

# The Home Page Is Dead and Microsites Are the Future - What That Means for New gTLDs

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October 7, 2014

[MarketingData-Driven Marketing](#)The Home Page Is Dead and Microsites Are the Future – What That Means for New gTLDs

Brands can use their gTLDs to unchain themselves from the home page concept, and redirect consumers to microsites, landing pages, search, and apps.

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**Date published** October 8, 2014 **Categories**

The home page, as have we come to know it over the last 15 years, is dead. Yes, every company still maintains the hub to its digital spokes as a home page. But, largely replaced by search, microsites, landing pages, and apps, the need for companies to maintain the traditional home page has all but been erased.

How many customers enter your digital world through the home page? And, if they do come to your home page, do they leave in desperation unable to find what they want? Think about the factors that have changed the way consumers navigate the digital world. Isn't it time to completely reinvent the concept of a home page? Will brand gTLDs be the catalyst for that change?

## Search Replaced the Home Page – Years Ago

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When you are looking for something, how often do you go to the home page, only to find yourself frustrated in searching through pull-down menus and using the search function within the site? You turn to Google or Bing or begin a more focused search in hopes of finding the specific page to help you find what you seek. Most home pages for companies are the entry point to thousands of sub-pages, often giving little attention for how users actually navigate. The home page concept has not changed much in the last 15 years other than sizzled up a bit with enhanced graphics and motion. With the complexity of how we live digitally, the old-school approach to website structure just doesn't work anymore. Consider just a few examples.

- **Marriott. Com:** I recently wanted to book a hotel room at a Marriott in New York City. I knew which one it was, as I had walked past it, so I thought going to Marriott.com was a good idea. I was wrong. Their search box didn't seem to want to recognize the street – I didn't have the street number. In frustration, I ended up in Google Maps, which led me to another nearby hotel where I booked my room. What good is the home page if someone looking for a specific product at a specific place can't get there and ends up choosing a

competitor instead? It means your home page failed you.

- **Microsoft.com or Apple.com:** Now that they are in the retail business, what if you just need an address for a specific location or phone number – any chance of finding it on the home page? No, you'll have to click through layers of website jam-packed with graphics and text that leave your eye wondering where the simple information is located. With a gTLD, they could bypass this and just have a findstore.microsoft or geniusbar.apple or any number of other variations that people search for to get what they need.
- **Chanel.com:** Or, for that matter, any big fashion company like Burberry, Gucci, Louis Vuitton, Prada, etc. Did you see something in a magazine and want to know where to buy it? Best of luck to you. You'll never find it. You have to wade through layers of website to even get to something close, but that still doesn't help you find what you saw and might want to buy. Despite the exclusiveness of the brand, customer sales still drive growth, particularly if they are trying to find you.

These are just a few examples of how using the home page when you know what you want is a waste of time. A search engine with the proper query will get you there much faster. So why are so many companies hanging on to this massive home page as the hub to thousands of spokes? Search algorithms are forcing you to focus on specific benefits to the user in order to rank higher in search pages. This inherently means your home page can't be all things to all people and while you can try to segment sub-domains for search optimization in microsites, the reality is the best way to proceed is to unravel your home page into targeted digital experiences.

## Mobile and Apps

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Now that everyone is on the go and accessing their digital world from a phone or tablet, the app has become the home page. Need to book a flight, change your seat on a plane, order a pizza or flowers, track a package, or make a dinner reservation? You likely hit a button that takes you to exactly what you want and need. Apps are tailored functionality to what most people do with that company. If you're on the go and on a small screen, the last thing you would do is go to a home page. So, why do so many companies still maintain this unhelpful home page?

## Microsites Are Replacing the Home Page

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When you are on a desktop computer or using your mobile device as a remote to your flat-screen, landing pages and microsites have largely replaced the home page concept. Most brands know people are using search engines so they try to build out landing pages or microsites tailored to what they need.

YouTube channels, Google Maps, and Amazon are also replacing the home page. As consumers know they can often find what they want in a YouTube channel or an Amazon search, these become their home page or starting point. How companies leverage their

relationship with both Google and Amazon will become increasingly important, particularly in light of the very large gTLD portfolios (Google applied for nearly 100 and Amazon applied for about 75 gTLDs). And, how many customers end up on a competitor site as a result?

## What It Means for gTLDs

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Brand gTLDs don't need to and shouldn't redirect their home page. They can use this as an opportunity to reinvent the entire online digital experience, unchaining it from the home page concept. Recognizing consumers will enter the online digital world through microsites, landing pages, search, apps, or other directives, they can look at how consumers will live in their digital world and build an environment to further their needs and drive company goals. Brand gTLDs are ideal for utilizing microsites because there are endless possibilities of digital addresses directly tied to the brand name as the top-level domain. This becomes a better authentic experience tied to your brand in your own digital space.

The hundreds of millions of companies out there, large and small, without a brand gTLD should use this expanding Internet environment as an opportunity to rethink their approach and integrate how consumers actually navigate the online experience bouncing from social platforms to mobile and then into the online experience. This unraveling of the home page will be critical to how brands maximize the use of the gTLD to make it easier for consumers to find what they are looking for in their branded digital experience.

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