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- The State Department's mobile app provides traveler warnings, news, and other popularly-requested information. 1 of 4



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"Our mission is to inform and engage with foreign audiences, and in recent years, there's been an enormous migration from desktop to mobile," said Orr, a government contractor who works for Computer Technology Consultants.

There are 5.3 billion subscribers with mobile devices in the world, he said. "That's growing all the time, and we're trying to reach out to those people."

It's the right time for this endeavor, for sure. Mobile devices are taking off across the federal government with mobile web and native apps initiatives underway governmentwide and featured on [GSA website](#).

In addition to the mobile web site, IIP's Office of Innovative Engagement is developing a series of mobile apps to build engagement with foreign audiences. The Apps@State ([apps.state.gov](#)) program is developing apps that can be customized by personnel at U.S. embassies to suit local needs, including languages.

The idea of moving to a mobile website is the easy part of the equation. The challenge is actually doing it. Just ask Orr, a former journalist who understands the importance of getting the news out quickly and accurately across any kind of platform.

"Launching a mobile website is no different than launching a desktop site, it's all about planning and developing the kind of site that is appropriate for your content and your audience." - Scott Orr. However, he offers some [recommendations](#).

"The technology is simple. But there wasn't a big road map of what we were trying to do at the time," Orr said. "We tried to offer content shrunk down to the size of a business card. We decided to go with a very short headline that is clickable, a brief summary and a thumbnail photo in menu format on the

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landing pages to attract users and encourage them to click through to the full content."

Instead of building and hosting the site on government servers, IIP turned to Mofuse, a third party provider that hosts the site and makes sure each user is shown a version of the site that is appropriate for their device.

Now the big challenge is generating traffic. The bureau has done some online advertising and the content is promoted on IIP's Facebook and Twitter accounts. Still, the bureau hopes to find new ways to promote the site.

Not to worry, said Orr. "Innovation is part of the culture here."



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