



Mobile Website VS Mobile Apps

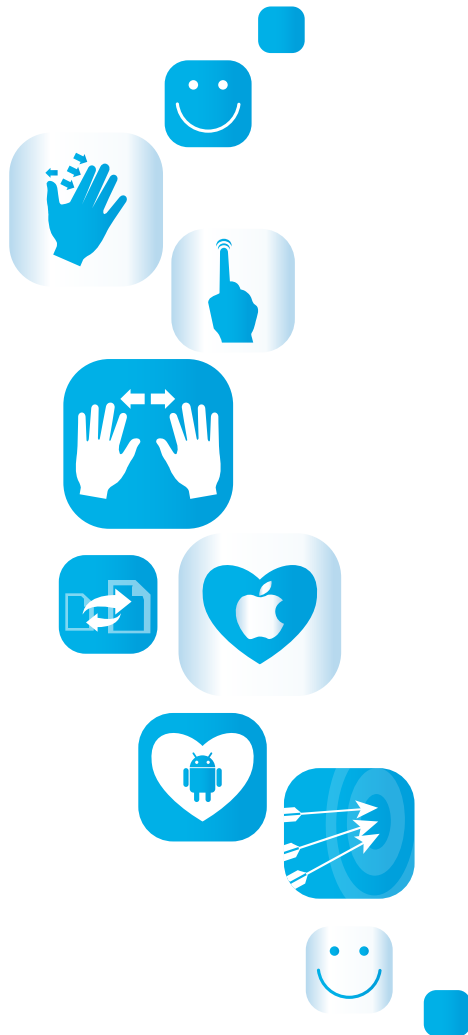
Mobile is the new web. However between the two options of developing a mobile website or a mobile application, choosing one that helps reach a wider customer base might turn out to be confusing. In this paper, we have listed the advantages of each, using which you can take an informed business decision.



With the emerging popularity of smartphones, more and more retailers are taking their business to the mobile platform. They can build a mobile app or develop a mobile website or do both.

Many who have not yet taken the trend are wondering what to invest their resources in first.

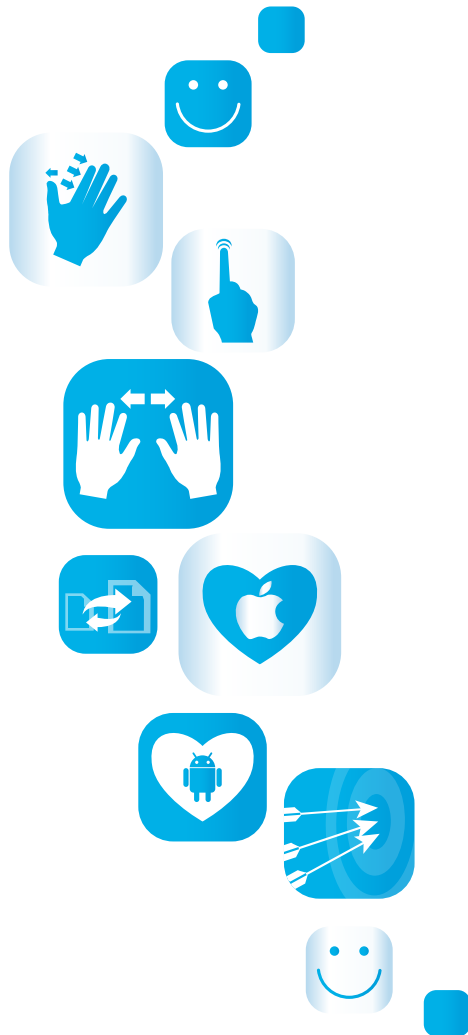
To decide which option will work for you, we have discussed the key objectives that each will help you achieve.



Mobile Apps

Mobile apps are actual applications that are downloaded and installed on mobile devices. Apps can be downloaded from portals such as Apple's App Store, Android Market, or Blackberry App World for a given operating system. Native mobile apps will be appropriate if your priorities are:

- > **Brand Loyalty:** Through a browser a user can go to any site providing similar services as you but an app user is captive to you.
- > **Better Targeting:** You need access to user information provided by the phone such as location, address book, accelerometer, etc. You can target users based on information available from their device.
- > **Optimized User Experience:** In case of a mobile app, there are no compatibility issues when apps are dedicated to the device they were developed for. The screen size and features are consistent for all users. You can control the way text and images are displayed, as well as the use of sounds and videos.



- > **Faster Information Transfer:** Your presentation is constant and only content or data needs to be downloaded each time. This means less data is transferred and process takes lesser time.
- > **Interactive Experience:** Build an app if you need your interface to be highly interactive and richer than what HTML can provide. Apps provide more feature-rich functionality today than mobile websites.

Mobile Website

On the other hand a mobile website is similar to any other website except that it is designed for the smaller handheld display and touch-screen interface. Choose to develop a browser-based mobile website for your product/service if you want:

- > **Searchable Content:** Mobile websites work better for delivering content, catalogs and shopping functions since that content is easily accessible by search engines.
- > **Changing Layouts:** If your content presentation format changes from time to time, a web-browser is the right choice. Design changes of a mobile website can be made visible immediately by simply publishing the edited version.
- > **Mass Market Appeal:** With a web-browser you do not have to download and install to be able to use the website.
- > **Operability across Platforms:** You can reach anyone with a device that has web browsing without writing the same app thrice (iPhone, Android, Blackberry).
- > **Lesser Maintenance Cost:** Porting apps to various mobile platform environments like Apple App store or Android Market costs money. Plus, every time a particular device is updated, you'll need to change your app accordingly.



- > **Simple Interface:** The interface is moderately interactive like in the case of knowledge portals.
- > **Monetization of the Site:** Advertisements targeting mass can be easily published on your mobile website to generate revenue from the ads viewed and clicked by users.

Finally, what works best for you would also depend on the kind of product or services you offer, the audience you target and the cost of your product! Typically, gaming and entertainment are always better off as apps. M-commerce and Social stuff could be better as browser based.

HTML5 will change this equation further in the future. It will definitely enhance the capabilities of mobile websites and help mobile websites offer a richer experience. But it is certainly a while before this technology matures.





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