

PDF documents: did you consider mobile users?

23 August 2017 By Chris Rand

There's been a steady increase in the amount of email which is read on mobile devices, even in a purely business context. Indeed, mobile readership of this blog has just passed 40%, and there's no reason to believe that something similar isn't happening with your email promotions. I hope that your emails are formatted to read nicely on mobile devices, and that you thoroughly test them to ensure that's the case. But do you ever promote PDF documents via email? And if so, have you checked them too?

I find that the majority of PDF documents are designed for A4 and are illegible on a mobile device. Of course, it's simple to zoom in on a mobile device, but if this causes the line length to expand beyond the screen width, it's far too irritating to pan around. Your recipient would have to be *really* keen on your offering to put up with doing that ...or to forward it to a desktop device. Don't ever assume that's the case.

So, can PDF documents be designed for viewing on a small screen? I don't see why not. If it's a brochure, you'll probably want to give it a miss, but for white papers and other text-first publications, talk to whoever designs them for you to see if a narrow column width and larger text could be used.