

# Performance Is Money

Optimization of rich media drives revenue in e-commerce

Undeniably, success in e-commerce nowadays requires a commitment to visual media. Shoppers expect at least a baseline level of product information and analysis in pictorial form—a minimum of eight images for a product they're interested in, up from just three as recently as 2016. Another bottom-line connection is that almost 80 percent of shoppers claim that product videos make them **feel more confident** about purchases, and 73 percent say that such videos steer them toward a buy decision.

Hence why image—and video-rich product galleries are now table stakes for e-commerce. Advanced features, such as user-generated reviews accompanied by rich media, 360-degree product videos with 4K zoom, and even augmented and virtual reality are entering the mainstream and connecting with shoppers in greater depth. Additionally, research has shown that shoppers have **more trust** in sellers who accord them the ability to interact with products online—an enjoyable experience that's similar to browsing and making purchases in store.

However, as **captivating** as digital images are, they take up a **substantial amount** of a page's bandwidth. And, the more complex and compelling the media, the more voluminous the associated data. That means more bandwidth and, ultimately, longer loading times and weaker site performance.

The sections below explain why media optimization matters and what to do about it.

## Understanding Why High-Performing Media Are Important

Two major reasons account for the importance of displaying fast-loading rich media on e-commerce sites.

### Performance Is Inextricably Linked to Revenue

It's hard to underestimate the effect of site performance on user experience (UX). Studies have shown that 40 percent of visitors would **abandon a site** if a page load takes more than three seconds—apparently a breaking point for most online shoppers. Subsequently, Google **reported that a one-second delay** can more than double the bounce rate. That means that just a one-second delay would cost an e-commerce business with a daily sales revenue of \$100,000 a staggering \$2.5 million in lost sales per year!

The logical flow of the online shopping journey reinforces the need to analyze the connection among rich media, site performance, and business goals. Proven is the fact a rewarding UX results from a combination of rich media, an intuitive and engaging site architecture, and high-performing pages, all of which foster the desired consumer behavior and, ultimately, generate revenue. Furthermore, slow pages are even more damaging to your business because visitors must be on your site for the impacts to take effect.

## Performance Is Money

How do we find e-commerce sites to buy from in the first place? From organic search, which, according to SEMrush, **38 percent** of retailer traffic originates. So, optimizing for search is clearly a must-do for your e-commerce sites.

Search-engine rankings are based on complex formulas, which are beyond the scope of this post. Nonetheless, you must understand how Google and other search providers incorporate site speed and performance in their algorithms and how they take into account those measurements and other UX metrics like time on page and bounce rate in search results.

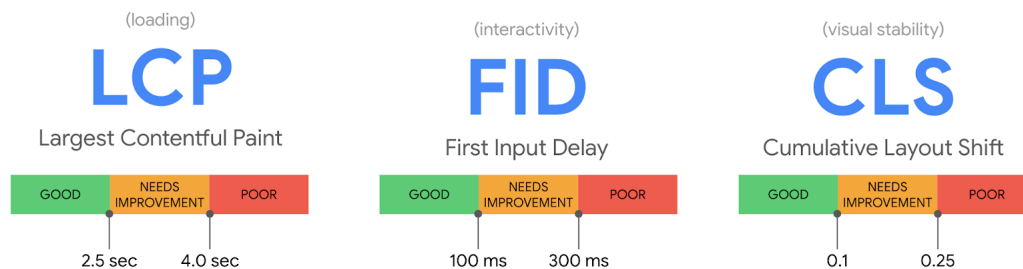
In recent years, Google has elevated the importance of site speed as a UX measurement. Since site speed also affects such key factors as bounce rate, conversion rate, and session times, that measurement factors highly in search.

**Core Web Vitals**, a Google initiative, offers unified guidance for quality signals deemed to be essential for delivering a sound online UX, which encompasses three aspects: loading, interactivity, and visual stability. Google leverages these three key measurements:

**Largest Contentful Paint (LCP)**, which measures loading performance. For a good UX, LCP must occur within 2.5 seconds after a page starts loading.

**First Input Delay (FID)**, which measures interactivity. For a good UX, a page's FID must be less than 100 milliseconds.

**Cumulative Layout Shift (CLS)**, which measures visual stability. For a good UX, a page must maintain a CLS of less than 0.1.



The goal is to hit **at least** the 75th percentile for each metric. Your challenge, which, once solved, could open up opportunities, is to deliver a large volume of data-heavy media assets across your site efficiently enough to maintain site speed, thus delivering a credible UX and achieving a high Google ranking.

A recap:

- 1 To reach e-commerce goals, enable and foster positive behavior of visitors.**
- 2 The UX is the driving force behind consumer behavior.**
- 3 A superb UX encompasses compelling rich media and fast page loads.**

## Optimization of Rich Media Is Key

Given that images and videos account for more than 90 percent of the average website's **page weight**, your top priority must be to optimally deliver them for all user contexts. As a first step, find out how to do the following:



Recruit the talent or allocate the technical and creative resources required to optimize and customize your media for an outstanding presentation and fast loads.



Create a high-performing ecosystem in which to seamlessly manage data-heavy media at scale.



Ensure that all your media assets load fast, serving their purpose in all contexts and on all channels.

What you need is a comprehensive media-first strategy that aligns people, process, and technology and that streamlines internal workflows and delivers the UX consumers expect.



## Effortlessly Deliver Optimized Media Assets

At the outset, familiarize yourself with the behind-the-scenes requirements.

## A Robust Media Platform That Delivers On a Media-First Strategy

To help generate demand for your products and convert visitors to customers, you need a media platform that efficiently delivers a compelling, personalized, optimized, and Google-compliant UX regardless of user device, browser, location, etc. A dedicated, AI-driven media platform on which you can accomplish the following **through automation** is the answer:

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Convert raw photos and videos to web-ready formats tailored to the limits of the delivery channel.

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Streamline omnichannel workflows with features like AI-based tagging, version control, role-based access control, and performance tracking.

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Standardize the delivery of user-generated content in optimized file types and sizes.

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Boost visitor conversions with high-performance, context-specific, and responsive media.

Specifically, you need an automated, media optimization solution with these key features:

**Optimization of image formats and quality, which includes auto-compression** based on the content type and the user's device and browser through an addition of parameters like ``f_auto`` and ``q_auto`` to the image or video URL.

**Multi-CDN delivery**, which speeds up page loads—again, no matter the type of user device and geographic location.

**Delivery of responsive media**, which saves significant time and effort by eliminating the need for manually creating media of various sizes and adding them to ``srcset`` attributes.

**Support for numerous image and video formats and codecs**, which leads to delivery in the most optimal format for the user's browser. No longer do you need to manually create multiple versions of the media for delivery.

**AI-based cropping**, which yields focus and a sharp display regardless of the viewing device and orientation.

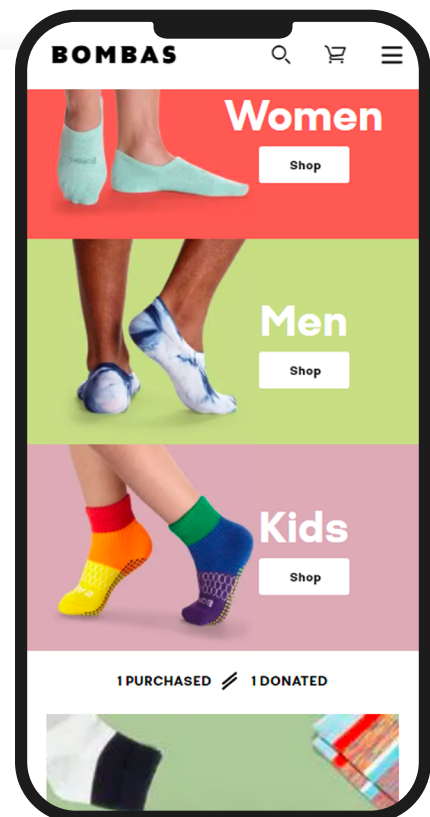
**Lazy loading**, which delays loading of media that are not in the viewport, shortening load times.

## CASE STUDY

# Bombas

As leading apparel brand Bombas expanded in wholesale and e-commerce, managing over 10,000 images on its site was a daunting challenge, what with the burdensome editing tasks and demands of rebranding and redesign schemes, which in turn caused uncertainties in meeting seasonal-sales deadlines. Adopting the Cloudinary platform with its many automated, flexible capabilities for optimizing, transforming, and delivering rich media proved to be the right call.

Integration with Cloudinary and transition took only a few weeks, after which Bombas could count on the platform to reliably and efficiently optimize and format images without human intervention—at scale and in real time—for fast loads on all devices. Besides, by taking full advantage of the time and manpower gained after adopting Cloudinary, Bombas has embarked on projects to test the effects of various image treatments on performance and visitor conversions, continually enhancing its user experience.



## Quality-First Optimization Is Achievable

The conventional belief is that building a more captivating and informative shopping portal filled with a high volume of rich media would reduce the portal's usability due to the larger page size and, concurrently, slower load speed. Fortunately, that's a misconception.

In reality, compressing the size of rich media while maintaining or even improving their quality is not only doable, it's the only way to optimize high-impact, branded media for fast page loads, delivering a great UX and securing a high ranking in the Search Engine Results Pages (SERPs). The catch lies in finding a media optimizer whose quality-selection algorithms can, among other tasks, determine and review the optimized quality settings for all the images to accelerate the identification and updating of those that fail to meet the standards for all user contexts.

By adopting such an optimizer and implementing automatic format-selection processes, accessibility analysis, and semantic data extraction and moderation, you can generate a superior UX for all touchpoints with media of minimal bandwidth. All that ultimately translates to customer satisfaction and loyalty, as well as seamless and efficient workflows for your e-business.



To learn more about fast-loading media, read Cloudinary's **Cloudinary's Guide to Building the Ultimate E-commerce Website.**



To test out your site's media vis-a-vis the site speed, use the **Image Analysis Tool** by Cloudinary.

## About Cloudinary

Cloudinary's mission is to empower companies to deliver visual experiences that inspire and connect by unleashing the full potential of their media. With more than 40 billion assets under management and 6,500 customers worldwide, Cloudinary is the industry standard for developers, creators and marketers looking to upload, store, transform, manage, and deliver images and videos online. As a result, leading brands like Atlassian, Bleacher Report, Grubhub, Hinge, Lyft, NBC, Mediavine, Peloton, Petco and Under Armour are seeing significant business value in using Cloudinary, including faster time to market, higher user satisfaction and increased engagement and conversions.

For more information, visit [www.cloudinary.com](https://www.cloudinary.com)