

WHITE PAPER



Mobile-Optimized Websites A Primer for Printers



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Mobile-Optimized Websites: A Primer for Printers

As print continues to evolve, so will the business model, business offerings, and capabilities of the most innovative print service providers. Historically, printers have been able to adapt and change, continuing to offer new technologies that help their customers connect and grow their businesses with print. These technological advancements in software and the Internet have led to new products, services, and applications that were not possible even just a few years ago.

Marketers understand—and numerous studies show—that the most effective campaigns use multiple marketing channels. Much of what is seen in other media—television and radio, for example—is designed to drive the customer to a website to obtain additional information or purchase a product or service. This also applies to print—QR codes have been used to track the effectiveness of a print campaign by driving print-to-web using mobile devices. However, one thing that is consistent with the use of QR codes is their misuse.

Think about your experience with the last 10 QR codes you've scanned. Was it a useful experience? Did it engage you to act? Did it offer something meaningful? Many QR codes simply connect to a company's homepage—something that does not add any value. Others connect to websites that are not optimized for mobile. The continued, widespread misuse of QR codes represent an opportunity for printers to offer services to connect print to the web—the right way—with websites that are optimized for mobile while providing content that matters to the customer.

Mobile is a very powerful medium for many important reasons. We (almost)

always have our mobile phones with us, it's an “always on” medium, it's how we connect socially, and—most importantly—it's a medium that has payment capabilities. Some trends that point to continued strong growth with mobile and smartphones:

- Almost half (49.7%) of U.S. mobile subscribers now own smartphones, as of February 2012 (Source: Nielsen, March 2012).
- 47% of consumers use their smartphones to search for local information (Source: The e-tailing group).
- eBay mobile commerce in 2011 generated \$5 billion in retail volume (Source: Reuters, EBay sees strong mobile commerce volume growth in 2012).
- In one year (2012), Apple sold more mobile devices (iPhone, iPad, iPod) than laptop and desktop computers—ever (Sources: CNET, Apple's fiscal 2012 in numbers and statisticbrain.com).

Trends point to continued mobile usage, sales, and growth—this is where the money will be spent, and where money can be made. It's essential for print service providers to offer marketers mobile solutions, and to integrate these solutions with print.

Desktop Web Versus Mobile Web

What are some of the core differences between the mobile web and the desktop web? Obviously, the screen size requirements for mobile are much smaller than for those of a standard, desktop website. Additionally, navigation, text and graphics, bandwidth issues, the way in which the content is presented, and limitations of some types of content must also be considered. To summarize some of the major points to keep in mind when developing mobile websites:

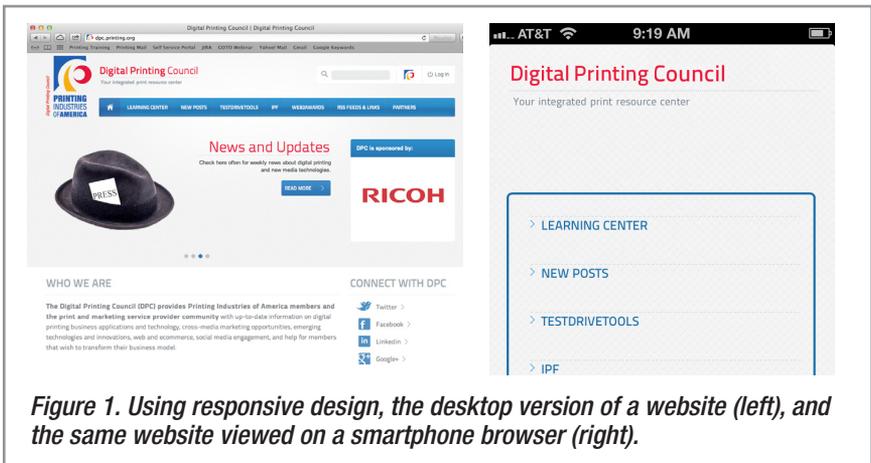
- **Prioritize content.** Prioritizing the content to be presented on the mobile web is the first consideration, and the first conversation to have with a customer. Desktop websites typically contain a wide range of content. Mobile sites should only include the most critical content—delivering the features that end-users will require when viewing a site on their smartphone. Consulting with your customer and uncovering their most critical needs are paramount when it comes to a useful mobile experience.
- **Vertical, not horizontal.** Content for the mobile web must

be presented vertically instead of horizontally. Browsing the mobile web is accomplished either by touching the screen on a smartphone. Content is presented vertically—and the links, buttons, and other navigational elements must be large enough to be easily “clicked”.

- **Text, graphics, and content restrictions.** Text must be large enough to be viewed easily on a small screen. Because of the slower download speeds on mobile networks and the limited available screen size for displaying the content, graphics and images should be used at a minimum. Finally, Adobe Flash should be avoided on mobile sites since iOS and the iPhone do not support Flash-based content.
- **Search.** As mentioned in a statistic earlier, most search is performed locally on mobile devices. Mobile search is often based on geolocation services in the smartphone, so it’s critical that the mobile website is optimized properly for search.

Options for Constructing a Mobile Site

There are many options available for building a mobile website. Building a mobile site “from the ground up” using HTML5 is the most flexible option, but also requires the most programming expertise. These sites are referred to as responsive, meaning the content displayed will resize based on the screen size of the device (Figure 1).



Another option for building a mobile website is using jQuery Mobile. jQuery Mobile is compatible with most smartphones, and is a touch-optimized framework for building mobile sites. Best of all, introduced in Adobe Dreamweaver 5.5 is a mobile site builder based on jQuery Mobile that allows you to construct mobile sites without an extensive knowledge of code.

Many websites are also built on open-source CMS such as WordPress, Joomla, and Drupal. Many themes are available (both free and for purchase) that are responsive in design. There are also plug-ins, extensions, and modules for websites built on these platforms that will optimize site content for mobile when accessed via a smartphone browser (Figure 2).

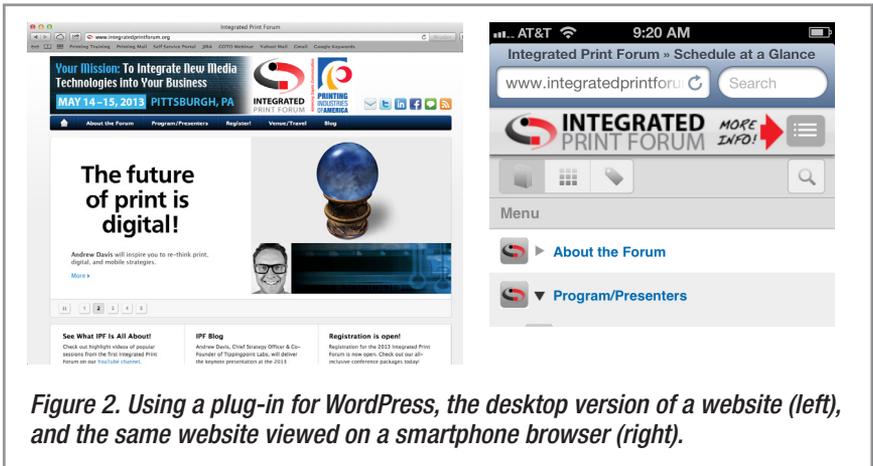


Figure 2. Using a plug-in for WordPress, the desktop version of a website (left), and the same website viewed on a smartphone browser (right).

Finally, online mobile website creation tools represent a great way for printers to get started offering mobile websites to their customers as part of an integrated print solution—mainly because this option requires no coding experience to construct and launch a mobile website. Compatible with most smartphones, the providers of this technology include easy-to-use administrative functions such as analytics reporting and optimized search. Examples of some of the online mobile website offerings—many of which you can try for free—can be found in Figure 3.

Company	Product	Website
2ergo Ltd	2ergo	http://www.2ergo.com
Afilias Technologies Ltd.	goMobi	http://gomobi.info/
Akmin Technologies	mobiSiteGalore	http://www.mobisitegalore.com/
AllViso Solutions Ltd.	Smartviso	http://www.smartviso.com/
FiddleFly, Inc.	FiddleFly	http://www.fiddlefly.com/
interlinkONE	iFlyMobi	http://iflymobi.com/
Kishkee	Kishkee	http://www.kishkee.com/
MoFuse	MoFuse	http://mofuse.com/
TenPearls, LLC	Mobeezo	http://www.mobeezo.com/
UAB XtGem	XtGem	http://xtgem.com/
Wapple.net Ltd.	Wapple	http://wapple.net/
Wirenode	Wirenode	http://www.wirenode.com/

Figure 3. Examples of online mobile website creation tools.

Summary

The most innovative printers are transforming their business and offering more to their customers than just print alone. The statistics are very clear as mobile points to continued growth and opportunity. A forward-thinking approach to partnering with marketers and providing cross-media business opportunities is a recipe for success. QR codes—along with the right mobile experience—is another tool that can be offered to marketers as part of an integrated print solution.

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