



Choosing a mobile strategy that works for you

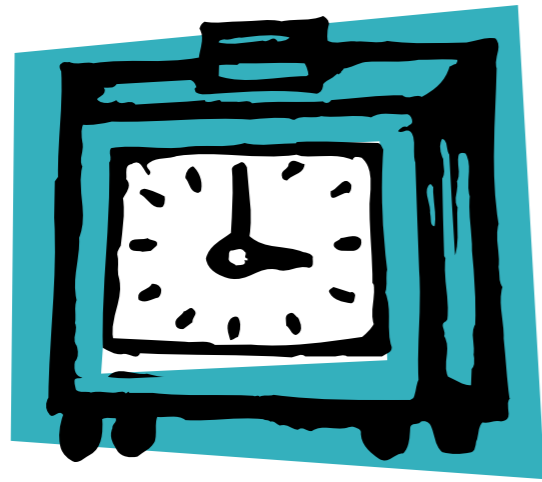
Graves Fowler Creative

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MarketPoint LLC



Spring 2005



Sarah Porter hits the snooze button for the third time on her bedside clock radio. It's another Monday morning in 2005, and she's already late for the beginning of her work week. In five minutes the beeping returns, and this time it wins. Sarah flips on her television for a weather report as she heads to the front porch to retrieve the paper. She digs out the business section to see if her press release made it into the On the Move column.

After a quick run and shower, Sarah grabs her cell phone, appointment book and mp3 player and heads for her office. She plans to pick up a latté on the way in but realizes that her credit card is in the pocket of the jeans she wore yesterday. No caffeine today until she gets to the free stuff at work.

On the Metro, she listens to music while she writes out her to do list:

Call the courier to deliver artwork to the printer

Pick up photo paper for presentation comps

Check fax machine for printing estimates

Email mom to find out how her trip went

Schedule portfolio review with the new illustrator

Write mortgage check and mail

Register for the annual conference

Find a good kitchen remodeler

Buy the book for the next book club meeting

Lots to do. For now, however, she leans back and waits for her stop.



Summer 2011

Fast forward to a Monday in 2011, and imagine the start to a similar day in Sarah's life. What would be different? Plenty. Sarah's gone mobile.

Sarah's smartphone is charging beside her bed and is set to wake her. As she hits the floor, she grabs it to check the weather, news and Facebook to see the photos her mom has posted from Ireland. On her way to the Metro, she stops for a latté and flashes the mobile card app to pay for it. During her commute Sarah checks print estimates, orders office supplies, registers for the annual conference, pays her mortgage, searches Yelp for kitchen contractors and downloads the e-book for her next book club meeting. By the time she opens her office door, she's done a lot more than make a list. She's finished it.

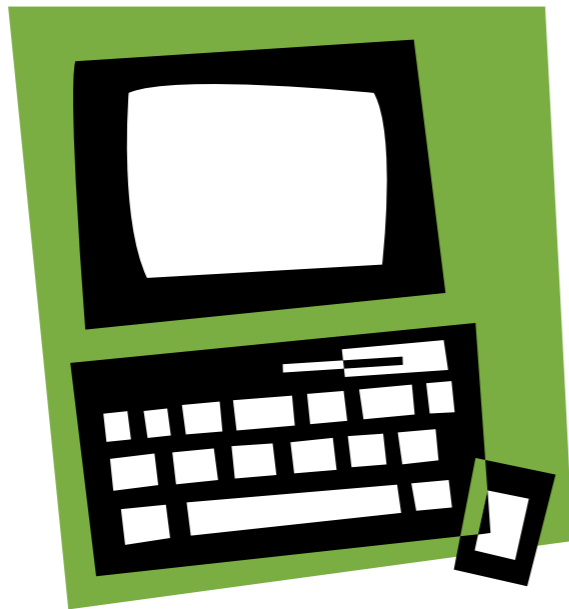


Why mobile? Why now?

Whether these changes thrill or appall you, they are rapidly becoming the standard for a majority of people in the US and around the world. In June 2011, Apple launched iCloud, one of several choices for storing vast amounts of music, video, photos and documents on the Web. Paul Saffo, managing director of foresight at Discern Analytics expressed his take on the announcement saying,

“The whole idea of a stand-alone personal computer with a big processor is going the way of the VCR.”¹

Who could have imagined that this ever-present workhorse was going to become a dinosaur so soon?



Wireless Internet usage grew by a whopping **51%** from May 2009 to May 2010.²

“Mobile” could become the word of the decade, based on the impact that this technology is making on our lives. Here are just a few statistics that indicate the trends.

By **2013**, more people will use a mobile device to access the web than a desktop computer.³

By the end of this year there will be more smart phones in the US market than feature phones.⁴

If you’re reading this paper, you’ve probably already accepted that your organization needs to begin taking advantage of all these new possibilities for reaching the clients, members, customers or constituents — the people who keep you in business. But where in the world does one begin?



First, understand your choices

All mobile is not the same, obviously. We look at the main options in three categories:

Mobile-friendly web sites are standard web sites designed for viewing on a computer that also perform adequately on smartphones and tablets.

+ ADVANTAGES: This option uses what you already have. It keeps all of the content from your site available and provides repeat visitors with a familiar experience. Costs to test the site on a mobile platform and make needed adjustments are minimal. There is no additional work for your webmaster and content editors.

— DISADVANTAGES: Flash animations and certain dropdown menus may not display correctly. Too much content to scroll through may be frustrating for the user and make it difficult to find what they really need “on the go.” The site will not be able to take advantage of specific smartphone commands such as finger swipes that users have come to expect.

A mobile-friendly web site is a good starting point on a limited budget, but it doesn't begin to take advantage of the ways mobile can meet user needs.



This site displays well on a desktop or mobile device.

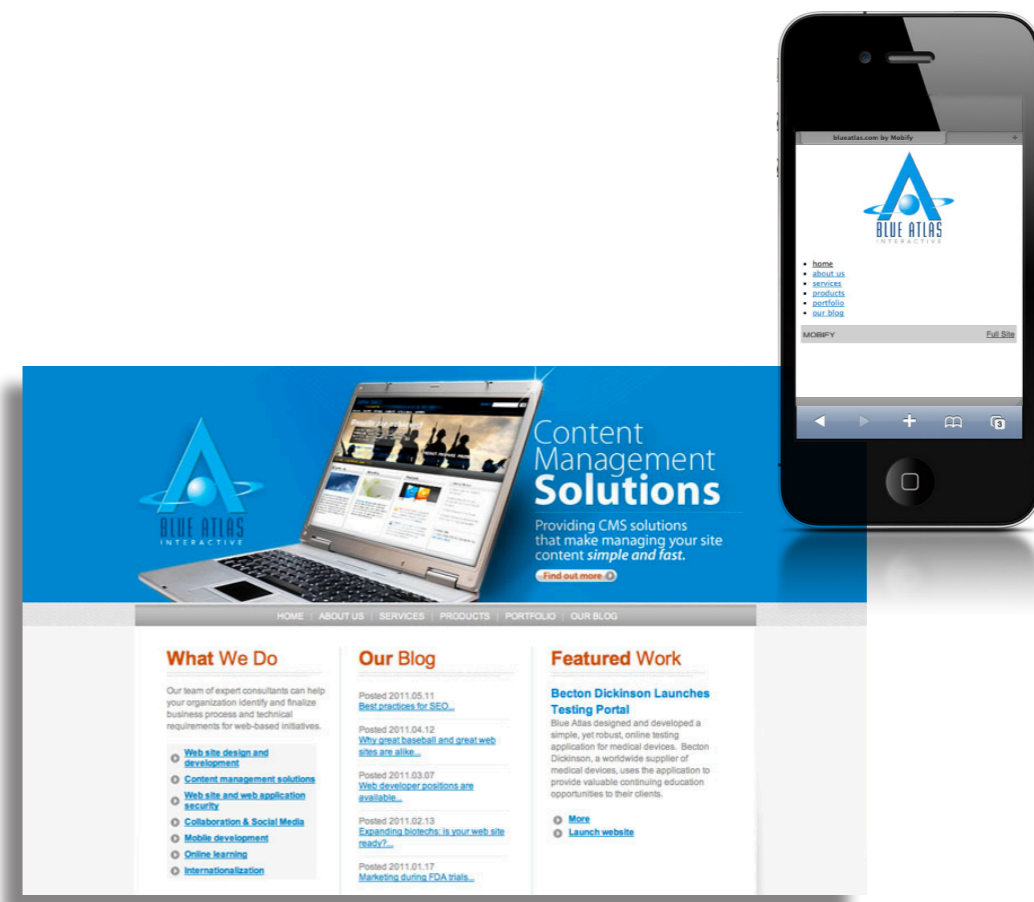


Mobile sites are web sites designed specifically for viewing on the smaller screen of handheld devices such as an iPhone or Android, using a touch-screen interface and accessible over a WiFi, 3G or 4G network.

+ ADVANTAGES: This option makes only the most relevant and essential content available for users on the go. It is clearly branded to reflect the messaging of your standard web site and provides a familiar experience to mobile users. A mobile site always can link back to your full web site if users need access to additional content. This option will work across any platform (*i.e.*, iPhone, Android, Blackberry.)

— DISADVANTAGES: Mobile sites must have limited imagery and minimal content. They can only provide a glimpse of your organization. This option is less expensive than a full site development, but it requires careful planning and involves design and development costs.

Even if a mobile presence is not your top priority right now, it is good business practice to ask your web designer/web developer/webmaster to be aware of your current site's performance on mobile platforms.



With mobile sites, the desktop site is significantly different from the mobile site in content and appearance.

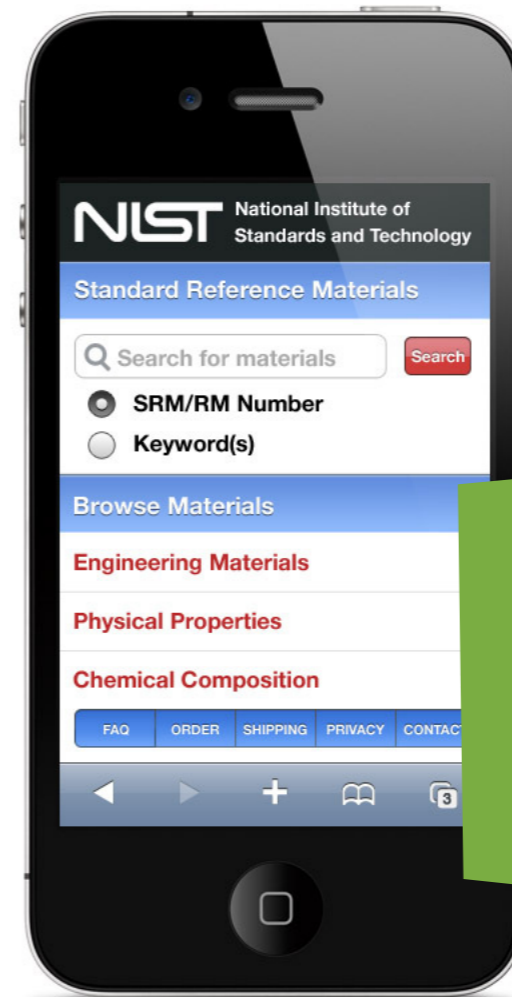


Native applications, are dynamic apps that are developed for a specific platform, (*i.e.* iPhone, Android, Blackberry) and perform a specific function.

+ ADVANTAGES: This option provides the user with an experience that takes full advantage of smartphone technology. For example, the Yelp.com app not only tells you where to get the best burrito but uses geolocations to help you find a good burrito nearest your current location. The possibilities are vast, exciting and limited only by your imagination.

— DISADVANTAGES: Launch costs are big, and they multiply if you need to develop the app for more than one platform. Native apps for the iPhone must receive approval from Apple, and they just won't work on an Android. Apps are not built to one standard such as html (as yet). As anticipated mobile standards develop, current native apps may quickly go out of date.

If you have a very specific business goal or service in mind and an audience loyal to one type of mobile device, the native application is worth considering. Otherwise, a mobile web site will likely be your best option.



Our app for the National Institute of Standards and Technology allows scientists nationwide to access NIST's reference materials data and availability.

There are now over 400,000 unique mobile apps available for download.⁵



Other mobile tools to consider

QR Codes

Quick response codes are those digitized boxes that are popping up on ads, merchandise signs and billboards these days. They connect users to online resources, text messages, contact information and more. You access the information through a free app that reads the code and makes the connection. QR codes are easy to create at sites like zxing.appspot.com.

Bar Codes

Newer smartphones now come with bar code scanners, or they are downloadable as an app. With this handy tool, users can scan bar codes on products to compare prices, receive discount coupons, etc. However, this technology is quickly expanding to other uses such as checking in at trade conferences and boarding airplanes.

Mobile wallet

Also called “wave-and-pay,” these mobile cards can be used as an alternative for paying with cash, check or credit card. Instead, customers can use their mobile phone to pay for a wide range of goods and services.



Next, revisit your marketing plan

To use mobile tools effectively you still need to consider who you're trying to reach as well as how you plan to engage them. Go back to your marketing plan (you have one, right?) and look at your target audiences and overall goals. Then you can decide on the tactics that will best support what you're trying to accomplish.

As you wrestle with how to go mobile, the biggest challenge you may face – at least from a marketing perspective – is setting your own framework aside. For some, the specter of falling behind is motivation enough to go mobile (i.e., “If I don't jump in now, I'll never catch up.”) But most of us need a more tangible reason to invest our time and money. At the core, the decision to go mobile should be made based your customers' needs and preferences, not on your desires – or fears.

Know your audience

Are they comfortable with the technology? Do they choose to connect through mobile? Demographics can act as flags and indicate a greater probability of mobile

engagement. Certainly the 25-and-under crowd, the gamer community, the technically hip and the “early adopters” are ready and receptive. The same can be said for people who are already active on Facebook and other social networks. Statistics are also showing trends that individuals with lower incomes are more likely to interact with the Internet through mobile devices. By contrast, the percentage of active users in the 50+ crowd is still relatively low (although that's changing), and this audience may be less likely to embrace mobile offerings.

What about access? People who spend much of their time out of the home or those with out-of-office occupations such as salespeople, tradesmen or business travelers tend to rely on mobile accessibility. On the other hand, if your customers are in remote areas with spotty cell coverage, mobile access may not be the best way to connect.

How would they define their relationship with you? Would your users classify themselves as casual “opt-ins,” as members or as loyalists? In the words of Seth Godin, would



they consider themselves part of your “tribe?” The more attached people feel to your organization, the more likely they will be to engage while they’re on the go.

Identify options that support your overall goals

What is it you want to accomplish through mobile marketing? Do you want to build awareness? Increase memberships? Sell a product? Match your mobile solution to the goals and objectives you’ve already established. For example:

- **To raise money.** Charities are raising surprising sums through text donations e.g., “Text RELIEF to 6454 and donate \$10 to Haiti.”
- **To educate.** Businesses from manufacturers to movie producers are embedding QR codes in their communications or at point-of-sale to help customers get the information they need to make informed purchases.
- **To engage customers.** Reality TV shows are boosting viewer involvement by allowing them to vote for

contestants or choose how a story will end (ultimately, driving ratings higher).

- **To deliver services.** Education, nonprofit, business, consumer and government organizations are using YouTube, Tumblr, Flickr, Google and other sites to share resources, train, and engage members and constituents.
- **To build loyalty.** Blogs, text messaging, email marketing, location-based marketing (FourSquare), Groupon and many more channels point mobile consumers to up-to-the-minute developments, special deals and insider benefits.

Look around to see what other organizations in your immediate space and beyond are doing. For more ideas, pick a few online technology news sources and subscribe to their blogs or email alerts. Here are a few resources where we’ve found ideas that spark new solutions for our clients.

Mobile Commerce Daily www.mobilecommercedaily.com

Marketing Experiments www.marketingexperiments.com

Tech Soup (for nonprofits) www.techsoup.com

Fast Company www.fastcompany.com/topics/technology



Tips for moving ahead

All decisions about marketing tools — traditional or mobile — are about connecting to an audience with an appropriate communication medium. By understanding the drivers and preferences of your specific audience as well as the mobile options available, you can determine the best choices for making mobile technology work for you.

Using what you have – a mobile-friendly site

- Test out your site on handheld devices to identify potential viewing problems.
- If the display is not adequate, you may be able to solve the problem with a design refresh for the home page and navigation elements.
- If you are planning to redesign your standard web site, keep the design simple!

Launching a mobile web site

- Hone content down to the essence of what people need on the go.
- Keep text to a minimum and limit the size and number of images.
- Use buttons and functions that are already standard and that users will intuitively know how to use.
- Make sure the streamlined mobile site supports your overall branding and marketing message.
- Always provide a link back to the full web site in case the user wants access to content that isn't part of the mobile site.



Building a native application

- Do your research — will the anticipated native app fulfill a business need better than the other web options? Avoid developing an app just because it's the cool thing to do.
- Testing the user experience is key to the success of any mobile app. Invest in it.
- Simple, simple, simple. Successful mobile apps are intuitive and fulfill user needs and expectations quickly.

Integration of mobile into your marketing and communications strategy may come in single steps or big leaps. The mobile world is poised to offer you a whole new way to connect and make a difference. Use it well, and enjoy the ride! ■■■

Footnotes

¹ “Apple announces free iCloud service,” *The Washington Post*, Tuesday, June 7, 2011, pg. A10

² “Gartner: Mobile to Outpace Desktop Web by 2013,” Unbound Edition, January 14, 2010, http://www.unboundedition.com/the_feed/2010/jan/14/gartner-mobile-outpace-desktop-web-2013

³ Pew Internet & American Life Project, Mobile Access 2010, July 2010, <http://www.pewinternet.org/Reports/2010/Mobile-Access-2010/Summary-of-Findings.aspx>

⁴ NielsenWire, March 26, 2010, Roger Entner, Senior Vice President, Research and Insights, Telecom Practice, <http://blog.nielsen.com/nielsenwire/consumer/smartphones-to-overtake-feature-phones-in-u-s-by-2011>

⁵ “The Case Against Apps (and For the Web),” Imprint, Christopher Butler, <http://imprint.printmag.com/web-design/the-case-against-apps-and-for-the-web>



If ideas are stirring, and you want to continue the conversation, contact:



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Graves Fowler Creative www.gravesfowler.com

Graves Fowler Creative works with government agencies, nonprofit organizations and businesses to promote health, housing, education, the arts, community development and international relief. The firm offers branding programs, print and web design, and marketing strategy to inspire, involve and call people to action. The company was founded in 1984 and is located in Maryland, near Washington, DC.



Blue Atlas Interactive www.blueatlas.com

Blue Atlas is a user-friendly “tech” company with over 15 years experience helping organizations take advantage of the Web as a business tool. Since 1996, Blue Atlas has expanded their services to include web and mobile strategy consulting, development services, content management solutions and website and web application maintenance services.



MarketPoint, LLC www.yourmarketpoint.com

MarketPoint provides honest, insightful and effective branding and marketing strategy for organizations in the education, nonprofit and B2B sectors. By exposing the uncomplicated truth about marketing and brand, MarketPoint’s consultants empower clients to better define who they are and communicate that essence, both internally and to their target markets. MarketPoint helps clients understand their marketplace, product managers penetrate markets, leadership teams become brand champions and employees live the brand.

