How Mobile Friendly Is Your Dental Website?

November 25, 2019

by Naren Arulrajah, Ekwa Marketing

Your patients hold the internet in the palms of their hands, quite literally. The popularity of mobile has been growing rapidly for over a decade, and it passed desktop computers years ago. As you probably know, Google has kept up with the times, transitioning to a mobile-first ranking system.

Just a few years ago, you could get an edge on the competition simply by having a mobile friendly website. However, the rapid change in user behavior coupled with Google's mobile-first indexing propelled sweeping changes in web design standards. Today, virtually every website is deemed mobile friendly.

Redefining mobile friendly

You might think the mobile revolution has completed, and the opportunity to get ahead of the trend has passed. In reality, it is just beginning – but we need to re-think the way we view mobile friendliness.

Traditionally, a "mobile friendly" website is defined as one that displays and functions correctly on smartphones, tablets, and other small screens. Essentially, the optimization conversation has traditionally revolved around mobile *device* friendly designs. Technical performance is extremely important, but you aren't marketing to devices. To take your website to the next level, it needs to be mobile *user* friendly. In website design lingo, this means a renewed focus on UX (user experience).

Mobile UX tips

Your website might be perfectly functional on a mobile device, but is it easy to use? The first step to answering this is to try and put yourself in a potential patient's place. Load your site on a mobile device, and imagine you've never seen it before. Can you find your way around, read the text, and easily locate important information and features? Does it look nice? You can also ask friends and family for feedback. Any problems that "jump out" at first glance should be priority.

Beyond the above non-scientific analysis, what UX issues should you look for?

- **The rule of thumb** – If you are reading this on your smartphone, take note of your hand position. Most likely, you are grasping the device with your fingers, and scrolling with your thumb. This is the most common way people hold small mobile devices. Now look at the part of the screen you can reach with your thumb. The lower part, especially in the center, is easy. The middle of the screen is a stretch, and you might need your other hand to tap

an upper corner. Place the most important or frequently used buttons in the thumb-friendly zone.

- **Readable text** – Does your page load with a lot of tiny text? Do large fonts take up the entire screen so that someone must scroll endlessly to read it? Is there enough contrast between the font and background for easy readability? Remember that mobile devices are used in a variety of settings. The viewer might be in bed with the lights turned down or strolling down a sidewalk in bright sunlight. You want to make text as readable as possible.
- **Navigation** – Mobile users are often multi-tasking, meaning their attention is already divided. They might not be focused on what they are reading, and they aren't likely to put a lot of effort into finding a specific feature. Avoid complicated navigation systems, lengthy submenus, and things that might look like plain text.
- **Interactive features** – Mobile users do more than browse. They spend a large amount of time using apps, with a nearly endless variety of features. If you want to hold their attention and garner engagement, you need to offer more than a passive viewing experience. Add action features like a chatbot, fillable forms, tap-to-call buttons, and text messaging options.
- **Multi-screen compatibility** – Mobile isn't a single device or screen size. When reviewing your website, try to view it on as many different models of phones and tablets as possible.
- **Automatic feedback** – No matter how technically optimized your pages are, they might load slowly when the user has a weak data signal. Don't leave them wondering whether the site registered their taps. A simple "form submitted" message, or "page loading" icon can alleviate confusion and frustration.

Conclusion

Your website probably meets the technical requirements for mobile functionality, but that doesn't guarantee it is appealing to the user. For a high-converting mobile site, make it attractive, useful, and simple on every device.

About the Author:

Naren Arulrajah, President and CEO of Ekwa Marketing, has been a leader in medical marketing for over a decade. Ekwa provides comprehensive marketing solutions for busy dentists, with a team of more than 180 full time professionals, providing web design, hosting, content creation, social

media, reputation management, SEO, and more. If you're looking for ways to boost your marketing results, call 855-598-3320 for a free strategy session with Naren.

Interested in contributing to Oral Health Group's dental blog? Email marley@newcom.ca for more information!