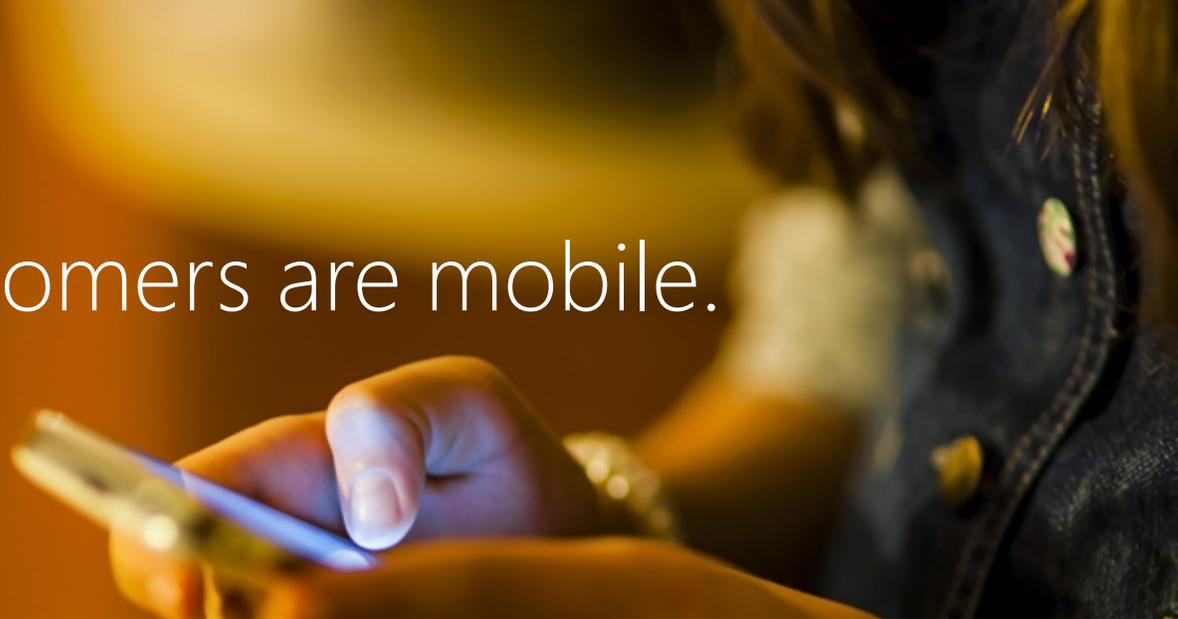




Your customers are mobile. Are you?



What is a mobile optimized website?

A mobile optimized website is a simplified version of a desktop website that is specially designed to display on small screens such as smartphones.

In this document, "mobile" refers to smartphones, although the principles here apply to tablets as well.

A site that's **mobile-optimized** will appear on mobile like this:

A site that is **not mobile-optimized** will look like this:

Why do I need a mobile optimized website?

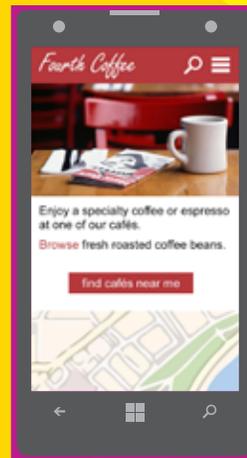
We know your secret: Most small and medium-sized businesses do not have mobile-optimized websites. According to a study by Hibu in 2014, only 6% of SMBs have a mobile site.¹

But according to eMarketer, the number of smartphone users reached 165 million or 52% of the U.S. population at end of 2014. This number will be 67% of the U.S. population by 2018.² Everyone, everywhere is using their smartphones for everything all the time. If you're not giving your site visitors a mobile-friendly experience, you risk losing valuable traffic and turning customers away.

NetElixir reported that of the 180 million shopping sessions on 53 retail clients' sites, the smartphone conversion rate was 23% for those not optimized for mobile and 60% for mobile-optimized sites.³

What's worse is that 57% of mobile users will abandon a website if it takes more than three seconds to load. In addition, 30% will abandon a purchase transaction if the shopping cart is not optimized for mobile devices.

The bottom line? Smartphone users don't have the patience for a website that isn't built for their phone. If your sites aren't optimized for mobile, you are ultimately losing sales.



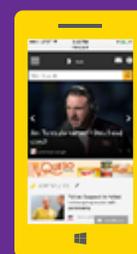
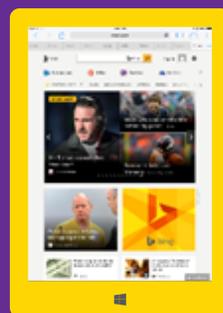
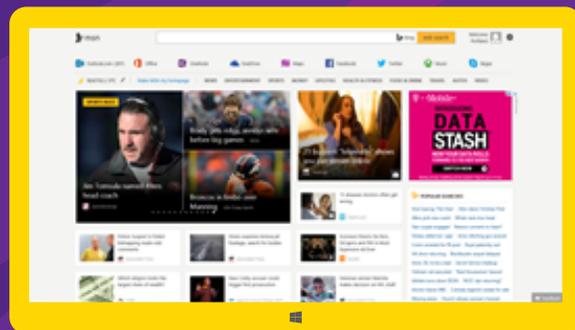
Smartphone conversion rate, based on 180M shopping sessions of 53 retail sites³.

1. Hibu, Mobile audit 2014, reported on [Marketing Land](#) February 2014.
2. eMarketer, US Internet and Mobile Users, Sept 2014.
3. eMarketer, [Proof that Mobile Optimized Sites Are Necessary](#), Oct, 2014.

Why does mobile need its own special design?

In addition to the obvious difference in screen size, mobile and desktop user expectations and behavior differ greatly and demand a specific screen experience:

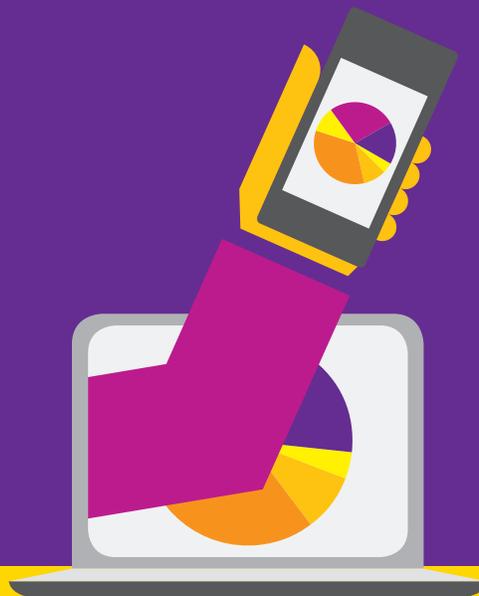
- Limited space on a small screen means the site content must be succinct with minimal scrolling to get to what your customer is looking for.
- Layout and navigational design needs to encourage conversion and user engagement on a small screen. It must be easy for customers to locate the Call or Buy button, and reduce the number of steps to complete a transaction for customers on a small device.
- Speed and bandwidth are concerns for mobile users, so images need to be compressed or resized to speed up site loading.
- User engagements should be easy to execute and designed for touch screens. Depending on what you are trying to accomplish on your website, it should be easy for customers to scroll, swipe or select to make a phone call or click on a map to get driving directions.
- Optimizing for mobile gives you the chance to be consistent with your brand across devices.



What are my options for building a mobile-optimized site?

There are two primary approaches to building a mobile-friendly website. There isn't a right or wrong answer when it comes to which approach to use, because your business goals and marketing plans will drive you to the right method.

Unless you're a design pro, you really should work with an experienced web designer or developer. Those people know what they're doing and can keep you from making innocent mistakes, which can mean the difference between daily conversions and zero conversions.



Option 1: A separate site for mobile users.

If you already have a website that was designed for desktop (on www.contoso.com), one common setup would be creating corresponding pages on a

separate site served on m.contoso.com for mobile users. This separate URL serves different code to mobile devices and desktop.

Pros

Mobile optimization

- Design that is optimized to work well on small screens
- Ability to adjust content to respond to top ranking mobile search queries, which often vary from desktop searches
- Faster load speed and minimum amount of bandwidth required

Cons

Management and cost

- Maintain separate URLs (one for desktop site, one for mobile, and possibly one for tablet)

SEO

- Manage mobile site SEO separately from the desktop site
- Search engines may not index duplicate content on multiple sites appropriately as a result may impact ranking

Flexibility

- Adaptability to future device types and sizes like when mid-sized tablets such as Kindle Fire came out

Dynamic Serving is a variation on building a separate mobile site. You still manage multiple sites and the site serves different code to each device, but the difference is that all sites are on the same URL. The server detects users' browser type (desktop versus smartphone versus

tablet) and dynamically responds with page designs that are optimized for devices. The biggest advantage is SEO, as search engines prefer indexing a single URL versus multiple ones.



Option 2: Responsive Web Design

The speed and innovation of new devices gave a set of challenges to website designers. How can you generate and maintain updates of site designs that work for screen resolutions of iPad and iPhone, Microsoft Surface, Kindle, and Samsung Galaxy S5 (just to name a few) while retaining the integrity of the content and brand?

Responsive Web Design (RWD) is aimed at crafting sites to provide an optimal viewing experience – easy reading and navigation with a minimum of resizing, panning and scrolling – across a wide range of devices from desktop to mobile phones.

It's important to know that a RWD site is an all-in-one site, meaning there is no separate mobile website and separate URL because the RWD site is completely optimized for all screen sizes.

How is this accomplished? Responsive Web Design utilizes CSS (a programming language) media queries and multiple cascading style sheets to change the layout of the websites depending on the screen size it detects. A responsive layout adapts to viewing conditions depending on screen size and device orientation such as a tablet switching from portrait to landscape. Here are [50 examples and best practices of well thought out responsive web designs](#).

As the variety of devices that access the web grows, Responsive Web Design is gaining popularity by the day. However, it too has its pros and cons.

Pros

Management and costs

- A single URL, a single sitemap that adapts to all device types
- Ease of management, update once and it applies to all device types
- Lower maintenance cost compared to separate sites

SEO

- Search engines prefer single URL for indexing

Cons

Costs

- Requires complete revamp of site architecture and design (however, once setup maintenance is lower)

Mobile optimization

- RWD sites may be slower to load
- Information architecture issues. Prominent features on mobile site may not be optimized for mobile keywords or top navigational needs as the site is designed to meet the needs of all screen types
- Lack of the ability to delight mobile users with mobile only features such as GPS, camera, accelerometer to create app-like experiences on the Web

Want to know more about responsive design? Here are additional reads:

- [How to Use Responsive Web Design](#)
- [Responsive Web Design Guidelines and Tutorials](#)
- [7 Best Practices of Responsive Web Design](#)

You may also find the following design testing tools helpful. They provide free evaluation for mobile-readiness.¹

- [MobiReady](#)
- [Responsinator](#)
- [Mobile Phone Emulator](#)

1. Microsoft does not endorse any of the third party tools and software listed in this article.

Landing pages: How can I make the most of my mobile site?

Landing pages can be used for paid search ads, social marketing and other promotional campaigns. Optimizing your mobile landing page can increase conversion and give your customers a better experience. Here are some tips:

1. Create a strong call to action.

This may be a button to click-to-call, a form to open, a special offer, a “like” or “more.” This button should be clearly visible when the visitor lands on the page. Don’t overdo it: limit the number of actions to three or less.

The top mobile user action for SEO and paid search is making a phone call, so ensure your phone number is visible. Users should be able to tap/click a phone number to initiate a call (click-to-call functionality can be enabled in your website design process).

2. Make navigation easy.

Given the limited screen size for smartphones, a single-column layout with the priority content at the top is preferred. Always put the call-to-action above the fold or without needing to scroll.

Have a “Menu” button, a visual that’s hard to miss.

3. Build clean, legible design with limited distractions.

Headlines should be kept to one or maximum two lines in a clear font, preferably making use of the keywords that you want to optimize for SEO. Less is more for the remaining content and context on the site. Bullet points are a good way of keeping content succinct and layout clean with font large enough to see on a small device without needing to zoom.

4. Optimize for speed.

Mobile pages should be lightweight with recommended page size less than 20kb and load time preferably under five seconds. Things that may slow down page load include images and scripts. Consider consolidating or eliminating scripts, resize or use mobile optimized images, use [CSS text in place of images](#), and other [mobile web performance optimization tips](#).

5. Only use content that is accessible via mobile.

Not all content types are compatible with mobile devices. Adobe Flash, frames, PNG-24 images, and numerous plug-ins are not accessible for mobile. You may have these type of content on your desktop site. Ensure that you update them with mobile friendly alternatives like HTML5, JPG or GIF image formats and jQuery.

6. Make it touch friendly.

Can users easily use thumbs to navigate your site? Make sure your site design and buttons are optimized for touch and keep the number of clicks that a visitor needs to make to find their way around to a minimum.

7. Design for local.

Smartphones offers valuable location-based information that allows you to personalize content and serve up the most relevant page. A mobile user’s location can typically be determined by their IP address, GPS location or in some cases Wi-Fi network (without the user explicitly disclosing their location).

Leveraging location signals, website creators can design personalized site experience based on where the user is. For example, a personalized heading with a city or metro area name, list nearby store locations, re-center and zoom maps to the user’s location for ease of navigation, or a local phone number in place of a 1-800 number to make the service more local.

8. Simplify forms.

The number one goal for a form is conversion. Mobile landing page forms should be short and only include required fields and collect data that’s imperative. Target seven or fewer fields.

Designing an effective mobile website and landing pages should not be a set and forget onetime thing. Top performing websites and practitioners use A/B testing to see which design users respond to better and which landing page converts better. A simple tweak like location of a call-to-action button may yield a big increase in conversion. [Click here to learn more](#) about how to design a high-converting mobile landing page.