



How to build great retail mobile websites

...in 11 easy moves

An eBook for marketers

netbiscuits®



Your customers are already on mobile. Are you?

If you don't modify your sites for mobile, your users will click away - and they won't come back. But don't panic, there's still time for you to fix this...

As a retail marketer, you'll be aware that your customers are changing the way they use your websites.

The days when they browsed only from a desktop PC are gone.

Now, they're arriving at your web pages from phones, tablets, possibly even games consoles and TVs.

To keep these customers, you must ensure they can view all your content, on all devices, at all times.

If you don't optimize your sites for the vast array of devices, they will load slowly, display images that don't fit the screen and fail to run mobile-only features like touch and location recognition.

You customers will hate this.

A 2013 study of U.S shoppers by Harris Interactive said **71 per cent of smartphone owners shop with their mobile.**

However, 88 per cent said they had





experienced negative issues, with 51 per cent confirming that retailers' websites are harder to navigate on a mobile device than they are on a desktop.

Some of you may think you have the solution to this: responsive web design.

This technology lets web designers build a single site using code that adjusts the content for different devices.

Limits of responsive

Responsive is a start. But it is limited. Responsive web design sends virtually all assets to the device even if they are not used, which slows loading times. It's like packing your bags for holiday and taking everything you own, just in case.

Any retail marketer with a significant number of sites to manage needs something better.

Know your device

This is where adaptive web technology

comes in. This design solution builds intelligence into the server so it can identify the device.

It means the server can adjust what is sent based on screen size, bandwidth, connectivity type, input method (hard key or touchscreen), location and more.

This speeds up page loads, and ensures that every user gets a smooth experience appropriate to their device.

11 moves to mobile greatness

In this eBook, you will discover the 11 steps you must take to ensure your mobile websites delight and retain your retail customers. And you will find out how adaptive web technology can:

- **Deliver a consistent look and feel for retail websites across all devices**
- **Save developer time and cost**
- **Build a future-proofed web strategy**
- **Delight customers with speedy, intuitive sites whatever the device**

01



**“Make it easy
for customers to
buy from your
retail sites”**



01

The impact of new web-enabled devices on retail has been immense. People shop at home and on the bus. They may even be shopping at your rivals' sites while they are standing on your own shop floor.

comScore stats for August 2013 said **one in ten e-commerce dollars is now spent using either a smartphone or a tablet.**

Clearly, retailers that fail to build in a smooth shopping option are missing a huge opportunity.

The key here is to ensure that web layout, sizing and typography are always legible on payment forms. In a 2013 study of US shoppers by Harris Interactive **26 per cent of shoppers described the mobile web check-out process as a 'pain'.**

With a good mobile web strategy in place, you can analyze user behavior for details such as: page impressions, session duration, page paths, basket abandonment, conversion and more.

This can help you to modify your sites to encourage users to buy more.

Imagine a user browsing recipes on a mobile device. Once the site has learned a little of the user's interests, it could make suggestions.

Later, when the user is at home on a tablet, the same site would only display relevant pages as it assumes the chef is ready to cook.

How adaptive web design can help:

With adaptive web technology, mobile sites can serve navigation items to users based on analysis of previous habits. It can modify check-out screens so the menu items are legible, drop down screens work well and so on. This should improve payment conversions.

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02



“Create mobile sites that properly integrate with your back-end systems”



02

If your mobile website exists to sell, nothing is more important than this: you must devise a mobile web strategy that connects seamlessly with your back-end systems.

There are multiple requirements here. **Your mobile site should know stock levels, use a payments system that harmonizes with existing transactional platforms, and integrate analytical tools** such as those that collate user reviews and ratings.

With so many retailers exploring ideas such as 'click and collect', which brings together online ordering and high street redemption, these actions are paramount.

You need a partner that can build these systems – or work with existing web developers.

Now, some in-house teams have never built a mobile site. Others have. Either way, **making sites future-proof and integrating them well takes time and resources.**

Ideally, you want your developers to focus on great design ideas, and let someone else worry about these issues.

How adaptive web design can help:

A cloud-based adaptive platform lets your developers build sites using the code they already know – standard development languages including XML, HTML5, CSS3 and JavaScript. They just need to add an API to make their systems 'talk' to the adaptive platform.

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03



**“Abandon your
'apps for
everything'
strategy”**



03

Since the app era began in 2008, many marketers have devised mobile strategies along these lines: 'Get me an app'.

Yes, there have been successful retail apps. The world's biggest stores have the budget and the mindshare to justify the investment.

But it is unrealistic to build an app for every new property or initiative.

Why? First there's the cost. Users demand a level of polish in their apps. This is why some brands spend hundreds of thousands of dollars on each app project.

Then there's discovery. **There are over a million apps on iTunes™ and Google Play™. How can you ensure yours is discovered?**

Finally, there's distribution. Native apps (in the case of iOS™) can only be available on the official store. You need approval to get yours listed.

So you don't even control your route to market.

Rather than download dozens of apps, mobile users will find you on the mobile web. Indeed, an Xcubelabs study found 81 per cent of smartphone owners use their device to browse the web, while 68 per cent use an app.

It makes commercial and strategic sense to make mobile sites a priority.

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How adaptive web design can help:

Apps are expensive to make and update. If you're on iTunes or Google Play, you do not control your route to market. A mobile web strategy is cheaper and more adaptable. And if you use adaptive web design, your sites will deliver an experience tailored for every device, browser and data connection.

04



**“Host sites that
know where your
customers are”**



04

People love to use their phones to tell them where they are. They use maps all the time, for example.

Location data can help a retail brand deliver more relevant information to a mobile web user on the move. **It can help to bring locally relevant details to the top of the page, or deliver content in local languages with local currency.**

Retailers should also explore new technologies such as BlueTooth Beacons, which can 'buzz' opted-in users when they are nearby or in-store – and alert them to deals and offers.

Of course, your customers' location might also change the data connection they're using.

This will alter the expectations they have of their web experience. **Consumers on 3G will not expect the same rich content experience as those on Wi-Fi.**

It's crucial that your mobile websites can detect the kind of connection your customer is using to take account of these nuances.

How adaptive web design can help:

GPS is one of the key features included in the vast device profiles used by adaptive web design platforms. So the system knows the device can run location services – and it can activate them so the user enjoys a fully localized web journey.

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05



**“Deliver a great
retail web
experience to
users who are
offline”**



05

The customer who loses a connection to your site will not necessarily come back – even if it's not your fault.

On mobile, limited (or no) connectivity is a fact of life. There are tunnels. There is the countryside. There are thick brick walls.

So you need to ensure that when your customer is offline, your site doesn't have to be.

You can do this with caching. Imagine your customer is browsing your site on a train platform. With this functionality they can continue their session on the train, even when 3G drops out.

And there's an added benefit.

With so much cached locally, there's less data to load on subsequent sessions so page loading times are faster.

How adaptive web design can help:

Adaptive web technology can build in a caching feature that stores web content locally on the device. When a browser request is sent out, it loads the content directly from the local storage cache. In other words, there's no need to access the network. More caches can happen in the background when there is connectivity again.

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06



“Create retail sites for all your customers – not just iPhone users”



06

If you live in a 'mature' mobile market, you may think all mobile users have an iPhone™ or a Galaxy™. You'd be wrong.

When Netbiscuits analyzed its mobile traffic in January 2013, it found the top ten devices accounted for just over half of all activity.

Any brand building sites just for these devices is alienating more than four in ten users. And if you manage a global brand, the problem is worse: six in ten Middle Eastern and African users don't have a 'top ten' phone.

The rise of Android® is not helping. Today, 4,000 devices run on the platform. Then there are multiple mobile OSs such as BlackBerry™, Symbian™, Windows™, Firefox™ – and mobile browsers like Safari™, Chrome™ and Opera™.

Every one of these makes the mobile experience slightly different.

But don't forget. There are feature phone users out there too. Strategy Analytics says **five million people still use legacy handsets.**

Why would any retail marketer want to exclude customers by building web experiences that work well only on smarter devices?

How adaptive web design can help:

Adaptive web platforms build databases of thousands of devices, so they can identify virtually every different model connecting to the site. It means every user gets the optimum browsing experience – including the very first phones running WAP web pages from a decade ago.

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07



“Remember, slow loading sites annoy users – and can cost you millions”



07

We've all done it: clicked on a web page and then clicked away again if it doesn't load straight away.

Indeed, a survey by Smartbear in 2012 found **a one second increase in load time results in 11 per cent fewer page views.**

For sites where visitors actually spend money, slow load times are unforgivable.

No one knows the benefit of fast loading web pages better than the world's biggest e-tailer.

In a report, Amazon® revealed it increased its revenue by **one per cent for every 100 milliseconds of load time improvement.**

Clearly, a desktop site running on a mobile device will load painfully slowly.

And so, in many cases, will a site built with responsive design. Why? Because a responsive web site pulls in all of the site assets before it optimizes them for the small screen.

This is inefficient. It means the server sends unusable content to the phone – and sends such big files that pages load slowly.

How adaptive web design can help:

The fundamentals of adaptive web design are that it detects both the device capability and the connection speed before delivering web pages. This ensures that large files are only sent when appropriate. Result? Consistently fast loading sites.

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08



**“Ensure mobile
web users can
see the
pictures and
read the words”**



08

Pictures are important for any mobile site. But for retailers, they mean everything. Shoppers need to see what they're buying in the best resolution possible, ideally from multiple angles.

So it's essential for retail sites to serve images that fit the screen and display in a resolution that suits the capabilities of the device. **Without a proper mobile web strategy, images might not load at all.** And they will slow website loading times.

Type must be the correct size and in fonts appropriate for a screen held inches away (in the case of phones and tablets), or ten feet away (in the case of smart TV).

Images must fit the screen and display in a resolution that suits the capabilities of the device. Without a proper mobile web strategy, images might not load at all. And they will slow website loading times.

This will cost you money. In a Harris Interactive study, **46 per cent of U.S consumers had come across mobile websites with product images too small to make buying a decision.**

A customer who cannot read your descriptions or see your images is a lost customer.

How adaptive web design can help:

Adaptive web design knows the screen size before rendering a site for the device in question. It will serve pages that fill the screen with legible text and images that can be seen in full – whether portrait or landscape. It also converts images on the fly so designers only need to produce one hi-res image file.

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09



**“Make certain
Google loves
your mobile
retail sites”**



09

In the summer of 2013, Google® tweaked its guidelines to punish those with poor mobile sites – and reward those with great ones.

It changed its approach to ensure that when mobile users perform a web search or click through on a Google-enabled ad, they are more likely to land on a nicely optimized page.

Websites that don't have a mobile-optimized version, or don't use SEO best practices, will be demoted in the rankings.

Google also simplified device targeting, treating anything with a seven inch screen or below as a mobile device.

What difference does that make?

Well, it means the target device is now a relative unknown.

So if Google does not specify the device, you have to. That means sending consumers to sites that give the best experience to all users.

How adaptive web design can help:

The basis of an adaptive web platform is a 'device context service'. This delivers a correctly configured mobile website with the right content and the right experience to all devices. This is what exactly what Google wants from the mobile web.

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10



**“Remember that
mobile, tablet and
PC owners shop
in different ways”**



10

It's tempting to see the screen size as the main difference between PCs, tablets and mobiles. But it's more complicated than that.

These users all behave differently. PC owners generally shop at home on a broadband connection, browsing rich sites for long sessions.

Tablets owners can be at home or on the move, on 3G or Wi-Fi. Phone users will be the most data-sensitive and browse for shorter durations. Indeed, according to Adobe™, **tablet users view 70 per cent more pages per visit than smartphone users.**

Then there's the input method.

Website design needs to take account of this to ensure that a site that works well with a mouse works equally intuitively with one or more fingers.

But don't forget, the people using PCs, tablets and phones, are not mutually exclusive groups.

They can be the same person. They may start an online journey with a session on the mobile. Later, they will check back on the tablet. And they may conclude on a PC.

In each case, they will expect the same quality of experience. This is important for your brand equity and your sales.

How adaptive web design can help:

The device profiles built into an adaptive web design system include details of the input system. This means that, for example, sites served to tablets include swipe. Meanwhile sites served to phones with a hard keypad require a button press.

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11



**“Prepare your
customers for the
next generation
of internet-ready
devices”**



11

Can you imagine your customers shopping from a games console? A watch? A pair of glasses?

Well, start planning. Because **the web has already gone from PC to phone to tablet. Now, it's moving to smart TVs and 'wearables'.**

This new generation of web-enabled devices will bring new challenges. Google Glass, for example, can read web content out loud to the user. Will your site be future-proofed to do the same?

Of course, there's lots of innovation to come in the devices we already use. **Phone makers are already working on a new ideas such as voice recognition, QR code reading and NFC.**

Barcodes and NFC could be hugely important for web and high street retailers. Many providers, such as Barclays PingIt™, use barcodes to help retailers sell instantly off the page, while the next generation of mobile wallets may integrate NFC 'tap to pay' at retail point of sale.

Any retail brand with a mobile web strategy needs to take account of these changes and ensure their sites are optimized to support them.

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How adaptive web design can help:

Adaptive websites that use device services are covered from a testing perspective when it comes to new devices being launched in the market. These new profiles can be added to the library within 24 hours of launch. Typically, there are around 750 device features for each profile.



Too busy to read the whole piece? Here are those 11 steps at a glance...

1. Make it easy for mobile users to buy from your retail sites

Mobile commerce is so important. Don't ruin it by serving unusable payment pages.

2. Create mobile sites that properly integrate with your back-end systems

A great mobile shopping experience is no good if it can't check your stock levels.

3. Abandon your 'apps for everything' strategy

The mobile web is where your customers are.

4. Build sites that know where your customers are

Location-aware sites deliver a better user experience. Context is key.

5. Deliver a great retail web experience to users who are offline

Use caching to keep users shopping when in a tunnel or behind a thick wall...

6. Create mobile retail sites for all your customers - not just iPhone users

If you only build for the top ten mobile devices, you're excluding half your users

7. Remember, slow loading sites really annoy users - and can cost you millions

People will abandon your site when it loads slowly. And take their money with them.

8. Make sure mobile web users can see the pictures and read the words

Don't serve pictures that fall off the screen or display text in illegible fonts.

9. Make sure Google loves your mobile retail sites

Beware, Google's new search policy punishes sites that are not mobile-ready.

10. Remember that mobile users shop differently from tablet and PC owners

The session times vary; the input controls are different...

11. Prepare for the next generation of devices

Smart TV, wearables, games consoles...they're coming. Are you ready?

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Switch on your mobile web strategy now!

By downloading this eBook, you've proved you're serious about making your websites work beautifully on any device.

And by getting to the final page, you've learned exactly what's needed to ensure this happens.

You can start that process today with a **free, no obligation, mobile health-check** to help you find out how your current site can be optimized.

Simply complete this **form**, and we'll get you on your way to mobile readiness.

Alternatively, just email info@netbiscuits.com.

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About Netbiscuits

Netbiscuits is the global leader in software solutions for adaptive mobile web experiences used by brands worldwide. The Netbiscuits solution is powered by the Netbiscuits Cloud Platform. This technology helps reduce the cost, time and risk involved in developing mobile web applications that deliver a customized, superior mobile user experience across all connected devices.

Netbiscuits hosts in excess of 300,000 mobile web applications, supported by a comprehensive eco-system of web infrastructure vendors and systems integrators. The Netbiscuits Cloud Platform efficiently and securely delivers a tailored mobile web experience through industry-leading testing and software detection services. Intuitive shortcuts that are part of the Netbiscuits Development Framework create and deploy rich web browsing features for both legacy mobile devices, as well as the latest tablet and smartphone releases.

For more information, please visit: www.netbiscuits.com

Global headquarters: Netbiscuits GmbH, Europaallee 10,
67657 Kaiserslautern, Germany