



## **Mobile Websites**

by Howie Horrocks & Mark Dilatush

We look upon finding new effective ways to promote dental offices as part of our corporate responsibility. Within that responsibility is a benefit to our company in the form of competitive advantage. While you might think it would be a tremendous advantage for us, it's not really. Dentistry doesn't adapt to anything quickly. Back in the 80's, electronic insurance claims were new. It took fifteen years for dentistry to eclipse the 51% adoption mark. Fifteen years! Which begs the question – why is all of this talk about insurance claims important within the context of Mobile Websites?

Well, having a mobile website is one new way to promote your practice that you may not want to wait on. In other words, being the first in your area to do this provides significant upside potential toward a long term payback.

When we see those types of opportunities on the surface, we go to work.

### **Mobile Websites – Due Diligence**

The first thing we do as a firm when we identify an emerging medium is project the potential impact using consumer numbers. Our work with mobile websites was no different. Here are just a few of the numbers & characteristics we uncovered while doing our due diligence on this emerging opportunity.

1. **67%** of the world population has a wireless communication account. This is a staggeringly high number. There are more humans with wireless accounts than wired accounts! If you project this in the US & Canada, that's about 235 million wireless subscribers.
2. **700%** - Year over year mobile internet surfer growth. This means more and more people are using their mobile phones to search the internet for things they need or have an interest in. You rarely see 700% year over year growth in any market sector. This is serious growth! The growth is actually expected to expand!

3. **80%+** - The percentage of employers with more than 50 employees that currently use PC internet traffic tracking software to keep tabs on their employee productivity. What this means is that employers are aware that “surfing the net” with the work PC is damaging to their bottom line, so they are running workstation monitoring software to keep tabs on their employees. This is important because dental consumers still need to surf the net at work for things they need or have an interest in. Clearly, some of the year over year mobile surfing growth is being fueled by “big brother” watching work PC activity.
4. **Cost is not a barrier** – Cost is usually where an emerging promotion opportunity becomes nothing but wasted time. Technically, we *could* advertise a client practice during the SuperBowl! We wouldn’t, but we could! There are literally thousands of marketing opportunities out there for every dentist. Unfortunately, only a handful will fit inside a properly defined and managed marketing budget! Here is some good news. The cost of a mobile website with proper optimization runs from \$2800 to \$3,600. You can fit that number into almost **any marketing budget**.
5. **Verizon just announced a rival iPhone** – Right now, AT&T has a lock on being an iPhone provider. This is all going to end in June or July 2010. Now the *other* major mobile phone carrier is going to have a slick phone, not only capable of surfing the net – but is *easy and manageable* at the same time. This will again only increase the number of mobile surfers in the future.

### **Mobile Websites – The Marketing Opportunity**

The best way for us to explain the first benefit of a mobile website is to have you actually take your mobile phone and look at your .com dental website. If you do not have a dental website yet, go take a look at **any** dental website.

You **MUST** look at the dental website you chose from the dental consumer perspective. Pretend you are a contract worker in the area for at least the next 6 months and need some dental treatment. Pretend you are using your phone to navigate a dental office website.

Go ahead, try to navigate a .com website with your cell phone.

How are you doing? Are you trying to figure out where everything is? Have you tired of scrolling left, right, up, and down yet? If you have an iPhone, have you resized your screen three times yet? If you were a dental consumer, how would you rate your first experience with this dental practice thus far? Is *frustrating* the first thing that came to your mind? Probably.

OK, keep your mobile phone in your hand. Don’t put it down just yet.

Now go here: <http://romeovillesmiles.mobi/>

How are you doing with this site? Pretty straight forward huh? Everything is right in front of you isn't it? If you were a dental consumer, how would you rate your experience with this (dentist) dental website? What if you visited four other .com dental sites and then came to this one? Wouldn't this one be your pick? Since you looked at a .com site first, *easy* is probably the first thing that popped into your mind after you looked at the .mobi website. Making it easy for the dental consumer to do business with you is an important (vital) part of an effective overall marketing plan. It is just as easy to hit the "Back" button on an iPhone as it is to hit the "Back" button on a PC!

Clearly, one of the many advantages of having a mobile website is the way the site interacts with mobile surfers. Mobile websites are better organized, far easier to navigate, and can even connect the mobile surfer directly to your dental office with one click (if they click the contact us link). The mobile site will immediately feed the phone number to the phone and dial the practice phone number.

But is that the only benefit of a mobile website? Hardly. The next advantage is probably the most exciting.

### **Trump Optimization**

One really interesting characteristic of mobile websites is how the optimization works when a mobile surfer is looking for a dental office (or anything else for that matter). If the mobile website is developed correctly **and** optimized correctly (which isn't easy to do), when a mobile surfer looks for a dental office – the .mobi website will now position itself in the search ranking **higher than the .com counterparts**. This can take a bit of work and a bit of time to accomplish but remember what Google and the other search engines are in business to do. They are in business to bring relevant information to the surfer. Did you find the .com site *relevant* on your mobile phone? Hardly. It was frustrating, remember? Well, Google and the other search engines know this. That's why they are beginning to give priority ranking to .mobi sites when it is a mobile surfer (rather than a PC surfer) looking for something. Basically, even if your .com site is on the third page of a Google search for a [dentist - your town], your .mobi site will eventually trump your own .com site position as well as everyone ahead of you! This will put the thousands of mobile surfers squarely in your sights!

### **Zero Media Dilution**

This should be the most obvious advantage. You know there are other dentists in your area promoting through the internet with a .com site. You know there are other dentists in your area promoting through the mail. You know there are other dentists placing print ads. You probably have heard a dentist or two promoting over the radio, on TV, or on billboards near you.

But we bet there isn't a dentist within 50 miles of you that has a properly constructed and optimized mobile website!

Shhhhhh. We won't tell anyone ☺

This is what we were talking about in the opening paragraph of this article. This is a rather unique opportunity in that you get to choose “when” you enter this emerging medium. You can enter as the first dentist in your area, the 5<sup>th</sup> dentist in your area, or the 100<sup>th</sup> dentist in your area. Very few promotion mediums allow you to be the first **and only** dentist. That window of opportunity will close. The opportunity won't close because we wrote this article, but because you are going to be hearing more and more about the promotion opportunities to mobile surfers through various means in the future.

### **Which dental practices should consider a .mobi site?**

This decision really comes down to priority use of your available marketing dollars and what type of market you serve. If you work with NPI, you know we can do *any* type of promotion. Which promotion you invest in next, really comes down to where the investment fits into your overall marketing budget and budget allocation. The investment is \$3,200 with very little ongoing expense.

Here is a general list of what we consider pre-requisites prior to investing in a .mobi website for your dental practice.

#### High Priority.....

- Dental practices in or very near densely populated metro centers
- Dental practices in or very near large clusters of large businesses
- Practices that already have a solid .com website and good ranking position
- Practices that already have at least one successful external promotion (like a mail campaign)

#### Low Priority.....

- Practices with extremely tight marketing budgets
- Practices without a solid .com website and good ranking position
- Practices without another consistent/effective external promotion
- Practices in light density suburban/rural areas

In other words, a dental practice in rural Indiana that already has their marketing budget fully allocated – can wait a while before getting a .mobi website. However, a dental practice in NY, Atlanta, Houston, Dallas, Chicago, basically **any** major metro area – should begin to prioritize a .mobi website higher for their next budget availability.

Ultimately, we are here to tell you that the mobile website market is **wide open** in 99% of the US and Canada dental markets. If you find a dentist in your area that has a .mobi website, it would be a complete statistical anomaly. Getting into the mobile market **first** means all of the mobile searches for a dentist will see your .mobi site and have every reason to click “Contact Us” which connects their mobile phone to your front desk. It is sort of like being the only dentist in the area to mail, or the only dentist with an ad in the newspaper, or the only dentist on the radio. Zero media dilution significantly reduces

your investment risk and greatly increases your chance for a larger long term return on investment.

### **Your Expectations for Return**

Statistically, results from those that have mobile websites are trickling in. Today, we would not count on a significant number of consistent new patients from a mobile website. Results are trending much like the numbers from a new internal promotion initiative – low numbers each month, but great patients. For the rest of 2010, we expect those trends to continue – low numbers of great patients.

But, remember the new Verizon iPhone. Remember the 700% surfer growth year over year. Remember, the public that currently uses their mobile phone to surf the internet is absolutely **hooked** on surfing the internet with their phone. It is a habit now. It is now part of their lives. Their average age is 19 to 34. They are on the cusp of being the perfect family dental patient. The mobile professionals that use their phones to surf the net are **already** your perfect market. The busy professional mom is **clearly** your target market.

Your expectations should be, no matter how the current returns trickle in – returns are just going to build over time as the mobile surfer market continues its obvious maturity path.

### **Summary**

Don't just run out and get a mobile website for your practice just because it is "cool" to have one. Consider your market area carefully. Consider the other priorities within your marketing plan carefully. Eventually, a mobile site is going to float up to the top of your priority list.

We hope by sharing our due diligence on this emerging medium, we have done our part to help you prioritize your marketing dollars in a proper manner.

For those of you who want to learn more about how to promote your practices, we would like to invite you to one of our upcoming Dental Marketing Summits. You can learn more about our Dental Marketing Summits here:

[http://www.newpatientsinc.com/marketing\\_summit/](http://www.newpatientsinc.com/marketing_summit/)