Kobiton

The Importance of Mobile-First Testing

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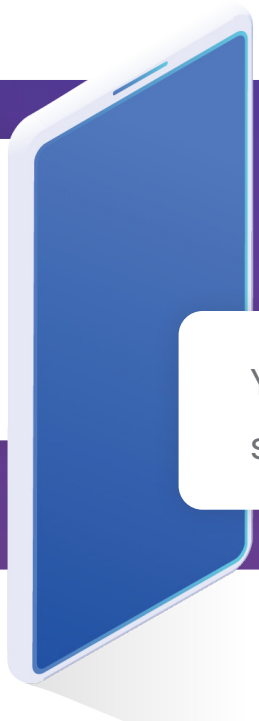
Introduction

Mobile-First Strategy

Adopting a mobile-first strategy to your QA processes is not just important; it's everything.

In 2021, time spent mobile shopping increased by **49%** from the previous year.



Yet only **34%** of brands have shoppable mobile apps.

As more enterprises discover the importance of a mobile app, the pressure to have the best mobile experience becomes paramount. It's not just making sure your app works; you need to adapt a mobile-first testing approach to truly guarantee customer acquisition and retention, faster and better app updates, and global functionality. It's the mobile-first era, so why don't you have a mobile-first testing strategy?

Why Does Mobile Matter?

Simply put, customers are using mobile more than ever.

A recent survey found that the average person spent;

4.8 HRS a day on mobile apps and downloaded over 435,000 apps per minute.

In 2020, mobile retail sales accounted for;

44% of all US online sales, and mobile commerce is expected to grow by 14.4% from 2019 to 2024.

With the market for mobile growing at the pace it is, the ability to deliver a great mobile experience to your customers is crucial to stay relevant. But with consumers looking for faster and more convenient solutions, the mobile experience may not be enough. Developers and QA teams will need to establish a mobile-first testing strategy in their processes to guarantee better customer acquisition and retention, better visual and UX design, and global functionality.

Customer Acquisition + Retention

Research shows that mobile users are more likely to abandon an app than they are with a web or desktop application and the mobile shopping cart abandonment rate is 85%. This can be caused by a number of factors that can be attributed to poor performance including app crashes and other bugs.

70% of app or site abandonment is due to pages taking too much time to load.

The last thing your app needs is a negative app store review that could ultimately hurt overall app store discoverability. Preventing churn and enabling retention requires more efficient and faster releases.

A Better UX/UI Experience

Customer expectations are at an all-time high. If your app can't live up, another app can. Nothing says customer churn like a bad experience, and with increasing competition, having an app that not only performs well but has a visually appealing UX is paramount.

Imagine this scenario: You're a retail business, and a potential customer downloads your app. A product is in their cart, and they go to checkout, but the checkout button is obscured by overlapping text. When the user tries to hit the checkout button, it selects the text instead, nothing happens, and they abandon their cart and the app.

Functional tests won't always catch visual errors like that. But, a mobile-first testing strategy would include visual testing as a regular part of your QA processes.

A Truly Global Customer Base

Mobile-critical companies are rarely playing in a geographically isolated field. Instead, they operate at a massive scale globally with a need to support thousands of different device types.

Research found that just this year, an estimated 6.6 billion people have smartphones, and although iPhone users have taken over the majority in the U.S., Android users are still the majority worldwide. Not only that, Android operates on a huge variety of devices, and according to Google, they have over 3 billion active devices!

Mobile Innovation

In the market, there are two separate types of companies: the Mobile Elite and the Mobile Follower. The Mobile Elite are digital leaders and push the envelope in terms of mobile innovation. Think of Uber, Instagram, and Twitter. These enterprises are highly focused on a better-performing app and improving every day. Frequent releases fix bugs most users never see and bring new updates utilizing upcoming technology trends that users never knew they wanted.

The Mobile Follower, on the other hand, noticed the market demand and invested in a mobile app, but maintaining and updating it became less of a priority over time. According to a recent Omnichannel Leadership Report, innovation has stalled. By failing to upkeep their mobile presence, customers found solutions elsewhere in their competitors with better performing, high functioning, and visually appealing apps.

What is a Mobile-First Testing Strategy & How Can I Implement It in My Processes?

A mobile-first testing strategy anticipates the needs of its users by using functional, visual, and performance testing, utilizes automation, and tests early and often with real devices.

Steps To Implement This

1

Dedicated Test Team for Mobile

Not just borrowing the browser testing team

Making sure you have a dedicated test team just for mobile testing is an essential first step in implementing a mobile-first strategy. Some organizations will simply borrow resources from their browser testing team, but they may lack the specialty and expertise that is needed for a mobile tester.

2

Develop Testing Plan

Manual vs Automation

Once you've established your mobile team, you will need to decide if you'll be using manual or automated testing. Both types of testing have different benefits for different scenarios and adapting a multifaceted approach would bring the most success to your organization.

3

Decide on a Provider

Scriptless vs Scripted Tests

When using automated testing, scripted automation can be flaky and hard to maintain, while scriptless testing is fast to set up and requires minimal training for your team.

4

Procure Devices

Real Devices vs Simulators & Emulators

A mobile-first testing strategy would implement real devices, ensuring a high-performing app across ALL devices and operating systems. Testers are able to attain the truest, most accurate testing when executed on real devices with various OS, screen sizes, and device types. Emulators and simulators can often be less reliable and slower than real devices.

Device Hosting

Hosting your own devices may be a bigger challenge than anticipated, so choosing the right device lab management provider with the option of hosting on a private or public cloud or both would allow your team the most effective and efficient testing.

5

Test Early & Test Often

Testing early and often can avoid problems that often plague app releases and catch bugs earlier in development.

A mobile-first strategy adopts an agile testing method and integrates continuous testing into the DevOps process so testers can take their automation to the next level. Adding regression testing in a CI/CD pipeline can enable a more mature development cycle for faster app releases.

6

Communicate with Vendors

Always ensure you are on the latest and greatest version of the software and tools that you are using to ensure optimal performances.

Takeaways

Whether you're trying to stay relevant in a mobile-first world or wanting to stand out from the competition, adapting these practices can ensure not only a better functioning app, but the best mobile experience for your users.

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at **kobiton.com**

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