Specific Considerations for Mobile Design by Michelvar Smith

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Mobile usage is on the boom. Mobile phone users are increasingly browsing internet through their mobile phones and mobile web browsing is predicted to become the next predominant Internet platform. Currently, there are millions of mobile users browsing the Internet. However, there are few consumer focused mobile web sites that actually load properly on mobile devices within fraction of seconds.

Mobile design process then should rely on user involvement. Such user centered designs will make sure that users will find useful and want to use. It is very essential to have a clear understanding of the users.

There are several differences between designing a web site for a computer/laptop and designing for mobile devices. Letâ€™s understand special procedures involved in designing a mobile web site from the below points:

1. Decide on the Screen Resolution

Mobile device screens are so small that you really need to utilize the available space in optimum manner. There are a lot of screen resolutions out there that are available for web design purposes. You have to consider that different mobile devices have different screen sizes. Design and build with a "fluid" layout in mind.

Modern web design best practices and guidelines assume 1024x768 screen resolution. For smartphones, the most popular screen resolution is 320x480.

2. Communicating workflows

It is very difficult to read lengthy sections of text on small mobile screens. Hence, itâ€™s sometimes more efficient to display additional information on a new screen instead of putting all of the information on the same screen. Stick to a single column of text that wraps so thereâ€™s no horizontal scrolling. Priority must be given to the tasks and content, which users are most likely to use on a mobile device.

3. Reduce User Text Entry

It is a fact that data entry on mobile phones is time consuming and error prone as compared to computers/laptops/tabloids. Designing to encourage selection instead of typing can greatly ease the pain of typing on mobile device. Replace with radio buttons or list so that they can opt from what they need with ease. Remember that mobiles users donâ€™t have access to conventional keyboard and mouse.

4. Layout and Coding

Web site must use CSS for the layout to ensure maximum compatibility. Avoid using table formats. It will be the easiest if your site is coded using either XML or XHTML, with your character encoding set at UTF-8.

5. Navigation

All the important information must be put on the top of the page, like site search and navigation. It can be time consuming to browse through a mobile site. Mobile web design should be convenient for the users.

6. Click Targets

Mobile web design should be supportable for the fingers. Use whitespace in between elements to ease clickability. Click targets should be minimum of 30-40px in size.

7. Size of images

Smaller images should be combined into one file, and use CSS to position them on the page. The size of the images should be reduced. Avoid background images. Avoid using unnecessary graphics, too.

8. No Pop-Ups or Refreshes

Mobile browsers do not normally support pop-ups. Due to the limitation of memory, mobile web design also does not have page refreshing option.

If you currently do not have a mobile website, you are potentially losing out on extra business. Consider it seriously today as people want things handy and at a fingerâ€™s touch!

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