift (CLS)	0.000	0.001	0.029	0.000–0.003
Page weight	1.3 MB	2.6 MB	4.7 MB	2.1–3.1 MB
Performance score (0–100)	60	68	76	64–69

A check from outside Google Maps

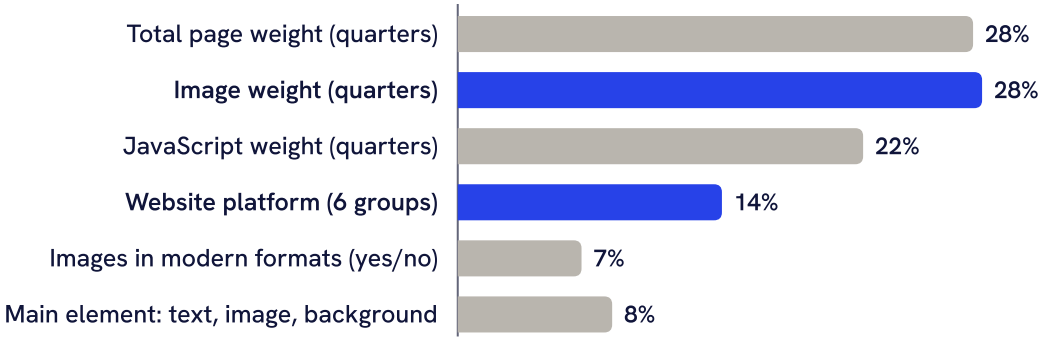
LAB RESULT	GOOGLE MAPS FRAME (N = 126)	REGISTRY FRAME (N = 75)
Main content (LCP), median	8.1 s	6.5 s
LCP ≤ 2.5 s	5 (4%)	12 (16%)
LCP ≤ 4.0 s	21 (17%)	21 (28%)
CLS ≤ 0.1	87%	92%
TBT ≤ 200 ms	91%	92%
Page weight, median	2.6 MB	2.1 MB

Registry frame: websites of businesses with a Florida pool/spa contractor license or a pool-related company name, found without Google (75 of 82 measured). LCP ≤ 2.5 s, 95% CI 9%–26%. Comparison only; all other figures are the Google Maps frame.

05 PHOTO WEIGHT TRACKS THE WAIT MORE CLOSELY THAN THE PLATFORM DOES

If the platform decided speed, an owner could only fix a slow site by rebuilding it. The data point the other way. We asked how much of the spread in load time each factor accounts for on its own. Page weight, and image weight in particular, comes out ahead of the platform a site is built on in the point estimates, though the bootstrap interval for the difference touches zero; adding the platform to image weight explains only 4 points more, while adding image weight to the platform explains 18 points more.

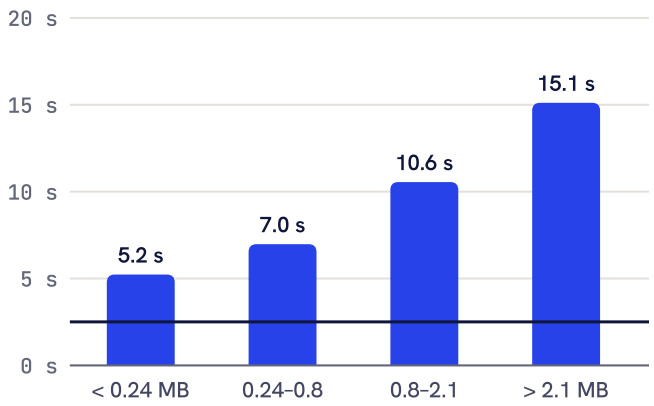
Image weight accounts for 28% of the spread in load time; the platform for 14%



Rank-based R^2: share of the variance in ranked LCP explained by each factor alone (n = 110 sites with platform data). Bootstrap 95% intervals (2,000 draws): image weight 15–47%, platform 7–30%; image weight comes out ahead in 95% of 2,000 bootstrap resamples (difference −2 to +29 points; the interval touches zero). Factors overlap and do not add up.

Source: Ruberio Lighthouse census and crawl, Oct 30, 2026.

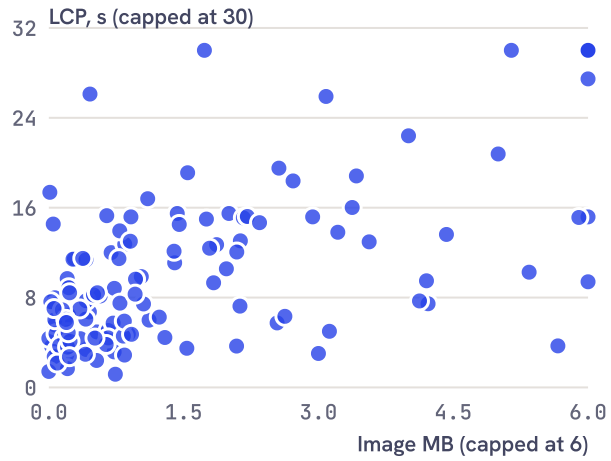
The heavier the images, the later the main content



Median LCP by quarter of image weight (about 32 sites each); line = 2.5 s. Within 4 s: 10, 6, 3, 2 sites; within 2.5 s: 3, 2, 0, 0.

Source: Ruberio Lighthouse census.

Site by site (Spearman ρ = 0.54)



Each dot is one site (n = 126); values beyond the axes sit at the edge. Light pages are not automatically fast; heavy pages almost never are.

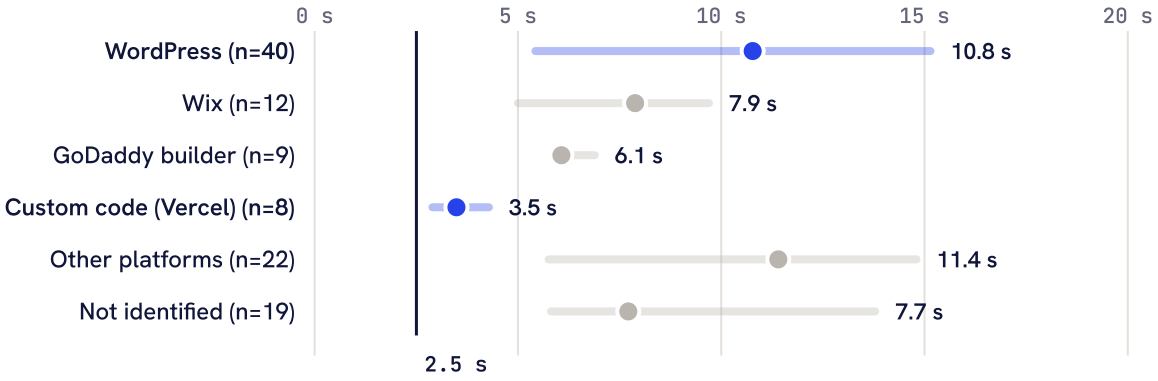
Source: Ruberio Lighthouse census.

SAME PLATFORM, DIFFERENT PHOTOS

Within WordPress alone (40 sites with platform data), the 7 sites whose images pass Lighthouse's modern-format check (WebP or AVIF instead of JPEG or PNG) show their main content in a median 6.1 s; the 33 that fail it in 13.0 s. Same platform, more than twice the wait. Even the lightest quarter of all sites still has a median of 5.2 s.

06 EVERY PLATFORM GROUP MISSES THE LINE ON ITS TYPICAL SITE

Custom code (Vercel) sites are fastest, WordPress slowest of the named platforms, and no group's median reaches 2.5 s



Dot = median LCP; bar = middle half of sites (25th to 75th percentile). Groups with fewer than 8 measured sites are pooled; 16 sites without crawl data are not shown.

Source: Ruberio Lighthouse census; platform detection from the Report No. 01 crawl.

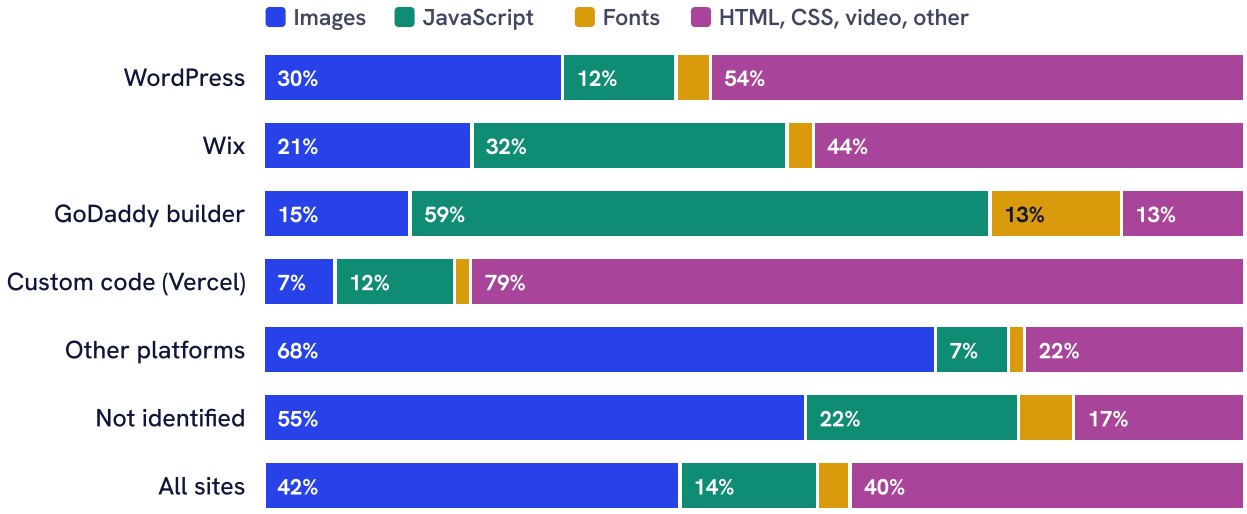
Medians per group

PLATFORM	N	LCP	LCP 95% CI	WEIGHT	IMAGES	JS	3RD PARTY	REQ.	TBT MS	≤ 4 S
WordPress	40	10.8 s	7.6–14.1	3.6 MB	1.5 MB	0.6 MB	0.4 MB	72	20	6/40
Wix	12	7.9 s	4.9–9.8	3.7 MB	0.3 MB	1.5 MB	3.4 MB	235	93	1/12
GoDaddy builder	9	6.1 s	4.4–7.0	1.0 MB	0.2 MB	0.7 MB	1.0 MB	78	76	1/9
Custom code (Vercel)	8	3.5 s	2.7–6.0	1.5 MB	0.2 MB	0.5 MB	0.3 MB	34	37	6/8
Other platforms	22	11.4 s	5.8–13.9	2.7 MB	0.9 MB	0.7 MB	0.9 MB	61	56	1/22
Not identified	19	7.7 s	5.9–13.0	2.3 MB	1.2 MB	0.4 MB	1.2 MB	37	3	1/19

WordPress is the largest group and among the slowest: its pages carry the most image weight (1.5 MB median), and 24 of its 40 sites put the top photo in as a section background (a common page-builder layout); those load in a median 13.3 s. **Wix** pages carry little image weight (0.3 MB) but the most JavaScript and requests (1.5 MB, 235), and the highest blocking time. **GoDaddy builder** pages are the lightest (1.0 MB) and remarkably uniform, yet only 1 of 9 gets under 4 s; their median is 6.1 s, so on this builder the page weight an owner controls is already small and most of the bytes come from the builder's own code. **Custom-coded sites hosted on Vercel** are the fastest group, but there are only 8, so the interval is wide. "Other platforms": GoHighLevel 4, custom code on Netlify 4, Duda 3, Squarespace 3, Hostinger builder 2, Drupal 2, Hibu 1, Shopify 1, Google Sites 1, Webflow 1.

07 WHERE THE WEIGHT COMES FROM, AND WHAT LIGHTHOUSE FLAGS FIRST

Images are the largest share of the bytes overall; JavaScript outweighs images on Wix, GoDaddy builder and Custom code (Vercel)

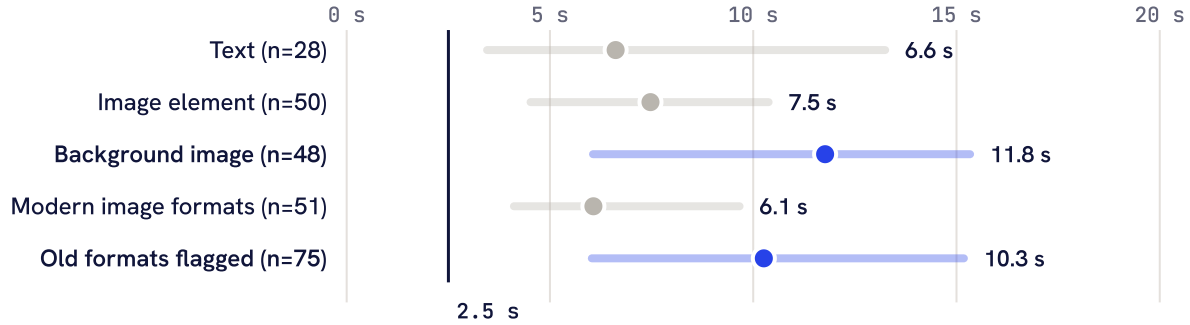


Share of all bytes downloaded for the first view, summed per group.

Source: Ruberio Lighthouse census.

Across all sites, images make up 42% of the bytes, JavaScript 14% and fonts 3%. Code and files from other companies (chat widgets, maps, review badges, analytics, the builder's own servers) account for 49% of all bytes. 43% of sites download more than 1 MB of images for the first view; 23% weigh more than 5 MB in total.

A top photo set as a background loads last

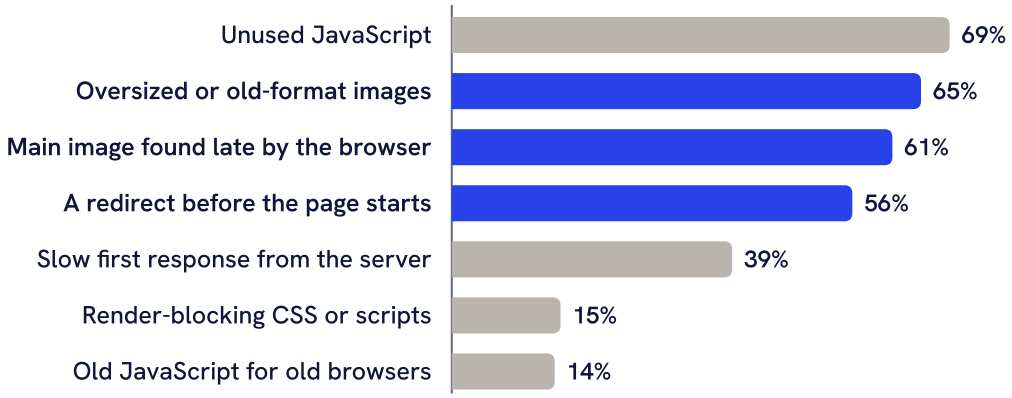


Median LCP (dot) and middle half (bar) by what the largest element is, and by whether Lighthouse's modern-format check passes.

Source: Ruberio Lighthouse census.

On 78% of sites the main content is a picture. When that picture is placed as a CSS background of a section, the browser finds it only after it has read the styles, and the median wait is 11.8 s; as a regular image element it is 7.5 s, and where the largest element is text, 6.6 s. Sites whose images pass the modern-format check carry a median of 0.3 MB of images, against 1.5 MB for those that fail it.

65% of sites are flagged for image delivery, and 56% start with a redirect



Share of 126 sites where Lighthouse estimates a saving on the main content (median run). Estimates overlap and do not add up. Median estimate where flagged: images 0.75 s, unused JavaScript 0.85 s, redirect 0.75 s. “Main image found late” = Lighthouse’s LCP request discovery check failed.

Source: Lighthouse audits “Improve image delivery”, “LCP request discovery”, “Reduce unused JavaScript”, “Avoid multiple page redirects”, “Document request latency”, “Render blocking requests”, “Legacy JavaScript”.

Which flags each platform group gets

	Image	Late	JS	Redir.	Block
WordPress (40)	70%	62%	68%	58%	20%
Wix (12)	50%	83%	75%	42%	0%
GoDaddy builder (9)	89%	100%	100%	89%	0%
Custom code (Vercel) (8)	25%	38%	25%	38%	12%
Other platforms (22)	68%	45%	77%	36%	14%
Not identified (19)	68%	53%	79%	68%	16%

Share of sites in each group flagged; n in brackets. Image = image delivery; Late = main image found late; JS = unused JavaScript; Redir. = redirect; Block = render-blocking requests.

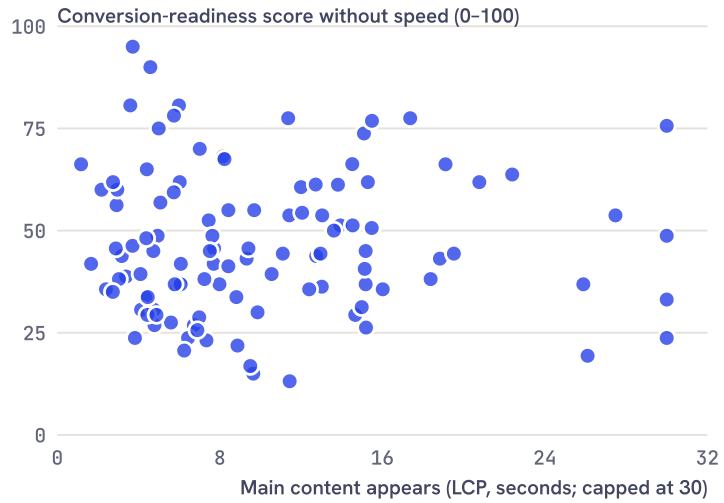
Source: Ruberio Lighthouse census.

The redirect is the cheapest fix in this report. We tested the address as it appears in each business’s Google Maps listing. For 56% of sites that address is not the final one: 59 still list `http://` while the site runs on https, 33 add or drop “www”, and 6 send the visitor to another domain. In the lab test this hop costs a median 0.75 s; browsers that upgrade to https on their own skip part of it.

Server response is flagged on 49 sites, but from Europe that check overstates the delay for US-hosted sites, so we do not rank it.

08 FAST SITES ARE NOT BETTER SET UP TO GET THE CALL

No detectable link between load time and conversion readiness (ρ = 0.03, CI ±0.21)



Each dot is one site (n = 110). Score = Report No. 01 index without its speed pillar.

Source: Ruberio Lighthouse census; Report No. 01 scores (reach, trust, answers, price).

A fast site might be expected to come from an owner who also gets the rest right. We see no sign of that. We measured conversion-readiness features, not calls. Between load time and the four non-speed pillars of Report No. 01 the rank correlation is ρ = 0.03 (95% CI -0.16 to 0.21). The pillar closest to a link is price: sites that show a price load slightly faster (ρ = -0.19 between LCP and the price pillar), which is small and could be chance.

Split at Google's 4-second line, 9 of the 16 sites under 4 s score above the median on conversion readiness (56%), against 50% of the slower sites (Fisher exact p = 0.79). With a median split on speed the picture is the same (p = 0.34).

Speed × conversion readiness (number of sites)

	ABOVE-MEDIAN CONVERSION SCORE	BELOW MEDIAN
Main content within 4 s	9	7
Slower than 4 s	47	47

How often fast and slow sites have each feature

FEATURE (REPORT NO. 01 CRAWL)	SITES WITHIN 4 S	SLOWER SITES
Tap-to-call link on first screen	50% (8/16)	55% (52/94)
Quote, contact or book button on first screen	69% (11/16)	55% (52/94)
Call button that stays on screen	38% (6/16)	32% (30/94)
Any price shown	38% (6/16)	29% (27/94)
Reviews or testimonials on site	75% (12/16)	55% (52/94)
License number shown	31% (5/16)	34% (32/94)

Correlation only. A fast, empty page and a slow page with every answer on it are both common; an owner has to work on both.

09 LIMITATIONS

- **Lab data, not visitors.** Lighthouse simulates one phone on one connection. Real visitors on fast home Wi-Fi will see faster pages, visitors on weak signal slower ones. Google's field data (Chrome UX Report) is published only for sites with enough Chrome traffic; we did not use it.
- **INP is not measured.** TBT is a lab stand-in. A page can pass TBT and still respond slowly to a tap.
- **Measured from the Netherlands.** Server response times are inflated for US-hosted sites, which is why we do not rank them; the simulation models the network, so the effect on LCP is smaller but not zero. 18 sites refused our test, probably because of non-US blocking; if those are systematically faster or slower, the medians shift.
- **One moment, one page.** Homepages only, tested on Oct 30, 2026. Sites change, and inner pages can be slower or faster.
- **Simulation on a fast machine.** The 4× CPU slowdown is applied to a fast desktop processor (benchmark index around 4131), so blocking times may be lower than on PageSpeed Insights' servers. Load-time ranks are stable across runs (median spread in performance score 3 points). The same fast processor likely makes our LCP values somewhat lower than PageSpeed Insights would report, so the headline share is, if anything, generous.
- **The lab model favors the image result.** Under simulated throttling (about 1.6 Mbps), bytes on the critical path translate almost linearly into LCP, and the largest element is an image on 78% of sites. Part of the image-weight finding is therefore built into how the test works; with real visitors on faster connections, image weight may matter less.
- **Platform detection is automated** and leaves 19 crawled sites unidentified, plus 16 measured sites the crawl could not load; groups are small (8 to 40 sites), so per-platform medians carry wide intervals.
- **Explained variance is correlation.** Image weight and platform overlap (builders shape how images are delivered). We show that photo weight predicts the wait better; we do not prove that shrinking photos alone brings a site under 2.5 s.
- **Frame.** Google Maps listings in four metros, skewed toward Tampa Bay; not a statewide random sample.
- **The comparison frame looks faster.** Of 75 registry-found sites tested, 16% meet 2.5 s (95% CI 9%–26%), against 4% in the Maps frame. That frame is statewide and includes pool builders (licensed contractors), so it is not a like-for-like group; but if the gap holds, the share of fast sites in the wider market is higher than our headline figure.
- **What would change the conclusion:** field data from real Florida visitors showing a different ranking, or a larger sample in which platform explains as much as image weight.

10 WHAT AN OWNER CAN DO WITH THIS

You can check your own site in about fifteen minutes with Google's PageSpeed Insights, which runs the same test we did [5]. It costs nothing and needs no account.

WORKSHEET · A 15-MINUTE SPEED CHECK

STEP	WHAT TO WRITE DOWN	YOUR RESULT	THIS STUDY
1. Go to pagespeed.web.dev, enter your address *exactly as it is in your Google listing*, open the Mobile tab.	Does the address end up somewhere else (http → https, www)?		56% redirect
2. Top of the report: "Discover what your real users are experiencing".	Field data shown, or "no data"?		Small sites often have none
3. Lab section: Largest Contentful Paint.	LCP in seconds		median 8.1 s; good ≤ 2.5 s
4. Same section: Total Blocking Time and Cumulative Layout Shift.	TBT ms / CLS		91% / 87% pass
5. Diagnostics: "Largest Contentful Paint element".	Photo, background or text?		78% a photo
6. Insights: "Improve image delivery" and "LCP request discovery".	Flagged? Estimated saving		65% / 61% flagged
7. Run it twice more and take the middle LCP.	Middle of 3 runs		We used the median of 3

PageSpeed Insights runs the test from Google's servers, so your numbers will differ somewhat from ours. Google defines its "good" (2.5 s) and "poor" (over 4 s) lines for real-visitor data at the 75th percentile, not for one lab run; use the lab number to compare and to find the cause. If step 5 says photo and step 6 flags image delivery, the photo is the first thing to fix.

The three fixes that matter most, by platform

Chosen from what Lighthouse flagged most often on each platform in this study (see the flags chart in section 07).

PLATFORM	START HERE
WordPress	1. Shrink and convert the top photo (WebP or AVIF, about the width of a phone screen) before or after upload, for example with an image-optimization plugin. 2. If the top photo is a section background in your page builder, change it to a regular image block so the browser finds it first. 3. Remove plugins and widgets you no longer use; each one can add JavaScript to every page.

PLATFORM	START HERE
Wix	1. Remove apps and embedded widgets you do not use; Wix pages here carry the most code. 2. Keep the first screen to one photo; avoid a video or slideshow at the top. 3. Put your final web address (https, with or without www as your site shows it) in your Google listing.
GoDaddy builder	1. Put your final web address in your Google listing: 8 of the 9 sites here start with a redirect. 2. Use one smaller photo at the top instead of a large or sliding header. 3. Remove sections and embeds above the fold you can live without; most of the remaining bytes are the builder's own code.
Any other platform	1. Ask whoever built the site three things: are images served as WebP/AVIF at phone size, is the top photo a regular image that loads first, and is unused code removed? 2. Fix the address in your Google listing so it matches the final URL. 3. Retest after each change; one change at a time shows what helped.

- [ ] **Update the web address in your Google Business Profile** to the exact final URL your site lands on.
- [ ] **Make the top photo light:** phone-width, WebP or AVIF, as a regular image rather than a background. The lightest quarter of sites in this study load less than 0.24 MB of images in total for the first view, and still have a median of 5.2 s: lighter photos help most, but rarely reach 2.5 s on their own.
- [ ] **Count your widgets:** chat, reviews, maps and social feeds each add other companies' code. Keep the ones that earn their place.
- [ ] **Do not stop at speed.** In this study fast sites were no more likely to have a tap-to-call link or a price on the first screen; Report No. 01 has that checklist.

11 SOURCES

1. web.dev, "Web Vitals" (good thresholds at the 75th percentile: LCP ≤ 2.5 s, INP ≤ 200 ms, CLS ≤ 0.1; Lighthouse cannot measure INP). https://web.dev/articles/vitals (accessed Oct 30, 2026)
2. web.dev, "Largest Contentful Paint (LCP)" (good ≤ 2.5 s, poor > 4.0 s). https://web.dev/articles/lcp (accessed Oct 30, 2026)
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12 ABOUT THIS RESEARCH

WHO MADE THIS

Ruberio is a Dutch design studio: Ruben designs, Sven answers every email. We're focused on websites for pool service companies and fence contractors in Florida. We ran this study because we build sites that have to load fast on a phone, and we wanted to know where pool service sites actually stand and what slows them down, instead of repeating general claims. The data and scripts are available on request. If you spot an error, email hello@ruberio.com and we'll correct it and note the change.

If you want to see your own site rebuilt to show its main content fast on a phone, we build a preview for $49 at us.ruberio.com. The $49 comes off the price if you keep it.