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Diving Into the Mobile Web - How Brands Can Optimize in 2014

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The age of e-commerce is fully upon us and the rage is all mobile. Mobile shopping -- from smartphones to tablets -- has been on a steady rise in recent years. A new study found that exactly 33 percent of all online shoppers for the top 10 retail brands use their mobile devices for shopping and purchases. For any business, no matter the size, it is vital to have a streamlined and fully functional mobile solution ready for consumers. As smartphone and tablet use continues to grow, businesses without mobile-optimized websites risk losing out on potential sales.

Benefits of Being Portable

Creating a specifically mobile website has added benefits beyond simply allowing viewers to access an easy-to-view version of a brand's page. The functionality of portable devices can actually translate into the new site, creating additional features for consumers. Location services, for instance, are very popular with cell phones and tablets and can have added benefits for shoppers. Brands can offer product deals based on one's location to boost sales as well as consumer interest. Mobile websites can also allow for click-to-call capabilities, making it simpler for customers to inquire about store hours, sales and product details.

In many cases, websites catered to cell phones and tablets also have the added benefit of boosting traffic. A well-designed mobile website can help improve Google search rankings, as the search engine gives precedence to mobile-friendly pages. But brands should take note -- poor mobile websites with weak or glitchy functionality will actually reduce search rankings. Google even published the criteria affecting poor rankings for portable device websites, highlighting broken videos and faulty redirect links as the main culprits.

How to Make Mobile a Reality

Many brands are hesitant to create websites designed specifically for portable devices, thinking they will have to create new platforms from scratch. Most businesses don't realize, however, that creating a mobile site is actually very simple. Mashable published an article featuring 8 easy-to-use tools for creating your brand's mobile site. Mobify, for example, uses a simple interface to help businesses build fully functional mobile sites in mere minutes. Instead of rebuilding an entire site over the course of weeks, like some companies expect, designing your portable website is as simple as plugging in a few specifications and pressing OK.

Brands must be smart, however, when deciding what content to include on their mobile pages. Be conscious that smartphone and tablet-optimized websites will be viewed on smaller screens. Many companies choose to keep mobile sites condensed for this reason. Think of these pages as the bare essentials. Don't bombard customers with flash ads and lots of text, which will slow down load times. Make it easy for viewers to see products, make purchases and check on order statuses.

Ensuring a Website is Consumer-Ready

The best way to guarantee a mobile website is ready for smartphones and tablets is to test it on each operating software, on both sets of devices. This is by far the most tedious process of constructing a mobile site, yet it ensures that each link and redirect has been tested effectively. Marketers most concerned with their Google ranking should definitely take the time to test the new site by hand.

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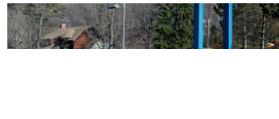
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Brands looking to save time have another option they can employ to assess mobile-readiness, however it is not as effective as an organic run-through of each page. Emulators such as GoGoMeter, which is a product of Google, allows you to view your website as it would appear on a specific mobile device. This particular emulator also offers a free summary of your website's functionality, which is helpful when determining pages that need editing.

Mobile websites have the potential to greatly increase both sales and customer satisfaction if designed properly. Essentially, these websites fill the need for consumers on-the-go, who are looking to make purchasing decisions in a hurry. There is an array of tools now available to businesses looking to bring their websites into the ecommerce mobile race, making it easier than ever before to go mobile. With the promise of higher traffic and boosted functionality, there is no reason for brands to not optimize mobile websites.

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