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The Mobile Website Kit

White Paper

Table of Contents

"The stage is set, and it's lights, camera, action on the year of the mobile. As mainstream adoption of the mobile web takes hold, it's a time of opportunity for organisations quick to make the most of first mover advantages in the mobile arena."

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Introduction

While we've had the capability to design and develop mobile websites for quite some time, up until just recently we've struggled to convince clients and prospects that

a) there is a market out there

 and

b) they should be at the forefront

Now that mobile has made its way onto the mainstream grapevine, people are starting to put their hands up, but many are still asking themselves whether it's right for them.

This whitepaper aims to help website owners make that decision.

1
Why Mobile?

- **A Growing Market:** The number of smartphones is steadily rising (growth is running eight times faster than the PC, and set to overtake in 2013), the shift in usage has moved away from social networking to research of and purchasing from organisations and the explosion of practical and fanciful mobile apps continue to fascinate and amaze.

- **First Mover Advantages:** There will be many first-time users out there whose loyalty is still up for grabs.

- **Access anything, Anywhere, Any time:** Mobile is here to stay, and the functionality of the future is bringing the mobile experience closer and closer to that of a laptop, desktop, and sometimes even reality. Virtualisation, augmented reality, GPS and mobile payment options are just a handful of the many ample benefits we can come to expect.

- **Reach:** Mobile web presence increases visibility and accessibility, and mobile advertising has so far been well received.

- **Brand Awareness:** Search engines have a separate index for mobile content, and at the moment they're practically empty. Imagine coming up first in every search result for all of your keywords…

- **Competitive Positioning:** If you aren't already considering a mobile strategy, you should be - because in all likelihood, your competitors already are.

2
Dos and Don'ts

DO

- Deliver a relevant, positive user experience – fast. Automatically send mobile users to a dedicated mobile version of your website.

- Save the lengthy marketing messages and various calls to action for your full website.

- Offer minimalist design and only the most relevant information.

- Provide simple, intuitive navigation. Start by arranging content in a single column layout.

- Test, test and test again. Consider your target audience and optimise for the most relevant devices.

DONT

- Overdo tables and imagery – mobile pages take longer to load due to slower network speeds, and mobile devices have limited memory.

- Offer users what you think they want – offer them what they do want.

- Forget to link to relevant pages and content. It's hard enough to get around on a mobile phone without being forced to hit the back button to escape dead ends.

- Shamelessly self-promote.

- Ignore search. It's harder for search engines to discover sites on the mobile web. You can speed up the process by proactively submitting sitemaps in top search engines.

3
Mobile Website vs. Applications

If you're considering mobile, then you may very well be considering applications.

When addressing the website vs. application debate, there are a few key considerations:

- **Your target audience.** Your target audience is the best place to start when considering whether to build a mobile website or application. Is your target audience younger or older? What types of mobile devices do they use, and for what? Beyond an educated guess, commercial website analytics packages now offer information on percentages of website traffic arriving from various platforms and devices, inclusive of demographic information.

- **Your budget.** Another key consideration is budget. How much do you have to spend? A mobile friendly version of your website is typically much cheaper than a mobile application, depending on your supplier and the level of development you require. A mobile website is accessible by all phones with an internet browser; whereas mobile applications are accessible only by the smartphone for which they are built for (eg. An iPhone app is not compatible with an Android phone); and costs will increase with the number for which you need to optimise.

- **Your timeline.** If speed to market is critical, a mobile website is the way to go. Applications take much longer to develop as they are generally built from scratch and also require comprehensive auditing before approval is granted for listing in an App Store.

- **Value.** A good question to ask yourself here is **"**has it already been done?". The number of applications on the market has more than doubled in the last year alone. Prime real estate will soon be hard to come by, and unless you plan on developing an application that will offer real value to your customers, in an app that offers compelling reasons for use, don't do it. It is interesting to note that both a mobile website and a mobile application offer real estate on home screens – so if brand awareness is an objective but an application isn't in this year's budget, promote your mobile website, and ask visitors to 'save to home page. In this way favourite mobile websites can be 'iconised', just like applications. This little piece of functionality is still in the discovery phase and is increasingly growing in popularity.

- **User Experience** Mobile websites and applications are all about user experience, and having one or the other (or both) will always be better than doing nothing at all. Having said that, the level of interactivity possible is much greater when using an application because an application can leverage smartphone hardware (GPS, motion, etc).

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4

Examples

Some great working examples to model on include:

- www.nintendomobile.com.au
- http://m.youtube.com
- www.mobile.netbank.com.au
- www.cnnmobile.com
- www.bbcmobile.com