

What is Mobile Friendly?

By Roberta M. Gubbins

Being on the Internet + being found on the Internet = an effective marketing program.

Let's assume your website and SBM Directory profile are current and you frequently e-mail your clients, keeping your name present in their minds. The first part of the equation is up and running. The issue becomes the second half of the equation—being found on the Internet.

Consumers, as we've said and will continue to say, search for lawyers online—either at the beginning of their quest or to follow up on referrals. They search on their desktop computers, laptops, tablets, and, with increasing frequency, their smartphones. According to independent market research company eMarketer, the number of smartphone users worldwide will surpass 2 billion in 2016.

Smartphones are the smallest of our computers. The screen on my antique iPhone 4s is a mere 2 by 3 inches. Newer models are bigger; however, the content still must fit in a small space. Often, the fit is not optimal, requiring pinching, expanding, and scrolling to see everything.

Recognizing this problem and wanting to retain its position as a useful service, Google is changing its search robots to include a website's mobile friendliness as a factor in its rankings. This means that pages that can't fit comfortably on a smartphone's smaller screen could experience a downgrade in ranking. Google says the change only affects a firm's ranking on smartphones and applies only to pages, not entire websites.

On a mobile-friendly page, text is readable without tapping and zooming, tap targets are spaced conveniently, and there is no unreadable content or horizontal scrolling.



A mobile-friendly site is good for its owner, the consumer, and Google. Researchers say that nearly half of all smartphone traffic (43 percent in the first quarter of 2015) is spent on searching. Search engines will send inquiries to mobile-friendly sites, increasing traffic to your website and pages.

E-mails should also be mobile friendly. Content should fit on smaller screens so consumers can read your words while on the go.

How do you know if your website is mobile friendly? Visit the Google Mobile-Friendly Test page at <https://www.google.com/webmasters/tools/mobile-friendly>, enter your URL or web address, and you will quickly know the results. If you fail the test, contact your web developer or website host to find out how to make your website mobile friendly. Your clients and potential clients will thank you. ■



Roberta M. Gubbins, Esq. practiced law before serving as the editor of the Ingham County Legal News. Since leaving the paper, she provides services as a ghostwriter, editing and writing articles,

blogs, and eblasts for lawyers and law firms. She is the editor of Briefs, the Ingham County Bar Association e-newsletter; and The Mentor, the SBM Master Lawyers Section newsletter.

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT EASTERN DISTRICT OF MICHIGAN

NOTICE OF AMENDMENTS AND PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO LOCAL RULES

The United States District Court for the Eastern District of Michigan publishes proposed amendments and approved amendments to its Local Rules on its website at www.mied.uscourts.gov. Attorneys are encouraged to visit the court's website frequently for up-to-date information. A printer-friendly version of the Local Rules, which includes appendices approved by the court, can also be found on the website.