

DESIGNING FOR DEVICES

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INTRODUCTION

The digital publishing industry is highly reactive to the continuous technological developments of desktop and mobile devices. App design therefore, is constantly evolving to suit the latest innovations and user requirements. There are now a vast range of various devices available on the market and each is designed for a specific use. The app design thus needs to suit the purpose of the device as well as the dimensions.

PageSuite's solutions are optimised for a variety of iOS, Android and Kindle devices, it is therefore fundamental that our app designs are tailored to suit each device. This white paper aims to illustrate the main points to consider when designing apps for different devices.

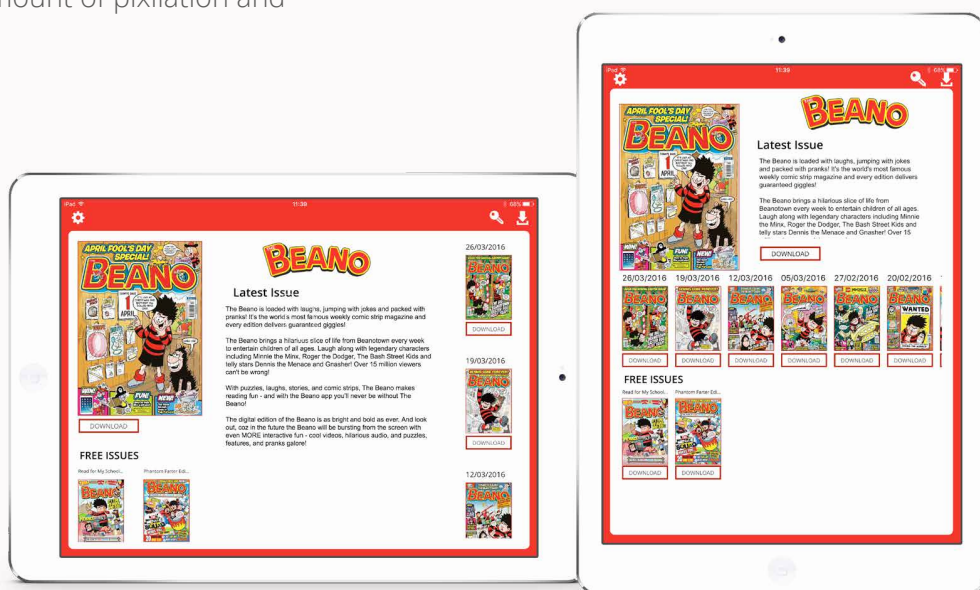
ORIENTATION & RESOLUTION

When designing apps for different devices it is essential that you consider both the orientation and resolution of each device.

It is important to establish whether the device you are designing for orientates in both landscape and portrait. The design needs to suit both orientations and needs to transition smoothly when the angle is changed. It is also necessary to consider the default orientation of the device, for example most smartphones and iPads adopt portrait, whereas most Android and Windows 8 tablets are primarily defaulted to landscape. You should always remember that the primary orientation of your app should always serve the device's default mode and functionality.*

Designers should also take into account the various resolutions across the different devices to guarantee that the app looks effective and works properly. Conduct research on the different devices to ensure that you maximise quality and resolution of all app assets. This will help to minimise the amount of pixilation and poor image quality.

PageSuite's Lead Designer, Emily Jarvis, says "Making effective use of screen real estate is always a design challenge. Consider the task at hand and how this affects the UI layout, as some content lends itself better to a particular orientation. For example, long scrolling lists tend to work better in a portrait orientation or viewing a double page spread of a newspaper or magazine is better suited to just a landscape orientation. Also, in instances where specific functionality is available in only one orientation, it's important to make it as clear as possible through either quick tutorial screens or pop-up screen hints to help notify the user."



* <https://www.smashingmagazine.com/2012/08/designing-device-orientation-portrait-landscape/>



11:39



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APP JOURNEY & APP AESTHETICS

It is important to give thought to the user's app journey and how your design can facilitate smooth navigation around an app.

Planning the user journey should be done during the initial app design stages in order to visualise the user requirements and app functionality. It is important to consider the user's goals, motivations and main tasks they want to achieve when using the app.

You will need to think about the following five steps when planning the app journey*:

Context - What is your target audience and where are they? Are there likely to be any external factors which may be distracting them? E.g. commuters on public transport

Progression - How many steps does it take the user to find and read an article?

Devices - What device are they using and what features does it have?

Functionality - What type of functionality are they expecting? Is it achievable?

Emotion - What is their emotional state in each step, are they engaged or bored?

The fluidity of the journey is relative to the aesthetics of the app. It is essential that the interface is as simplistic as possible so that the user knows how to use the app effectively. Using common images, icons and buttons will enable the user to clearly identify their function, for example, using a magnifying glass as a search icon.

Icons and buttons are also particularly useful when designing for mobile devices. They can be used to section off parts of the app to make room for more content and to minimise cluttering.

The pre-designed templates within our Infinity portal enable your users to efficiently navigate their way round your app and find their desired content. Alternatively, our Designers are on hand to assist with any custom projects.



* <http://theuxreview.co.uk/user-journeys-beginners-guide/>

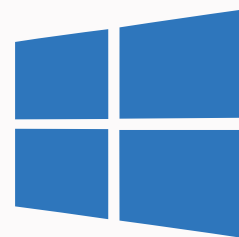
OPERATING SYSTEM FUNCTIONALITY

When designing apps for different devices it is imperative to take into consideration the various functionalities on different operating systems.

The user will be accustomed to certain functionality on their preferred operating system. For example, an Android phone works entirely different to an iOS phone, so the user will be used to their apps working in a specific way. Variations even consist of simple functionalities such as; the location of the 'back' button or the appearance of the 'social share' button. Following the conventions of each OS will contribute to the overall user experience and will enable the user to successfully navigate their way round the app.

You can refer to the Interface Guidelines below to ensure that you meet the standards of each operating system:

- **Apple**
- **Android**
- **Windows**



UTILISING SPACE

A vital consideration when designing an app is how best to utilise the space. Designing for smaller devices such as smartphones significantly reduces the amount of available space, so designers have to find solutions for fitting the same amount of content into a phone as the tablet edition.

Using different functionalities can help to tackle this potential issue. Incorporating functions such as menus and dropdowns can help to filter areas and even hide less important items without removing them altogether. Establishing the hierarchy of app content and features helps with this, as it eases the decision on what needs to be eliminated from the mobile app.

PageSuite's Lead Designer, Emily Jarvis, says "Having a clear idea of the goals of the app and keeping the content focused is key to avoid unnecessary clutter. Even though space is limited, it's important to make effective use of white space too and give sufficient padding to graphical elements and text to ensure the mobile design is user-friendly and readable."



PURPOSE & UNIQUE ASPECTS

Designing for unique aspects and purposes of different devices is becoming increasingly prevalent within the digital arena. The introduction of revolutionary devices such as smartwatches and larger screen tablets has intensified the requirement for extensive design measures.

It is imperative to consider the purpose of the device in order to effectively tailor your designs. For example, smartwatches serve a very different purpose to a smartphone or tablet, so it is important that the apps reflect this. Larger screen tablets such as the iPad Pro would be used for reading, watching movies and even drawing, whereas smartwatches are primarily used 'on-the-go'. App designs for tablets can therefore be more intricate and contain more content. Smartwatch app designs have to be more simplistic and visual.

The ability to tap into the unique aspects of the device is what can separate an app from the rest, for example, taking full advantage of the elite functionalities on a smartwatch.

App designs for wearable devices such as the Apple Watch are continuously evolving and are building upon the personal aspects of the device. The Activity and Workout apps provide simple visual snapshots of your daily activity, including charts of how many calories you have burned.



CONSIDER THE AMOUNT OF CONTENT

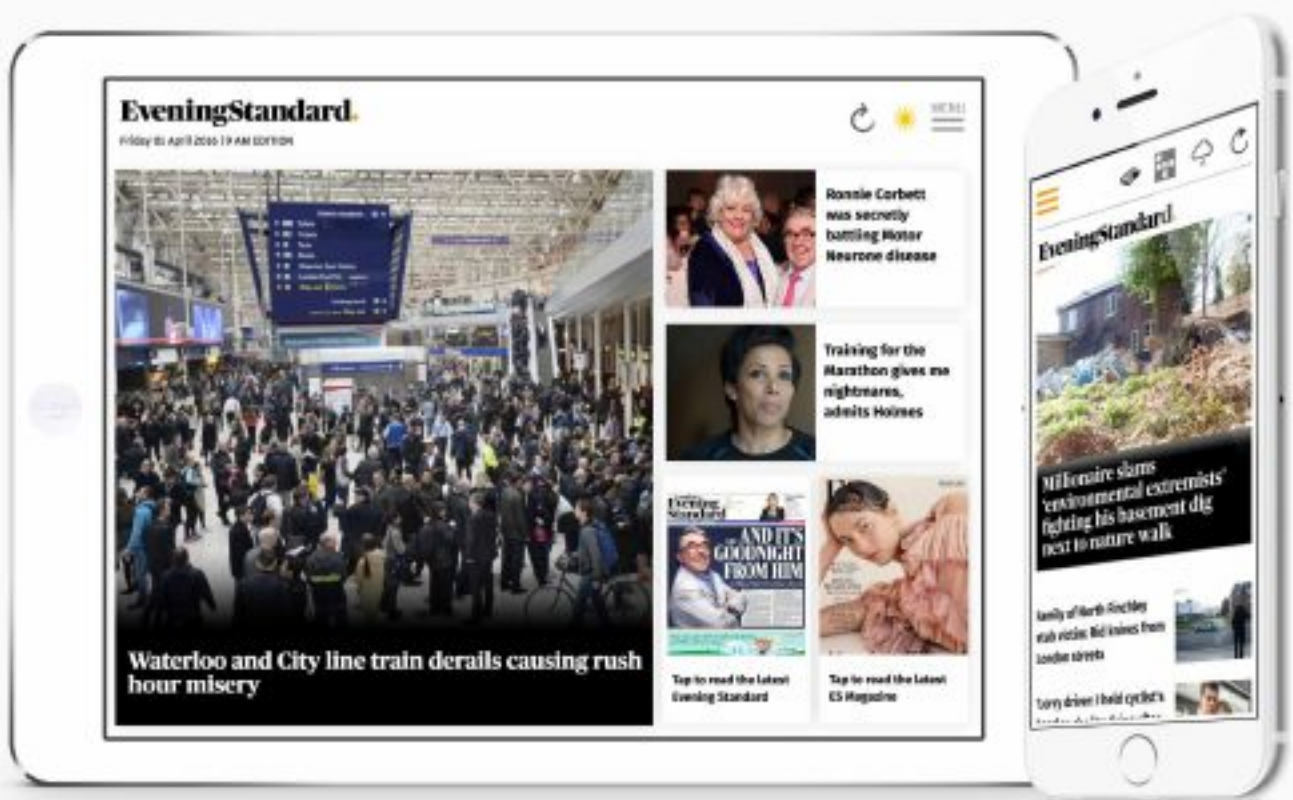
The amount of content should always be considered when designing apps for different devices. The volume and depth of the content changes depending on the size and purpose of the device.

A tablet for example, is a lot bigger and is generally used for more in-depth reading of books and news and magazine articles. The environment in which media is consumed on these devices is also crucial, as tablets are used to leisurely consume content in a relaxed environment at home or on a long commute. We are therefore given more room to play with when designing a tablet app, there is much more room to fit all kinds of content and the user will usually be in a comfortable position to consume the media.

Smartphones are smaller, yet also a popular content consumption channel. There is slightly

less room, so buttons and menus are often designed to maximise the amount of space for important content. Smartwatches however, are mostly used 'on-the-go', so a quick notification of breaking news or a snippet of a headline is more useful here. Users will not want to read in depth stories on a small, wearable device.

Consumers use different devices for different things, so trying to ascertain people's needs and specifications for an app on a specific device is critical. The same app across different devices will hold different purposes for the user, so the amount of content needs to be relative to these.



CONCLUSION

The key considerations discussed all accumulate to the central concept that every device has a different function and therefore need their apps to be designed accordingly. Certain features do not translate across all devices, so designs need to be customised to fit each one.

Identifying the user requirements is another key concept. Users with mobile devices will want different things from your product than desktop users. A desktop provides a more immersive experience, whereas mobile devices are predominately used 'on the go' and thus need less content.

You can maximise the user experience through the app design so that users trust that the app was specifically designed for their device, rather than simply being shrunk to fit their mobile screens*.

By taking these points into consideration, your app will undoubtedly provide your users with the best possible experience and consequently increase retention and revenue.

* <https://uxmag.com/articles/framework-for-designing-for-multiple-devices>

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