

From the Great Jakes Blog

Responsive Design for Law Firm Websites – 10 Questions Answered (part 2)



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Just a few months ago, when I spoke at the 2013 LMA conference about a new mobile technology for websites called “responsive design,” I was afraid that no one would know what it was. Since then, the term “responsive design” has entered the legal marketing lexicon.

Below is the second of two posts ([here's a link to the first post](#)) that address some of the questions that we've fielded about responsive design for law firm websites. If you have others, send them our way. I'm happy to share our knowledge.



6. What's the risk if we punt on this and do nothing for the next few years?

Responsive design is new, but in short order (read: the year 2014) it will become odd to see a new law firm website not have it. But aside from keeping up with the Joneses, the big risk is that you might be undermining your other marketing efforts. We're predicting that within two years, 40% of the traffic that happens on your firm's website will derive from mobile devices. (And that's a conservative figure.) If a large percentage of visitors to your website are unable to find the information that they seek, what will this mean for your firm?

7. Should we add responsive design to our current website?

If you're developing a new website in 2013, it's a no-brainer to include responsive design. But deciding to add it to your existing website should not be automatic. It could prove to be a bigger challenge than expected.

8. Is there an advantage to be gained by being among the first law firms to embrace this?

Early adopters will enjoy a competitive advantage due to the frustration experienced by users of law firm websites that have not been designed this way. But the big benefit is a more engaged potential client.

The goal of a law firm's website should be to help attorneys demonstrate their experience and expertise. The content that they produce is one of the primary ways that this is done, and a responsive website makes it easier for that content to be found, consumed and shared. Execute that formula often, and new business will result.

9. Does it help with SEO?

Yes. In fact, Google has specifically said that responsive design "is Google's recommended configuration." The main reason is that websites built with responsive design have a single URL. Below is a paraphrase of why Google says a single URL is better.

- A single URL makes it easier for your users to interact with, share and link to your content.
- It helps Google's algorithms assign the indexing properties for the content.
- Google's crawlers need to access your pages only once. This improvement indirectly helps Google index more of the site's content.
- The load time of your website is faster when users need not be redirected to a different version of your website. Google considers this a page rank factor.

To read Google's recommendations in their entirety, [click here](#).

10. Other than law firms, what companies are using responsive design in their websites?

Disney.com, BBC, Microsoft, Harvard University, Starbucks, Time Magazine, Sony and the Boston Globe are just a few of the entities that have embraced responsive design. There will be many more before the end of 2013 – including the soon-to-launch new website for the New York Times.

If you would like to see a demonstration of how we're implementing responsive design for mid-size and large law firms, please contact me. I'm happy to share with you examples as well as discuss some of the more challenging aspects of implementing it.

