

# FINIEN

## YOUR BRAND LAUNCH

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### 04

WHY RESPONSIVE WEB DESIGN IS IMPORTANT FOR YOUR  
BRAND LAUNCH AND 6 WAYS TO LEVERAGE IT

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## WHY IT MATTERS

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**“There is no mobile. There is only The Web, which we view in different ways.  
There is no Desktop Web. Or Tablet Web.”  
Stephen Hay, Author of Responsive Design Workflow**

Let’s define Responsive Web Design (RWD) first so we are all speaking the same language. In a word, RWD is ‘flexibility.’ Instead of building separate websites for different viewing devices (i.e. one website for mobile phone users and a separate website for desktop users), RWD allows for the development of one website that resizes its content based on the width of the user’s browser window, thus allowing a user to view the same website on a desktop, tablet, or mobile device.

The benefits of RWD are twofold: (1) there is only one CMS backend to update and maintain and (2) building one website often equates to less design and development cost than building two completely separate websites (one for desktop users and another for mobile users). Of course, developing a RWD is more costly than developing a singular desktop site, but after reading this white paper, you will likely realize that it will be more costly to your business in the long run to forgo a responsive approach.

On the following pages, you’ll learn why RWD is so important to reach a wider audience as well as how to leverage your RWD during your next brand launch.

## THE DATA SUPPORTING RWD

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It should come as no surprise that the number of tablets and mobile devices is skyrocketing. The latest statistics surrounding mobile phones and internet usage further justify the logic behind a responsive approach to web design:

- A sale coming from mobile phones on eBay comes every 2 seconds\*
- Mobile web usage took 50% of sales related to Mother's Day in 2012\*
- Smartphone sales have become bigger than PC sales\*
- Search queries from tablets increased by 23% after Christmas Day\*
- 91% of American adults have a cell phone\*\*
- 31% of current cell internet users say that they mostly go online using their cell phone, and not using some other device such as a desktop or laptop computer\*\*

The above statistics provide just a small sample of the prevalence of internet browser usage among tablet and mobile devices. With these numbers on the rise, it's difficult to justify providing only a desktop website these days. The number of users (a.k.a. potential consumers) you could be missing out on seems to far outweigh the cost of developing a site that will reach all audiences.

\*source: <http://tinyurl.com/FINIENRWD01>

\*\*source: <http://tinyurl.com/FINIENRWD02>



## AN ALTERNATIVE TO RWD?

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Despite the growing popularity of RWD, there are still a few who argue separate desktop and mobile sites are the best solution. Some buy into it in order to save upfront costs by first introducing a desktop website and later building a separate mobile site. Some believe users want to see different (less) content when on a mobile device. If we think of a restaurant's web site for instance, the argument was made to strip all images and menus and only show operating hours, the phone number and address to mobile users. These are notions we can no longer buy into.

Imagine you're on a road trip and want to try out the local cuisine—you search on your smartphone for nearby restaurants to check out what they have to offer. If any of the local restaurants you find online subscribe to above website philosophy, the only information you'll find is their operating hours and an address. This could lead to a loss of business for those particular restaurants if the user decides to move on to the website of another restaurant that provides access to their full menu and imagery through their responsive site. The point is, mobile users may demand more from your site than the minimal amount of information. That's not to say that everything needs to be included on the mobile view of the site—but RWD allows you the flexibility of including or excluding items at different screen sizes. With RWD, you can offer users access to relevant content in a digestible format suited for their screen.

## TIPS FOR YOUR RWD BRAND LAUNCH

Before you dive into your RWD project, ensure that you've familiarized yourself with the best practices so you can effectively lead your creative team to developing a RWD site. Here are our 6 key pointers to make your launch a success:

### 1. PROTOTYPE, PROTOTYPE, PROTOTYPE

Prototyping is an especially important step in the RWD process. Completed in the early stages of website development, the creative agency you're working with will develop wireframes for your future website. A wireframe is essentially a sketch outlining what content will live on each page of your site. It can be an old-fashioned pencil on paper sketch, a more refined flat file PDF created using a program like omnigraffle or Adobe Illustrator, or a full-fledged web-based interactive prototype.

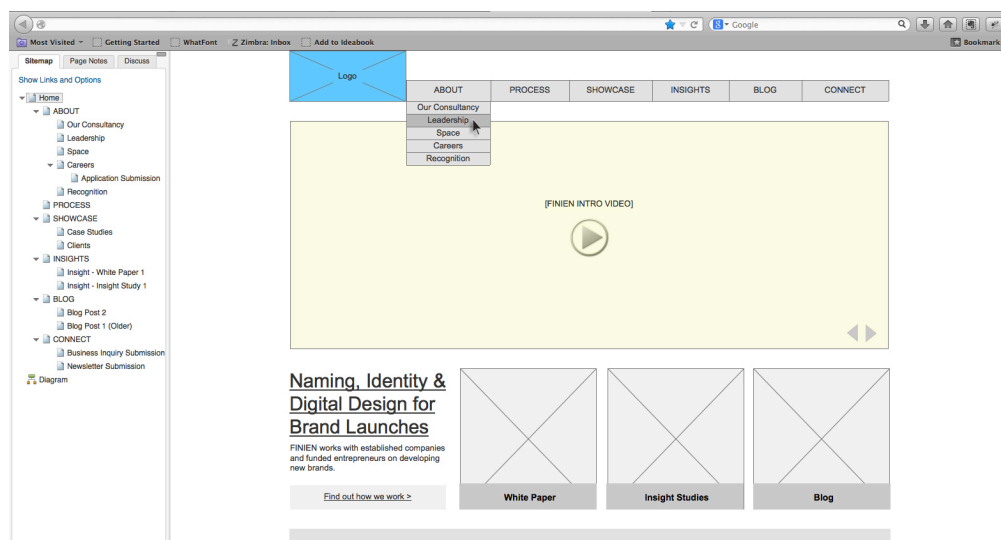


Figure 1: Example of an interactive wireframe prototype

Interactive prototypes give you the best idea of how your final site will function from a user experience standpoint. Before the start of the project, be sure to ask your creative partner if they plan to use interactive wireframes. They allow you to test all

elements of your website since you can click through the page links just as you would on a live site. During this phase, your creative agency will present wireframes for desktop, tablet, and mobile views of your website. Take the time to discuss and refine what information will stay, what information will change positioning, and what information will drop off the screen at these different pixel sizes.

## 2. KEEP THE AMOUNT OF TEXT TO A MINIMUM

Less text and more imagery make for a more engaging site across all browser sizes. Images can easily resize whereas lengthy blocks of text become cumbersome to scroll through and read on a mobile phone. If extensive text is necessary, consider using expanders where applicable.

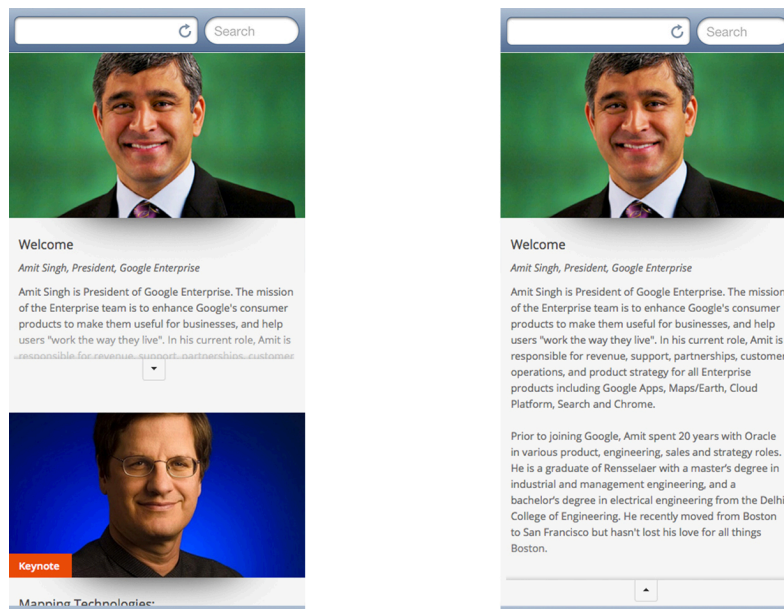


Figure 2: On a mobile device, condensed text prevents users from having to scroll through lengthy text (refer to the above left image). Expanders allow a user to view more if desired (refer to the above right image). <http://www.atmospheremaps.com/>

### 3. CONSIDER THE APPROPRIATENESS OF THE CONTENT FOR THE SIZE OF THE BROWSER WINDOW

Carefully consider your content and make sure that it makes sense for the user based on the device they are using to access the Web. Is the information navigable, downloadable, and readable for all users? Certain elements can appear or disappear at specific pixel breaks to customize what information appears to desktop, tablet, and mobile users. To use the simplest of examples, many desktop websites include a “print” button. This type of element would need to disappear at the mobile browser size as it’s not a function mobile users would need to access.

### 4. PRIORITIZE INFORMATION FOR EACH BROWSER SIZE

It’s logical that as the browser size condenses from desktop view to mobile view, there is less space available “above the fold”. This is where prioritization of your most important page elements, like your call-to-action, need to occur. Key messaging should be given special attention in the desktop, tablet, and mobile views so that the visibility and hierarchy of this information remains consistent at all browser sizes.

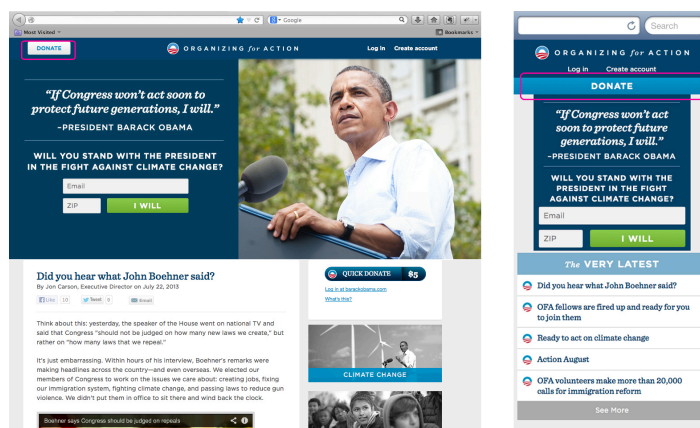


Figure 3: The above image shows a side-by-side comparison of the desktop (left) and mobile (right) views of this website. The “Donate” call-to-action is prominently placed at the top of the page at both browser sizes. It is also important to note that you can change the color, size, and positioning of items as the browser size changes as seen in the case of the “Donate” button above. <http://www.barackobama.com/>

## 5. ENSURE EASE OF NAVIGATION ACROSS ALL DEVICES

Menu layouts that work well at the desktop browser size may not work as well once your browser is condensed down to the width of a mobile device. Ensure that there are menu structures at each pixel break (desktop, tablet, and mobile) that are intuitive for the device they're being viewed on. When reviewing the menu structure in the design comps presented to you by your creative team, know that you have design options when it comes to how your menu condenses as browser size decreases.

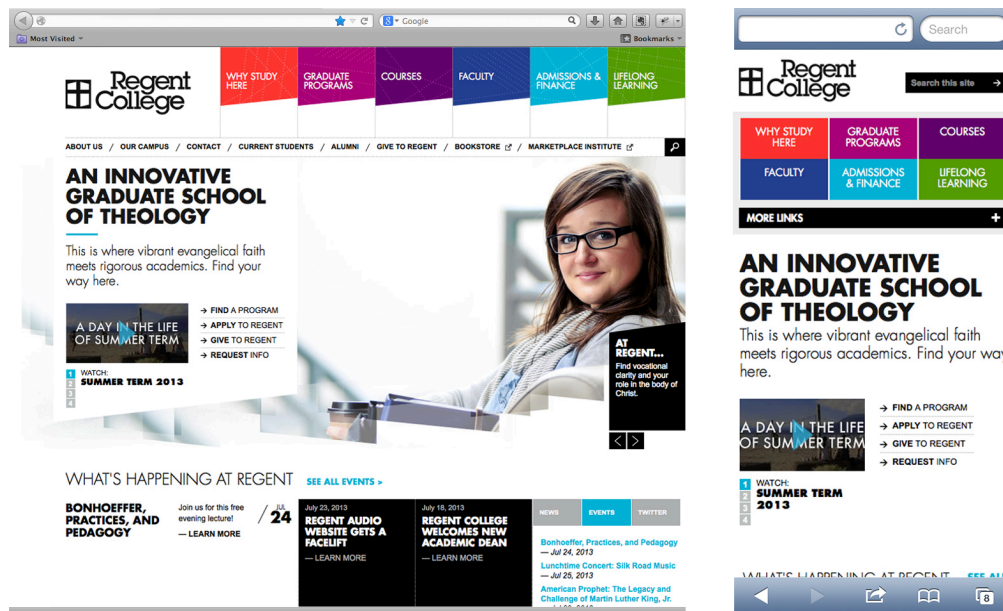


Figure 4: The image above is an example of how a menu can restructure from a horizontal style in the desktop view (above left) to a stacked menu in the mobile view (above right).

<http://www.regent-college.edu/>

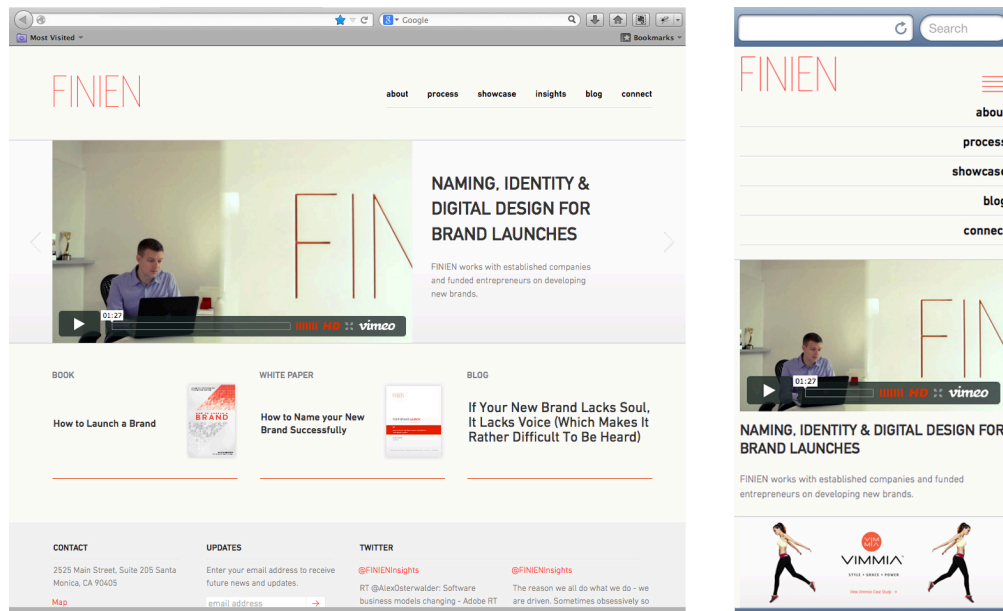


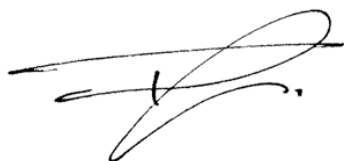
Figure 5: The image above is an example of how a menu can restructure from a horizontal style in the desktop view (above left) to a single button that drops down into the full menu when tapped on a mobile device (above right). <http://www.finien.com/>

## 6. ALLOW PLENTY OF TIME FOR QA TESTING

With many moving parts (in this case, elements are literally rearranging and morphing at various browser sizes), ensure that your creative team has allotted time for ample Quality Assurance (QA) testing. One effective method of QA Testing is to develop a script of click-through paths for a sampling of users to follow on the beta launch of the website. Create scripts for desktop, tablet, and mobile views and ensure that your users are testing the site on the actual device called out in the script.

Keep this document on-hand when you plan your (next) brand launch. Share it with your project team and agency partner(s) prior to your next Responsive Web Design project.

Please share your opinion or own findings with me via [fgeyrhalter@finien.com](mailto:fgeyrhalter@finien.com) or engage with us to take you there safe and sound ourselves. I look forward to hearing from you!

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several fluid, overlapping strokes that form a stylized representation of the name Fabian Geyrhalter.

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