

Five reasons why search advertisers need to consider responsive web design

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The sites that make their content both accessible and consistent will be the ones that succeed. Below are five reasons why responsive design must be a priority for advertisers in the near future.

Growth in the use of “mobile” devices

The use of mobile devices has grown year on year and shows no sign of slowing down. The sales and use of PC and desktop computers is on a steady decline. With such high penetration rates of mobile devices advertisers need to acknowledge the change in search behaviour. The different categories of device are also increasingly homogenising, meaning it is crucially important to optimise your site for mobile.

Improved site engagement

Mobile devices are often the first “proactive” point of interaction for users. Therefore mobile content needs to be the most engaging. At the very least, mobile sites must be consistent with what can be consumed on more “traditional” devices for a more congruous user experience. Some of our clients at Agenda21 have experienced conversion rates doubling after introducing a responsive design site. Mobile devices do, however, yield lower conversion rates. It’s not completely clear why this is, but we can speculate that trust issues and early adoption of mobile searching are at play. Conversion rates for mobile devices should increase in the near future as users become more used to the layout and functionality.

Mobile search space is still cheaper

By using responsive design to ensure optimal experience for users, there is an opportunity to capitalise on cheaper CPCs. Despite Google’s best efforts, advertisers are still reluctant to invest in mobile search activity with the same vigour as desktop and tablet, meaning a cheaper environment across many verticals. The cheaper traffic can actually offset poorer conversion rates to bring about a more efficient return.

Data consolidation

Responsive design means using only one site. Therefore only one site needs to be tagged. This means data no longer needs to be stitched together in order to get an overall picture. Data can then be segmented to view site stats for the different devices, making analytics and optimisation more straightforward.

Responsive design versus app

Despite the inroads that are being made in to in-app tracking, I always suggest that having a consistent site experience is more important. An optimised site provides the initial engagement, whereas an app's purpose is focused on user retention. An app is very rarely going to provide you with brand new customer engagement. Rather than a choice of the two, ideally an organisation should prioritise which is the right move for them.