

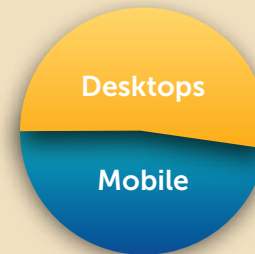
Responsive Design vs. Mobile-Friendly Websites

10 Things You Need to Know About Your Website

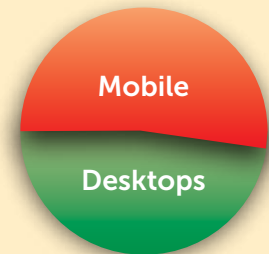


Traffic to the two major U.S. search engines shows that a substantial proportion of their traffic comes from mobile devices. For Google, mobile comprised almost half of all traffic from June to November 2014, with 52 percent coming from desktops and 48 percent from mobile. However, **in November, mobile traffic surpassed the quantity of visits from desktop, marking the turning point on the way to mobile dominance for Google.** – ClickZ.com

Google
Traffic



June-November 2014



November 2014



Mobile-friendly vs. Responsive Design

Mobile-friendly

A mobile-friendly site is essentially a copy of your website, where the server does the work to deliver optimized pages that will appear smaller on a phone and may not work ideally on a touchscreen device. It will, however, be functional.

Responsive Design

In responsive design, the site automatically adjusts and reformats itself according to the user's behavior and environment, based on the device's screen size, platform, and orientation.



Two Domains vs. One

Two Domains

With a mobile site, you will have and maintain a second sub-domain (EX: "m.domain.com") for the mobile-friendly version of your site.

One Domain

With a responsive design you will have and maintain one single domain. Coding on the back-end is changed to accommodate the responsive nature of the site.



SEO Implications

If you rely on organic search traffic heavily, you should know:

Having two domains (primary and sub-domain) might have a negative effect on your organic search traffic, and cause you to have to manage and maintain two separate silos of content.

Google considers the better solution to have a responsive design website and maintain a single shared site – among other things, avoiding unnecessary and complicated redirects.



Link Equity

Because a mobile site uses a separate domain, links shared from mobile browsers don't count as search link equity toward your primary site.

Since responsive design simply embeds new code on the back-end of your primary website, your company's link equity is preserved.





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Re-work vs. Re-design

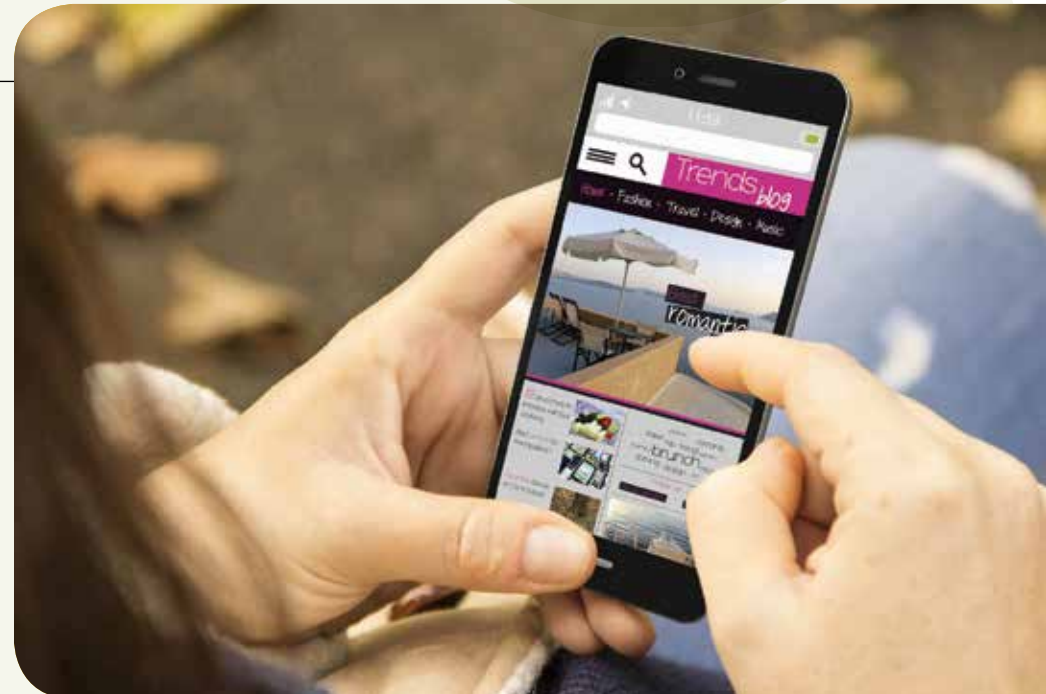
Mobile sites can be refreshed and re-worked to stay current with next-generation phones and mobile devices. This may be a good choice when the expense to redesign responsively is simply too high to absorb at the present time.

Responsive design is designed to work across all devices (mobile and tablet) without requiring extensive additional programming. Ultimately, this could be a better return on your investment in your website. Consequently, up-front costs can be slightly higher than a standard site build, and the project can be more time intensive.

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Key features of a mobile-friendly website:

- Static content
- Simplified, pre-determined primary navigation
- Images display smaller
- Not reliant on a mobile operating system to function properly





Key features of a responsive website:

- Dynamic content
- Navigation is larger, reformatted, condensed or altered to be "thumb-friendly"
- Optimized images
- Changes and enhancements made will propagate across any device



How to know if you have a responsive website.

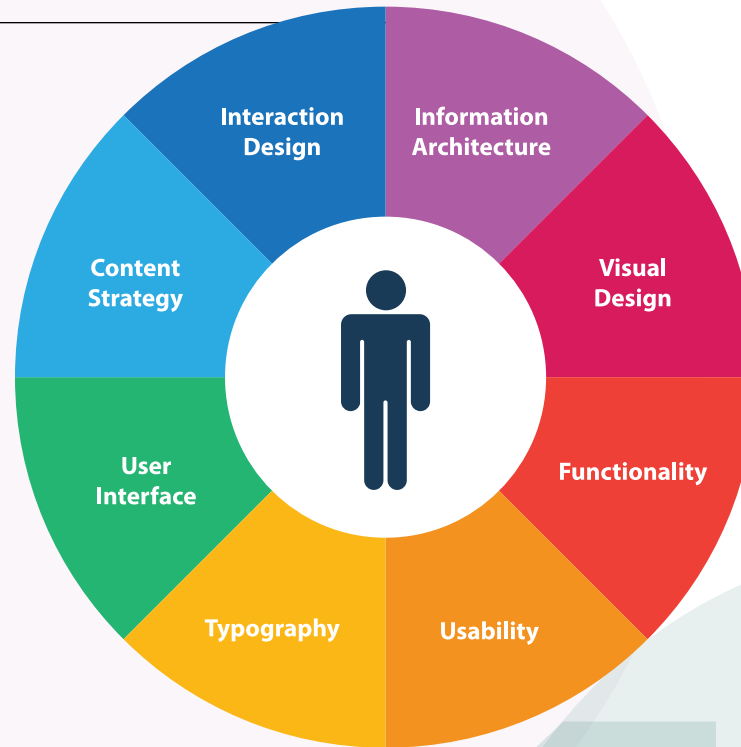
On your computer, reduce your browser's window size from full screen down to very small. If the appearance of the text, images and menu change as you get smaller, the site is responsive.



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UX (User Experience)

Think about all of the screens your users will be viewing your website on and focus on the user experience as you evaluate your site, refresh or re-work your current site, or build a new responsive design website. UX is king!



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Test Your Website

The following two sites will give you an idea of how your website appears on multiple mobile and tablet devices.

They're not foolproof, but they're pretty cool!

<https://www.browserstack.com/responsive>

<http://responsivedesignchecker.com>

In Closing...

Should you consider a new responsive design website? Every situation is different. Responsive is a great concept, but it is not a one-size-fits-all solution. In fact financial, multi-step, data entry, or form input sites may not be good candidates for responsive design. Start by knowing what percentage of your site visitors are on mobile devices (Google Analytics will give you this information), and what your current site looks like as well as the user experience on a mobile device. If you find a large mobile audience viewing your website (>35%), perhaps it's time to go responsive!

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