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Title: What Non-Profits Need to Know Before Jumping on the Mobile Bandwagon

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Think that members and donors aren't reading emails or viewing websites on their mobile devices? Think again. According to a recent [Strategy Analytics report](#), the number of U.S. mobile device owners who use their phones to access the Internet has quadrupled over the past four years. ASI partner [Informz](#) also found that, among its non-profit clients, mobile readership of email has more than doubled in the past 12 months.

While organizations need to take advantage of this mobile trend to interact with their communities and stay ahead of the competition, there are some factors to consider first. For one, email does not look the same on a mobile device as it does on a PC. The same goes for website content-both will appear differently depending on whether they are viewed on an iPhone, Blackberry or Android device. Luckily, there are a number of best practices for non-profits to follow to make sure they offer their members and donors the greatest mobile experiences possible.

Non-profits should be sure to master email marketing in the mobile world, according to Joe Tyler, CEO at Informz. To get started, he suggests that organizations create web versions of their emails and call them out with text such as "Reading this on a mobile device? Click here for the mobile-friendly version." When the [Satellite Broadcasting and Communications Association](#) did this, the organization discovered nearly 20% of members were reading its newsletter on mobile devices, and clicks increased by 173% in the first email with the new language.

Tyler also says that it's important to keep the length of emails in mind. Typically, about 12-15 lines will fit on a mobile screen, so make calls to action clear and copy concise in order to not lose readers along the way. Subject lines and from addresses are the first things readers see, and are big factors in members' or donors' decisions to open emails. It's helpful to check how the subject lines read in case they are shortened and keep the most important information first. In addition, use only one column for the email layout. Sidebars and multiple column tables tend to reformat themselves on mobile devices, and cause the other columns to display above or below the main body.

Next, there are several formatting issues non-profits will need to take care of to ensure their emails are readable. Tyler recommends setting the width of emails to equal 100% - doing this will allow the web page to size itself to the width of the screen it's rendering on. For organizations that tell stories through pictures, know that images do not always

format correctly in mobile emails. To prevent this, keep the image size less than 480 pixels. He also encourages non-profits to leave plenty of space between links. PC users have the benefit of using a mouse to pinpoint the link they want to click on, but mobile users only have their finger, so make it as easy as possible for them to get to the information. Finally, use a font size greater than 12 pixels to ensure that the copy can be read on all devices.

Now that emails are ready, organizations should look at their existing websites to make sure they are mobile-friendly. First, it's important to simplify the content that appears on the main website and reduce the amount of text and sidebar clutter. Doing this will make it easier for members and donors to browse and complete transactions like giving donations or signing up for newsletters. Organizations should also try to reduce their bandwidth usage and check that their mobile websites' load times are as fast as possible. To get a smoother mobile experience, it's helpful to avoid Flash, Silverlight and other non-mobile web supported formats, and resample images and compressed graphics. It may also be useful to implement a feature that automatically detects whether users log on to the website from mobile browsers versus web browsers and display the correct versions. Additionally, mobile websites need to be compatible with and accessible across all mobile devices and operating systems.

The mobile web provides fundraising organizations with an advantage by allowing donors to give directly to them via their smartphones and tablets. For non-profits thinking of running a text-to-give campaign, there are actually significant benefits to fundraising through mobile-optimized web pages instead. There is no donation limit amount, non-profits can capture more donor information, and record it directly into their database systems. Organizations also have greater flexibility when it comes to selecting their own payment gateways, and can provide secure and automatic processing of the gifts. After a donation, be sure to send receipts, thank supporters and brand the mobile-optimized donation pages with tailored content that speaks directly to donors. This will guarantee a smooth transaction experience while improving fundraising performance.

The majority of members and donors are using their mobile devices to read emails and browse websites right now, and the rest will be joining in soon. While it may take non-profits some extra time and resources to get emails and websites ready for mobile, it's important for organizations to stay ahead of this trend and not get left behind. The efforts will be well worth it when non-profits can offer members and donors enhanced experiences.