Configuring a Site for Responsive Design

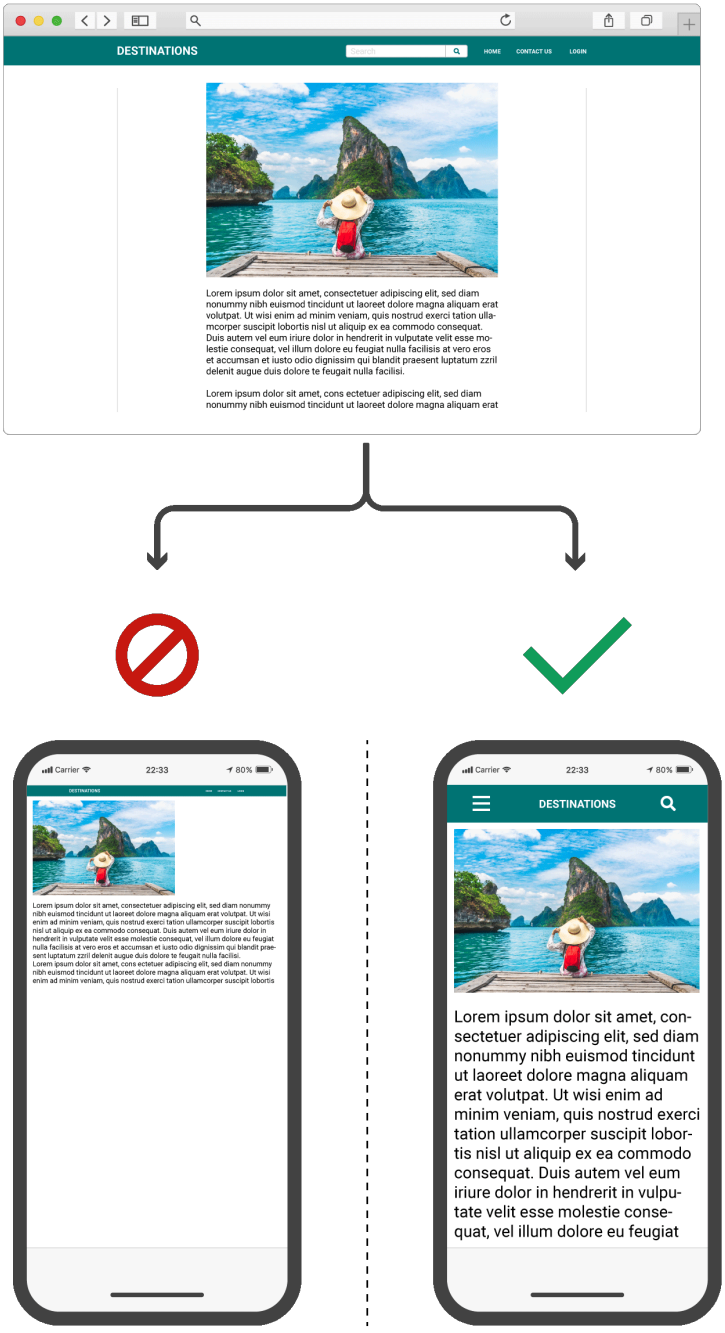
Getting started with responsive design is pretty simple — here, you'll create HTML and CSS documents in the way you always have. However, you'll need to add an extra <meta> tag to get started, and you may want to modify some CSS as well.

The Viewport

The **viewport** is the area of a webpage that is visible to a user. The viewport varies depending on the type of device — desktop, tablet, or mobile — that is being used to view the webpage.

Before the mobile revolution, webpages were designed for desktops and commonly were fixed in size. Once users started to surf the internet on mobile devices, these fixed-size webpages were too large to fit the viewport. To adjust for this issue, the browsers on mobile devices scaled down the entire page to fit on the screen.

Perhaps you've visited a website before that looks fine on a desktop computer, but when you view it on your phone, it's a tiny, unreadable version of the desktop website. Below is an example of a webpage with and without the meta tag.



Without the viewport meta tag **With** the viewport meta tag

Adding The <meta viewport> Tag

To address this problem, responsive websites must add a meta viewport tag anywhere inside the <head> tags of an HTML document. The **meta viewport** element allows web designers to take charge of the viewport, and ensure that the content is sized appropriately. The code syntax to set the viewport is illustrated below:

```
<meta name="viewport" content="width=device-width, initial-scale=1">
```

The <meta> viewport tag indicates the following:

- **<meta>**: instructs the browser on how to control a page's dimensions and scaling.
- **width=device-width**: Refers to the width of the viewport. This is set to be the same as the device's width used to view the web page. Therefore, this value is typically something like 300px on a phone, or 1920px on a desktop computer.
- **initial-scale=1**: refers to the amount of zoom when the page first loads. In this case, the page loads with no zoom

You may change these values, but typically, most web developers use this tag exactly as it appears above.

Best Practices: Setting the Viewport

Be sure to add <meta> viewport element in all of your webpages. This prevents site visitors from having to scroll horizontally, or zoom out, to see an entire webpage. Doing so results in a poor user experience.

Review Checkpoint

To test your understanding of the content presented in this assignment, please click on the Questions icon below. If you have trouble answering any of the questions presented here, you are always free to return to this or any assignment to re-read the material.

1. True or False?

The meta viewport tag can be added anywhere inside the head tags of an HTML document.

a. True

Correct. This statement is true. The meta viewport tag can be added anywhere inside the head tags of an HTML document.

b. False

Incorrect. Try again.

2. The meta viewport tag contains which two properties?

a. Width and initial scale

Correct. The meta viewport tag contains the width and initial scale property.

b. Width and zoom

Incorrect. Try again.

c. Initial scale and viewport

Incorrect. Try again.

d. Initial scale and scale

Incorrect. Try again.