

KEEP IT CURRENT:

# 10 Ways to Stay on Top of the Latest Web Trends

By John Simpson

**Interactive designers, strategists and technologists are constantly reimagining the way information is delivered via the web — and with good reason.** The Internet is ever-changing and advancing at an increasingly rapid pace. According to Mary Meeker's 2013 Internet Trends Report, there are now more than two billion global Internet users. Hundreds of millions of Internet-capable devices are shipped around the world quarterly, and 15 percent of all Internet traffic now originates from mobile devices.

Such a shifting online landscape can make you feel as though your relatively new site is out of date. To help you keep your website current and your users' online experience top of mind, we've come up with a few suggestions:

## 1. ALWAYS HAVE MOBILE IN MIND

At the very least, **your website should be touch-friendly.** Using large text and buttons, eliminating hover or rollover functionality and using persistent or anchored navigation will keep your mobile audience happy. Deploying a separate mobile site is also an option, which can be done fairly quickly and inexpensively. Responsive design provides the best user experience because it tailors the site to the visitor's device.

## 2. ADD A TOUCH OF PERSONALIZATION

In the legal world, business development often centers on one-on-one conversations, where lawyers are able to mold their messages to the unique needs of each individual client or prospect. This customized approach should also be applied to your digital marketing strategy. Take a stab at using data from your site visitors' digital fingerprints to personalize the way you promote and deliver content to them.

## 3. KEEP SEARCH SIMPLE

These days, your users are likely sifting through thousands of pieces of content on any one law firm website. **Put your users in control of how they search for — or find — the information they need on your site.** Adding type-ahead or filter technology to your search feature will make their lives a whole lot easier. Including trending results, such as most read or most shared, is another useful offering.

## 4. INCLUDE SOME MOVEMENT

Site users now expect a certain level of interaction. **One way to add more excitement is to pay close attention to the way that information appears, moves and shifts as a user explores your content.** Consider beefing up your transition design by adding a little animation or movement. Cinegifs, parallax scrolling and isotope are just a few of the latest trends.

## 5. TAKE ADVANTAGE OF NEW TECHNOLOGY

New web technologies, such as HTML5 and CSS3, have opened up new possibilities for web development, including responsive design, animations and transitions. However, because these features are not supported on older browsers like Internet Explorer 7, 8 or 9, embrace the opportunity to keep your site up-to-date by developing functionality primarily for newer browsers.

## 6. CONTENT PRESENTATION IS KING

Serve up site content in small, digestible bites. Subheads and bulleted lists help to break up content and make it easy to scan. **Optimizing content for your mobile users will make their experiences less stressful.** You can also benefit other users by making the most important points stand out.

## 7. READABILITY IS QUEEN

Content creation can be both time consuming and expensive, so it's important to make sure that it's readable. Things like the "everything" or "more" button help keep navigation tucked away, allowing your content to shine front and center. You can also help your content breathe by keeping highlights in sidebars and mega menus to a minimum.

## 8. CONSIDER NEW WAYS TO NAVIGATE

Consider the number of different devices people use to access content – and all in an endless range of sizes. **Explore different navigational techniques, such as single-page homepage navigation, or scrolling options, like horizontal scrolling, to keep the user moving through your content.**

## 9. ALLOW YOUR VISITORS TO SHARE THE WEALTH

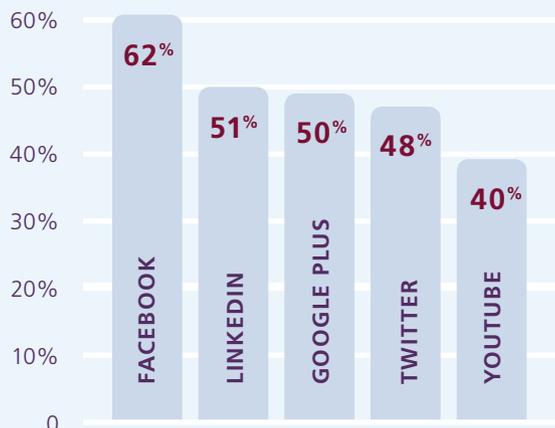
With the explosion of social media, sharing has become second nature. **Allowing people to act on this impulse enables you to extend the reach of your content. Be sure to include social sharing links for all of your content.**

## 10. AVOID DEAD ENDS

Always give your visitors additional options to explore related content, such as articles, events or professionals. But don't make it hard for users to find their way back to where they were. When including links to additional content, it's always a good idea to set those links to open in a separate tab or window.

There are 10 tips here, but it is important to note that **the possibilities on the web will continue to change and improve.** The goal, however, will always remain the same: to keep your visitors engaged. It all comes down to creating the best experience for those interacting with your site.

John Simpson is the CEO of One North Interactive and a 13-year veteran of helping legal marketing professionals with website design and interactive online marketing. He is a frequent author and speaker as it relates to interactive marketing, mobile website design and marketing innovation, and be reached at [jsimpson@onenorth.com](mailto:jsimpson@onenorth.com).



## SOCIAL MEDIA Spending

Website development isn't the only area where law firms may need to focus their resources. A survey by The Creative Group revealed that advertising and marketing executives plan to increase spending on particular social media efforts. Based on the survey results, the chart below shows where executives will increase spending among social media sites.