

CLICKFIRE MEDIA AND THE MULTI-PLATFORM DIGITAL AGE

In a very short amount of time, the mobile device has become the platform of choice for digital engagement. Whether it is a primary or second screen, the mobile platform is now integral to the consumption of video and interactive media. As this trend grows we've noticed a couple of things:

- ▶ PC sales are declining for the first time due to the unprecedented growth of smartphones in it's various iterations. Large segments of the connected world - even middle class families - are ditching their desktops in favor of tablets, phablets and mobile devices for their internet access.



Director of UX Owen Corso at the ClickFire Media mobile lab

- ▶ Considering that 52% of mobile traffic is video (projected to be 70% in 2016), cord-cutters are able to circumvent their cable box with the use of integrated devices like Chromecast, AppleTV and Roku which allow you to project video wirelessly from your phone on your TV. IPTV gains at the expense of cable/satellite systems are small at the moment, we believe the technical and usability innovations are likely to accelerate this trend.
- ▶ As premium TV becomes increasingly mobile friendly (with HBOGo, WatchESPN, etc), print media is becoming increasingly reliant on the mobile subscription model complete with video channels (Conde Nast Entertainment). Each "channel" relying on cross-platform multimedia content.

49% of all video viewing involves a mobile device

While these numbers are very impressive, the real point is that ClickFire Media has proactively evolved its approach to creating content as much as it has evolved the way it consumes it. Our focus now is to ensure mobile compatibility. Site content and the entire digital presence should exist on any platform while maintaining a consistent visual and emotional experience. This evolved technical vision, paired with our long standing history of visionary creative, translates into rich content that can be viewed anywhere.

MORE THAN JUST AN APP

When brands and agencies think about the word “mobile”, the first thing that comes to mind is a mobile app. Maybe they think about a mobile website, independent of the main execution. However at this stage, “mobile” is actually a set of platforms, technologies and techniques used to make digital content accessible on any device, and taking advantage of the unique opportunities that the mobile platforms provide.

At ClickFire Media, we have developed a suite of products and technologies to address the transition into a mobile world while still creating rich immersive experiences. At the beginning of each project, we evaluate the project holistically to determine the best practices for best execution. We call this: ClickFire Mobile.

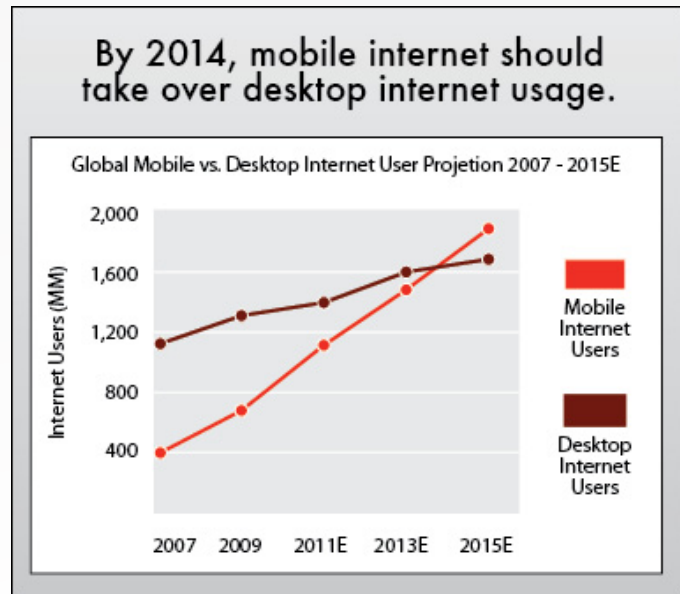
ClickFire Mobile Includes:

1. **Many Platforms, One Site:** Adaptive and responsive design applications using HTML5, including mobile-friendly e-commerce applications.
2. **Vine and Instagram video** within engaging and utilitarian environments.
3. **Apps - iOS and Android**, using both native code and framework development paradigms.
4. **API Integration**, including Instagram, Facebook, photo recognition, social media aggregation tools and CRM technologies.
5. **MultiPath Video**, a unique way to create video content based on user interaction within a mobile environment.
6. **User Generated Content**, user created and uploaded shareable content.

MANY PLATFORMS, ONE SITE

Responsive and adaptive design principles in conjunction with HTML5, is our basis for creating a single concept that works across multiple platforms. We also examine the user experience across all platforms from the very beginning of a project, finding the right functionality and interaction for each platform. The end result is an application that looks and works equally fabulous on any screen size.

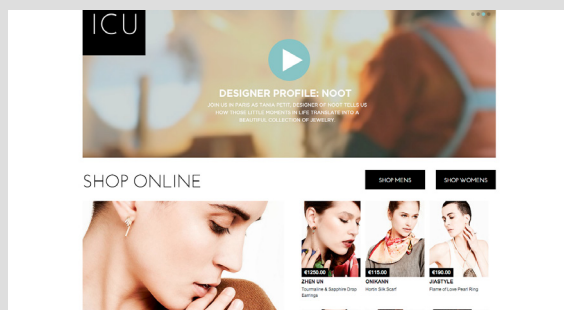
Since many of these principles can be conceptual in nature, in the following content we will be using a website for a restaurant as a reference point. However this is only one example, and the Many Platforms, One Site principle can be applied to any web execution.



CONSISTENT UX

User experience and information architecture have always been key to any successful application, and are even more important when planning multi-platform applications. Our team includes an expert in cross-channel user experience, and before any technology or design is defined, they strategize with both teams to develop wireframes detailing the optimal architecture for every possible platform.

CASE STUDY: ICUinParis.com



ICUin Paris, a fashion-forward blog and e-commerce site, engaged ClickFire Media to update its look and backend, based on a pre-existing Magento architecture. From the beginning, ClickFire Media envisioned this project as a Many Platform, One Site destination, designing and building with responsive design principles from the beginning. The rebuilt site, based on a WordPress backend, provides a seamless experience on any platform including reading of the blog, browsing the product catalog, and purchasing the custom products. The Magento backend remains in place to allow for easy updating of the product information and management of the e-commerce.

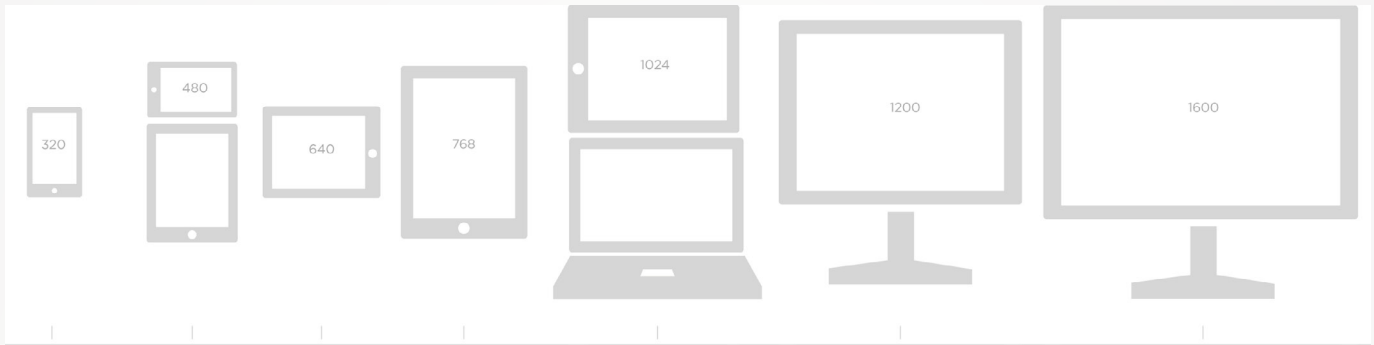
Consider a restaurant website. When creating the experience for the desktop, we may draw upon the convention of putting the phone number, hours of operation and address in the footer. Users have been trained and conditioned to look for things there over the years of looking at such similar websites. However, on a mobile device, the paradigm changes. Users looking up a restaurant website on a mobile device are more likely to be looking for contact and address information. Therefore, in a mobile environment, that information should be brought to the forefront, without the need for menus and scrolling, but geo-location drives to specific directions and maps with a phone call or a single click.

While that is a small example, it shows the thought process we bring to the mobile sphere. In order to create a successful, excellent, engaging user experience, all types of considerations should be taken into account and thought through. It is a hybrid discipline that ranges from design, to information architecture, to engineering, to psychology, to usability. It spans across screens, platforms, advertising channels, etc.

ADAPTIVE AND RESPONSIVE DESIGN

In a nutshell, responsive design is basically the adjusting of content's appearance or presentation layer so that it "responds" to different screen sizes, and is typically done using CSS. Adaptive design is the changing of content or behavior to accommodate the current channel/device, which can be done using JavaScript or CSS media queries. Both of these strategies seek to achieve a similar goal.

Performed properly, these techniques can produce many layouts of the same site - up to eight for each page! However, this upfront work is necessary to ensure a consistent user experience that is not only optimized for the screen it is being viewed on, but also for the environment the site is being used in. Combined with the user experience exercises, our developers are given a well thought out base to apply our cutting edge technology.



Given the vast number of mobile devices available, determining which screen resolutions to design for can be a bit daunting. There are always exceptions to any method of abstraction; however, we've found that the chart above of screen widths will generally cover the majority of use case scenarios. Notice that only the screen widths are listed because in most cases that's the greatest area of concern with regards to UX.

Interactive users have generally grown accustomed to scrolling vertically to view content overflow. In some exceptional cases however; we do provide design frames for specific screen heights as well. In the case of the restaurant website, we'd most likely want the footer containing the contact information to be visible at all times, which would require further evaluating the vertical real-estate available on the device being used.

ADAPTIVE AND RESPONSIVE DESIGN

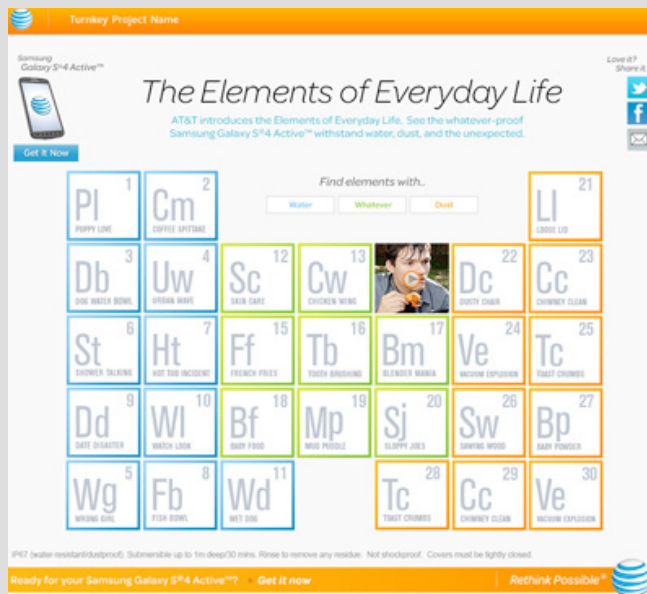
Obviously even the most insightful design and user experience principles require the best possible technology. ClickFire Media has consistently been at the forefront of digital programming techniques and we bring that experience to bear in the mobile sphere as well. For our web applications, we primarily use HTML5 with integrated responsive frameworks such as Twitter-Bootstrap, Response JS, and our own library of extensible HTML/JavaScript components.

To illustrate our usage of some of these technologies, we'll continue with the restaurant website example. When visited on a desktop, navigation typically appears horizontally laid out across the top or vertically stacked down the left side. When the screen size width drops down into a mobile range, Twitter-Bootstrap automatically collapses the main navigation into a full-width pull-down menu complete with a nice animation transition. A collapsed navigation would benefit the mobile user by neatly stacking the navigation out of view making the most helpful content immediately visible upon page load. Furthermore, Response JS could be utilized to display the restaurant's contact/location information in the header container, rather than the footer. To ensure cross-browser compatibility we also utilize tools like Modernizr, Initializr, and jQuery UI.

CASE STUDY: AT&T

AT&T Elements of Everyday Life for BBDO is a website built using Vine as the platform for the video content. Using responsive design techniques, the website was built to work universally on various mobile devices, as well as desktops. Smartphone and tablet web support was identified as key functionality from the beginning. Not only is Vine a mobile-centric platform by design, but also our research shows that mobile platforms are particularly popular for watching video.

- Approximately two million smart phone users have watched a video within the past 24 hours
- Vine was the top downloaded non-game app while Instagram uploaded five million clips in the first 24 hours



VINE AND INSTAGRAM

Integration with Instagram has long been a strong suit of ClickFire Media. Using their API, we have built many campaigns with integrated Instagram feeds. The addition of Vine and Instagram Video brings together both the technology of ClickFire Media and the video capabilities of Click 3X.

The power of having both of these capabilities under the same roof is that we are able to leverage the formidable video creation tools and artists at Click 3X, and then take the created video straight to the most popular digital channels. ClickFire Media not only handles this integration, but can also build a custom site/gallery based on the Vine and Instagram feeds.

APPS

While we have spoken at length here on principles for the mobile web, there are times when the functionality of a mobile web browser simply does not provide the features required to successfully execute to a client's desires. In that case, a mobile application is still a viable alternative, and, in some cases, is the only alternative. For each application, we engage in the same user experience exercises we would for the mobile web. However, for apps, there are additional parameters available to the client. With applications, access to personal data on the device (contact information, address book, etc.) is available, as are the full multimedia capabilities of the device (e.g. SMS, photo/video cameras).

As with the mobile web, there are a variety of technologies available to us in our toolkit. We primarily prefer using native IDE's, which across all devices; however, when deemed optimal we use tools such as Adobe Air, PhoneGap, and Titanium, to create very maintainable and cross-platform applications built on a single code-base.

ClickFire Media has a rich portfolio of apps for clients such as The Travel Channel, GEICO, Clorox, Starz, NBC Universal and William Grant Distillers. The apps are built for both IOS and Android - often with tablet versions of each - including Kindle Fire.

API INTEGRATION

To one degree or another, all projects in the digital sphere at this point and time integrate with an external API to bring additional texture and capabilities to the experience. Whether they are for social sharing (Facebook, Twitter) or for advanced technology integration (Photo recognition), the identification of these technologies and

CASE STUDY: Mobile Apps

GEICO Ventriloquist

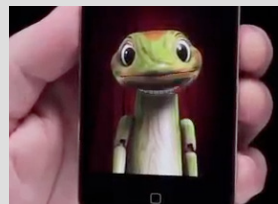
ClickFire Media worked with The Martin Agency to build GEICO Ventriloquist for their client, GEICO. Fully articulated, users can bring the dummy alive with gestures of the hands and wrist, and move the mouth itself by covering and uncovering the device's camera. Additional features such as backgrounds and sound effects are unlockable when sharing on Facebook and Twitter.

GEICO Ventriloquist was built using native code (Objective C and Java) for iPad, iPhone, and Android devices. Native code allowed us to harness the full power of each device to provide for the most unique techniques possible to bring life to the model.

Clorox Centennial Challenge

Click Fire Media was challenged by our client, Ketchum, to create a mobile application for Clorox's 100th anniversary. The app, using cutting edge image recognition technology, asks users to answer trivia questions using pictures taken with the device's camera as answers.

The Clorox Challenge app was built using Adobe Air, a cross platform mobile technology. Air allows us to create both iOS and Android applications from a single code-base, providing for a seamless cross platform design and accelerated development timeline.



how they fit into the design and technological requires of every project are a part of our development thought process.

Overall, we are intimately familiar with a rich set of API's - not only for the major platforms like Google Maps, Facebook, YouTube, Twitter and Instagram, but also social media aggregation apps like This Moment and Feed Magnet. "Mashing" these up can create entirely new experiences (see our Roxy case study below).

MULTIPATH VIDEO

User-generated video customization is where a user chooses video clips in any order and sequences them to create a shareable custom video. This is straight forward on a desktop where bandwidth is generally not an issue and videos can just be served and auto-played one right after another. Bandwidth aside, there are issues with doing this on mobile devices; in particular, within iOS. Due to the limitations of the Apple mobile operating system, users are required to tap a play button for videos to begin playing. This creates a less than ideal experience if the user has to click play at the start of each segment within the customized video.

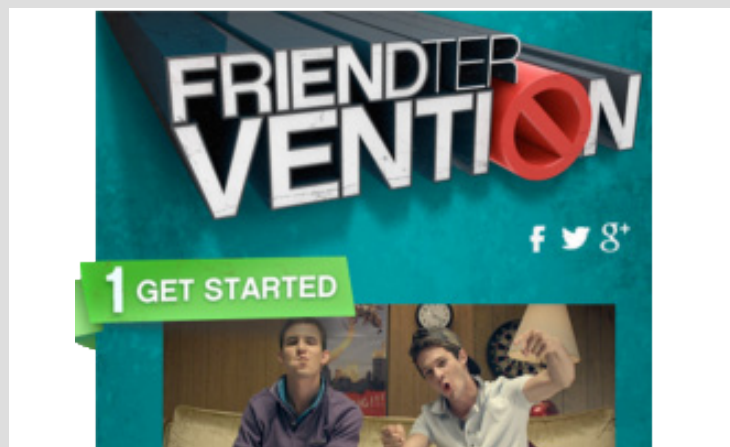
One solution is to use very high-powered media web servers, which can generate individual video streams on the fly to multiple users. The approach is effective and used by many of the larger players - it's not a practical solution for limited or even mid-range budgets. Usage is charged by the bandwidth and limited in the amount of simultaneous viewers. If the site becomes viral or simply popular, clients can find themselves in the position of being forced to shut the site down simply due to hosting costs.

CASE STUDY: FRIENDTERVENTION

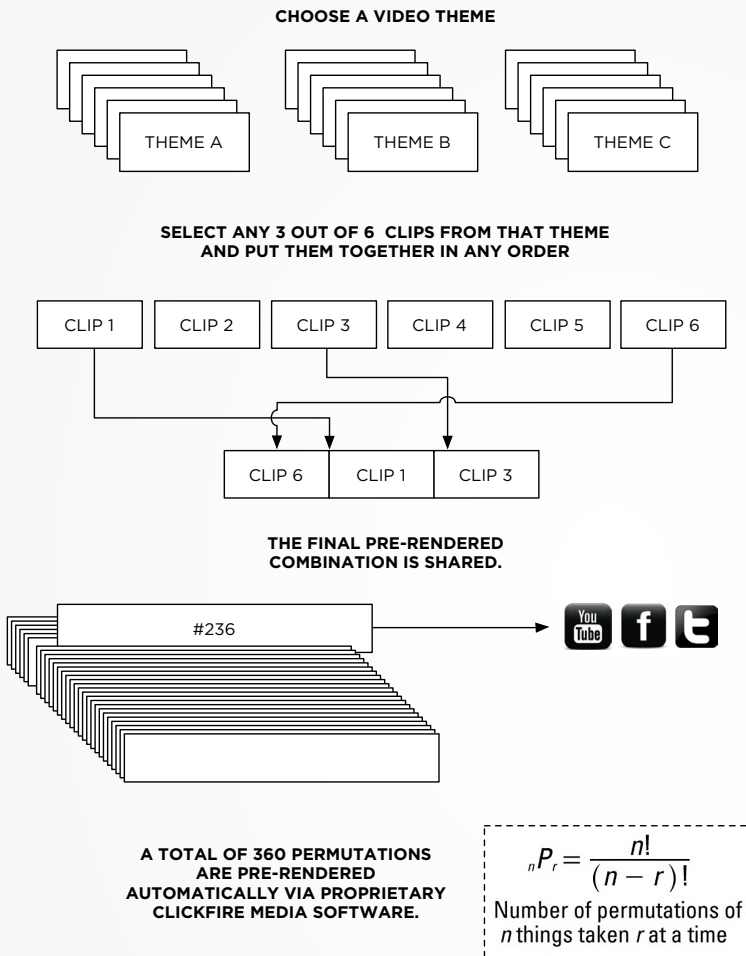
The Friendtervention site is an anti-smoking site targeted to young Mississippi teens (the majority of which use their smartphones as their only web device) where friends can send friends a comedic "intervention" video. Users are able to customize the video by stringing together a series of short scenes based on their friends' interests. Because of the young, urban demographic it was critical that it be mobile friendly.

Video customization, while straightforward on a PC, cannot normally be achieved on a mobile device. Our solution to this was to invent a software application that can automatically assemble every possible permutation (in this case, 360) so when the user thinks they're creating their own custom arrangement, they are simply selecting one of the hundreds of pre-created videos. The result is a seamless experience on any platform.

- Almost half of all smartphone users watched a video recently on their phone
- 2/3 of smartphone users watch at least one hour of video per week



Another solution is to create every possible permutation of video that can be created. In the case of our project, we had users select one of three sets of 6 videos - 18 videos in all - for a total of 360 possible permutations. Aside from the huge amount of hours it would take someone to set up and render all this out, there would inevitably be mistakes that would be very difficult to ferret out during Q&A.



Our solution was to actually invent a software application that can automatically assemble every possible permutation. It does what the high-powered web host server would do every time there was a request, but this way it's done only once on our local server prior to even launching the site. So when the user thinks they're creating their own custom arrangement, they are simply selecting one of the hundreds of pre-created videos. The result is a fast, seamless experience on any platform.

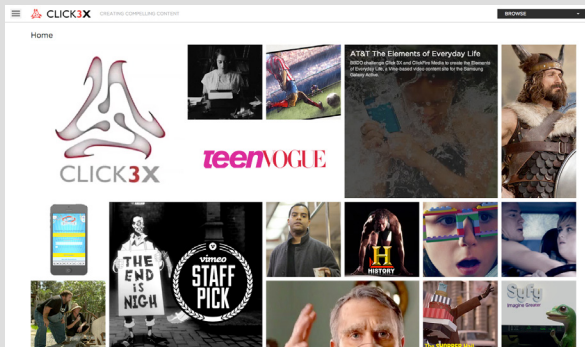
USER GENERATED CONTENT

This has long relied on PC technologies - to access the user's webcam for example. Realizing that those days are mostly over, we have developed user upload technologies and resources to create the same or even better user engagement in the platform of their choice.

If there is a method of submitting content, then we can and have explored its abilities to allow users to create their own content and share it with others. Be it the classic option of uploading straight from the user's hard drive, or more advanced methods of using Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube, we find the right user experience for creating and submitting content.

CASE STUDY: ROXY

When Roxy wanted to launch its “Dare Yourself” user generated content campaign, there were two main requirements: it had to be on Facebook, and it must be mobile compatible. ClickFire Media built a full-featured submission, gallery, and voting experience, incorporating YouTube and Instagram. Each piece of content was viewable on mobile devices, and by using mobile-enabled Facebook shares and a mobile-web experience, users could participate with any device (phone, tablet, or desktop) at any time.



CASE STUDY: CLICK3X.COM

When ClickFire Media set out to rebuild the sites for both divisions of the company, we knew there were two main requirements:

- 1) Fully responsive and mobile compatible
- 2) Engaging and a showcase for our expansive portfolio of work.

From the first wireframes through design and development, this site is platform-agnostic. Both our developers and creative teams really liked the jQuery plugin Isotope that allows for a masonry style flowing of content boxes. However, it wasn't powerful enough for what we need the site to do so we re-wrote our own version of it.

For the administration and content management of the site we felt that none of the standard CMS would work just the way we wanted. So, we built our own, taking what we like from different off the shelf CMSs. Our custom built, PHP based CMS manages the multiple sites from one unified control panel.

Because of the responsiveness and flexibility of the site, we were able to add it as a tab to our Facebook page without any adjustments or extra work.

These are just some of the solutions we offer. We are also developing HTML5 mobile ad units, integrating Pinterest analytics systems, finding new and creative ways to integrate in-app advertising with technologies such as geo-location, and many other user engagement strategies. We would love to get your feedback and comments!

For more information:

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