Responsive Web Design and Mobile Web
By Matthew Friedel, UWM SCE Instructor

As we transition to a mobile-focused society, how can we create the next generation of great user experiences and interface designs? Can mobile web and responsive design bridge the gap between smartphones, tablets and desktops? What are the critical elements to consider in developing both web and mobile applications for smartphones and tablets?

According to a report from Walker Sands, 24% of total website traffic came from mobile devices in the first quarter of 2013, up 78% from the same time in 2012, and 109% from 2011. Businesses and organizations must address the growing need for a mobile presence. Users now have an expectation of accessing content 24/7 on multiple platforms. So, companies that embrace mobile have a significant opportunity to connect with their current and future customers in a unique way!

**Mobile website design** is crafting mobile-friendly websites that provide optimized content for specific mobile platforms including smartphones and tablets. **Responsive web design (RWD)** is an approach to creating websites that aims to offer an optimal viewing experience – easy reading and navigation with minimal resizing, panning and scrolling – across a wide range of devices (mobile phones, tablets and desktop computer monitors).

Developing a successful strategy in this area requires knowledge of the differences between platforms as well as the benefits and opportunities in developing for each. Additionally, understanding how to rapidly prove out your design, navigation and layout before committing to coding can yield a much more successful project. The goal of a mobile-friendly approach is to understand what the user wants and provide an experience that shines in that context.

The UWM School of Continuing Education offers two distinctive courses in this area. The goal of the courses is to showcase industry best practices and help students understand the mobile web landscape, including tools and methods to develop great user experiences.

**Website Design for Mobile Devices** – With the ever-increasing popularity of web-enabled portable devices, it's important to know how to create sites for mobile. Utilize the latest tools and methods to build mobile websites, and identify their benefits as well as their distinguishing characteristics.

**Responsive Design** – By using media queries, responsive design allows for delivery of content that is appropriate to the device requesting the information. This course focuses on the basics of responsive design, and covers user interface design for mobile web, iPhone and Android.

For more on Matt, visit [http://www4.uwm.edu/sce/instructor.cfm?id=14264](http://www4.uwm.edu/sce/instructor.cfm?id=14264)

*For more information please contact Pam Nellen at: 414-227-3208 or nellenp@uwm.edu*