# Why progressive web apps (PWAs) are poised to dominate moving forward

## 30-second summary:

- Progressive web apps (PWAs) offer app-like experiences without requiring users to download anything from an app store
- PWAs are also much less of a burden for developers than native apps, which require ongoing updates, review management, and shared profits with app stores
- Nick Chasinov, Founder and CEO of Teknicks, outlines a few of the major business benefits of using PWAs

If Apple was threatened by “Fortnite” trying to bypass the App Store, it’s not going to be happy when progressive web apps take off. PWAs disrupt the tech giant’s granular control over the Apple App Store because they offer app-like experiences without the need to download an actual app. They’re designed for the everyday website user but provide many features that are exclusive to native apps.

Although many companies love the idea of building a native app, this approach can be a hassle for developers. You have to update them, manage reviews, attract downloads, and pay most stores a 30 percent cut of every sale – this includes paid apps and in-app purchases, which can add up quickly. Apple raked in $64 billion from the App Store in 2020.

That’s part of the reason Google is an advocate for PWAs, encouraging developers to build and distribute them. The

search engine also leads Project Fugu, which aims to expand browser capabilities and help web apps “do anything native apps can“. This dream could become a reality: Almost 65 percent of internet users already rely on Chrome, and its open-source Chromium foundation lets other browsers use its PWA technology.

Since the pandemic has been sending more people online than ever before, much of the focus in 2021 will remain on the user experience. So, would you rather take cues from Apple or Google? The PWA vs. native app war has begun, and if you’re looking to stand out and get a leg up on the competition, then a PWA may be the way to go.

# The business benefits of PWAs

PWAs provide users with numerous benefits. For example, they are smaller files than native apps, which frees up space on people’s devices. However, PWAs can also impact your goals and bottom line as a business. Here are three key advantages of progressive web apps:

## 1. Rapid connections

Consumers have options: There are plenty of places to browse news, buy clothes, and watch videos. If your website isn’t up to speed (literally), people will take their attention and spending power elsewhere. For instance, the Forbes website used to take anywhere from three to 12 seconds to fully load, those delays caused 53 percent of users to abandon the website. Once the company switched to a PWA, browsing sessions increased by 43 percent.

PWAs can increase speed for all users, but the acceleration is particularly important for browsers on slow connections. By caching content after the first visit, PWAs make it possible for more people to access your products. That increase in

speed also translates to improvements in discoverability for all users. According to Google’s 2018 announcement, mobile speed factors heavily into overall page ranking.

## 2. SEO capabilities

Aside from the fact that speed affects your page rankings, PWAs are also SEO-friendly. Because they live on the web, their content is visible to search engines. This can boost your ability to generate traffic and leads. For example, when Alibaba turned its website into a PWA, it saw 76 percent more conversions.

Native apps are limited to the SEO constraints of app stores. Typically, only the app profile page is listed in Google search results, forcing companies to rely on the app’s description, pictures, and positive reviews to improve visibility and land more downloads.

With a PWA, you have the same unlimited flexibility as a website to create custom user experiences and optimized resourceful content that will rank on Google and showcase your app’s features and benefits. App store optimization is limited, but a PWA enables you to execute all SEO strategies.

## 3. Engagement opportunities

PWAs support push notifications, creating opportunities for companies to reach out to their customers with personalized product recommendations, news updates, and other relevant communications. This can improve customer engagement and help increase brand loyalty.

PWAs can also boost engagement with your social media pages because they’re able to use device tools like cameras and Global Positioning System (GPS). And as augmented reality (AR) becomes available on PWAs, all kinds of exciting possibilities will open up. Imagine a customer trying on your company’s

latest apparel in AR and then sharing their selfies on social media – all without a native app that has to be developed for multiple operating systems and tweaked to support dozens of devices.

Decreasing coronavirus case numbers and accelerating vaccine distribution efforts are contributing to optimism in many parts of the world. Still, it will likely be a while before life returns to normal. As people continue to spend more time at home (and on the internet), organizations need to prioritize their digital transformation strategies.

For the reasons above, this should include building PWAs. While web apps aren't new developments, they are uniquely positioned to help companies achieve their goals in the current environment. Companies can focus their efforts on one web app that prioritizes the user experience instead of wasting energy on multiple native apps designed for different operating systems with limited search engine visibility.

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