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Reading Eagle: Ben Hasty | The logo for Quarter Note Systems LLC, Spring Township.

## Creating a viable website

By David A. Kostival

Tuesday December 13, 2016 12:01 AM

It's clearly evident that technology never stands still, and that means the way that we use it also evolves.

A recent report from the Silicon Valley venture capital firm KPCB revealed that we have now passed the tipping point when it comes to mobile digital media versus desktop.

The data shows that with adult users of digital media, 55 percent of total usage is on a mobile device. Compare that to 2008, when mobile only accounted for 12 percent.

The evolving changes are reflected in the trends in websites and how they are designed.

Craig Stonaha, 38, president of Laughing Rock Technology, Spring Township, said changes in the industry dictate how websites are created.

"It used to be that the No. 1 thing about a website was graphics, and making it look attractive," Stonaha said. "The industry has changed so much, and now our biggest approach is to make sure a

### FYI

**Predictions for e-commerce site design trends**

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Websites will be designed with its mobile form as the most important aspect.

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website is compliant with Google guidelines and algorithms for search optimization."

## Interconnectedness

"The other thing is: Content is king," Stonaha said. "The industry has shifted from web developers using megatabs to tell Google what a site was about, to Google using what I would call artificial intelligence."

Stonaha said the former method resulted in web developers cheating the system by forcing a website to show up on different searches.

But now Google looks at content and matches the title to the words on the page, he said.

"It's all become one great web of interconnectedness to your site," Stonaha said.

When it comes to the actual design, Stonaha said, everyone's tastes are different.

"The most important thing is to realize the website is about how you are enriching the experience of someone visiting it," he said. "You need a good solid design, with a good organizational flow."

## Study in analytics

Regy Varghese, CEO of Amskape Inc., Robeson Township, said developing a website must include a study in analytics to determine what traffic is coming to a particular site.

"Focus on the traffic and what drives people to come to a site, and converts them to buyers," Varghese said. "The conversation (with a client) has to be about what are the goals and what are they expecting out of the market."

Varghese said that once the goals of a site are nailed down, the design will be driven by those factors.

"Marketing is a key driver of website design, and in that vein you have to consider social media," he said. "You have to design a site in such a way that search engines find your information relatable enough. Social media plays a great role in that."

## Social media vital

Ann Marie Olivieri, 41, owner of AMPN Design LLC, Exeter Township, agreed that social media play a vital role.

"One of the key things is to have a Facebook and Instagram presence," Olivieri said. "Facebook can really drive people to your website."

Olivieri said social media presence should not be sterile, but bring out your personality.

"Post things that people can relate to a couple of times a week in order to drive them to your website," she said. "Once they are on the website, that's where they will find out what you are all about."

But Olivieri warned about relying only on social media.

"You can't buy things off of Facebook," Olivieri said. "Customers have to be able to go to a website; it's what makes you legit."

Online stores will continue to use cardlike layouts and be responsive to animations and transitions.

## Long scrolls and lazy loading

Web designers will create pages that scroll to great lengths, loading portions of the page only as they are needed. As the user scrolls, the page will continue to add more products.

## Hamburgers on the left

Google and other sites have started placing their hamburger menus, or draw-down boxes, at the upper left so they are among the first things a user finds on the page.

## Cinemagraphs, or the return of the graphics interchange format

The animated GIF image may be making something of a comeback in 2017, in a form called the cinemagraph.

A cinemagraph is a still photograph with the addition of a small repeating animation.

## Advanced adaptation

Sites could soon adapt to specific users, changing layout based on age, visual acuity or even if users are left- or right-handed.

## Explosion of color



## What people are reading

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2. 1 to 3 inches of snow, icy mix forecast for tonight, Saturday
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5. Woman reported burned in house fire in Robeson Township (VIDEO)
6. Former congressional aide found guilty of sexual assault
7. Troopers make \$270,000 heroin bust in Upper Tulpehocken
8. Donald Trump brings victory tour to Hershey
9. Daniel Boone sophomore put chemicals in other student's water, troopers say
10. Woman burned in structure fire in Robeson Township (VIDEO)

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Once on a website, Olivieri said, trends have changed to limit the amount of text.

"A huge downfall is to have four pages of text, which people will not read," she said. "Keep your text to a few short paragraphs. Give them just a enough information to understand and want to learn more."

## Mobile-friendly

Olivieri said the trend today is that websites be mobile-friendly and be easy to navigate.

To make the site appear attractive on a smartphone, Olivieri said, she recommends designing the PC website and mobile site as one.

"That will make it look better on the phone than on the computer itself, but that's OK," she said.

Because people are looking at sites with handheld devices, she said, the website designer has to be aware of the places in which they are doing this.

"People are sitting in doctors' offices looking at websites, so you want to avoid the flashing deals that annoy people, and avoid blaring music," she said.

Steve Fabian, 55, director of creative services at Quarter Note Systems LLC, Spring Township, said the content of a site depends on the products or services being sold and the business goals.

"An e-commerce site will have different goals from an informational site," Fabian said. "We start with discovery with our clients to find out what his business goals are so that we can determine content."

Fabian said videos can be added to websites if they are well done, but also said still photography should be professionally done to draw people in.

"People have an attention span of five seconds, so you have to be image-heavy over text," he said.

One mistake people make is to try and make everything stand out, Fabian said.

"The site really needs to be focused on a single area, and then steer users to where they need to go," he said. "An up-to-date website is an issue of credibility for your business. Users will take one look at an older website and just move on."

## Reflected in marketing

Colors on a website can be important, but should match with what the company does.

"Whatever you do (on a website) should be reflected in your marketing," Fabian said. "Social media are a great way to keep in touch, but be careful to keep it social and not for selling."

E-commerce sites are especially important to retailers, but can present their own set of challenges.

Wyomissing-based Weidenhammer recently acquired Praxis Information Science, Austin, Texas, which will enhance the company's capabilities for e-commerce platforms.

As a counterreaction to the trend of minimalism on sites, we may see lots of bright colors.

Source: Practical Ecommerce, [www.practicalecommerce.com](http://www.practicalecommerce.com)

## AMPN Design LLC

Owner: Ann Marie Olivieri

Location: Exeter Township

Phone: 610-406-9041

Website: [www.ampndesign.com](http://www.ampndesign.com)

## Amskape Inc.

CEO: Regy Varghese

Location: 4272 Morgantown Road, Robeson Township

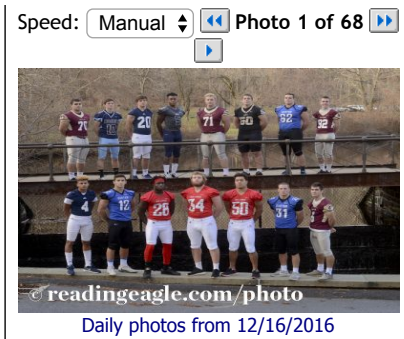
Phone: 610-856-0011

Website: [www.amskape.com](http://www.amskape.com)

## Laughing Rock Technology

President: Craig Stonaha

Location: 5 Old Wernersville Road, Spring Township



Jason Crickmer, former CEO of Praxis, is the managing director of e-commerce business for Weidenhammer.

Phone: 610-678-1978

"What we have seen is that the boundaries between doing business online and through a normal brick-and-mortar store are eroding," Crickmer said. "Competition is fierce, and in order to deliver your product to the most number of consumers, you have to have a brand presence to permeate every aspect a customer has with you."

Website:  
[www.laughingrock.com](http://www.laughingrock.com)

Crickmer said an e-commerce site should help customers translate the brand experience into the online experience.

### **Quarter Note Systems LLC**

"The site has to create a funnel to bring people in and reinforce the value of the brand," he said. "And that will keep them coming back. Your ability to compete is determined by how well you can respond to your brand in all channels."

Director of creative services: Steve Fabian

One of the most important aspects of an e-commerce site, especially during the holiday season, is to determine if it can handle increased traffic.

Location: 2917 Windmill Road, Suite 5, Spring Township

"Holiday traffic can get pretty complex," Crickmer said. "You want to work with your team to conduct stress testing and determine if you need a separate computer or another server to handle the load."

Phone: 610-621-5716

When it comes to the designing of an e-commerce site, Crickmer said, every client is different. He has not seen any dominant elements appear among all e-commerce sites.

Website:  
[www.QuarterNoteSys.com](http://www.QuarterNoteSys.com)

"It's important to listen to your customer and understand what is important to them," he said.

Contact David A. Kostival: [money@readingeagle.com](mailto:money@readingeagle.com).

### **Weidenhammer**

Managing director of e-commerce business:  
Jason Crickmer

Location: 935 Berkshire Blvd., Wyomissing

Phone: 610-378-1149

Website:  
[www.hammer.net](http://www.hammer.net)

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