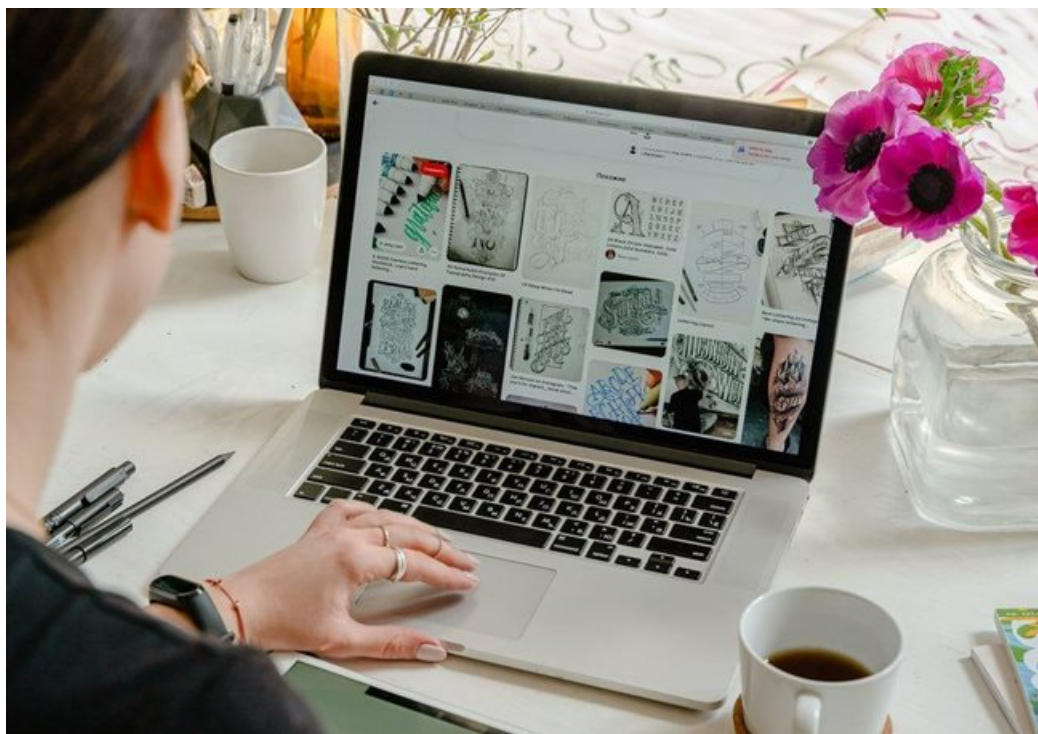


Will websites become obsolete?

Popular technology, from CDs and Walkman's to MP3 players and DVDs, have historically been rendered obsolete by new products and platforms. Amid the rise of social media marketing and in-app commerce, businesses may be wondering if websites are heading the same way.



Source: www.pexels.com

“Will websites become obsolete? As we’ve previously used them – yes. Consumer behaviour is changing in the face of social media and other online touchpoints. However, unlike MP3 players and CDs, websites will constantly evolve in tandem with other digital trends, giving entrepreneurs an opportunity to construct a fluid and interactive online ecosystem for their brand,” says Thomas Vollrath, head of 1-grid.com.

Out of 4.66 billion active internet users worldwide, 4.48 billion are estimated to use social media. Small businesses with a limited budget have opted to build their digital presence exclusively on apps like Facebook and Instagram, foregoing a dedicated website. However, existing solely on social media limits a brand's ability to build a customised identity on the web.

“Since social media apps are owned by other parties, they are not fully customisable. A business can own their website and have control over everything, from the look and feel to the content and traffic. They can also craft user journeys according to business goals,” says Vollrath.



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Judith Middleton 28 Feb 2022



Considering the crowded nature of Facebook and Instagram timelines, Vollrath advises entrepreneurs to use social media as a funnel to their true digital home – their website. Unlike on social media, a website visitor is focusing all of their attention on the brand when they are on a website.

A website also forms the foundation for brand credibility with prospective customers. “As the primary business listing on the internet, a website will have all the necessary information, from company history to products, policies, training and awards, and details of the management team,” says Vollrath.

Decline in traffic

Another reason why some brands feel that websites are slowly becoming obsolete is a decline in traffic to their online platform. Rather than heralding the end of the website, this may be a sign that a business is not actively updating its content or SEO keywords.

In 2020, Google ran more than 600,000 algorithm experiments, which resulted in more than 4,500 changes to its search feature – and this process is ongoing. “Website content produced for SEO isn’t just a one-and-done proposition. In the same way you would schedule weekly or daily posts on social media, your website content must be always fresh, responsive to current events and queries, and in step with the algorithms of the day,” says Vollrath.

In terms of leveraging search algorithms, a website remains the easiest way for search engines to find businesses. “Search engines don’t search deep within social media accounts, so most of your effort there won’t matter in rankings. Additionally, customers and clients may not be searching for a specific company. They may be searching for a solution to their problems using keywords and phrases. Social media posts won’t come up in search engines for those phrases – but if a business has optimised the content on their website, it will show up,” says Vollrath.

“Once the cornerstone of a business’s online identity, today the website functions as just one aspect of an overall brand experience – this doesn’t make it any less crucial. A business’s website remains the central hub of all its digital activities. Everything is connected to their site and flows from there. If a prospective client, customer, employee or business partner wants to know about the brand, this is where they’ll come first,” concludes Vollrath.

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