Responsive Designs by Ecommerce Templates

An overview

We can no longer assume that visitors will be viewing your store on their desktop computer. They may be using their tablet, smartphone, laptop or whatever device yet to hit the mass market. They may also not have their browser maximized in whichever device they are using.

Designing separate sites for separate devices would be cumbersome and to be honest quite impossible as the number of combinations of available screen sizes would be massive.

The solution is to use a responsive design, one that adapts to the size, resolution and orientation of the viewer's screen.

How it works

Through the css file we use something called media queries, which is basically assigning different css rules depending on the browser window size. A simple way of thinking about it, and indeed used in the planning process, is to drag your browser window to make it smaller and seeing where the design breaks down. At each point where the design breaks we set up a new set of css rules – these are called "breakpoints".

With smaller browser window sizes it may be necessary to hide some elements, use different background images and resize others so we change the css at each of the breakpoints.

Getting Started

The only difference between this Responsive Design layout and the other Ecommerce Templates is the css file. You would set up your store in the same way as you would any of the others. The shopping cart software behind it is identical so you can follow our tutorials and help files to upload your site to the server, make the database connection and start adding products.

CSS Media Queries

If you take a look at the file style.css, you'll see the breakpoints set by the media queries. This will typically be a line like this

@media screen and (max-width: 1024px)

This means that as soon as the browser window size hits the threshold defined (1024 pixels in this example), the css rules set after that line will override the ones defined previously.

You won't see a media query at the beginning of the css file. That's because any browser window size, above 1024 in this example, will use the main css classes defined at the beginning of the file. Also bear in mind that these first definition or rules will be used by default unless they are modified later in the file. For example, if you define six pixel padding around your logo for maximum browser window size, this will be used for all window sizes unless it is redefined later in the css file.

It's probably worth going through the css file and comparing the css classes after the media query entry to get an overview of how things fit together. You should see how some elements are hidden using *display:none*, whilst others are resized or have reduced widths, padding or margins.

Responsive Design Styles

This design uses table-less css layouts for the products, detail and category pages. The main design is also css based making it both fast loading and flexible. The elements used on the product detail page and their order are defined in vsadmin/includes.php and there are more details here.

The formatting of the buy and checkout buttons are set in the css file – you can if you prefer use your own images or change the color / size etc in the file style.css.

Everything we have defined and laid out is just a suggestion to how the pages can look. For example on the home page we have highlighted sample products but there's no reason why you can't add more, display them in a different way or do away with them altogether. All the background colors are editable, you can have as many menu items as you need and change the content of the footer.

You could also display products dynamically on the home page by showing recommended products.

The software does use some device recognition tools so if you are testing out the search or cart pages make sure you do so on your tablet or smartphone to get a realistic view of changes – just dragging the browser smaller won't show all the changes which apply on smaller devices.

Design Notes

The layout for the product and details pages are just suggestions. If you open products.php and search.php you'll see we have added a few parameters there to remove some elements from the products and search pages

$GLOBALS['nobuyorcheckout']=TRUE; // Removes buy and checkout buttons
$GLOBALS['noproductoptions']=TRUE; // Removes product options
$GLOBALS['showquantonproduct']=FALSE; // Removes quantity box
$GLOBALS['showproductsku']=""; // Removes SKU field
$GLOBALS['manufacturerfield']=""; // Removes Manufacturer field
$GLOBALS['showinstock']=FALSE; // Hides out of stock products
$GLOBALS['showproductid']=FALSE; // Removes product ID
$GLOBALS['shortdescriptionlimit']=0; // Removes short description
$GLOBALS['noshowdiscounts']=TRUE; // Hides discount text

You can remove or edit these depending on the layout you want. A full list of parameters is available here. You will find further parameters set in the file vsadmin/includes.php.

The main image slider can be changed to a static image if you prefer. You can also use your own responsive slider.

The images on the home page use the following dimensions

Main image – 1140px x 473px
Product images - 240px × 198px

To make new non-store pages, take about.php, save it under a new name and make the changes there.

Note for Dreamweaver / Expression Web users

The design uses a dwt file for making global changes and that can be found in the /Templates/ folder.

Support & Updates

The initial purchase comes with 6 months of support from
http://www.ecommercetemplates.com/support/ and 6 months of updates from
http://www.ecommercetemplates.com/updaters.asp - both are based on the
email address used on purchase. We do recommend keeping up with updates
as apart from the new features we add, they also include any security patches
we have applied. The updater will only overwrite the admin files and not mess
with your design or products – as they are cumulative to can always update to
the latest version without going through previous releases first.

Additional help files

Setting the database connection

Admin help files

Video tutorials

Store tweaks

User Manual

Online support

CSS products and category layout help

Store generated css classes