

Mobile Internet

Understanding the mobile internet, why it's relevant NOW and what you need to consider.

Who can benefit from this paper?

This paper has been put together to help those who have any form of digital strategy make the most of the explosion of mobile internet usage. Is this you? Well, if you actively drive people to your website, use it to impart information, enable purchases, use your site as part of your PR activity or consider it at least part of your organisation's public facing strategy then this paper is for you!

Setting the scene

- Mobile broadband subscriptions overtook fixed broadband subscribers in 2008, highlighting the huge potential for the mobile Internet International Telecommunications Union
- Total mobile broadband connections (across Europe) will increase in number from 32 million in 2009 to almost 120 million in 2015, at a CAGR of 24.8% in 2009–2015. Analysys Mason, July 2010
- Europeans spend an average of 6.4 hours per week on mobile internetcompared to 4.8 hours reading newspapers and 4.1 hours reading magazines Multilingual Search
- 29% follow brands directly resulting from the higher levels of emotional and rational connection internet usage offers Multilingual Search

As easily Google-able stats have demonstrated, the world of mobile internet usage is very much upon us and quite possibly reflected by your own user habits. Mobile devices are no longer used for just making calls but also socialising, purchasing, searching, navigating, interacting, self-serving etc. All are now common place and no longer considered a luxury but a necessity. This indicates the explosion in mobile internet is not simply a fad or short lived trend but a significant behavioural change. It is a behaviour which is here to stay. And as a result businesses need to sit up and realise the impact this will have on how they interact, engage and communicate with their customers.

What's driving the mobile revolution?

- **Social Networking** – this barely needs highlighting but the prolific use of social networks and micro blogging in real time on the likes of Facebook and Twitter have absolutely become the norm for millions.
- **Shopping** – M-commerce is one of the largest areas of growth in mobile internet usage, and it clearly makes sense for any organisation selling online. Why wait for consumers to be at home or at work and in front of desktop computers? Empower consumers to buy from you anytime, anyplace!
- **News and Information Resources** – as our lives become increasingly 'on the go' the use of this type of service, getting information sent in real time to your mobile device or having access when it suits you, enables you to stay connected with the world at large.
- **Travel** – providing the consumer with the ability to self serve at their convenience enables a great customer service, naturally reduces contact centre costs, and therefore a greater propensity of use.
- **Leisure and Entertainment** – music, sports, restaurants, theatres, cinemas. Enabling customers to make decisions on what to do, where to go, even make reservations no matter where they are maximises the consumer's ability to use your products and services.
- **Forward Thinking Brands** – interacting with customers how they want, where they want and when they want can only empower greater engagement. By putting your brand in the consumer's hand and utilising an integrated approach to your communications with the mobile user you can open up a whole new world of promotional opportunity.

The Mobile Internet User Vs Desktop User

There are major differences in what mobile internet consumers use the internet for with very different expectations and understanding this is key to unlocking why mobile strategy should form an ever increasingly important part of your digital marketing strategy.

Considering exactly what mobile internet users need from a more 'on the go' experience is vital, think about your own experiences, do you use the mobile internet for general browsing or do you have an action in mind?

What are you actually trying to achieve?

- Online sessions conducted via mobile devices are focused on highly specific activities including problem-solving, speedy fact checking and quick communication while out and about. This contrasts with fixed devices where online activity tends to be more general browsing. http://www.intersperience.com/article_more.asp?art_id=26

At the core of any mobile internet experience is quick, easy, action orientated access. Truly understanding what a mobile user will want from your site is paramount to building a user experience which enables them to get what they want fast and with minimal effort. Trying to search your way around a site with tons of text and large pictures which take an age to download on a mobile device can be frustrating and prove counterproductive to an 'on the go' experience.

Navigating and finding your way round any site can be tricky unless the customer journey has been clearly thought through let alone on a small screen where images, content and links are compressed and are no longer viewable, readable or clickable.

Things you need to consider for a practical user experience:

- **Take time** – to understand what the key things your site visitors are looking to achieve when using a mobile device Vs a desktop.
- **Content is king** – only present content which reflects a relevant user experience.
- **Navigation needs to be intuitive** – ensure that how your visitors get around your site is as simple and easy as possible.
- **Calls to action** – keep the inputting of information to a bare minimum, typing on a smaller device is difficult and makes for a cumbersome experience.

Limitations

- Mobile internet devices have some inherent limitations which need to be recognised so we can make sure you can avoid some of the pitfalls associated with what is still a relatively new technology.
- Limited processing power and bandwidth means slower speeds of download, this means paying attention to the size and sorts of content which you display on your site.
- Small screen sizes - this may seem obvious but the reality is the smaller the viewable screen the bigger the impact it can have on the user experience. Considering what is viewable and makes sense for a desktop user can be incredibly different for that of a mobile experience.
- Thought should be given to how much text needs to be scrolled through, image sizes, the proximity of links - larger fingers can easily hit the wrong links if placed too close together etc.
- Small keyboard and inputting methods can make filling in forms and responding to 'calls to action' painfully slow and deter any prospect from interacting with your organisation.
- There is a huge variance in the size and shape of mobile devices with a significant difference in browsing and data capabilities.

In Summary

Mobile consumers can no longer be seen as an optional extra or a marginal part of the digital world which might happen in a few years. They are already here, daily searching and interacting with brands in a way that suits their lives.

If you have not yet reviewed your mobile internet customer experience and taken time to understand what mobile consumers may want, and therefore the journey they will take, in the context of mobile usage limitations, you may be deterring customers from engaging.

So what this comes down to is a huge opportunity to maximise your marketing spend - in simple terms developing your communications strategy to include the mobile internet user and deliberately targeting this active consumer and in a way in which they choose to communicate will encourage greater interaction.

By integrating your marketing and communications strategy, and driving promotions and tactical activity specifically placed for mobile consumers, you can optimise the user experience and encourage repeated use through the ideal customer engagement strategy.