
1 Consider your Users

Your primary goal is to make sure your content is accessible and usable to your audience, regardless of the device they're on. So before you upload a file, think about whether or not it will reach the people who need it most.

Think about mobile first, and avoid downloads whenever possible

From 2013 to 2015, the percentage of mobile traffic on government websites jumped from 20% to 34%—that's [a 70% increase](#) ^[1] in just three years! And mobile's share on the web is only getting bigger. By 2018, the [majority of Internet access will be on a mobile device](#) ^[2].

Remember that everything is at a premium on a mobile device: screen space, processing power, Internet speed, memory card space, and the attention of your audience. Web pages leave more usable space for content, load quickly, are easy to search, don't require additional applications, don't take up storage space, and reduce the steps between users and your content. Web pages are also easier for you to edit and delete when needed.

If there's any way for your information to be displayed on a web page instead of attached as a PDF, skip the file download headache and just make a web page.

Convert files to PDFs whenever possible

Files made in Word, Excel, and PowerPoint may not load properly or at all on mobile devices, and they won't be accessible to anyone who doesn't have those applications installed on their computers. For this reason, if you absolutely *must* have content as a document, we recommend you try to convert it into a PDF file whenever possible.

The PDF is the most accessible and universal file type of document. PDF files display on most devices, display a large range of information, and have many free tools available to optimize them for the web. There are several excellent, free PDF readers available for both desktop and mobile devices, including Adobe Reader.

For more guidance on file formats, check out our [Web Guidelines for PDF and Alternate File Formats](#) ^[3].

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