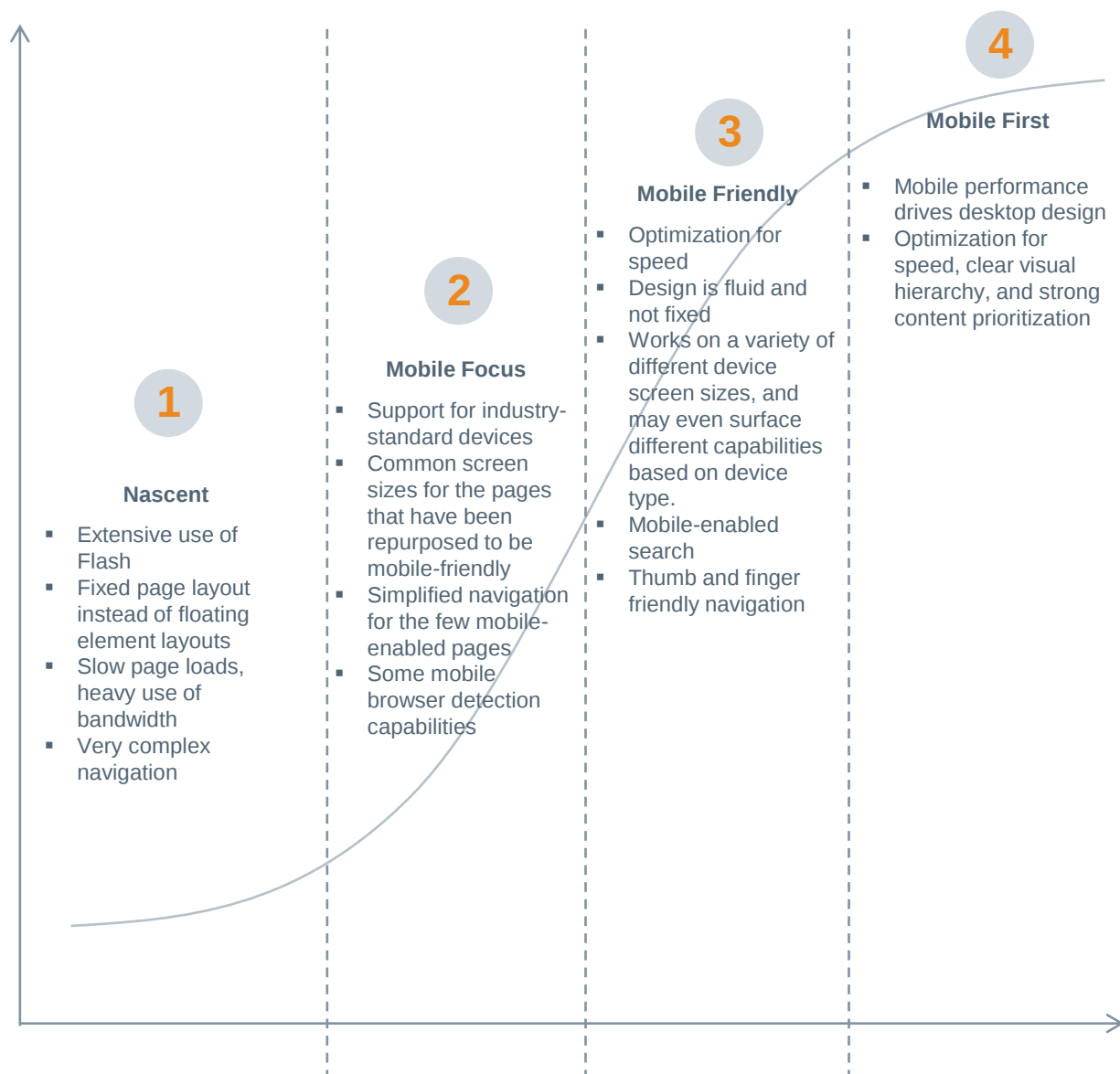


Mobile Optimization Maturity Model

Today, higher educational institutions need to treat mobile as a primary channel for prospective and current students, faculty and staff, and alumni. The Mobile Maturity Model outlines the four stages of mobile maturity complete with detailed descriptions of each. This tool can be used to cultivate buy-in and to help colleagues better understand the end-to-end resource requirements of transitioning to mobile optimization.

Mobile Maturity Model



Mobile Optimization Maturity Model, Cont.

Phase One: Nascent

This phase is marked by initial stirrings of interest in mobile, but legacy system obstacles that keep mobile optimization from gaining footing and momentum. The key indicators of being in this stage are:

- Extensive use of Flash
- Fixed page layout instead of floating element layouts
- Slow page loads, heavy use of bandwidth
- Complex navigation

Many COE units are in this stage today, not because they want to be, but because their systems and protocols for building their site were designed for desktop internet browsers of the late 1990s and early 2000s.

However, the need to revise these systems and protocols is mounting. When it comes to slow page loads or complex navigation, a one second delay in page response can result in a seven percent reduction in conversions.¹ From an admissions standpoint, if a website's goal is to attain 100 applicants per month, those seven applicants equate to an average loss of \$210,000, depending on tuition costs and student applicant value. Similarly, 70% of prospective students stated that their opinion of a college or university was diminished by a bad online experience.²

Whether a website's main intent is to drive applications or please current students (though we think it should be the former), consider the impact an aging website might have on larger strategic goals.

Phase Two: Mobile Focus

Organizations at this level have a subset of their high-value pages render correctly on a limited set of mobile devices. Mobile Focus is typically characterized by schools and universities that go down the "m dot" route, wherein they develop both a primary site (e.g., www.site.edu) and a subsite (e.g., m.site.edu) to manage mobile traffic. The main site redirects to the mobile site when it detects a mobile device such as cell phone or tablet. The key capabilities in Mobile Focus include:

- Support for industry-standard devices
- Common screen sizes for the pages that have been repurposed to be mobile-friendly
- Simplified navigation for the few mobile-enabled pages
- Some mobile browser detection capabilities

The Mobile Focus approach still supports desktop browsing over mobile browsing. The Mobile Focus level describes organizations that have taken steps in the right direction but still have additional work ahead of them to achieve a complete, mobile-centric digital experience.

Phase Three: Mobile Friendly

Mobile Friendly websites commit to providing a site-wide mobile experience for all visitors. The indicators of a Mobile Friendly site include:

- Optimization for speed
- Design that is fluid and not fixed
- Functionality on a variety of different device screen sizes, including different capabilities based on device type
- Mobile-enabled search
- Thumb and finger-friendly navigation

¹) <http://blog.kissmetrics.com/loading-time/>

²) http://omniupdate.com/_resources/pdfs/research/2013_expectations.pdf

Mobile Optimization Maturity Model, Cont.

Phase Four: Mobile First

Mobile First is a relatively new paradigm for organizations that are prepared to fully embrace the mobile revolution. Rather than starting with a traditional website developed for desktop browser viewing, the Mobile First doctrine,¹ created by Luke Wroblewski, suggests starting with mobile design principles and enhancing that experience for a desktop web browser.

The three tenets of the Mobile First doctrine are:

1. Mobile is exploding

It is clear that mobile is well past the tipping point of consumer adoption and has forever changed computing. There is an opportunity to improve overall service and visitor experience through a focus on mobile.

2. Mobile forces you to focus

As Wroblewski notes¹, “There simply isn’t room in a 320 by 480 pixel screen for extraneous, unnecessary elements. You have to prioritize.” A move to mobile loses approximately 80 percent of an institution’s digital canvas and forces leaders to focus on what is most important to visitors.

3. Mobile extends your capabilities

The web has always evolved the experience it delivers to visitors and has only been constrained by the limitations of web browsers. Beginning as a simple “view a page” experience, the use of JavaScript, plug-ins, add-ons and applications have allowed web designers to deliver richer and more engaging content to their visitors. Consider precise location information provided by GPS, Near Field Communication, and accelerometers, as well as camera and full touch capabilities. A “Mobile First” mindset helps an organization take advantage of these exciting new capabilities rather than being locked into an increasingly dated fixed desktop browser paradigm. Having a more intimate form of technology will contribute to a higher student retention rate and help boost prospective student quality and quantity.

Determining Your Stage

Complete the following table together as a team or individually in order to determine where you and your unit fall on the maturity spectrum.

	I strongly disagree				I strongly agree
	1	2	3	4	5
I have considered a responsive website design for my unit.					
I have assessed my website on a smartphone and/or tablet.					
I or someone on my team checks the bounce rate off my website on a regular basis.					
I or someone on my team knows which mobile devices are used to view my website.					
I or someone on my team regularly checks my website’s mobile conversion rate.					

1) <http://www.abookapart.com/products/mobile-first>

Mobile Optimization Maturity Model, Cont.

	I strongly disagree				I strongly agree
	1	2	3	4	5
I or someone on my team has thoroughly investigated competitor websites to see how user experience compares.					
I or someone on my team has considered building a specific mobile app for my unit.					
Social media sharing is enabled on my website.					
My website loads as quickly on a mobile device as it does on a desktop.					
I or someone on my team has examined the user journey to my website.					
My website is optimized for local search queries.					
My website is optimized for easy contact.					
My website is optimized for social sharing.					
My website is optimized for tapping as well as clicking.					
My website has clear calls to actions and active, urgent language.					
I have KPIs and targets in place for the website, both mobile and desktop.					
I or someone on my team has provided content generators and managers with templates to encourage a unified mobile presence.					
Before adding anything to our website, my team considers how it will display in mobile format.					

Scoring: sum your scores across all questions and use the following ranges to determine your phase:

18-36: Nascent

37-54: Mobile Focus

55-72: Mobile Friendly

73-90: Mobile First