

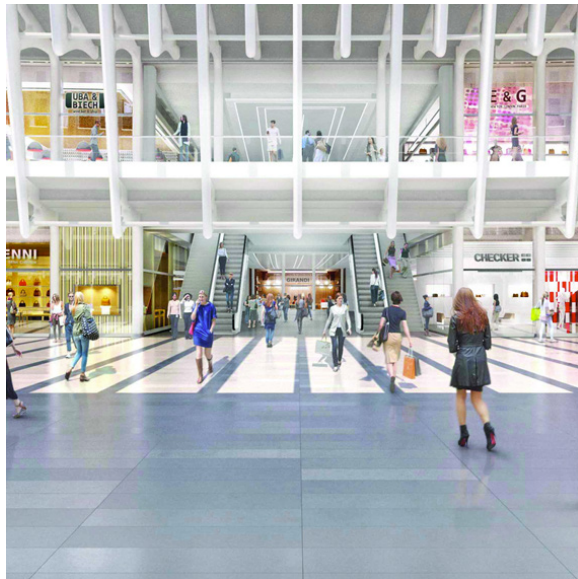


THE DISTRICT MARKETER'S DIGITAL PRIMER:

No One is Looking for Your Website... and That's OK

# The District Marketer's Digital Primer

A close look into trends and patterns clearly illustrates that the future is not entirely unpredictable and consumer behavior is on a steady course to a place where Districts, when leveraged properly, have an undeniable digital advantage.



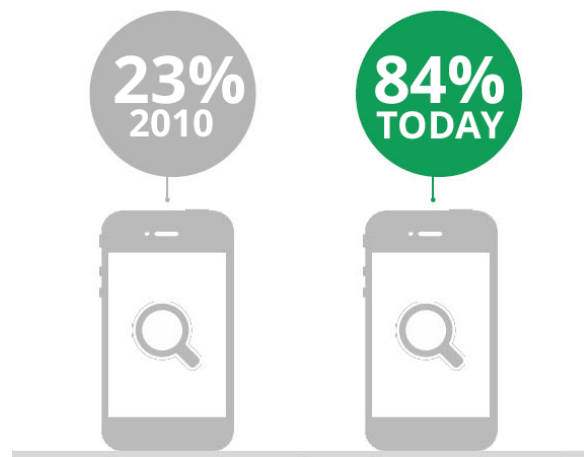
It is no secret that we are living in a world that is different than it was 20, 10, even 5 years ago. Many of the pillars of our society in the areas of media, retail and entertainment have drastically changed their presence and altered their footprint, some have even evaporated entirely. With all of this shakeup, newness, incessant change and chartless future, even the most experienced BID marketers have questions:

- **HOW CAN A DISTRICT FIND SOLID FOOTING AMONGST ALL THE CHANGE?**
- **WHERE DOES A SMART MARKETER PUT THEIR ENERGY?**
- **WHAT ABOUT SOCIAL, VIDEO, AND BLOGS?**
- **DOES A WEBSITE EVEN MATTER?**

# A Digital-First, Mobile-First Mentality

Change Your Thinking, Change Your Foot Traffic

## SMARTPHONE INTERNET ACCESS HAS SKYROCKETED



In the past 20 years, the Internet has quickly become our go to for everything — whether it's information or entertainment, and everything in between, our quest begins online. According to researchers at University of Southern California, the average American now spends 24 hours a week online, that's up drastically from the 9 hours a week we were spending in the year 2000.

At the same time, smartphone use has skyrocketed with the proportion of people accessing the internet from mobile rising from 23% in 2010 to 84% now.

*With the shift to Mobile,  
Websites are rarely a consumer's first stop.*



# Content Is King

Jump In, Creation Is Easier Than Ever!

In the shift from printed, traditional media to mobile digital consumption, **the types of content we consume has changed.**

The convenience of mobile devices has resulted in a proliferation of short, impactful, pieces. Luckily, mobile technology has also made it possible for anyone — not just a professional journalist, producer or photographer to capture meaningful moments and share them across the globe. From live streaming, to vlogging, to beautiful photos, to fun GIFs, there are countless ways to tell a story and multiple platforms to help distribute that message.

*Districts are wonderfully positioned to create dynamic content due to the very nature of their offering- multiple businesses, regional details, not to mention events!*

# Great Content Needs Great Tools

Be Ready When Inspiration Strikes

**Given the right tools**, posting or updating your online content can be as easy as writing an email, making web updates inexpensive, accessible and inevitable in this content-driven society.

Content need not be a laborious creative exercise either. Districts have an endless stream of posting opportunities in the form of **member business listings, events and activities, promotions and offers** — the kinds of things consumers are always pursuing.

*Districts have an endless stream of posting opportunities.*



# Social Media

Attracting Visitors In Their Native Habitat



Three-fourths of Facebook users visit the site daily. Compare this to the number of times that someone drives by your District, consumes a print ad or picks up a newspaper, the difference is staggering. And given the fact that most people use more than one social media platform (the average is three), choosing which social tool is less important than general activity.

Even seasoned marketers find themselves resistant to engage in social media, because they think it is too hard, they've missed the boat, or their content just isn't interesting enough. Nothing could be further from the truth.

*Audiences respond better to authentic, raw content than to polished campaigns.*



## Social Media (continued)

### Attracting Visitors In Their Native Habitat

Of course, there are plenty of ways to spend millions on post creation, lighting, photography or production, but even the most successful social media influencers do little more than just live their life with their phone in front. In fact, research shows that audiences respond even better to the **authenticity of raw**, low-budget content than polished, brand-based campaigns.

Another strength of social media is its **flexibility**. The frequency of posts, the message you send, the tone and length of your content is all up to you — not the editor, the producer or the platform.

Social media offers a multitude of opportunities for audiences to discover & engage with your District:

- **YOUR AUDIENCE PROVIDES FEEDBACK ON YOUR POSTS.**
- **VISITORS GO LIVE FROM YOUR LOCATION.**
- **INFLUENCERS, EMPLOYEES OR VISITORS TAG YOUR DISTRICT AS THEIR LOCATION.**

*Social Media is not only increasing your visibility to viewers, but also helping with SEO.*



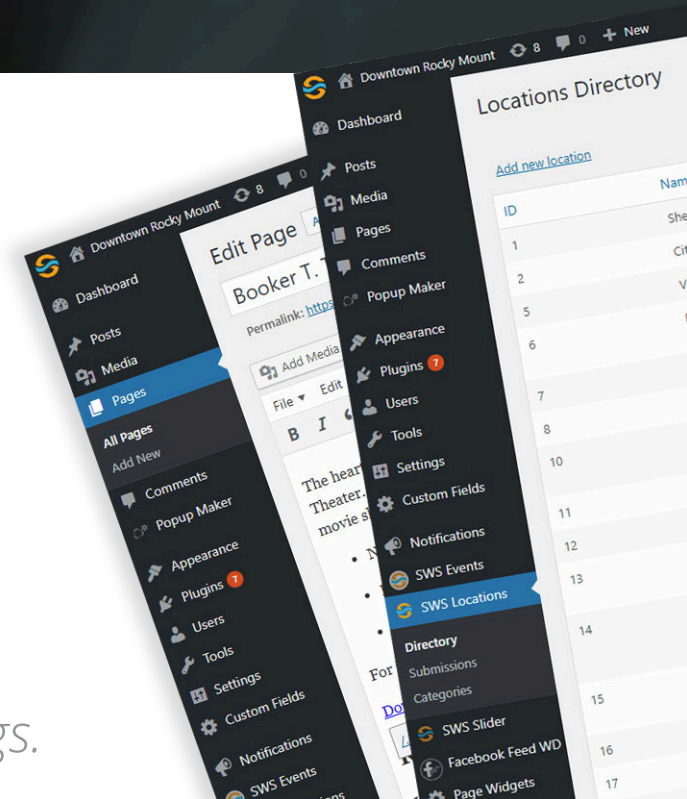
# Structured Data: The New SEO

A Fancy Phrase, A Simple Concept

As the world shifts more and more online, the race to maximize Search Engine Optimization (SEO) has become truly fierce. Previously, the process of search engine ranking was a complex, dark, fluid game with no rules. One could easily game the system and win.

But more recently, the search engine providers have implemented Structured Data as the standard for search rankings and in the process have made SEO easier to control.

*Today, Search Engine Providers have implemented Structured Data as the standard for search rankings.*





# What is Structured Data?

Structured Data is a tool that can **ensure that your District rules SEO.**



It is simply the way that search engines prefer to collect and display content (things like blog posts, calendar items, business information, locations, and services). If served up using the correct guidelines, this content becomes powerful boosting tool. Conversely, if it does not use the precise structure, the search engines will simply skip over your content — no matter how dazzling it may be. **If your SEO is weak, this will make it hard for customers to find your businesses via Google or other search tools.**

Often times, structured data is best presented by a tech professional, but if the structure is put in place early, all of the resulting content will yield excellent rankings. Our clients rely on us to create initial scaffolding for the structured data, but once established, we show them how to continue its performance by themselves.

In short, structured data may sound like a complex technological nightmare, but in truth, it is a wonderful tool that with a strong foundation and regular maintenance, **districts can ensure that they rule SEO.**

# Maps as a Service (& a Tool)

They're Not Just For Directions Anymore

Another critical piece of your digital presence is your District's map. This tool has come a long way from being a static, folded dinosaur hiding in your car's glovebox.

**A map is now a dynamic, interactive powerhouse packed with data.**

A digital map is now so ubiquitous that the average user says that they would have to be paid \$3,600 to give up internet maps. Contrast this to the cost of the glovebox variety (\$2.99 on average) and the value is clear.



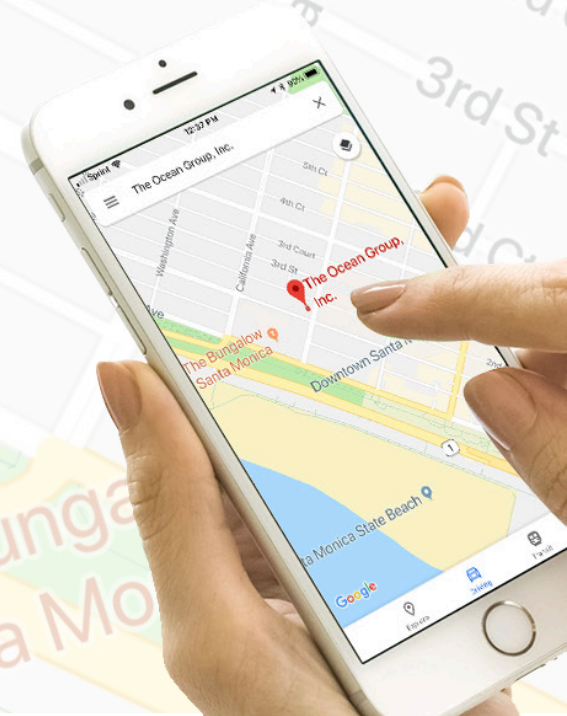
## Maps as a Service (& a Tool) (continued)

Whether using them for in-vehicle navigation or proximity to another attraction, the modern consumer's reliance on digital maps is undeniable. It is critical to ensure that your presence on these maps is displayed, mapped and served up properly & accurately.

**With 1 Billion monthly users**, Google Maps is the undeniable king of digital mapping, and integrating it properly can not only ensure user familiarity but also secure your presence online. The data loaded into Google Maps informs the other Google products as well as other content aggregators. So whether or not a map is a part of your website, **it is critical to the digital ecosystem.**

Thus, it is important not to neglect your maps, so make sure you make the time, or employ the right partner, to keep your mapping in order.

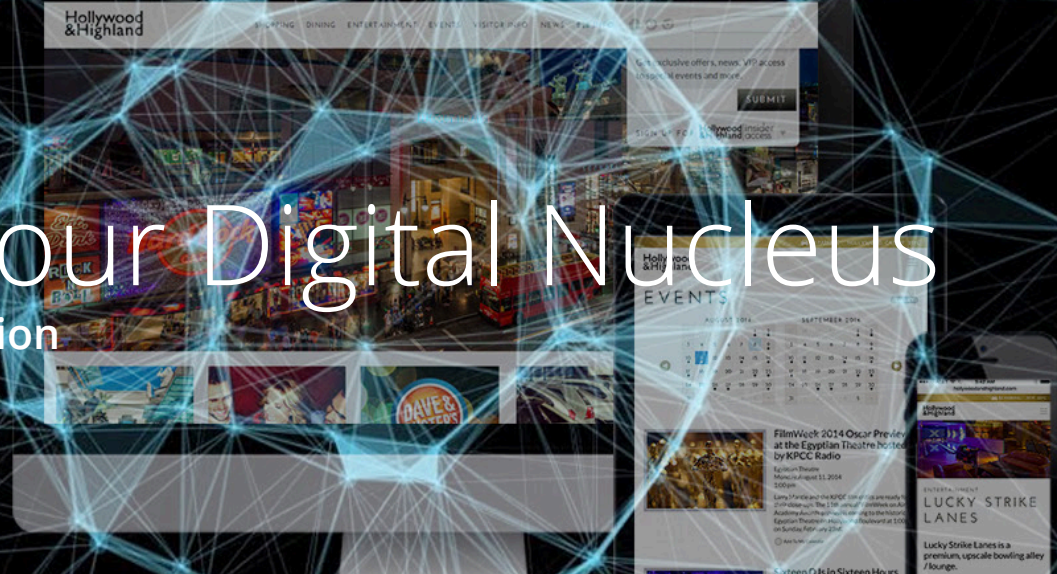
*the modern consumer's reliance  
on digital maps is undeniable*





# Your Website = Your Digital Nucleus

Power Your Website, Power Your Conversion



As outlined above, the customer journey has transitioned to **a mobile-first, content-driven digital ecosystem.**

Our responsibility as marketers is not just to create fresh, engaging content, but to ensure that this content does its job. Ultimately, **any type of digital traffic must convert to physical traffic** to be of value for your District and its businesses. This is why the website remains as the nucleus of the digital customer journey. Visitors that discover your District via social media are likely to need more information before a visit — and they'll look for this on your website.

*If your site is powerful, well-structured, clear and has all the information they need, they're more likely to convert.*

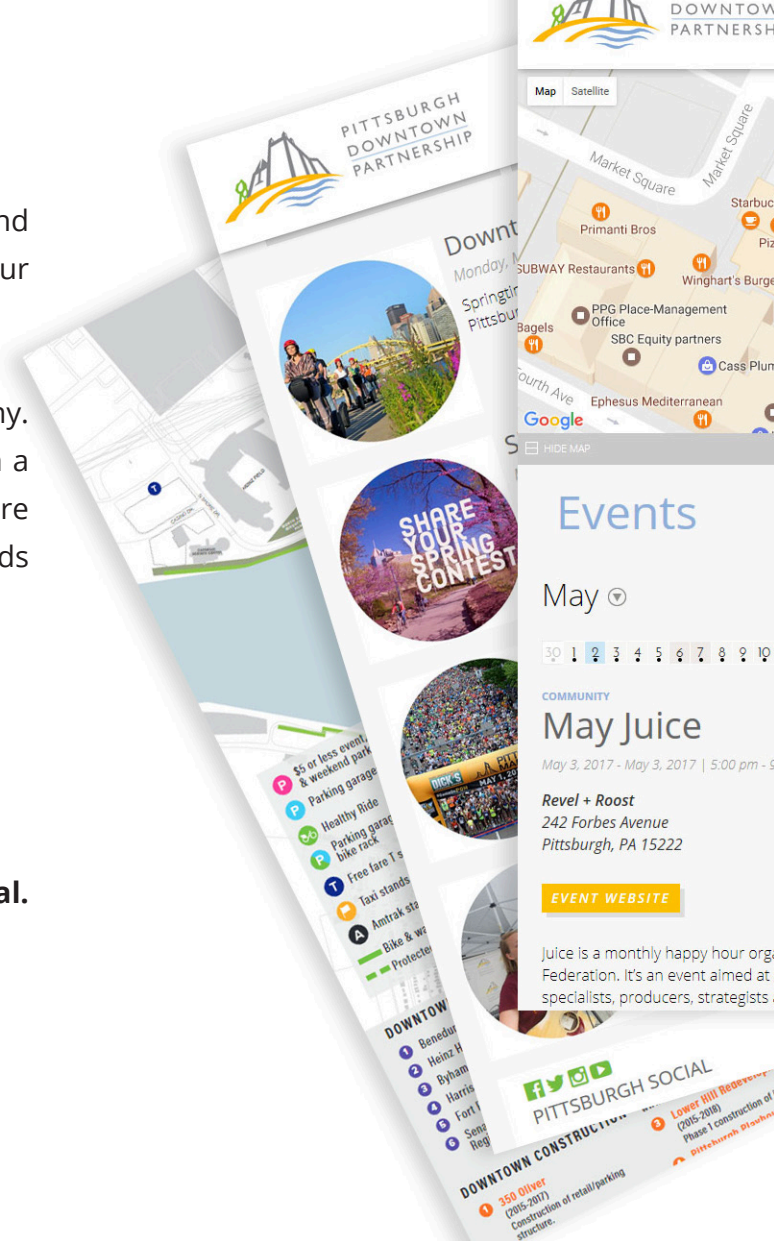
## Your Website = Your Digital Nucleus (continued)

We at Saltwater Software, are proud to provide website tools that leverage each and every one of these components with the industry's most robust technology to keep your digital presence strong, compelling and excellent at converting.

The evidence is clear — there is a new digital landscape and it can be daunting to many. While it may be true that **No One Is Looking For Your Website**, that doesn't mean a website no longer holds value. In fact, in the new digital world, your website acts more like a nucleus for your digital footprint. And whether visitors land there or not, it holds the key to unlocking your ultimate goal — sending visitors to your District.

Capturing this momentum is simple, if your District practices the following:

- **CREATE CONTENT — Consistently and with Authenticity.**
- **COMMIT TO SOCIAL MEDIA — Dive in and Have Fun!**
- **REVIEW STRUCTURED DATA — Either Independently or with a Professional.**
- **CHECK YOUR MAP — Particularly your Presence in Google Maps.**
- **FINALLY... REVIEW, REVISE AND RECALIBRATE REGULARLY.**





# We Are Digital Geeks

Our team at Saltwater Software is committed to helping our clients achieve the most out of their digital presence by offering integrated solutions with robust data structures, clear analytics and scheduled updates so that you don't miss a beat.

**GIVE US A CALL to receive a complimentary 30 minute site review** or just to talk through any of the above techniques.

*We love helping others navigate through this exciting, opportunity-rich time. Let's connect!*



# 20 Years of Tribal Knowledge...

With a proven track record of serving destinations and districts across the country, Saltwater was born of a desire to simplify, streamline and empower our clients to be better marketers.



## CONTACT US:

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*The Website and Marketing Platform for... Destinations, Districts, and Associations*

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