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Business at its best

Mobile Web: The last temptation of scale

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It is time to forget about feature phone Web experiences.

Brands should grip tightly to research that shows the behavior of feature phone users, take the plunge, and allocate the resources otherwise required to build a site for every phone and devote the resources to developing rich experiences for devices that actually promote engagement.

We have reached a point where most brands have a mobile Web presence. In many cases, however, it remains a one-off, rudimentary experience built to operate on all devices.

If every office was well-staffed, if every developer had time to kill, by all means, develop a site for each device. Sadly, this is not reality.

The desire to provide access is noble and, for large brands, necessary to meet the scale required to hit financials.

But this reach for scale has always driven some would argue slowed, and everyone would agree complicated brands' adoption of mobile Web.

Unfortunately, research shows that this investment in access is not reciprocated with actions.

Mouse trap

While more than half the population still uses feature phones (Nielsen), according to Pew's "Americans and their Cell Phones" report, just 15 percent of feature phone users access the internet.

It is not a philosophical choice it is prudent prioritization.

Surprisingly, it is not the growth of the smartphone that is the final straw it is the growth of the tablet.

With rapid adoption and deep user engagement, different user cases and screen size, tablets cannot simply be rolled in with smartphones.

With large screens and most people accessing tablets on Wi-Fi connections, desktop sites are sufficient.

But if you have an exploding population who drives an exploding amount of traffic, are you optimizing with a site that is intended for users navigating with a mouse?

Sure, there are platforms that allow the delivery of Web across devices. Warning: this can be a trap.

While those platforms may mitigate the time of developers, it still requires resources to bring this site to life and to let it live from user experience, to design, to analytics, to QA, to site operations. Often these can be forgotten costs.

SO, WHILE ACCESSIBILITY is often a noble cause, it can have a dangerous effect on business operations.

When brands resist the temptation of building a site "for everyone," they free the resources to build rich experiences for the devices from which people actually browse and, most importantly, convert.

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