

52 Question Checklist for Responsive Web Design Projects

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1. Will the content owners be OK with uploading multiple size photos in the CMS (if one is being used) on a frequent basis?
2. Will the marketing or design team be OK with the “mobile first” graphic design approach that limits branding design options?
3. Are you prepared for “technical issues” either during development or after your new RWD site goes live, since there is no single set of best practices yet?
4. Are you prepared to defend giving users of IE6-8 a slower or worse experience than their current experience on your non-RWD site?
5. How does a RWD, exactly, increase mobile or desktop users if nothing has changed with the existing SEO and social media strategy?
6. Can the increase in cost be justified by metrics that show more conversions or sales will take place?
7. Are you prepared to work with wireframes and outlines instead of traditional PhotoShop mockups?
8. Are you ready for any number of new and non-trivial tasks relating to content design that a RWD will require?
9. Do you have a lot of pages on your current site that are already long, like FAQs? What will happen to those pages when squeezed into the linear funnel of a RWD?
10. Can you prove that a RWD that will eliminate a dedicated mobile and desktop site will actually save you money?
11. Are you prepared for a slow-loading mobile view of your RWD if it's heavy on graphics for branding or catalog requirements? One study shows 86% of RWD mobile sites have no performance gains over their desktop versions.
12. Are you prepared to completely change SEO tactics?
13. Have you listed out the pros and cons of having a separate mobile site vs. the pros and cons of a RWD?
14. Do you currently rely on being able to easily create and test A/B pages?
15. If the vast majority of your web metrics show desktop usage and rely on that for sales and conversions, is a RWD that makes the site “more usable” on “all devices” necessary?
16. Do I have metrics to show a need for a RWD?
17. Can the teams who provide content for the new RWD provide this it up front and work iteratively as the site progresses?
18. Will a longer implementation period design, development, bug hunting be acceptable?
19. Will the more spartan RWD graphic design ethos be a detraction with the person signing off on the project?
20. Many say that RWD sites are “less expensive to maintain.” What are your current maintenance costs?
21. Do you expect the RWD site development process to be moderately or significantly harder to manage?
22. Do you have target mobile and tablet devices in mind?
23. Are you prepared to defend or explain longer load times for the mobile version of the RWD site?
24. Have you asked your RWD vendor if the technologies and methodologies they use for creating and maintaining a RWD are mature yet?
25. If you have had a RWD “evangelist” selling this approach, have you gotten a second opinion from a less dispassionate point of view?
26. Are you prepared to deal with the limitations you'll encounter with moving to one unified RWD from an existing multi-site strategy (dedicated mobile and desktop)?
27. Are you prepared to be able to “get under the hood” on your new RWD site less than your traditional site since it will now require a much higher degree of skill with HTML, HTML5, CSS, and JavaScript?
28. Will your marketing team expect to continue to have a divergence of focus between a dedicated mobile site and desktop site? RWD usually means creating one focus at the expense of different focuses for dedicated and desktop versions of a site.
29. Will the added time and cost of a RWD be recoverable through a measurable increase in sales or conversions?
30. Will flowing your website content create one very, very long page that will cause the user to scroll, scroll, scroll without knowing if what they need is somewhere in this vertical line?
31. The effects of RWD on SEO are largely unknown or anecdotal: how will you answer questions about this?
32. Are your internal teams prepared to work on creating this site very differently than they have in the past, especially regarding the need for content up front vs. content after a traditional design comp is provided?
33. Is your site tabular-data heavy? Can your RWD present to you truly acceptable solutions for large horizontal tables if your current site has them and relies on them heavily?
34. Do you have false expectations of increased sales, increased shopping cart completions, increased mobile users, decreased bounce rates, etc., because of the allure of RWD?
35. Exactly how will a RWD increase traffic to the site, or will it?
36. Is the marketing team prepared to sacrifice design for functionality in a very non-negotiable way that is often required of RWD sites to make them work?
37. If your site uses long forms, how will they work in a RWD?
38. On long mobile RWD pages which may occur on your site, are multiple scrolls more onerous than the pinches or zooms required to find the same information on your current site?
39. Have you asked the relevant people why some of the top sites like Apple, Amazon, Facebook, YouTube, Yahoo, Wikipedia, eBay, LinkedIn, are not RWD?
40. Would a slower mobile site cause you to bounce more visitors?
41. Will the custom nature of your new RWD create a captive relationship between you and your vendor?
42. Is it OK if the new RWD mobile site is slower than my current mobile site?
43. Are you prepared to explain a drop in search engine rankings when the new RWD site goes live should it occur?
44. How can you justify the number of breakpoints in a new RWD using existing website metrics?
45. Is there an over-zealous person on your team forcing a RWD solution or discussion prematurely?
46. Will losing rankings for any dedicated mobile pages you may already have be tolerable?
47. Have you fallen for unsubstantiated hype about RWD, like how it will “maximize user experience”, or do you have specifics you can talk about intelligently?
48. Is the “future proof” selling point of RWD really an issue if you design a new site every few years regardless of what technology is used?
49. If you have a dedicated mobile site now, chances are your site performance will go down. Are you prepared to defend this?
50. Will the content owners have the graphic design savvy to know how to resize images and make cropping decisions?
51. If you will be “given the keys” to the new RWD site after it's completed, do you have or have access to the requisite image optimization skills and software?
52. Has a RWD vendor over-hyped the SEO benefits of RWD and have they provided any case studies from reputable SEO experts?

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