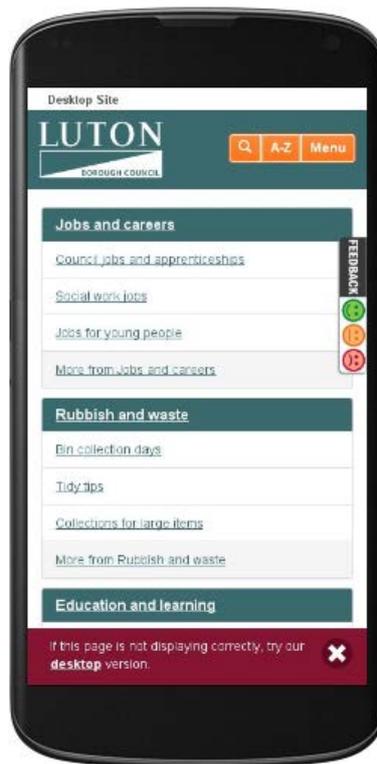




LBC Web Services team case study

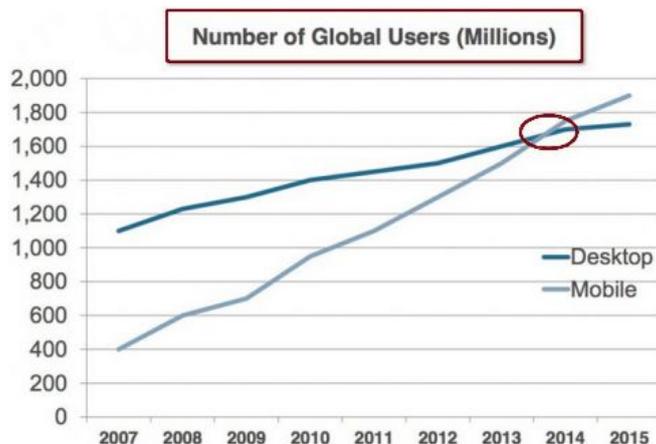


As part of the web metrics report, we will produce a case study demonstrating how the Web Services team uses the data provided by web metrics tools.

This month we will show the data, research and planning that went into the creation of our mobile website, which was taken from beta phase to live on 23 October 2015.

Why do we need a mobile website?

Mobile-ready websites have seen a revolution in recent years. They are the fastest growing communications channel in history. It was predicted in 2008 that mobile would overtake the use of fixed internet by 2014. As you can see from the graph below, that prediction was correct.



85% of people say that mobile devices are a central part of everyday life. The UK, according to Ofcom, is now a 'smartphone society'. The following facts were published on their website in August 2015:

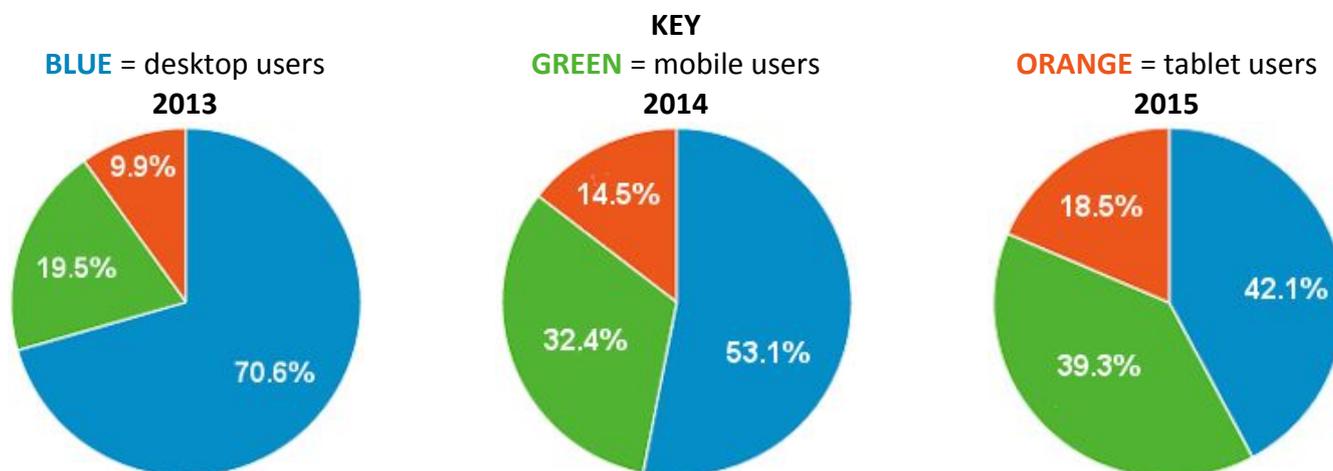
- smartphones have overtaken laptops as the number one device for UK internet users'
- **76%** of the UK population now own a smartphone, using it for nearly two hours every day; twice as long as laptops and PCs
- 4G subscriptions leapt from 2.7 million to 23.6 million during 2014 – a growth of **874%**
- mobile now accounts for **50%** of clicks, **44.8%** of ad impressions, **46%** of spend and **43%** of conversions in the UK

This quote is taken from *Better Connected 2013*: "Our information suggests that around **23%** of visits to council websites are made on mobile devices, with figures showing a rapid increase."

Better Connected 2014 reported that **42%** of visits to council websites were made on mobile devices. That means that mobile use almost doubled over a period of just twelve months.

Device use on our website

Through Google Analytics, we can see how behaviour on our own website has changed when it comes to mobile device use. The following graphs show that device use, in line with the *Better Connected 2014* report, has **virtually doubled** since 2013, from **29.4%** to **46.9%** in 2014 and **57.8%** in 2015.



The fact that **around half of our users** now come to the website via a mobile phone or tablet prompted additional investment in the development of mobile/responsive web services. This led to the creation of the Web Transformation Programme (WTP).

Testing the mobile waters

Development of a mobile version of our website began in 2014, ahead of a more major stage involving the replacement of our content management core components to make the website fully responsive.

What is the difference between a mobile site and a responsive site? A mobile site has content formatted to fit smaller screens, and navigation optimized for touching instead of clicking. A responsive site is a unified site that has the flexibility to adapt automatically to best suit whatever device it's being viewed on. The design remains more consistent between desktop and mobile when the site is responsive.

As part of the WTP we created service pack methodology, which was used to research, test and design the mobile site as an interim solution.

With support from Civica, a beta (test) version of the website was launched and was accessible for several months. Device users were still taken to the desktop site but given the option to trial the new mobile version. This resulted in the mobile site receiving around one thousand 'hits' per month.

We received positive feedback during that phase. Socitm said: "The current beta version of the mobile front-end is very promising. All done well." But there was still a lot of work to do in converting content to make it mobile friendly.

We knew traffic would greatly increase as soon as the mobile site was made the default for device users. We needed to be confident that we had addressed failure demand before the switch was made. To ensure the mobile site performed correctly we had to make a number of site-wide changes. This included optimising all page layouts for mobile, converting tables to HTML, removing carousels and enabling accordian tabs to function properly.

At the same time, we built a responsive template for AchieveForms, thus creating a seamless user journey between the mobile website and form completion on a device. This template was released in October 2015, so all forms have now been adapted to be fully responsive.

The changes made resulted in a better mobile user experience: legible and consistent font sizes; no horizontal scrolling and easy to access menus. This in turn will encourage returning visitors to use our digital channel in the future.

From beta to live

On **23 October 2015**, the mobile website was taken out of beta phase and into live, and we began to direct device users to the mobile site by default. This, as expected, caused a huge increase in use of the mobile site, going from around **1,000** sessions per month to **55,558** sessions in its first full month.

Graphs showing the spike in demand for the mobile site and decrease on desktop site around 23 October



The following table shows mobile use in the last four months.

	Sessions	Users	Pageviews	% of visitors
September	1,060	792	3,664	0.99
October	16,746	12,328	40,711	15.95
November	55,558	36,161	123,001	49.24
December	56,241	37,474	121,684	52.51

This table shows how session and user figures on desktop and mobile devices balanced out to around the 50% mark in the first month after the launch of the mobile website.

	Desktop	%	Mobile	%
Sessions	57,276	50.76	55,558	49.24
Users	37,807	51.13	36,141	48.87

Top tasks

More top tasks were carried out on the mobile site than on desktop in December.

The 'Christmas bin collection dates' news item was viewed on a mobile by **8,681** or **84%** of users viewing the page in December. People accessed this page to quickly and conveniently find out about the changes to bin collections over the festive period.

Desktop	
Bin collection days	9,559
Jobs and careers	5,624
Council tax	4,118
Housing	3,218
Environment	3,062
Rubbish, waste, recycling	2,880
Pay it	2,219
School admissions	2,063
Housing benefit	1,714
Christmas bin days	1,646
Total	36,103

Mobile	
Bin collection days	14,207
Christmas bin days	8,681
Jobs and careers	5,018
Rubbish, waste, recycling	4,033
Council tax	2,794
Housing	2,089
Housing benefit	1,753
School admissions	1,440
Environment	1,301
Bid for council homes	1,280
Total	52,596

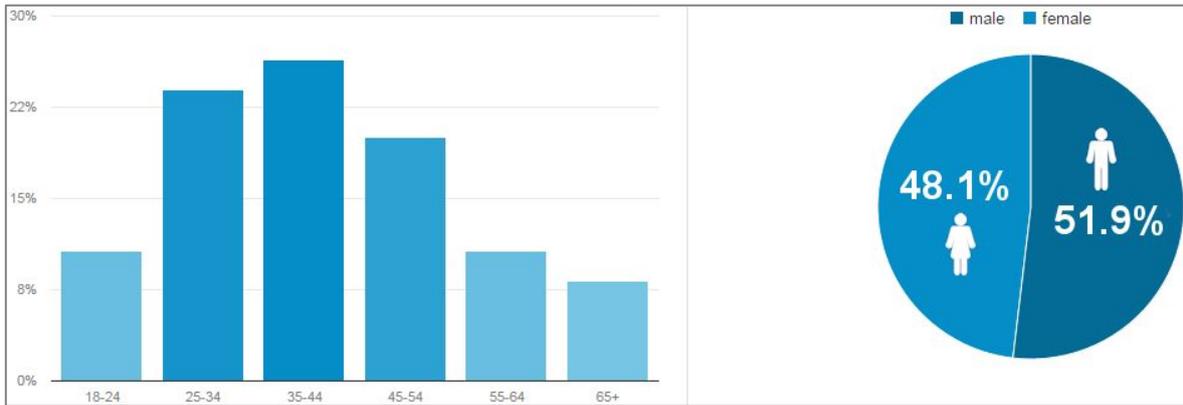
Demographics

There are gender and age differences in our desktop and mobile audiences. **3.8% more men than women** use the desktop site, but the variation is greater on the mobile site - **25.8% more women than men** use it. This figure correlates with national statistics that finds women use mobile more than men. **55%** of women think mobile is more convenient, as opposed to **40%** of men, and **56%** of women own a smartphone, where that figure for men is only **51%**.

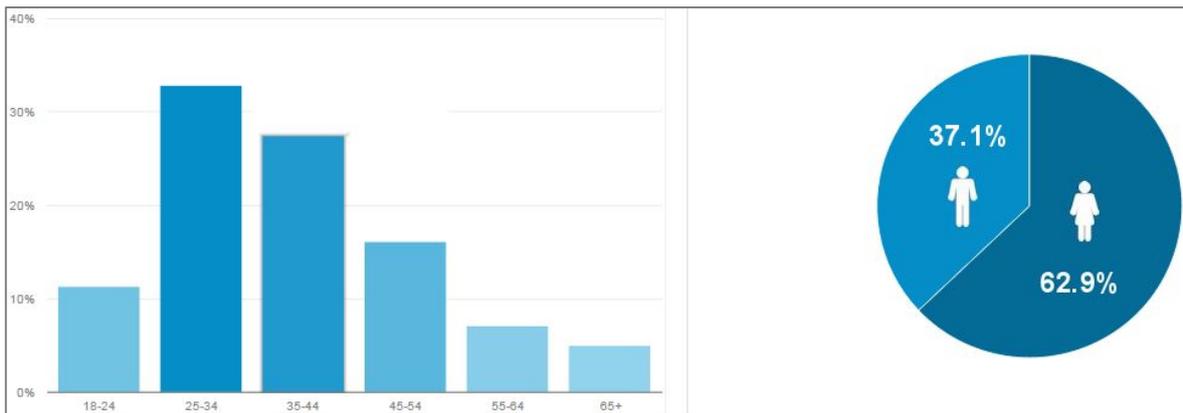
There are also differences in age categories. The biggest age group using the desktop site is **35 to 44 years**, accounting for **26.4%** of all visitors. The biggest age group on the mobile site is **25 to 34 years**, accounting for **36.1%**. Again, this figure correlates – **98%** of all 25 to 34 year olds are online using a range of devices*, making them the biggest age group of internet users. **26.7%** of global internet users are aged between 25 and 34*.

Under 65s are the smallest age group for both desktop and mobile - just **8.25%** on desktop and **5%** on mobile. While only 14% of over 65s own a smartphone, between 25% and 35% of over 65s use the internet. There are ways of encouraging our older audience to use mobile such as coaching and promoting technology that we may wish to look into in the future.

Desktop



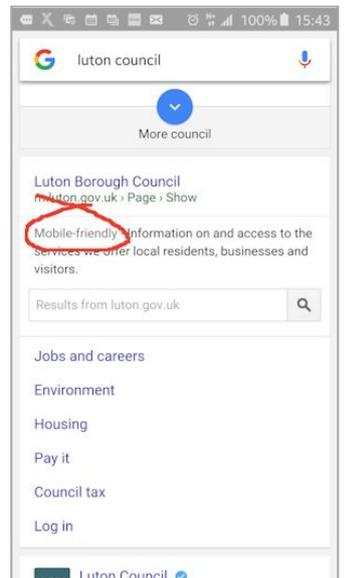
Mobile



Google

Our website at the time of the last *Better Connected* survey was reported as NOT being mobile friendly or responsive (according to Google) as it was only in beta phase.

The launch of the live version of m.luton.gov.uk has changed that. When searching for our website on a mobile device, we are now recognised by Google as being mobile friendly, as shown in the image to the right.



What do our users say?

With the exception of one or two Govmetric feedback messages, the general opinion of the new mobile site is good. These are just some of the comments we have received via Govmetric:

"Thanks, the page was better than I imagined, well done!"

"I was surprised at how quick and easy it was to get onto the site and get the information I needed."

"Excellent!"

"I find it easy and quick."

"Very easy to use. I was told what I needed."

"Great site."