
Mobile-first Design

Why is mobile-first design important?

51% of the population - 2 billion people - access the internet ONLY from their smartphones.

By 2025, that number is expected to jump to 72.5%.

<https://gs.statcounter.com/platform-market-share/desktop-mobile-tablet>

What is mobile-first design?

Mobile-first design is a design philosophy that aims to create better experiences for users by starting the design process from the smallest of screens: mobile. Designing and prototyping your websites for mobile devices first helps you ensure that your users' experience is seamless on any device.

For example, if a mobile-first designer sits down to prototype or sketch out a website layout, they wouldn't start sketching a desktop layout. Instead, they'd sketch out how it'd look on mobile, then move onto bigger and bigger screens.

But why is this important?

The reasoning behind this is simple: Mobile design is more limited. After all, you're designing for a smaller screen and can only fit so many elements into it. That means you choose only what's most important—what your users need the most—while ignoring everything else.

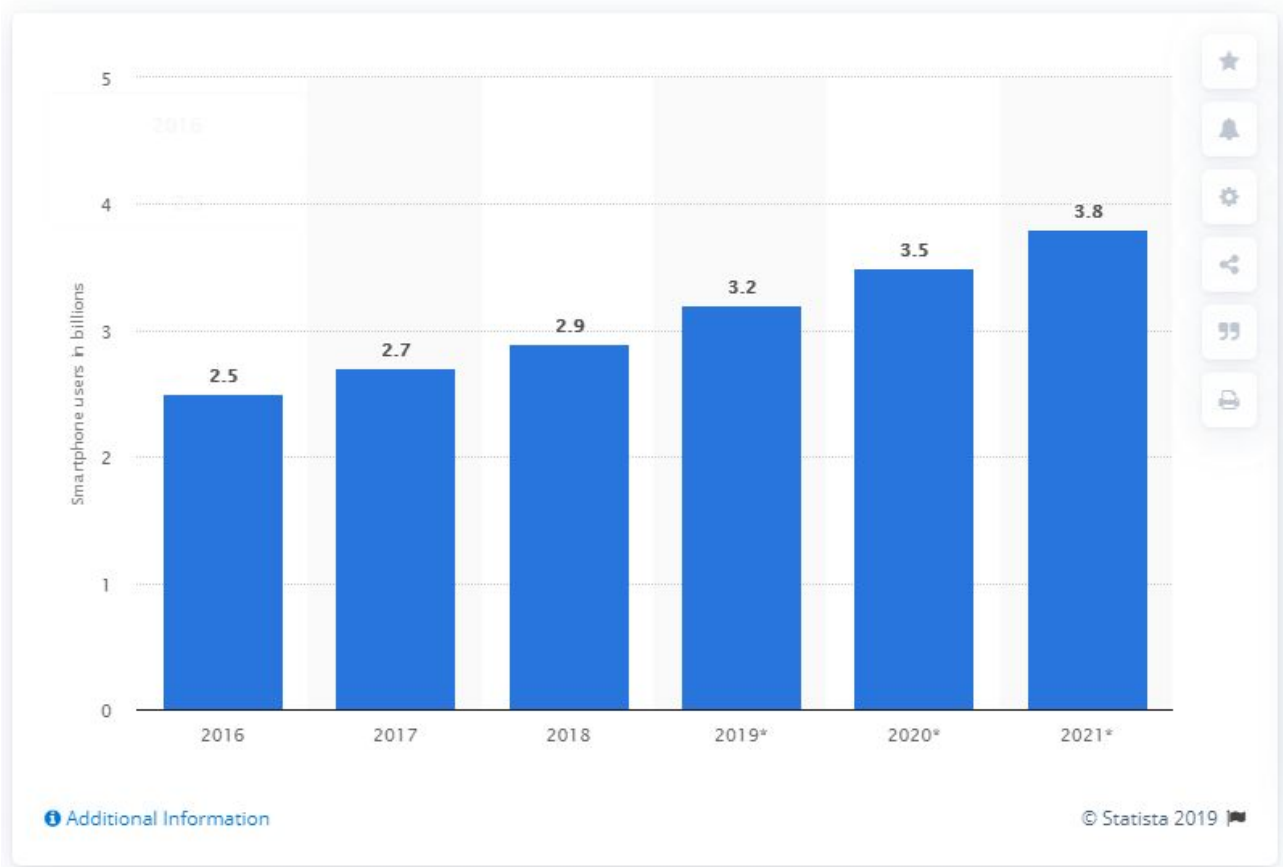
As you expand your design, you can provide them with other elements, but you know exactly what you need to bring to the forefront.

The majority of people are using their phones to find the content they need.

There's a big need for mobile-friendly websites out there, and so it's our job to supply it for our users.

Number of smartphone users worldwide from 2016 to 2021

(in billions)



Mobile-first design and accessibility

Small-screen friendly Mobile-first design pushes you to make your digital products more readable on smaller screens—and therefore more accessible to people who might be hard of seeing. And when your designs help people with limited vision, they'll also help everyone else.

Hierarchy of information As we'll go into later, mobile-first means content first. That means, putting your most important content assets (i.e. the ones your users want) as soon as possible on your page. This also makes your content accessible to anyone with cognitive disabilities.

Tips for good mobile-first design...

#1 Mobile-first = Content-first

When it comes to mobile-first design, you need to remember one thing:
Content is key.

You need to give your users all the content they're looking for—and only that. Anything else might clutter and distract from your users' experience.

#2 Make it easy to navigate

Condense your secondary elements into easy-to-reach navigational buttons.

A good example of this is the use of a hamburger menu or combo navigation.

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#3 KISS (Keep it simple, stupid)

Good mobile design is simple.

You never want to burden your users with extraneous elements like ads, pop-ups, and other content they don't want to see—but especially not on mobile. Limit your limited visual real estate to only including the things they're on the page for.

Keep. The. User. In. Mind.
