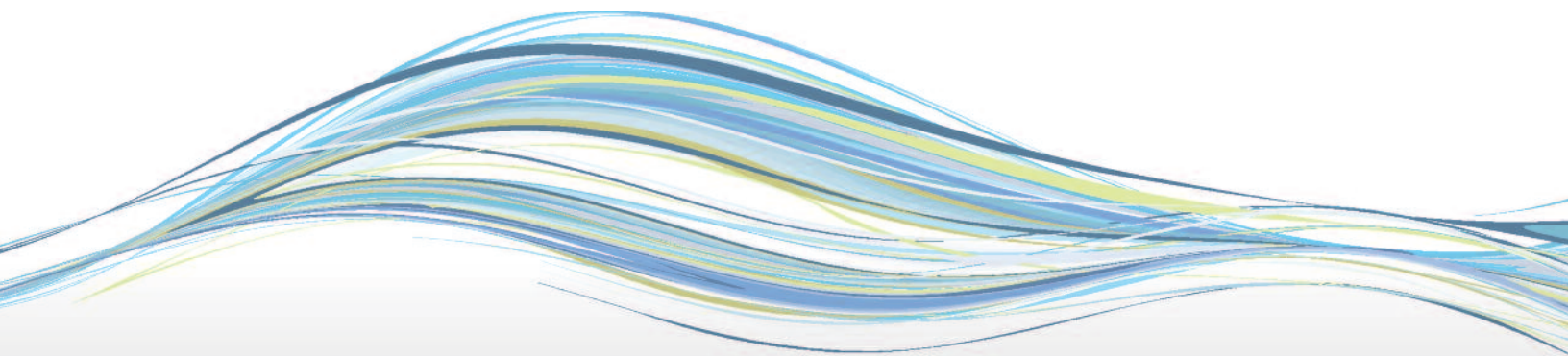# APTARA

Taking Your Learning Content Mobile

5 Keys to a Successful Mobile Content Strategy

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5 Keys to a Successful Mobile Content Strategy

Most companies, from high-tech firms to heavy equipment manufacturers, are wrestling with effectively delivering content to their customers' and employees' smart phones and tablets.

From in-house training materials created in PowerPoint, to Flash-based eLearning courseware, most organizations suffice with delivering PDF files to mobile devices, the equivalent of a static document or web page.

Adopting a mobile-friendly content strategy enables a myriad of benefits that go far beyond delivering the right content to the right device at the right time—including collaboration via social networking platforms, multimedia (audio and video) enhancements, interactivity (quizzes and exercises to test mastery of concepts), annotations to content, and much more.

But what is the most efficient way to produce and deliver learning content optimized for the unique dimensions and firmware of every mobile device? How do you enable the interactive features that make your content more than just a "page turning application"? These are just some of the questions that a mobile content strategy addresses.

At the crux of any effective mobile content strategy is HTML5, the latest web content standard. This paper focuses on 5 key areas, all of which leverage HTML5, to help you publish mobile content that will engage and delight your customers, and your bottom line, including:

- Migrating legacy content assets.

- Moving from "print-only" content to rich, multimedia, and interactive user experiences.

- Avoiding legacy tools that are not supported on all mobile platforms (e.g., Flash).

- Designing agile content collections that automatically reformat based on the size and screen resolution of a mobile device's display.

- Creating new potential revenue streams from existing content assets.

1. Migrate your legacy content assets

Problem: Training organizations have used a multitude of tools over the years to develop and publish content. For example:

- PowerPoint is typically used to develop training materials for on-site classroom delivery.

- Adobe Flash has long been the primary application to develop modular eLearning courses.

- Rapid Development tools like Articulate, Captivate and Lectora, to name a few.

- Student training guides and instructor materials are often developed using desktop publishing tools, such as Adobe InDesign.

As a result, vast quantities of legacy content are stored in proprietary file formats that are difficult, if not impossible, to reuse and repackage, let alone deliver to mobile devices. While some organizations have wisely started to create mobile content strategies based on storing content in a baseline format such as XML (extensible mark-up language) or taking the content directly to HTML5, it is still rare to find a company that does not have some form of content in proprietary formats. Furthermore, to date, proprietary tools are primarily designed to produce print publications, and not equipped to add interactive features that make mobile content engaging for its end users.

Solution: HTML5 is very quickly becoming adopted as the de facto standard for mobile content delivery. Because HTML5 is an international web content standard, it is completely independent of any specific tool or vendor application. HTML5 can be rendered in any modern web browser or on mobile devices. A one-time investment in converting legacy content assets to HTML5 ensures that content can be delivered to virtually all current and future mobile platforms and browsers, as the mobile technology market continues to evolve with increasing speed.
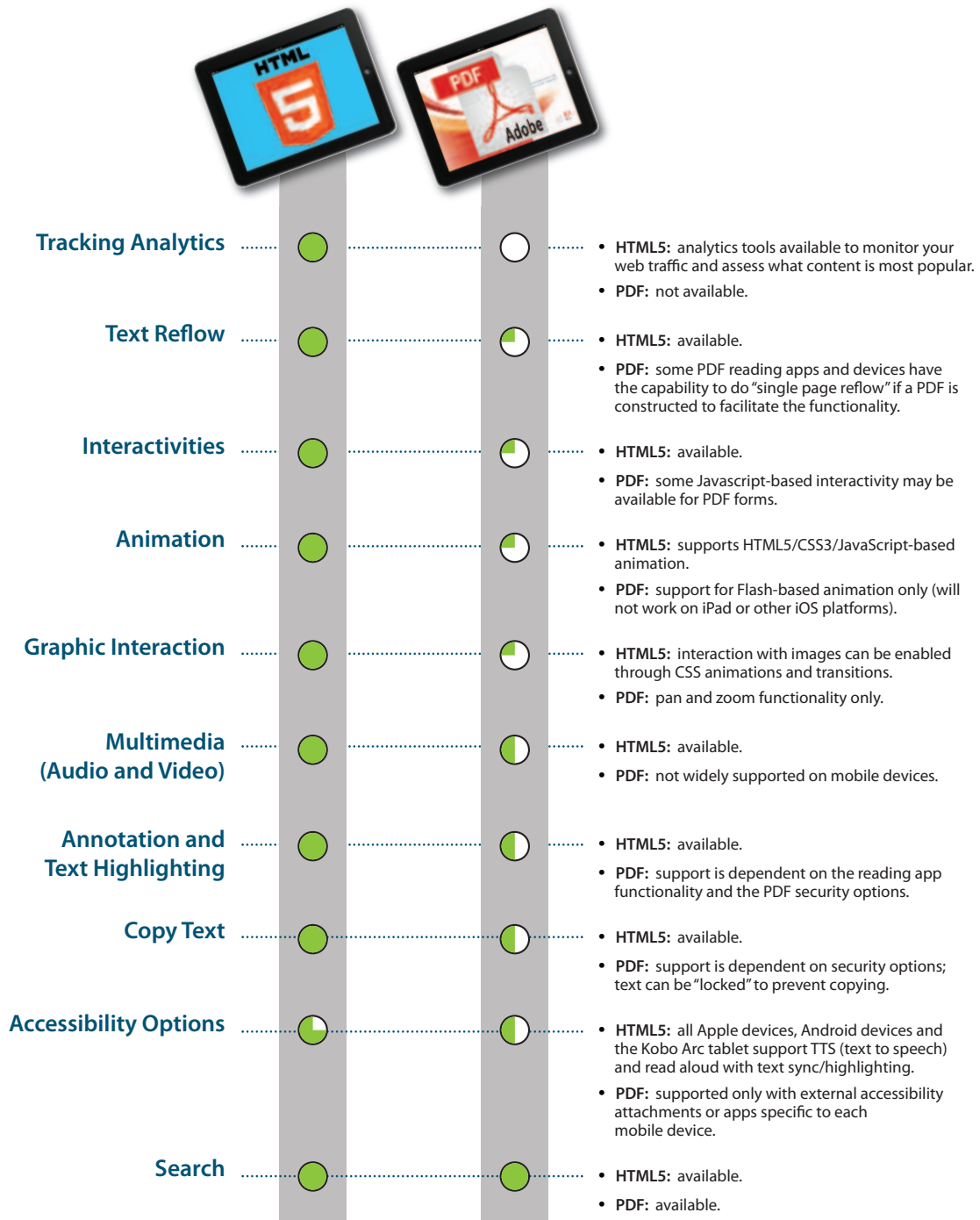
*In summary, converting your content to **HTML5** provides an easy way to consolidate, future-proof, and scale content assets while facilitating delivery to mobile devices and the Web.*

Case Study: **A leading national network of full-service residential and commercial real estate agencies** worked with Aptara to consolidate a myriad of legacy training content in multiple formats into a unified portal of HTML5-based eLearning courses. The unified portal solution integrated the full range of the client's traditional structured learning resources—video and web resources and documents from various websites, the cloud, intranets, and Learning Management Systems (LMS)—with a convenient single sign-in from a website or mobile device. The unified portal also incorporated a number of interactive social information exchange media tools, such as blogs, forums, tweets, social networks, and social bookmarks to enable collaboration. This custom solution has helped the client teach, inspire, and empower managers to more effectively coach their real estate agents and ensure maximum profitability.

2. Move from "print-only" PDF content to rich, multimedia, interactive user experiences

Problem: Your current definition of "digital content delivery" is a PDF file. You may ask: "Why can't I just deliver PDF files to mobile devices? The answer is "you can...if you're satisfied with a static electronic representation of a printed page." But, given all of the rich interactivity possible on mobile platforms, you could be squandering an opportunity to more fully engage your audience, further brand loyalty, and track how your content is used.

Solution: This table provides some examples of how HTML5 can leverage more capabilities of mobile devices than a PDF document:

	HTML5	PDF	
Tracking Analytics	●	○	• **HTML5:** analytics tools available to monitor your web traffic and assess what content is most popular. • **PDF:** not available.
Text Reflow	●	◔	• **HTML5:** available. • **PDF:** some PDF reading apps and devices have the capability to do "single page reflow" if a PDF is constructed to facilitate the functionality.
Interactivities	●	◔	• **HTML5:** available. • **PDF:** some Javascript-based interactivity may be available for PDF forms.
Animation	●	◔	• **HTML5:** supports HTML5/CSS3/JavaScript-based animation. • **PDF:** support for Flash-based animation only (will not work on iPad or other iOS platforms).
Graphic Interaction	●	◔	• **HTML5:** interaction with images can be enabled through CSS animations and transitions. • **PDF:** pan and zoom functionality only.
Multimedia (Audio and Video)	●	◑	• **HTML5:** available. • **PDF:** not widely supported on mobile devices.
Annotation and Text Highlighting	●	◑	• **HTML5:** available. • **PDF:** support is dependent on the reading app functionality and the PDF security options.
Copy Text	●	◑	• **HTML5:** available. • **PDF:** support is dependent on security options; text can be "locked" to prevent copying.
Accessibility Options	◐	◑	• **HTML5:** all Apple devices, Android devices and the Kobo Arc tablet support TTS (text to speech) and read aloud with text sync/highlighting. • **PDF:** supported only with external accessibility attachments or apps specific to each mobile device.
Search	●	●	• **HTML5:** available. • **PDF:** available.

*In summary, **HTML5** provides a robust platform for consistent digital content delivery, including interactivity, analytics, and the ability to intelligently query content.*

Case study: **A major North American brokerage firm** needed to migrate a massive amount of legacy print data to a mobile, cloud-based platform for delivering personalized data based on subscribers' profiles. Aptara designed and built a state-of-the-art cloud-based portal to enable the firm's clients to quickly and easily store, search, and retrieve content on any mobile device. Aptara's solution system is inexpensive to maintain, and scalable for integrating, managing, and distributing dynamic packages of information. The portal solution drastically reduced IT and infrastructure concerns.

3. Avoid tool traps

Problem: Interoperability between proprietary software applications and proprietary hardware platforms is often not possible. Proprietary tools impose artificial restrictions and limitations that have a direct impact on a company's ability to penetrate the marketplace. The classic example is Apple and Adobe Flash video animation. For many reasons (performance concerns, security issues, proprietary plug-in technology), one of the industry's most popular mobile devices (the iPad and iPhone) do not support the industry's most popular format for animation (Flash)—a key component of most eLearning courseware and promotional video assets.

Solution: Whenever possible, use open standards to ensure independence from the grip of proprietary tools. In the world of content authoring, this is best achieved by implementing a standard XML mark-up language, such as Dita (Darwin Information Typing Architecture - http://docs.oasis-open.org/dita/v1.2/spec/DITA1.2-spec.html) or DocBook (www.docbook.org). In the world of content delivery, HTML5 has emerged as the best-of-breed standard for cross-platform mobile device support.

In summary, **HTML5** *provides a standards-based platform for digital content delivery, guaranteeing independence from device and software restrictions while ensuring that content is "future proofed" for all upcoming mobile device releases.*

Case study: **A global pharmaceutical company** provided eLearning courseware to sales force. All of these courses were originally developed in Flash. In 2012, the company standardized on delivering iPad devices to the entire sales team. Because the iPad does not support Flash, the online sales training courses were suddenly inaccessible. Aptara converted the company's entire sales course catalogue from Flash to HTML5 in less than 6 months. As a result, the company now has a library of courses for delivering to desktops and mobile platforms, that is flexible enough to support any future evolution in content delivery.

4. Design content that will automatically reformat based on mobile device screen size and resolution

Problem: Most websites and computer-based training courses are designed for viewing in a browser on a large screen, making them difficult to view on the smaller screens common to smart phones and tablets. As a result, many companies create and maintain separate "mobile" versions of their website content. The practice of supporting multiple websites for delivering to multiple platforms creates significant added work for IT organizations and requires developers to update each unique website every time content changes. To make matters worse, many websites are not well-suited for mobile delivery (e.g., use of Adobe Flash, older HTML versions that do not support interactive features, etc.)

Solution: Adopting HTML5 as a delivery format, along with the use of website development techniques such as **Responsive Web Design**, enables the appropriate rendition of a website on any platform, browser, or device. Responsive web design is a design approach aimed at crafting sites to provide an optimal viewing experience—easy reading and navigation with a minimum of resizing, panning, and scrolling—across a wide range of devices (from desktop computer monitors to mobile phones).

*In summary, **HTML5** plus **Responsive Web Design** produces more innovative websites and eLearning courseware, which are easily maintained in a single repository, and display the right content to the right user at the right time on any device.*

Case study: **A global telecommunications company** needed to provide training materials to their customers on both tablets and smart phones. The company wanted to optimize the display for all possible screen sizes, but the overall project effort was constrained by a limited budget. Aptara applied Responsive Web Design development concepts to provide the customer with a single set of courseware, capable of automatically reformatting content based on the screen size of the device on which content is displayed. The telecommunications company has won awards for the design quality of its application.

5. Create new revenue streams from your existing content assets

Problem: Most companies are sitting on an untapped treasure trove of potential revenue. Corporate content assets (e.g., technical user manuals, customer support knowledge bases, internal bulletins and training materials) hold potential value to your customers. However, most departments responsible for creating and maintaining this valuable content reside in a company cost center not tasked with revenue generation. Furthermore, these departments often work in "silos" and do not share content with each other. Opportunities exist to consolidate and easily repackage corporate content into new content assets and products for which customers are willing to pay!

Solution: Developing content in HTML5 and delivering content in the context of an enterprise app or an interactive eBook, enables companies to easily sell content on a subscription basis or through an eCommerce solution.

*In summary, **HTML5** interactive eBooks and apps can provide new revenue streams.*

Case study: **A North American engine manufacturer** provides maintenance and repair manuals to their authorized dealers free of charge. However, customers who traditionally go to the dealers for repairs are often interested in doing their own engine maintenance and repair. Aptara is helping the engine manufacturer repackage their maintenance and repair procedures into a new interactive eBook, including videos of specific procedures demonstrating step-by-step instructions. The interactive eBook will be sold through their conventional online bookstore channels and represents a brand new source of ongoing revenue for the manufacturer.

Conclusion

The key to mobile learning success is implementing a unified mobile content strategy that calls for adopting an open, standards-based strategy such as HTML5. What are you waiting for? Your content might become more addictive than the games your kids are playing on your smartphone!

To request more information, visit **aptaracorp.com**.

About Aptara

Aptara's digital content, learning and performance, and business services solutions are in place at market-leading companies worldwide. Our industry specialists design and implement strategies that capitalize on new digital and mobile technologies for information providers in IT, law, healthcare, pharmaceuticals, insurance, financial services, and publishing. Aptara solutions uncover new revenue streams, improve operations, and realize cost savings for enterprises.

Founded in 1988, Aptara is headquartered in the United States and has offices on four continents. Our parent company, iEnergizer, is publicly traded in the UK.

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