



# Is Your Website Mobile Ready?

In 2011 we saw iPads, Androids, and iPhones generate billions of dollars in new sales. On December 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> alone, more than seven million mobile devices were activated in the United States.

Mobile is ramping up faster than any other technology we have seen in the past – eight times faster than desktop and laptop sales in the 1990s.

By the end of 2012, it is predicted that 50% of the US population will have smartphones.

Now is the time to jump on the mobile marketing tidal wave. There is no denying the massive growth in mobile devices and mobile search. Given what we know about the momentum of mobile search, why wouldn't you invest in an optimized mobile representation of your practice?

With smartphones and tablet devices, such as the iPad and Kindle Fire, taking over the consumer market, it is becoming more important to incorporate mobile-specific optimized designs for mobile marketing. In other words, you need to make sure your website is sized correctly and easy to navigate on the different types of mobile devices.

The content and method of presentation differs greatly between websites designed for desktop computers or laptops and those designed for mobile devices. The screen is considerably smaller and uses touch screen technology that differs from a computer mouse or a track pad. The environments these devices use are also different:

- Standard websites are too big for a phone, and mobile sites perform best in a stripped down format, e.g., less text, enlarged links, and reduced scrolling.
- People would rather not drag, enlarge, scroll, and zoom to find what they want. Mobile technology allows you to use appropriately sized graphics and buttons to put everything consumers want within one simple tap of their screen.

So far, the mobile revolution is less about search engine

*by Mary Kay Miller*

optimization (SEO) and more about the user experience portraying convenience, helpfulness, and preparedness as qualities of your mobile site. However, it is critical to include traditional SEO techniques involving keywords and meta tags. Without them, your mobile site would not be found on local search.

## Top Five Mobile Design Tips

1. Build your mobile website in a .Mobi format. This is a separate domain for your mobile site that is not a subdomain of your .com site. A .Mobi URL will automatically feature on files regularly requested by mobile search engines, directories, and other mobile-centric websites.
2. Information first! People want a map or directions, a linked phone number they can tap to call at the top of the site, highlighted products such as Invisalign, a doctor bio, a patient login link to check appointments, and a practice video three minutes or less, if available, with an overview of your practice. All should be easily accessible and in an organized format.
3. Make the mobile site action-oriented. Use links and calls to action buttons. Get the users tapping buttons instead of scrolling, and they will have a better experience. Keep the touch-links isolated to reduce accidental clicks.
4. Consolidate your written content. Not only is it difficult to read a lot of text on a phone, but one of the more important features of a mobile website is load time. The faster your mobile site loads, the better it performs for both users and search bots. Avoid long passages of text and large images.

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5. Build for scrolling along only one axis – whether it is up-and-down or side-to-side – to maintain an organized site, and user-friendly navigation.

Mobile apps are cool but do not lend themselves to generating new patients from local search. They require a download from Apple's App Store or Android Market. Apps are downloaded by patients who already know who you are, not new patients looking for treatment. Bottom line, mobile websites offer a better return on investment when setup correctly. Mobile apps are the fluff on a mobile marketing program.

Jumping on the mobile wave now will hurl you ahead of the game, creating invaluable mobile history which will give you an edge once your competitors follow suit. There's a new #1 spot, and it's on mobile search.

To view an optimized mobile setup for orthodontists, go to <http://www.thebraceplace.org> on your mobile device. ♡

## About the Author

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Mary Kay Miller is an Internet Marketing Consultant for the orthodontic profession specializing in SEO, WordPress Website Design, Exclusive Web 2.0 services, and Mobile Marketing.