Return on Responsive Web Design

Introduction

Responsive web design is increasingly becoming one of the most often discussed and debated approaches to delivering a consistent and optimized web experience to any display, whether it's a high-resolution tablet device, a smartphone, or a 50-inch monitor. As everything from billboards to watches becomes Internet-enabled, and device sizes and resolutions are no longer standard, many organizations with strong dependencies on a persistent web presence are investing in resources, platforms, and processes to:

- Build brand awareness and engagement with mobile users

- Grow reach across high-value demographics in the mobile segment with context-relevant content

- Increase customer loyalty with consistent, high-quality digital experiences across devices

- Optimize the investment in resources required to produce and maintain these experiences

Whether your organization is in the early stages of investigating a responsive web design approach or has been using responsive web design techniques for some time, the best practices, examples, and tips outlined in this paper will help you understand when a responsive design approach is best and how to optimize it. It outlines factors that influence successful business results and provides tips to achieve efficiency in content design, management, and publishing, ultimately increasing the return on your investment in responsive design.

Growth in mobility—the driving force for responsive web design

A mobile site with a solid user experience for smartphones and tablets is critical. The rise of smartphones and the increased use of tablets are well documented. Adobe's 2013 Mobile Consumer Survey finds that:

- Globally, websites are getting more traffic from tablets than smartphones.

- Internet users view 70% more pages per visit when browsing on a tablet compared to a smartphone.
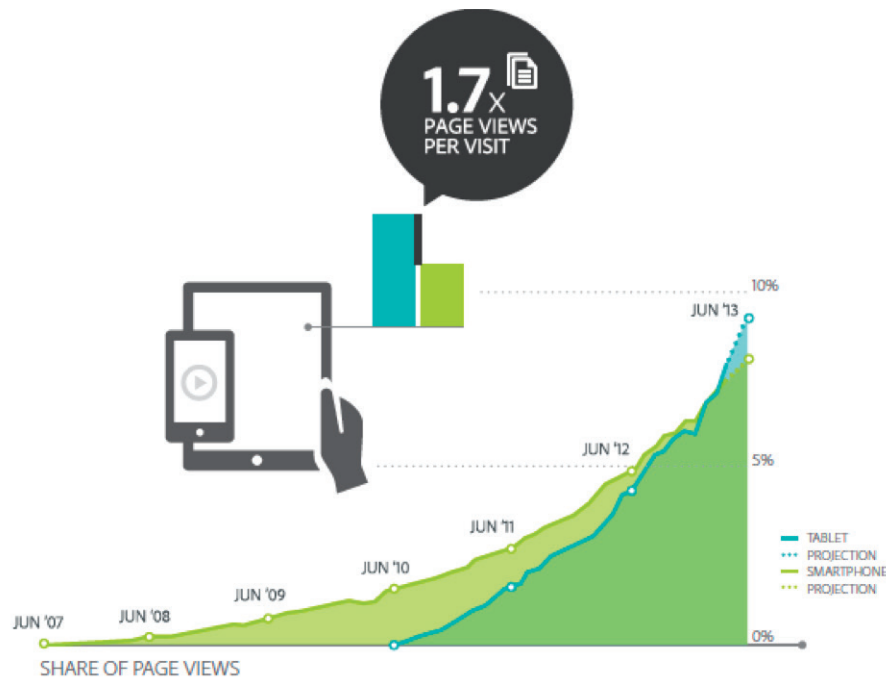

Figure 1. Tablet versus smartphone growth

While tablet and smartphone consumers are both mobile users, they behave very differently. Tablet users actually behave more like PC users in the way they browse and engage. They are willing to spend more time browsing, reading, and watching video. Tablet viewers, in particular, are early adopters who typically spend more money, book more trips, and consume more media content.
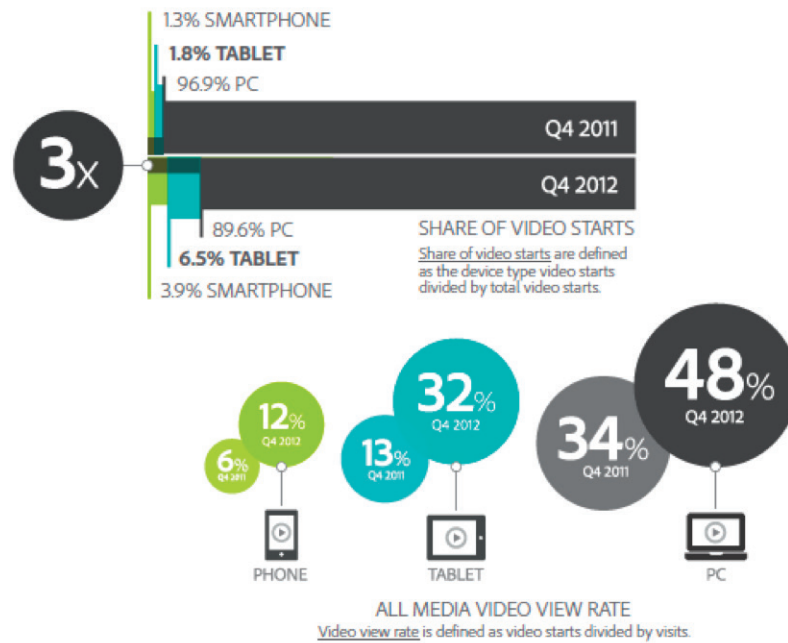

Figure 2. Video on mobile devices

In a recent survey conducted by Crown Partners, over 79% of the companies consider responsive design a priority. When compared with other potential priorities—improved content, better site performance, and additional interactive content—only better site performance was ranked as a higher priority, which responsive design actually addresses if architected correctly.

Understanding these trends, how customers are interacting with your digital properties today, and where your business is headed in the future will help you understand the business imperative to invest in responsive web design.

Return on responsive design

Similar to most business decisions, the question as to whether responsive design is right for the organization is a matter of return on investment. An important place to start is the demographics of your audience and the context in which customers visit the site, which can be different for each channel.

The investment side of the equation might seem relatively straightforward—We have to invest in a redesign, albeit just one. However, you need to look closely at existing costs when calculating the ROI for responsive design.

• Are you maintaining separate design, development, and content teams for your mobile sites and websites?

• Are you maintaining separate code bases and incurring the costs of managing separate deployments, including excruciatingly long test and QA cycles?

• Are search engines struggling to attribute the appropriate relevance to your content because it's not optimized for a single site (i.e., are your rankings suffering because you have multiple sites rather than a single site)?

• Is your organization struggling to keep up with new devices that have changing dimensions?

With responsive web design, these challenges are eliminated or drastically reduced, creating cost efficiencies as well as an overall better user experience across devices, which can lead to increased customer acquisition and retention, decreased site maintenance and support costs, and decreased customer service costs. Returning to the Crown Partners survey, 68.6% of organizations site a better overall user experience, and 62.9% cite a more effective approach to supporting multiple devices, as justification for implementing a responsive design. While not as significant, 28.6% did cite cost efficiencies as a justification.

Another question commonly posed when considering investment options is the benefits of optimizing a site for a specific channel or device. A number of different features—camera, touch screen, accelerometer, GPS, screen size, and phone—allow an organization to create a specific user experience, which creates a unique value for customers. Moving toward responsive web design does not eliminate your ability to add special features for different screen sizes and devices, but you do have to evaluate whether a responsive design can support a strong user experience as different features and functionality are added.

A key point to remember is that responsive web design is more than pixels and a fluid experience in the browser; it is feature- and context-specific to a device. Adobe Experience Manager is one of the only solutions on the market that allows you to leverage a mobile emulator to test different devices within the context of the site, allowing designers to see the user experience as it comes to life during development.
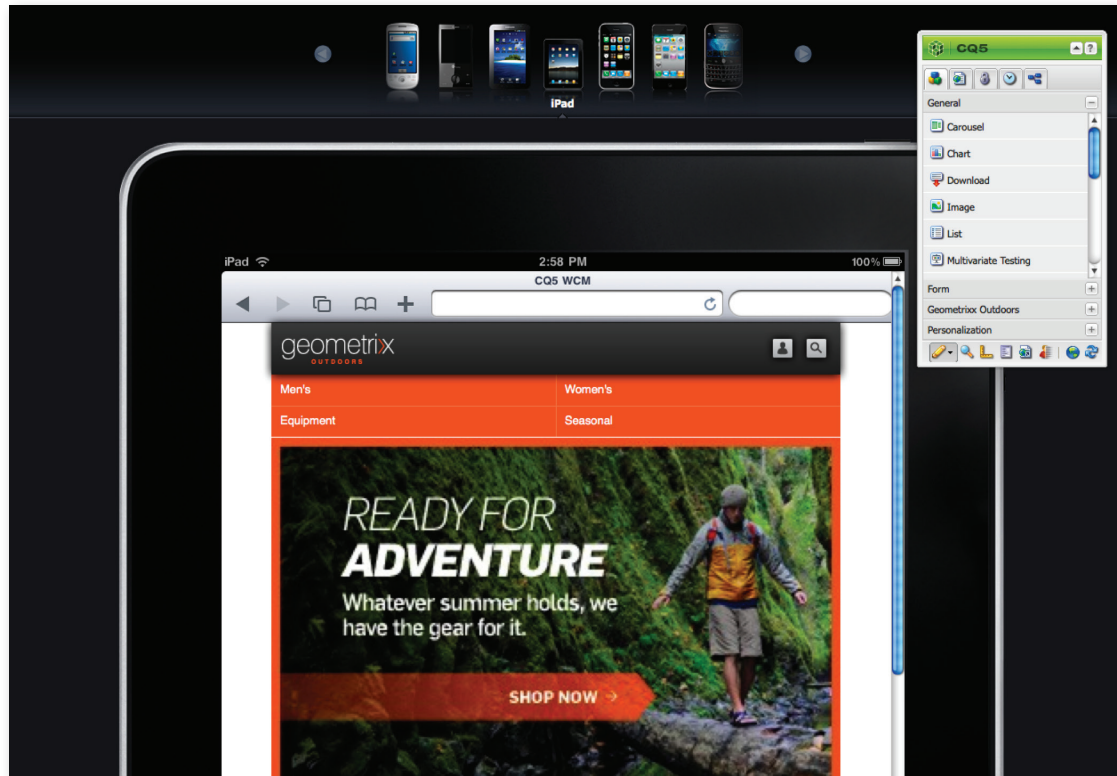

Figure 3. Adobe Experience Manager Mobile Emulator

Three keys to successful responsive web design

Take a minute to look at *www.audiusa.com*, powered by Adobes Experience Manager, in a browser on a desktop or laptop. Notice what happens when you resize the browser to emulate different devices. The site layout quickly changes to provide an appropriate experience for the size of the browser window. This is responsive web design—providing a device-appropriate user interface with an optimized, relevant experience.
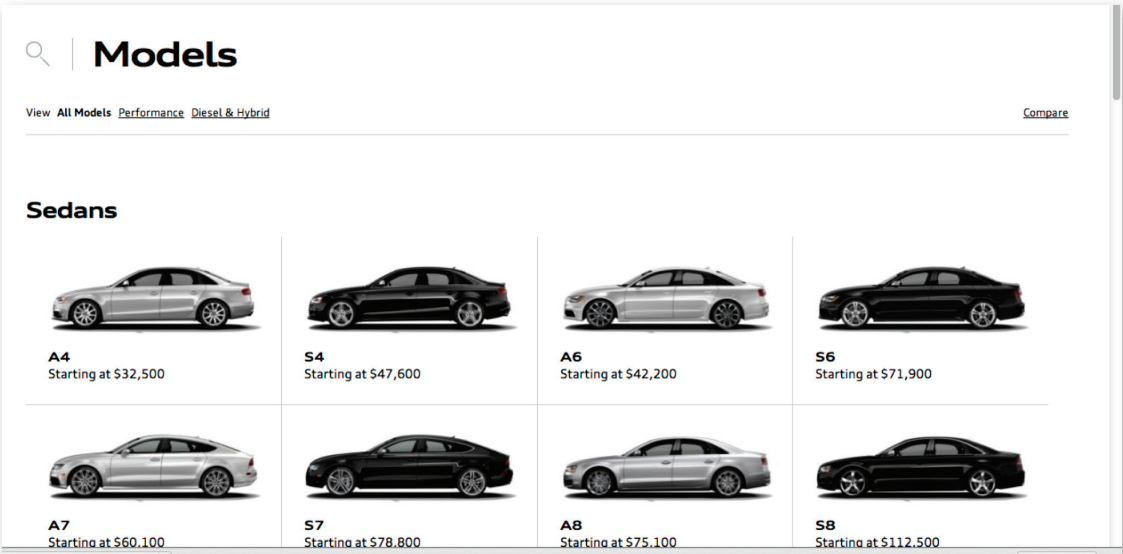
Full Screen
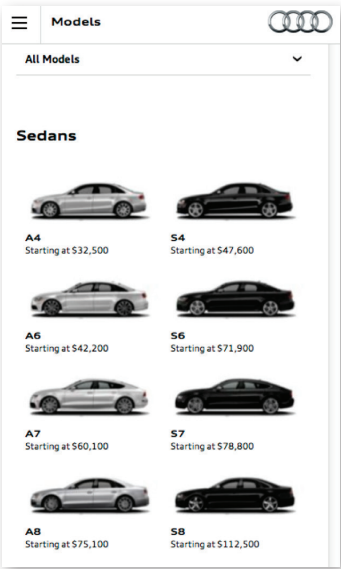
Small Screen

Figure 4: Audi and Responsive Web Design

If you've made the decision to move toward a responsive web design, which ultimately is about creating a great experience across multiple channels, these three keys to success can help guide your organization through the transition.

Content is king

An organization looking to have success should do a quick self-assessment.

- Do executives shy away from pointing people to the organization's site?

- Do employees avoid pulling out their phone to show off the company's latest product or service?

- Do people in the organization cringe as they leave a conversation with a customer and think about how their digital channel doesn't reenforce (or worse yet, contradicts) the message they just delivered?

You cannot let the focus on the design distract you from continuing to update your site with relevant content. This is why companies are making the investment in an enterprise web content management platform such as Adobes Experience Manager. Ensuring that content is current, compelling, and relevant is still key to a great user experience with responsive design.

Mobile first

Mobile devices have more real estate constraints, and it's easier to expand the user experience than to shrink it down. But thinking mobile first does not necessarily equate to investing the most in mobile. You need to consider your organization's demographics. If your audience is primarily engaging via tablet or desktop, the optimal experience should still be through these channels to the extent the company is forced to prioritize.

Performance

Great content and great design are all wasted if the customer abandons the site because it takes too long to download. One of the most common mistakes that organizations make as they continue to leverage more graphics and video is not being device aware. Image size and video format are synonymous with performance. Therefore, it's important to recognize the device that a user is interacting with and serving the device-appropriate asset.

One of the biggest advantages of using Adobe Experience Manager with Scene7 in your responsive web design is that you can dynamically modify the image payload that is delivered to the device, significantly improving performance and the customer's experience. For a web page on a desktop browser, you get thumbnails that are 50K; on a mobile phone, it's 3K. On a tablet, maybe it's 10K. This modified payload means faster load times and less data over the air. It also benefits customers who have cell phone plans that limit the monthly data usage. An efficient responsive web design strategy must include a performance-optimized approach.
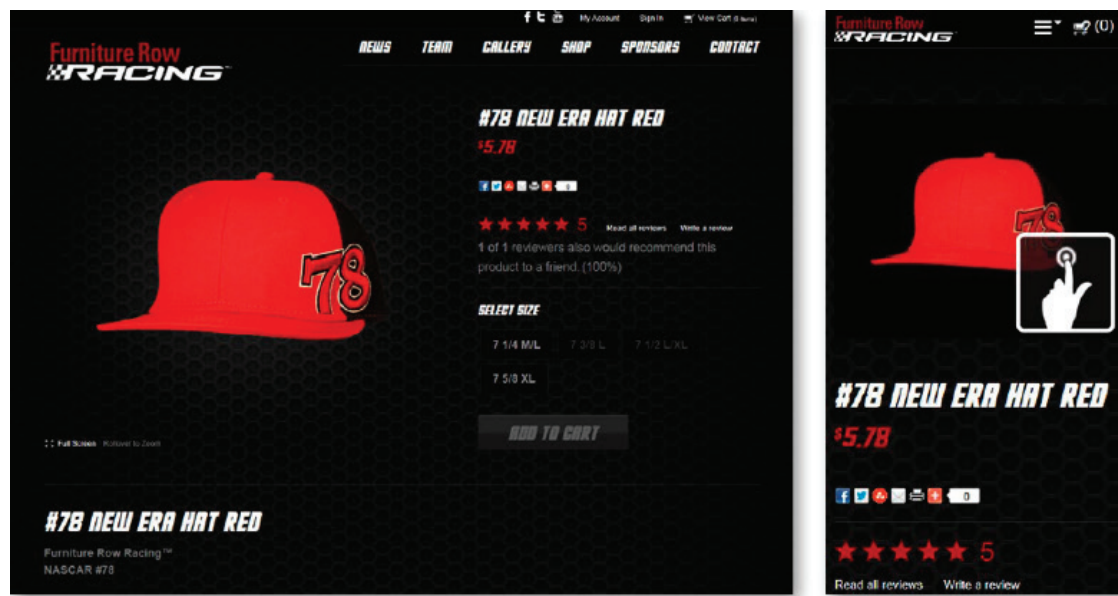

Figure 5. Device detection drive Furniture Row's responsive design

With the Adobe Experience Manager solution, images on Furniture Row Racing's site can be resized automatically or even downsampled dynamically to continually optimize a customer's mobile experience. In addition, as the use of video on the websites expands, the company can further leverage Adobe dynamic media capabilities to detect the type of device being used and the bandwidth needed to offer the ideal video format and playback experience.

"Today, the massive growth in mobile devices, including smartphones and tablets, is resulting in more than a quarter of visitors coming from mobile devices. We wanted a cost-effective way to provide a compelling experience from any device."
Noah Linge, Furniture Row's director of digital marketing
www.adobe.com/content/dam/Adobe/en/customer-success/pdfs/furniture-row-case-study.pdf

The Crown|Adobe white paper, *Is Your Responsive Design Responsive? Technical Tips & Tricks for Leveraging Adobe Scene7 for Optimal Responsive Web Design*, goes into more detail on the best practices for implementing fluid images.

Choose the right platform

The return on responsive web design for your organization depends on the method in which you design it, and the metrics you use to continually improve it. Your success increases with the right solution for content management and delivery. Adobe Experience Manager with dynamic media capabilities, powered by Scene7, provides a powerful solution to efficiently preview, manage, and publish web content across all devices.

About Adobe Experience Manager

The Adobe Experience Manager is the Adobe Marketing Cloud solution for building owned digital properties across web, mobile, social, and video channels. It unifies the former capabilities of Adobe CQ and Adobe Scene7 to offer web content management and digital asset management with optimized multichannel media delivery. Experience Manager integrates with the other Adobe Marketing Cloud solutions to provide a digital marketing solution to manage content across owned, earned, and paid initiatives.

Adobe Experience Manager enables marketers to create, manage, and optimize online customer experiences to build brand, drive demand, and extend reach. It integrates Adobe's broad portfolio of industry-leading tools to empower marketers to execute with ease, agility, and effectiveness. Experience Manager also facilitates collaboration with IT by providing the unified tools and platform to enable them to rapidly develop, manage, and deploy new templates, designs, and components for web, mobile, and social channels to business users.

About Adobe Experience Manager Dynamic Media

Adobe Experience Manager dynamic media capability delivers rich visual merchandising and marketing assets on demand, automatically scaled for consumption on web, mobile, and social sites. Utilizing a set of master assets, dynamic media generates and delivers multiple variations of rich content in real time through its global, scalable, performance-optimized network. Dynamic media serves interactive viewing experiences, including zoom, 360-degree spin, color swap, video, and overlay effects. In addition, it helps marketers ensure the highest probability of success by delivering dynamically personalized and localized brand and campaign content in videos, hero banners, and animated banners using templates to minimize production costs. Dynamic media uniquely incorporates the workflows of the Adobe Experience Manager digital asset management (DAM) capability to simplify and streamline the digital campaign management process.

Hundreds of leading companies worldwide, including 9 out of the top 10 online retailers, use Adobe dynamic media capabilities to enrich viewing experiences and increase conversion on their website. Adobe has been named the top rich media vendor to the Internet Retail Top 500 for the past six years and consistently receives a 4 out of 5 star satisfaction rating from existing customers. Customers in the financial services, media publishing, hospitality, and manufacturing industries choose to use Experience Manager DAM and dynamic media capabilities to streamline production management workflow and serve personalized banners and interactive video that engage audiences and simplify the selling process across all channels.

About Crown Partners

Crown is a full service eBusiness firm enabling clients to attract, convert, retain and activate customers digitally. Driving commerce, content, customer experience & analytics solutions, Crown leads clients to deliver the right experience to each customer every time. Crown is a strategic partner with best-of-breed technology providers Adobe, hybris and ExactTarget.

Founded in 2001, Crown is privately-held and has been recognized six times as an Inc500|5000 fastest growing company. Crown is headquartered in Dayton, OH with offices in Dallas, Denver and New York.

For more information, visit: *www.crownpartners.com*

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Contact us: 877.722.7088

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