

Mobile Sites and Mobile Apps

There's been a lot of buzz about mobile websites lately. You may have wondered whether your law firm's current website works on a cellphone, smartphone or iPad. You've probably also been approached several times by companies offering to create a mobile website for you. Now you are hearing even more buzz about mobile apps. With the arrival of these new technologies and the rapid pace of change, it's easy to become overwhelmed and simply do nothing. But here's a word to the wise -- doing nothing is not going to help you advance your legal practice or take advantage of this booming market. So, here's what attorneys need to know today about mobile sites and mobile apps when it comes to marketing your law practice.

What is a mobile website?

A traditional website is built to be seen on a PC or laptop. A **Mobile Website** is a separate site from your current firm's website that is designed specifically for mobile devices such as iPhones, iPads, Droids, and Blackberrys. It's simpler, meant to be seen on a small screen, with links that can be clicked on with the touch of a finger instead of a mouse. The idea of a mobile site is to give your visitors easy access to the most important material on your website from their smartphones. Typically a mobile site presents a home page with a few large buttons for easy navigation to information such as Contact Us, Directions, and Profile. Mobile websites are very effective for certain types of businesses like restaurants, hotels, and even the Red Sox where most visitors just want to make quick reservations or buy tickets. For attorneys, it is probably not worth the time and cost of hosting, managing, and updating a separate mobile website that doesn't present all your information.

However there is an alternative to mobile sites. Today many websites can be **Mobile Responsive**. This means they are designed to adapt to the mobile device someone is using and present your site effectively with all its features, functionality and content. There is a surge of interest by developers in advancing the mobile responsive technology. If you take a moment to view your own website on your mobile device you can tell if your website is mobile responsive. If see your entire site without having to scroll left to right or if your site reorganizes your content so you can view it easily by scrolling up and down, it most likely mobile responsive.

What is a mobile app?

A **Mobile Application** is a software program designed to operate on a mobile device and is entirely separate from your website and mobile site. An app operates on a smartphone or tablet computer like the iPad. Apps are small, individual software units with specific functions that integrate with a mobile device's features. For example, an attorney may offer a mobile app to clients that utilizes the mobile device's native functionality such as one click calling, easy emailing, GPS directions to the office, links to legal resources, even a referral feature to share the attorney's information with friends and family.

What's the next step?

Now that you know the difference between a mobile website and a mobile app, what's the next step for your business? If you have a mobile responsive site then developing a new mobile website is most likely not worth the marketing investment. However, the right mobile application can help you communicate more effectively with clients and retain those clients for long-term relationships. With more and more people using mobile phones and other devices, apps are becoming a very popular way to do everything. A mobile app is a friendly, professional service you can offer your clients that will help them stay connected with you and will help grow your business.

For more information about mobile apps, read our piece titled: **Mobile Apps To Grow Your Law Practice** and visit www.AttorneyConnectLLC.com.