

Why Google might just be wrong about responsive design in Africa

By [Phillip Kruger](#)

13 Dec 2012

Maybe, just maybe, Google is getting it wrong in Africa. I recently attended a very good session on responsive design by Luisella Mazza, and although I think responsive design is awesome, it's not for Africa. She (and Google) recommended that anyone building for an African audience use responsive design to build their mobile sites.

What is responsive design?

A new feature in HTML5 (or rather CSS3) is the ability to add media queries rules. So inside your CSS you can add conditions that apply to certain screen resolutions. This means you can create one HTML file, but depending on what device is being used to render this HTML file, certain rules will apply.

Any mobile web developer who's built mobile websites for African sites should already be able to tell you why this is a problem in Africa.

...look at the situation in Africa:

- Most Africans do not have internet at home or at work. Only about 15% of the population does. And the internet that they have at home and work is not at all comparable with what you have in America (in terms of speed and reliability).
- Smartphone penetration in Africa is less than 20%.
- Public Wi-Fi Hotspots are not widely available.
- The GDP and PPP in Africa is among the lowest in the world.

So your typical African's first and only point of access to the internet is via a feature phone. Because of the cost of data and the disposable income of a typical African, an African feature phone internet user is very aware of the size and cost of a web page.

Read the [full story](#) on www.memeburn.com.