

Mobile Marketing

Entry: The Florida Keys & Key West Mobile Site: m.fla-keys.com

TARGET AUDIENCE

The target audience for the mobile site, m.fla-keys.com, was web site visitors accessing the site from mobile devices. According to Google Analytics, mobile users represented 40% of all site traffic in 2014. Knowing that mobile usage is increasing every year and that digital trends project that it will exceed desktop traffic, it was paramount that this audience have a great mobile experience with our destination. This audience includes users of all ages from around the globe.

OBJECTIVE

The purpose of redesigning the mobile site, m.fla-keys.com, was to create a richer experience for users on mobile devices. Our overarching goal was to take advantage of the whole screen, so that a big experience can still be had on a small screen.

We outlined three primary goals for the redesign of the mobile site. The first objective was to make the site more aesthetically pleasing and functional by replacing small text navigation with a graphical navigation. The previous mobile site had smaller text navigation that was listed and required scrolling. Our objective was to leverage lively imagery and make navigation easy.

Our second goal was to use the small space allotted in mobile design more efficiently. We set out to consolidate the navigation and search functions by using collapsible menus, as well as edge-to-edge images.

Our third objective was to better represent the destination at a glance. As an island chain with five unique locations, we are always challenged to promote the five destinations within our destination. In the redesign, we aimed to more effectively illustrate each location by showing all locations “above the fold” and to show the map of the Florida Keys prominently on the home page.

Although the mobile site is scaled down in size from the desktop site, we did not want to compromise the “wow” factor of the destination, so we made imagery and video a priority for the design.

IMPLEMENTATION

To develop and implement our objectives for the mobile site, we consulted with our design, development and programming team. They brought forth solutions that would support the mobile usage of today and years to come. Their approach would accomplish our goals and exceed the expectations of our target audience.

With nearly half of web site traffic coming from mobile users, for many, the first impression of the Florida Keys and Key West may be on a mere 320x480-pixel screen. As such, our designers employed flat

design, responsive layouts, and edge-to-edge images, which span the entire width and length of the screen.

For m.fla-keys.com, our design team recommended flat design, and this strategy allows for a look that is simple, minimalist, and speeds page-load time, a necessity for mobile users. This type of design adheres to the "info now, no nonsense" approach to mobile design. Today, it has become a common, contemporary look to which users are accustomed in modern mobile apps.

Responsiveness and designing for tablets was a major part of our senior designer's approach to the project. Based on our site statistics, half of mobile traffic is from tablets and half is from mobile phones. The mobile site is designed for tablets, and it has a responsive layout that adjusts for phone portrait, phone landscape, and tablet screens. Responsiveness is what allows the photos and design elements to make the most of their screen "real estate" on phones and tablets.

Our team decided to make imagery and video a prominent part of the redesign. Bright, brilliant imagery is visible immediately. And because video is so powerful, and we wanted visitors to instantly connect and engage with the destination, we embedded video on the home page.

Our developers overhauled the navigation to create a new solution that uses colorful imagery in a grid format. To best utilize the space on small screens, our developers employed collapsible navigation and search.

This graphical design strategy also enabled us to illustrate the five unique districts of the Florida Keys at the top of the home page. We leveraged this method to help us overcome the challenge of promoting five destinations within one. Now with a quick glance, users recognize that the Florida Keys includes Key West, Big Pine Key, Marathon, Islamorada and Key Largo. This design strategy proved to be more aesthetically pleasing and allowed us to meet this directive from the Monroe County Tourist Development Council.

RESULTS

The purpose of the Florida Keys & Key West web site and mobile site is to create awareness about the destination, foster the relationship among current and potential visitors and assist visitors in vacation planning. Since no actual accommodations booking takes place on the site, we primarily measure effectiveness and performance by time spent on the site and pages visited.

We launched the mobile site in June of 2014. We analyzed the Google Analytics site statistics and compared the mobile site traffic before and after the launch of the site. We reviewed the data from January through June and June through November of 2014.

Since the mobile redesign, and according to Google Analytics, the average time on the site increased by 50%. Visitors previously averaged 1:53 on the site. Following the redesign, the average increased to 2:50. We attribute this result to a more aesthetically pleasing site, and a larger presence of imagery and video, which better engages visitors.

The average number of pages visited increased by 35%. Users previously visited 3.17 pages on average, and that increased to 4.27 pages following the mobile site launch.

Lastly, the bounce rate decreased by 25% from 50% to 37%. This means that more people continued to explore the site after viewing the home page following the redesign.

These statistics are illustrated in the second attachment in the Supporting Materials. In those statistics, please note that the “before and after” comparison of the beginning of the year versus the second half of the year compares our busy season (January-May) to our off-season months (June-November), so it is expected and consistent that overall traffic (sessions, users and pageviews) are down from the first half of the year to the second. The data which substantiates our work shows the dramatic increase in actual time spent on the site and pages visited and the decrease in bounce rate. These statistics confirmed that the new mobile site better engaged visitors.

BUDGET/COSTS

The mobile site totaled XXX hours of design, development and programming work. Because of our mutually beneficial agreement with the Monroe County Tourist Development Council (MCTDC), in which we offer our web site development services free of charge in exchange for the ability to sell advertising on the site, we redesigned the mobile site at no charge for the MCTDC. If it were a commercial account, the services would be valued at \$XXX.