HOW MARKETERS CAN

USE DEEP LINKS

to **DRIVE PERFORMANCE**

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Today's marketing teams are focused on building a strong mobile strategy—but the most innovative ones know that we've entered the era of the app. With users spending a staggering 86% of their time in apps, it's clear that branded apps are the future of mobile marketing.

But the app ecosystem is a constantly changing and evolving one, and it can be confusing to even figure out where to get started. That's where this ebook comes into play.

IN THIS BOOK, YOU WILL LEARN:

• Why you need to think about a better mobile experience

• How mobile deep links can drive marketing performance

• How Google, Twitter, Facebook and Apple are changing apps for marketers

• How the different roles on your marketing team can benefit from deep links

WHY YOU NEED *to* RETHINK MOBILE

Customer experience is complicated, especially on mobile devices. While you can rely on your email to bring your customer to the right content on a desktop computer, it can take up to 21 taps for a customer engaging with the same content on mobile to be brought to the right place. The more work for the customer, the less likely they'll get to the right place—which means more drop off, less engagement and fewer conversions.

70%
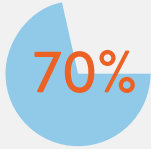
of this year's mobile retail spend will come from apps
INTERNET RETAILER

24

the number of apps the average person uses a month
MOBILE MARKETING REPORT

This poor customer experience has big consequences for mobile commerce brands. According to Internet Retailer, 70% of this year's mobile retail spend will come from apps—not the mobile web. This means that mCommerce brands that aren't focused on driving in-app purchases are leaving money on the table.

According to a 2015 Mobile Marketer report, the average person uses 24 apps per month. Out of those 24 apps, five dominate the smartphone user's time: Facebook, YouTube, Apple, Maps, Pandora and Gmail. That means your app's chance of being rediscovered is 1 in 19.

If you're a tech company or publisher, you know the importance of regularly driving your users back into your app. But how can you leverage your marketing channels to drive discovery and engagement?

That's where mobile deep links come into play.

WHAT *are* MOBILE DEEP LINKS?

Mobile deep links bring mobile users to a specific location within an app, the same way that a web URL can bring desktop users to a specific page on a website. For a publisher, this might mean driving readers to the right article. For an eCommerce brand, it might mean driving customers to the right item to add to their cart.

Mobile deep links look different than desktop web links, but they work the same. The same way this link brings you to an article about Carmelo Anthony on the web:

weblink

http://espn.go.com/new-york/nba/story/_/ id/12316308/carmelo-anthony-says-very-like- ly-new-york-knicks-shut-all-star-game

vs.

This link brings you to the same article, just within an app:

mobile deep link

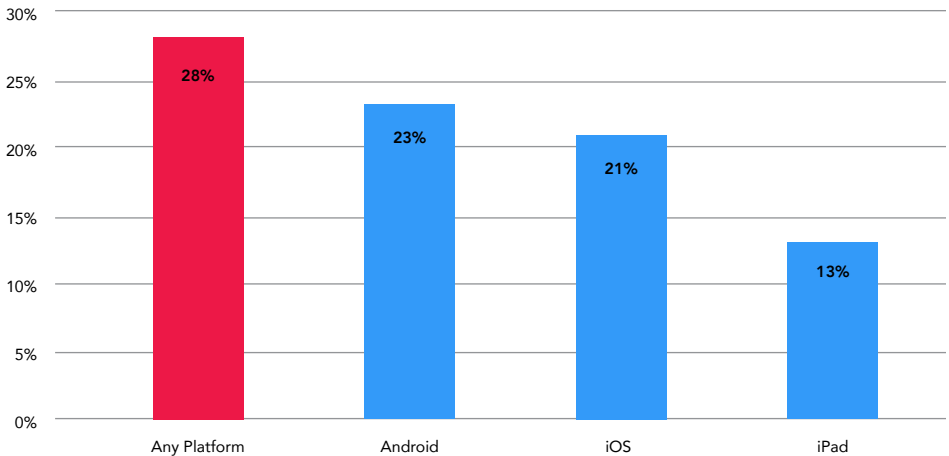**sportscenter://showArticle?contentID=12316308**

Because apps work differently than the web, the links to help apps communicate with each other look different than the links used to communicate on a desktop computer.

Deep links are made up of the following sections:

sportscenter://showArticle?contentID=12316308

[SCHEME]

URI
[HOST]/[PATH]

SCHEME tells the operating system which app to launch

HOST similar to a website or server name on the web

PATH provides additional information regarding the content location within an app

UNIFORM RESOURCE IDENTIFIER (URI) another way to refer to the host and path mentioned above, helping link to the right page within an app

If your app is mapped out, meaning that your mobile dev team has created deep links (like the ones pictured above!) to match all the links on your website, then you can get these deep links from your dev team.

Right now, only 28% of the top 200 apps use deep links, according to a study by deep linking

Deep Link Tags by Platform

Top 200 Mobile Apps

Blog.urx.com *February 2015*

company URX. At first, this might sound like a problem intended for developers to solve—but deep links are strategic assets that social and digital marketers should be using in their own efforts.

The same links that social media marketers are using on Facebook and Twitter and the links digital marketers are using in email and SMS campaigns can be further optimized to drive app installs and re-engagement. This means your mobile followers get the best user experience possible.

MAKING DEEP LINKS WORK
for MARKETERS

As we mentioned before, deep links can drive marketing performance. With customer experience being the second most important metric to CMOs right now (number one is ROI) as defined in this study by Foundation Capital, it pays for mobile, social and digital marketers to all be focused on how they can use deep links to drive the ideal experience.

| SOCIAL | EMAIL | SMS | PAID ADs |

APP

THE SOCIAL MARKETER

It's no secret that social audiences live on their phones—the five most popular apps include two social networks. As a social marketer, you should be making sure that you're driving your fans on Facebook and followers on Twitter back to content in your app. This way, social is more than just a tool to drive your audience back to your site—it's a stra-

tegic asset that can be leveraged to benefit your mobile marketing strategy too.

90%
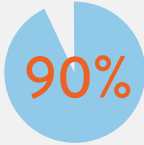
of 25-34 year-olds will recommend a brand purely on mobile experience.

NETBISCUITS

THE MOBILE MARKETER

As a mobile marketer, you're focused on driving app installs and re-engagement. Deep link meta tags make the content in your app searchable and indexable, meaning your app is easier to find and harder to be forgotten. Key demographics will notice—according to a study by Netbiscuits, 90% of 25-34 year-olds will recommend a brand purely on mobile experience.

THE DIGITAL MARKETER

As a digital marketer, you already knew how important it was for your emails and landing pages to be mobile optimized. Deep links can bring your digital marketing to the next level, ensuring that your email, SMS and push notification campaigns are all device-optimized for the best user experience. You already know—great user experience can lead to more and higher conversions.

GETTING STARTED *with* DEEP LINKS

Getting started with deep links is easy—just add a few meta tags to your site. Deep link adoption is being driven by a few major players: Twitter, Facebook, Google and Apple have all introduced deep linking initiatives to help apps communicate better with other apps.

You can check your site's meta data to see if your dev team is using one—or all—of these tags. The presence of any of these tags means that your app is mapped and you can get those deep links from your dev team.

TWITTER CARDS

Twitter Cards are Twitter's native experience for showcasing content. If the user has your app installed, they have the option to view the content directly in your app. If they don't have your app already, they will be prompted to download it in the app store. Looking for Twitter Card tags? You can find them here: http://bitly.is/TwitterCards

FACEBOOK APP LINKS

Facebook's solution is a little different, as Facebook focused on developing a cross-platform standard which could be adopted by developers to help with deep link discovery across apps. App Links will send people directly from the Facebook app to your app, even for links that are shared directly on Facebook. Here's an example: you're checking your newsfeed in the Facebook app and you see a post from Hulu. If you had the Hulu app installed, when you clicked on the link in the Hulu post, you'll be taken automatically to the Hulu app. You can find App Links tags here: http://bitly.is/AppLinks

GOOGLE

The rise of apps was a big deal to Google, because content that lived in apps wasn't searchable or indexable. Google's tags will make your app searchable, so relevant content will appear in search results—you can think about this as mobile SEO. When mobile users click on that content, they'll be prompted to either open the relevant app or visit the mobile web. Google App Index Tags are

designed for apps that mirror the content on a website. You can find Google App Index tags here: http://bitly.is/AppIndex

APPLE

Apple's approach is similar to Google's, but this standard is meant to support deep linking at the OS level across apps. When you add Apple's meta tags to your site, your app content will pop up in other iOS users' Spotlight search results, making your app indexable, and a built-in back button will let users click back and forth from your app to whatever other apps they're engaging with. If a user doesn't have your app installed, you'll be brought to Safari instead. The Apple Smart Banner meta tags can be found here: http://bitly.is/SmartAppBanners

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Apps and the way apps communicate with each other are permanently going to change mobile marketing. With this foundational knowledge of deep links, you're armed and ready to start using them in your own marketing efforts.

**INTERESTED IN LEARNING HOW BITLY BRAND TOOLS
CAN HELP YOU OPTIMIZE YOUR DEEP LINKING STRATEGY?**

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