


How to choose a responsive design approach

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Overview

1. **Approaches:** about the different approaches that are available
 2. **Research:** how to gather data to make an informed decision on your approach
 3. **Connecting research & approach:** use values to help you make your choice
 4. **Q&A:** anything you'd like to ask me
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Part 1

What types of responsive design are there?



5 main types of responsive design



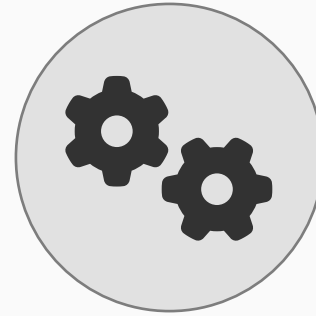
Traditional



Adaptive



Mobile-first



Multi-platform



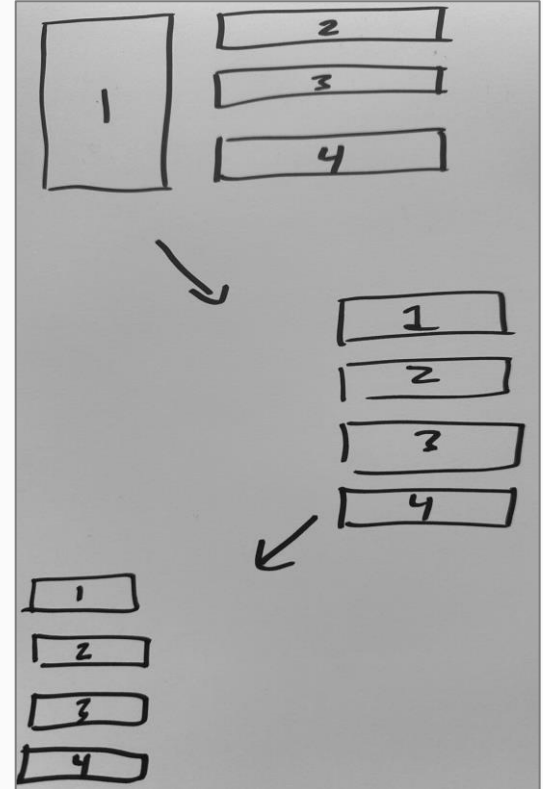
Hybrid

Traditional responsive design

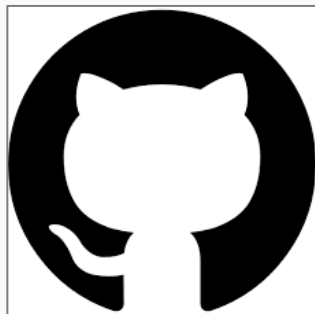
Approach: shrink your base design

This approach **works best** when: your audience is on desktops/laptops, you need a large screen to display the optimal experience, you don't need to target mobile devices, and your content format works across any device

This approach **is less effective** when: you are interested in targeting multiple devices, your content has a large amount of variation, your customers primarily use one device only to interact with you, you have a niche industry or have a specific-use case to support



Traditional responsive design examples

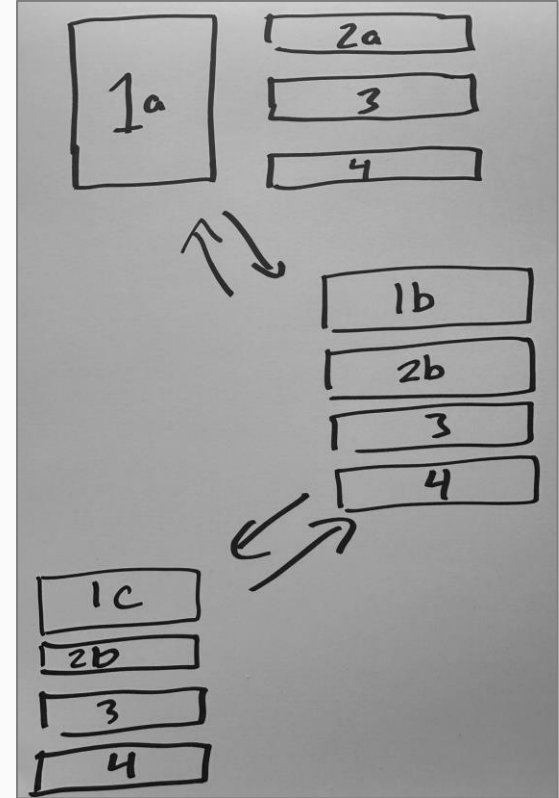


Adaptive design

Approach: cater your base design as you go

This approach **works best** when: you want to make device-specific experiences, user needs vary across different devices, your content is highly adaptable, and your development team can support multiple types of experiences

This approach **is less effective** when: users need similar experiences across all devices, your content & development teams are small, you have to support many tight timelines, and your content isn't easily adaptable across multiple devices



Adaptive design examples



IHG[®]
HOTELS & RESORTS



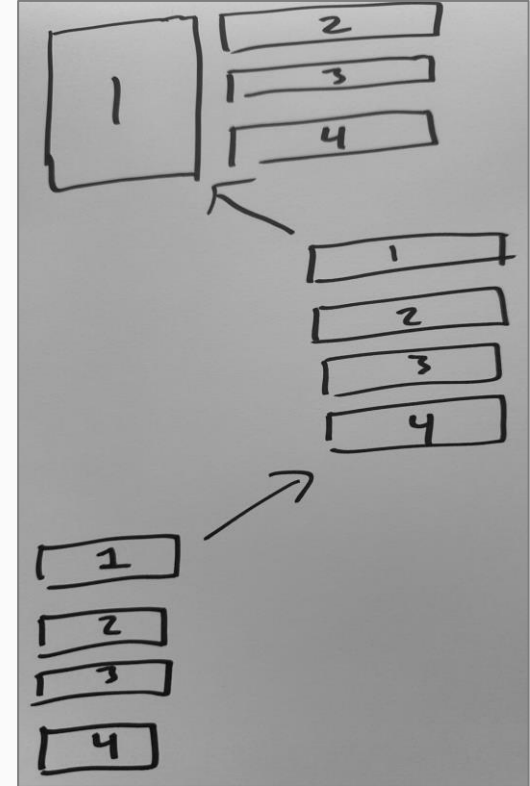
VICTORIA'S
SECRET

Mobile-first design

Approach: scale up your base design

This approach **works best** when: users benefit the most from having experiences on mobile, your content works well anywhere and can be adapted easily, development teams are familiar with building for mobile, your business needs to be visible on mobile

This approach **is less effective** when: the nature of your business is not mobile, your content is less effective on a small screen, you have a large amount of content to display, and your systems aren't ready for mobile



Mobile-first design examples

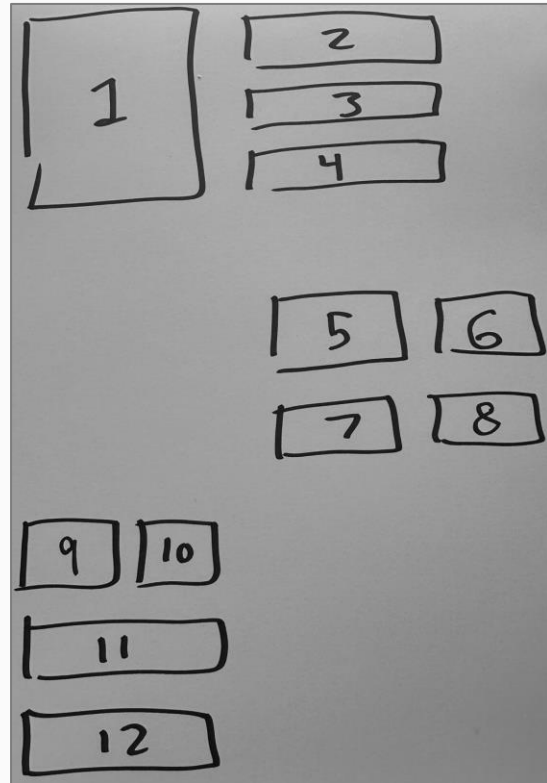


Multi-platform approach

Approach: use multiple platforms for devices

This approach **works best** when: you have many teams that can support separate experiences, you want to test significantly new experiences for specific devices, your content is device-dependent, you can build the sophistication to orchestrate your infrastructure

This approach **is less effective** when: you want to support experiences from one platform, you don't have enough people to create different experiences, and you care about high ranks on search engine results



Multi-platform approach examples

Surprise! This technique is being phased out of style due to Google's updated SEO ranking algorithm and our industry's need to deliver more experiences to market quickly.

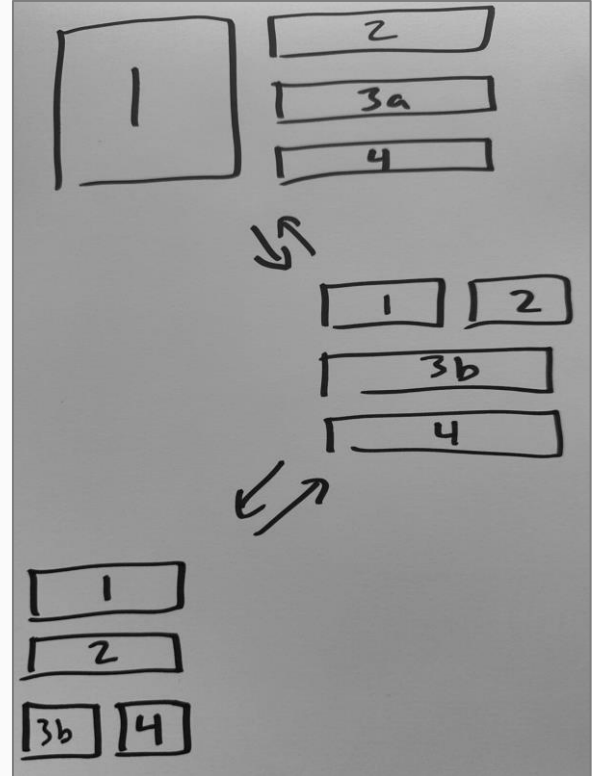


Hybrid approach

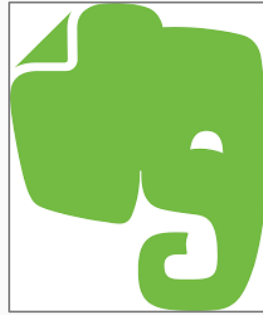
Approach: use a combination of approaches.

This approach **works best** when: you need full & customized control across all devices, you can easily adapt your content, users benefit from some similarity across different devices, and you have more time to set up your approach

This approach **is less effective** when: your content cannot be easily adapted, your infrastructure can't support multiple systems, users need multiple devices with similar experiences, and you need to be prepared for multiple releases or tight timelines



Hybrid approach examples



How do you know what philosophy a company uses?

Here's how to tell in practice

There's **a few tricks** to see how a company takes an approach to responsive design.

You can:

1. Review the company's design system to see if they say their philosophy
2. Resize (or “squish and expand”) your web browser
3. Inspect the code of the page in the web browser and look for the code frameworks they use
4. Trick your browser into “mobile mode” while on desktop



Part 2

Collecting data to inform your decision



You'll need 4 types of data



User behaviors & attitudes



Development needs & support



Content & content support



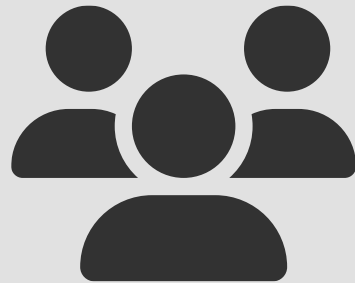
Industry & stakeholder needs

User behaviors & attitudes

Researching your users can help answer the following questions:

- **Benefits:** will multiple access points benefit your users; will this address pain points?
- **Technology:** what literacy do they have; what devices do they have?
- **Use cases:** what experiences do users want to have; will future use cases be benefited?

Supplementing these answers with analytics can help determine if responsive design is useful for your product.

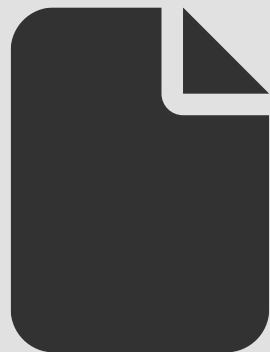


Content needs & support

Knowing your content is critical:

- **Inventory:** what type of content do you make; what language(s) do you support; can it be easily consumed on multiple devices?
- **Actions:** is your content interactive; what next steps can be taken?
- **Logistics:** how often do you make new content; what is the review cycle for new content; how large is your team?

This will help you understand if your content can work and scale for all supported devices.



Your technology platform & partners

Understanding your technology will help you understand how your responsive design choices will get powered:

- **Developers:** what knowledge, comfort, and skill do they have?
- **Platform:** does it come with a UI framework & templates; what content management system do you use; do you have appropriate technology hooks for your needs?
- **Logistics:** how short/long are your releases; how big is your development team?



Industry & stakeholder needs

Knowing your stakeholders and will help position your choices in their needs:

- **Industry insights:** where is your industry headed in the future; how risk-averse is it?
- **Stakeholders:** what is your budget; how quick does new content need to be released; is design new to them?
- **Organization:** how digitally mature is the org; how important is search engine results; what's your relationship with marketing?



Part 3

Choosing your approach to success

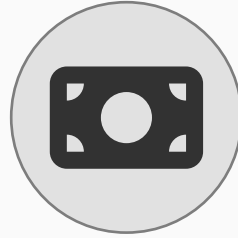


**Here's 6 principles I use from my
experience to choose a winning
philosophy for your users**

My personal winning philosophy



Communicability



Affordability



Scalability



Usability



Flexibility



Accessibility

Communicability

This is how easy you can design for users and communicate to them and stakeholders.

| | Traditional responsive design | Adaptive design | Mobile-first design | Separate platforms | Hybrid approach |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| Talking to users | Easy | Easy | Easy | Medium | Medium |
| Talking to content | Easy | Medium | Easy | Hard | Medium |
| Talking to development | Easy | Medium | Easy | Hard | Hard |
| Talking to stakeholders | Easy | Medium | Easy | Hard | Medium |

Scalability

Scalability is how quickly and easily you can extend your design over time to different use cases.

| | Traditional responsive design | Adaptive design | Mobile-first design | Separate platforms | Hybrid approach |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------|---------------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| Scaling for more users | Easy | Easy | Easy | Medium | Medium |
| Scaling for more content | Easy | Medium | Medium | Medium | Medium |
| Scaling for development | Easy | Medium | Easy | Medium | Medium |
| Scaling for stakeholders | Easy | Medium | Easy | Hard | Medium |

Flexibility

Flexibility is how adaptive the philosophy is to the variety of use cases you will need to support.

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|----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| Flexible for users | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Flexible for content | Partial | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Flexible for development | Yes | Yes | Partial | Yes | Partial |
| Flexible for stakeholders | Partial | Yes | Partial | Yes | Yes |

Affordability

Affordability is the total overall financial cost to the whole business.

| | Traditional responsive design | Adaptive design | Mobile-first design | Separate platforms | Hybrid approach |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| Cost for design | Low | Low | Low | Medium | Medium |
| Cost for content | Low | Medium | Low | Medium | Medium |
| Cost for development | Low | Medium | Medium | High | Medium |
| Cost for stakeholders | Medium | Medium | Medium | High | Medium |

Usability & accessibility

Usability & accessibility is how easy & accomodating the approach is for multiple users.

| | Traditional responsive design | Adaptive design | Mobile-first design | Separate platforms | Hybrid approach |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| For users | Easy | Easy | Easy | Medium | Medium |
| For content | Easy | Medium | Easy | Medium | Medium |
| For development | Easy | Medium | Medium | Medium | Medium |
| For stakeholders | Medium | Medium | Medium | Medium | Medium |

**And now a quick cheat sheet to put it
all together**

Use traditional responsive design for

In my experience, traditional responsive design is best for:

- **Content types:** blogs, news, B2B websites
- **Development considerations:** wide support, most developers know this, many platforms have this embedded
- **Organization considerations:** rapid release support, fairly low cost, can get fair results in search engines



Use adaptive design for

In my experience, adaptive design is best for:

- **Content types:** e-commerce, blogs, news
- **Development considerations:** fair support, can target many devices & users, can be fairly easily tied into most development frameworks and CMSs
- **Organization considerations:** fair release support, the cost is worth the effort, better search engine result support, more overall control of the end experience



Use mobile-first design for

In my experience, mobile-first design is best for:

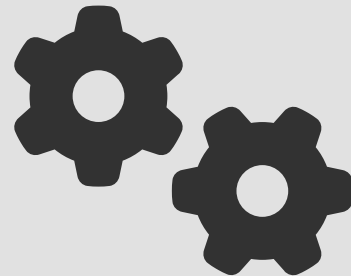
- **Content types:** blogs, news, small sites
- **Development considerations:** wide support, can target many devices & users, many developers can learn this quickly
- **Organization considerations:** can push releases out quickly, best search engine result support, best for organizations that want a wider reach in the market



Use multiple platforms for

In my experience, multiple platforms is best for:

- **Content types:** transient experiences, experimental sites
- **Development considerations:** need to create infrastructure to align everything, need to have specialized knowledge to implement
- **Organization considerations:** slower time to market but the most flexibility, best for organizations that want to try something outside their main offerings



Use hybrid design for

In my experience, hybrid design is best for:

- **Content types:** web apps, large enterprise sites & offerings
- **Development considerations:** most up front cost but can tailor everything to your needs, best with a services-first organization
- **Organization considerations:** slightly less time to market but with significant flexibility, biggest scale over time, can reuse content and design easily



Thank you



Let's chat

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