Mobile App or Responsive Website?

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Which one - Responsive Website Design or Mobile App?

A smart mobile strategy can help build brand loyalty, increase website traffic and boost your bottom line. You may have to decide between opting for a Responsive Website Design (RWD) - a website optimised for mobile viewing - or having a Mobile Application (MA). Either one should make your business money to ensure a viable return on investment.

Responsive Website Design (RWD)

Mobile websites (optimised for viewing on smartphones) can work very well if developed in the right way.

Access Speed and Optimisation: RWD is faster than a standard design and has good optimisation for a mobile device, although an app is considered better.

Approval Process: if you opt for an RWD you don't need to seek approval to launch online, so no delays or red tape.

Content and Navigation: you'll view the same content regardless of smartphone device or platform with RWD and the navigation will remain static and have a responsive user interface.

Cost and ROI: it can be a moderate to reasonable cost to develop, cheaper than a mobile application but it's not as easy to make money as a mobile app. But don't forget, £7.5 billion was spent through mobile devices in 2012.

Features and Functionality: RWD does have limited features but all functions of the original site remain.

Connection and Access: Internet connection is required for an RWD and you can access via a browser with little to no user configuration/interaction. More users are expected to access the Internet through their mobile phones than their desktops by the end of 2013.

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Mobile Application (MA)

A new report from Compuware suggests 85% of consumers favour apps over mobile websites. The most common reason is that apps are seen to be more convenient, faster and easier to browse. With the average person having around 41 apps on their phone, it's no surprise that they provide a vital channel for keeping customers engaged.

Access Speed and Optimisation: accessing an MA is very fast and it has better optimisation for a mobile device than an RWD.

Approval Process: some MAs have a mandatory approval process so you may need to consider this when planning timings to launch.

Content and Navigation: you have the luxury of multiple URLs/versions for each page, i.e. content forking, which means creating alternative versions of the content, plus the navigation is interactive.

Cost and ROI: to develop an app can be expensive to very expensive although it is easily monetised encouraging a better return on investment than an RWD.

Features and Functionality: an MA can have extensive features for the phone, location services, camera, etc…unfortunately some functionality is omitted compared to an RWD.

Connection and Access: you do not require an Internet connection for an app and user access is permissible after installation and some user configuration/interaction.

What next?

The choice between building an RWD or MA will be unique to your business. If you choose the MA route you must have a specific interaction you want your user to engage in.

However, if you simply wish to display your existing website as it exists on all devices, follow the RWD route, it's cheaper and will not need to go through an approval process. Remember, if you pursue the MA route it's vital you monitor how your brand is performing to ensure you're delivering the experience users expect.

Harnessing the right mobile technology will help bring your brand even closer to your customers. Assess your goals and resources and don't ignore your ongoing marketing activity. Mould mobile strategy into your existing marketing to ensure it complements and enhances what you're doing already.

**If you would like more information please get in touch, email us at:
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