

Websites for the Mobile Internet

Serving the needs of a new generation of mobile users



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Overview

It is widely expected that within the next five years more users will connect to the Internet over mobile devices than from desktop PCs. That represents staggering growth - so what do you need to do to take advantage of this change? This document describes the general approach to designing mobile sites and gives examples of "best practice".

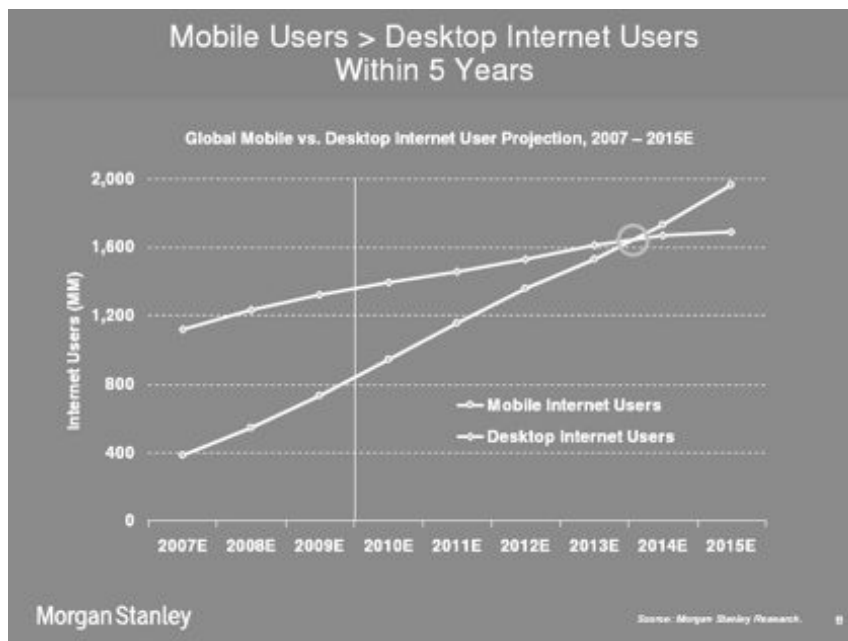


Figure 1 - Growth of Mobile Internet

The majority of users today experience your website through a desktop browser so they will see your homepage something like depicted in the figure below.



Figure 2 - A Typical Homepage on a Desktop Device

<http://www.zenithchambers.co.uk>

If a mobile user visits they will see exactly the same thing - but navigation on a small device is awkward and requires lots of zooming with nimble hands.



Figure 3 - Typical Desktop Website on a Mobile Device

However, if the firm has invested in a mobile site, then things will look very different - a clean simple website which immediately makes the user feel at ease.



Figure 4 - Example of a Mobile Site

The objective of a mobile website for a UK Law Firm should not be to replicate **ALL** the content of the main website - think of it more as the "Readers Digest" version of your site - it should be a well crafted summary containing answers to the most common questions but leaving users in no doubt that they need to click through to the main website if they need more in-depth information.

Here are some other examples of popular websites and their mobile siblings:



www.amazon.co.uk



www.bbc.co.uk



www.ebay.co.uk



Features of Our Mobile Sites

- **Ease of Use:** This is the primary objective. By designing specifically for small screens and large fingers we ensure that the user experience is swift and positive.
- **Large buttons:** All important links are presented as "buttons" rather than simple hyperlinked text (ideal for big fingers to navigate easily)
- **Simplified navigation:** Our sites present navigation in a simplified fashion and avoid traditional drop-down menus that can be awkward to use on hand-held devices (and would also require JavaScript to be enabled on the mobile device).
- **Less text:** Our mobile sites don't use exactly the same text as found on the main website. The text is usually distilled to its absolute essence and made much shorter.
- **High speed:** Mobile sites always carry a logo but very often don't have many other images. This, combined with simplified HTML and CSS, ensures that all pages are lightweight and therefore fast in operation.
- **Shared staff data:** We automatically publish all staff data from the desktop site to the mobile site so you don't ever have to worry about keeping both sites up-to-date in tandem.
- **Auto browser detection:** The desktop website automatically detects that you are using a mobile device but the desktop website is always just a tap away.
- **Linking to desktop website:** It makes sense to redirect mobile users to the mobile website, but we also allow them to link back to the desktop website if that's what they really want to do.
- **Technical development:** The capabilities of mobile phones are obviously an area of intense competition and rapid technological change. We monitor this all for you and make changes to the technical specification of your site when necessary (which is covered by the monthly operating costs outlined on the next page). For example, we recently linked contact pages directly to the Google Maps application (where present) rather than linking to Google maps in the mobile browser.
- **Easy Editing:** Content for the mobile site is managed via your main desktop site and published automatically onto a dedicated mobile site. You can login at any time to edit text or to create additional pages.

Design Options

We offer two levels of service.

- **Standard Design and Build:** Most clients tell us that they want a mobile website but want to minimise the cost. If that sounds like you then this is the service you need. What we do is:
 - Implement standard design template
 - Apply your logo
 - Match colour theme to your desktop website
 - Add brand image to the homepage
 - Add content
 - About Us
 - Services
 - People
 - Contact (offices)
 - Add footer and legal notices
 - Add Google Analytics
 - Review to approve the site
 - Make the site live

- **Bespoke Design and Build:** For clients who want to go beyond this we are delighted to offer a more traditional "bespoke" service that involves more design time and (possibly) also more technical work to implement. The basic process is:
 - Conduct a "Design Briefing" to discuss requirements and agree design scope
 - Prepare design concepts
 - Review designs and obtain feedback
 - Revise the designs
 - Review to approve the designs
 - Build the site (may include bespoke features)
 - Review the site
 - Modifications to site
 - Review to approve the site
 - Make the site live

Cost Comparison

	Standard Design & Build	Bespoke Design & Build
Design	Fast-track (based on an existing template)	Created following a "Design Briefing" following by a series of reviews
Build	Fast-track (based on an existing template)	Bespoke
Staff data	Appears automatically from the desktop website	Appears automatically from the desktop website
Other Content	Brief description of services (including team lists), our people, about us, and contact pages.	Bespoke
One-time "set-up" cost	from £250 <3 partners £250 3-4 partners £300 5-6 partners £350 7+ partners £500	from £1,000 Time/costs will vary depending on the specific features requested
Monthly operating cost (including technology license, hosting and support)	from £25/mth <3 partners £25 3-4 partners £30 5-6 partners £35 7+ partners £50	from £50/mth Time/costs may vary depending on the specific features requested

Frequently Asked Questions

1.1 Is a mobile website the same thing as a mobile application?

No - a mobile application is something that is downloaded from an "app store". It might be free or chargeable but it always runs as a separate application on the mobile device. Usually this means that the application can be used even when the device is not connected to the Internet. In contrast, a mobile website is accessed via the web browser of the mobile device and requires the user to be Internet connected. Typically, mobile applications make sense when significant complexity of user interaction is required or if the functionality needs to be chargeable. In most other situations, mobile websites are the most cost effective method of delivering content services. Obviously the most important difference is that an app has to be downloaded (and you can't force users to download them) whereas a mobile website is available to all through the phone's browser without any previous download required.

1.2 What is a .mobi domain name (and is it significant)?

.mobi is a top-level domain (TLD) approved by ICANN in 2005, and intended to signify content that has been optimised for mobile devices. It is recommended practice but not technically essential for a mobile site to have a domain name of .mobi. Mobile sites are sometimes made to coexist with the main site like www.bbc.co.uk/news/mobile but we do not recommend that.

If you can't obtain your name.mobi then common practice (and the next best thing) is to run the site off a sub-domain called "m" so the domain of the mobile site becomes something like m.name.co.uk

1.3 What mobile devices are supported?

Mobile websites use the same Internet technology as ordinary websites but because of small screen size a mobile website will typically be structured differently and be more concise in its language.

1.4 Does it make sense to use Flash on a mobile website?

Flash is not supported by Apple on the iPhone, iPod or iPad (and Apple has no plans for it to be supported) - the reason is that Apple (and many other developers) feel that other more open technologies should be used instead like JavaScript and HTML5. Whatever the pros and cons of the technical argument between Apple and Adobe over the use of Flash, one thing is certain: Apple own a huge chunk of the mobile Internet and for this reason alone we recommend avoiding Flash on websites in general and mobile websites in particular.

1.5 Is JavaScript a supported technology?

Desktop websites often use JavaScript to achieve effects like drop-down menus and actions like the "reveal" as the user clicks or rolls-over objects on the page. The latest smart-phones support JavaScript but there are plenty of older ones that do not. And to further complicate matters, there are popular phones like the older Blackberry that support JavaScript but were shipped with JavaScript disabled. For these reasons we do not use JavaScript on our mobile sites.

1.6 Can I have a different design for my mobile website?

Yes - there are design elements of a mobile site and so there can be a normal process of design, review and approval. However, mobile sites are optimised for speed and usability (with very few images) so the design decisions are significantly more limited than is the case for an ordinary desktop website.

1.7 Can my existing website be accessed from mobile devices?

Yes - all the websites built by us are standards [compliant](#), which means that they should work OK with modern smart-phones. Because of the complex layout and features of some desktop sites the reproduction on a mobile device may not be exactly the same as on a desktop, however, problems tend to be cosmetic rather than functional. The primary reason for having a mobile website is to optimise the delivery of your message for the mobile user (not because your existing website is inaccessible to mobile users).

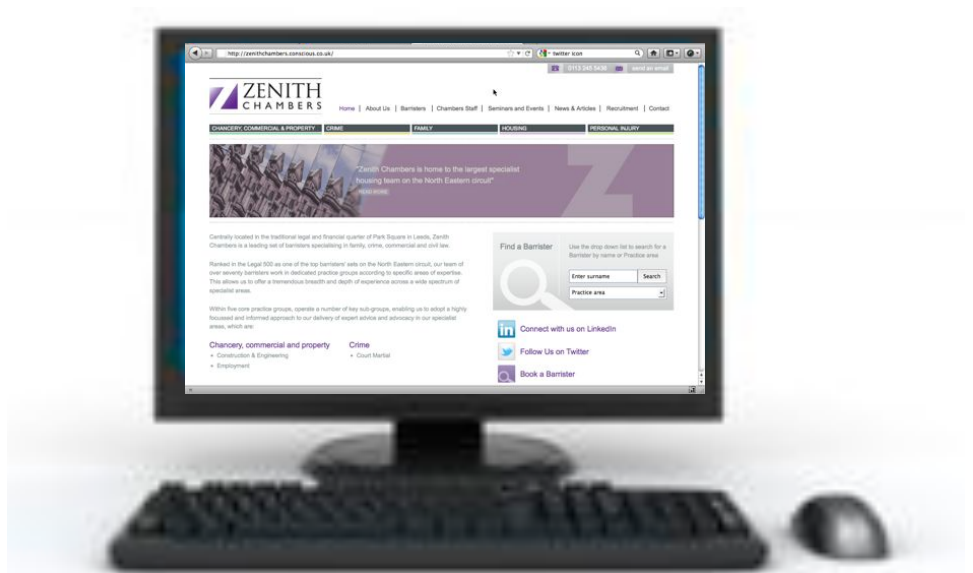
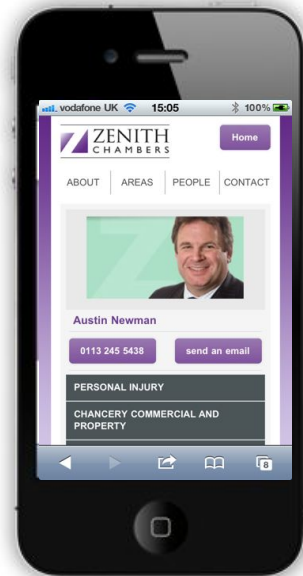
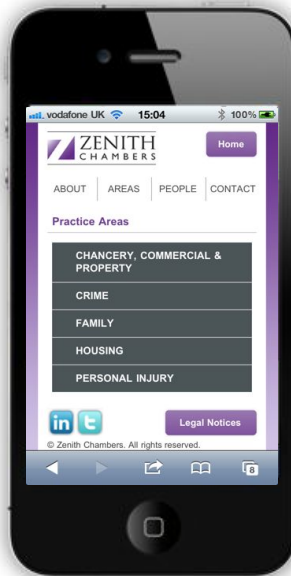
1.8 Will Google index my mobile site?

Yes. We can if you prefer tell the search engines not to index the mobile site by adding a "noindex" statement to the robots.txt on the mobile website

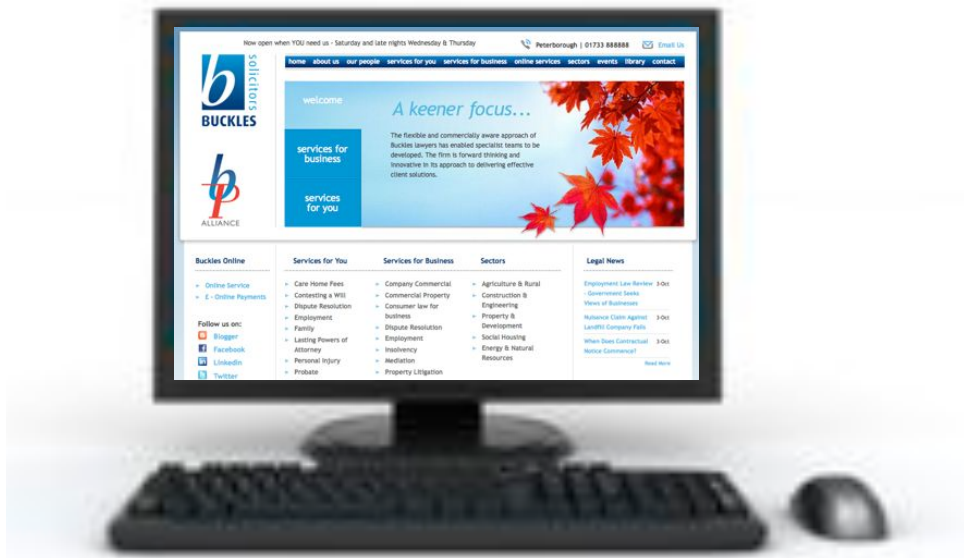
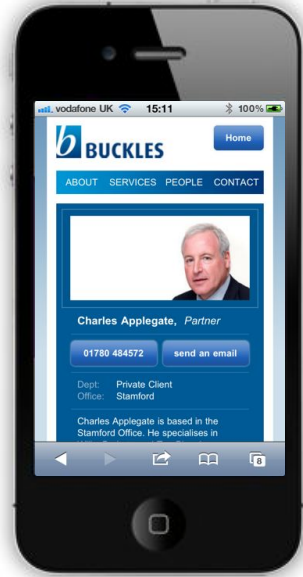
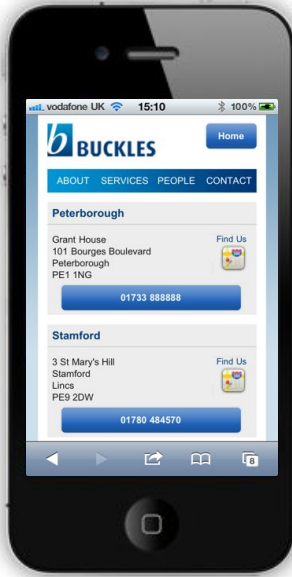
1.9 Will I be able to track how many people are using the mobile site?

Yes. Your mobile site will be made to use the same Google Analytics tracking code as your main website so you will be able to see exactly who is using the mobile site and monitor trends.

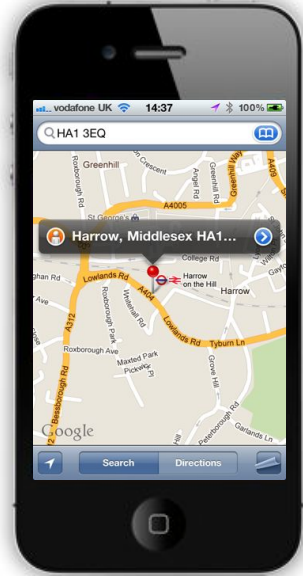
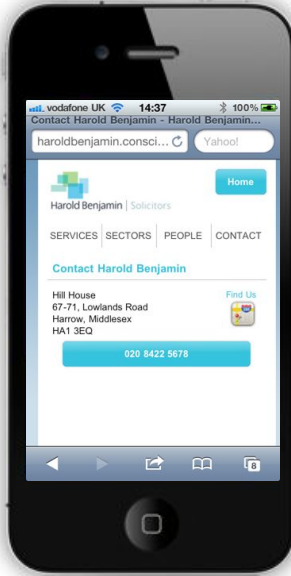
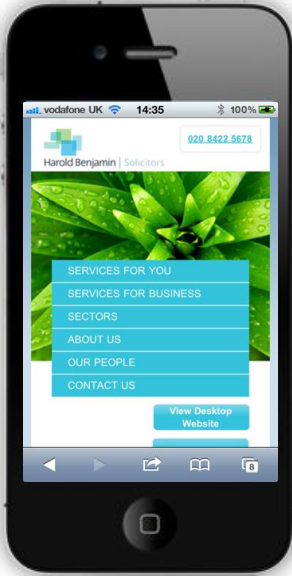
Appendix A - Sample Sites



<http://www.zenithchambers.co.uk>



<http://www.buckles-law.co.uk>



<http://www.haroldbenjamin.com>

Appendix B- Usage Trends

The chart shown below illustrates the simple fact that people tend to use their smart-phones more than they do their ordinary phones. That is perhaps not surprising but what is surprising is that even though they use their phone more, they actually use it for voice calls rather less. In fact, the total time spent on voice calls is falling by about 2% per year in most western countries.

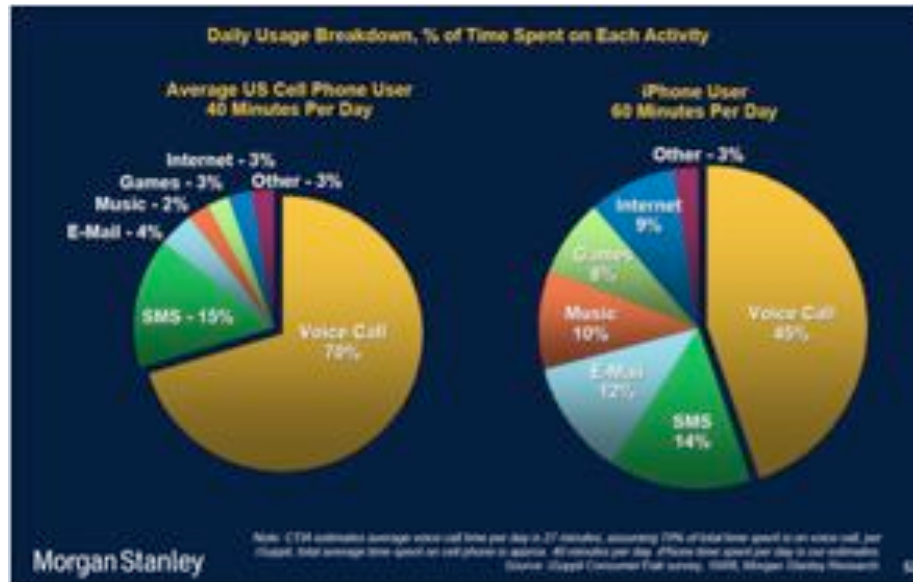


Figure 5 - Data Usage is Growing

Not all "smart phones" are born equal - some are far more usable than others (particularly when it comes to browsing the web). The iPhone established itself from launch as the market leader as far as "usability" is concerned, however, the other smart-phones are catching up fast.

Android is the operating system developed by Google which has become popular with phone manufactures and has recently started to outsell the iPhone.

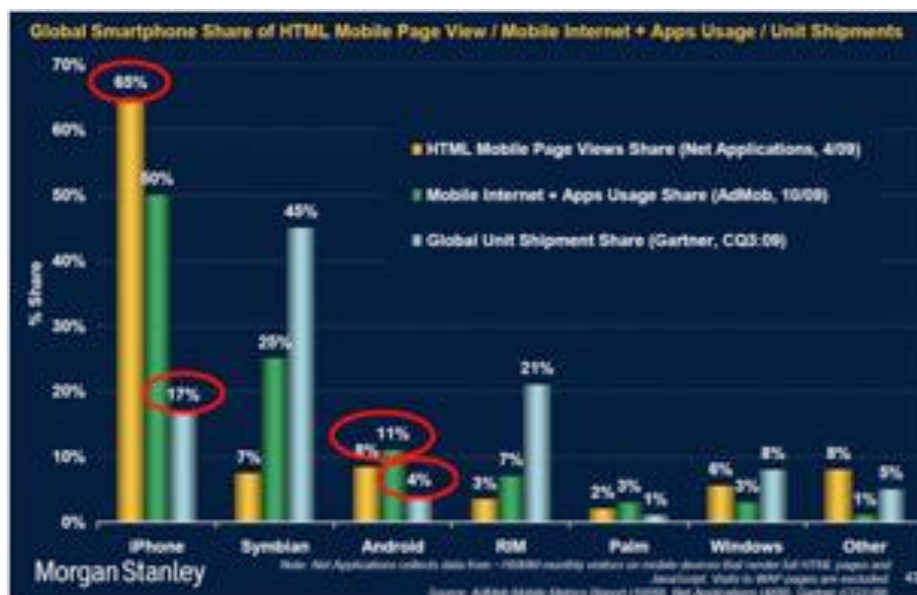


Figure 6 - Global Market Share





Appendix C - Technical Specifications

Because of the way we build mobile sites (using only very basic CSS and HTML) they work brilliantly on a very large number of devices. However, there are lots of mobile devices and we can't test on all of them.

Fortunately, the most popular smart-phones use browsers that share a lot in common - many are based on Webkit (which powers browsers such as Safari on the iPhone, the Google Android Browser, the Palm browser and the Nokia browser). Modern phones that use browsers that are based on WebKit are unlikely to experience any problems using normal websites and are extremely unlikely to have any difficulty using the simplified formats used on our mobile websites.



The table below shows many of the most popular models and in the notes section we indicate whether we test on that specific device. We also comment on any known issues with the capability of the device. Obviously devices not used for testing are not guaranteed.

Device	Screen Size	Notes
	<p>iPhone 4 The display is 640 x 940 pixels and has a 3:2 aspect ratio.</p> <p>Portrait and landscape.</p>	<p>Browser is Safari running on Unix iOS. Very good capability. Rarely any issues.</p> <p>Fully Tested/Supported</p>
	<p>iPhone 3 The display is 320 x 480 pixels and has a 3:2 aspect ratio. The resolution is 163 ppi (pixels per inch).</p> <p>Portrait and landscape.</p>	<p>As above.</p> <p>Fully Tested/Supported</p>
	<p>iTouch The display is 320 x 480 pixels and has an 3:2 aspect ratio. The resolution is 163 ppi (pixels per inch).</p> <p>Portrait and landscape.</p>	<p>As above.</p> <p>Fully Tested/Supported</p>
	<p>iPad The display is 1024x768 (like some standard laptop and desktop displays)</p> <p>Portrait and landscape.</p>	<p>N/A</p> <p>This device would normally access the desktop website (it would not be redirected to the mobile site)</p>

	<p>BlackBerry Bold The display is 480 x 360</p>	<p>Fully Tested/Supported</p>
	<p>BlackBerry Torch The display is 360 x 480 (the same resolution as the BlackBerry Storm and BlackBerry Storm 2)</p>	<p>The first BlackBerry to have a good web browser - based on WebKit (which is also the basis of the browser used by all the Apple devices).</p> <p>Supported (but not fully tested on this device)</p>
	<p>BlackBerry Storm The display is 480x360 (the same resolution as the BlackBerry Storm and BlackBerry Storm 2)</p>	<p>No known issues. Supported (but not fully tested on this device)</p>
	<p>Nokia N8 The display is 360 x 640</p>	<p>No known issues. Supported (but not fully tested on this device)</p>
	<p>HTC Sensation The display is 450 x 960</p>	<p>Fully Tested/Supported</p>

For more information about the specific browser-features that each mobile device supports please see <http://www.quirksmode.org/m/table.html>