Lima Bean's mobile web development and design

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It's not that mobile web development and design is an entirely new concept, in fact, a quick Google search will show articles on design tips and trends as far back as 2005. But that was when mobile websites were still in their infancy.

In 2011 however, it's grown massively and is now at a stage when more people than ever before are accessing the internet via their mobile devices. In fact, it has been forecast that by 2013 there will be more than 1.7 billion mobile internet users worldwide.

Slowly, many businesses have caught on to the fact that an increasing number of their target market are searching for, and accessing their site through mobile devices. Whilst this is good news for businesses, unless a site has been optimised for mobile use, the chances are that the current version is providing a sub-standard user experience. This is because developing and designing a site for a PC is different to designing one for mobile use. At Lima Bean, we understand that not only do the obvious aspects, such as screen dimensions and rendering change, but so do a company's objectives and focus.

In fact, there are a few aspects you need to consider when developing and designing a mobile website. Let's take a look:

- The key is to keep it simple; basically you want all the good stuff, without the fluff. While a website designed for a PC can handle any number of objectives and focuses, when it comes to mobile you need to decide what your primary objectives and topics are and choose the most important actionable items to focus on. What is the number one message or content that you want to convey to your visitors? Remember, when it comes to mobile web design, less is more.

- It can be tricky designing a mobile site that renders and looks good on all mobile devices from iPhone and Blackberry to Android, Palm and HTC (not to mention their different OS's and screen resolutions). However, utilising progressive technologies such as HTML5 and CSS3 means you can design your mobile site to scale and adapt it for whichever device it's needed.

- At times though, trying to design for every platform is just not a viable option, so it might be a good idea to find out what mobile devices the majority of your customers are using and enhance your mobile site in line with those mobile device specs.

- 'Clicking' on a website becomes 'finger tapping' on a mobile phone, which changes the dynamics of the User Experience entirely. Mobile design demands bigger, bolder and clearer 'clickable' links that don't clutter an already small screen. This comes back to choosing 'key objectives' and focusing on the most important message that you want to get across. It's vital that this action is clear and the process is easy to navigate.

- A mobile website needs to be kept 'lightweight' with a minimum loading time, simply because current mobile device networks (although improved), don't run at the same speed as broadband devices.

If you're thinking about extending your current website to a mobile version (or designing one from scratch for that matter), then contact Lima Bean for more information or to get a quote. As experts in Expression Engine (EE) CMS based development, Lima Bean have built numerous integrated CMS web and mobile sites, that are slick, intuitive and easily manageable. www.limabean.co.za

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