Talent marketplace uses Adobe Creative Cloud, including Adobe Edge Reflow CC and Adobe Dreamweaver® CC, to execute responsive web design that delivers a consistent experience on all platforms and devices.

Businesses looking for professional voice-over talent can simply point their mouse, or finger, to Voices.com. Media conglomerates, advertising agencies, and Fortune 500 companies use the online marketplace to search for, audition, and hire voice-over artists for a wide variety of projects—commercials, corporate presentations, movie trailers, audio books, and e-learning software, to name a few. Voice actors use the website to post demos, send audition audio files, and collaborate online during the course of projects.

Taking a new approach
Established in 2004, the company was founded by David Ciccarelli, chief executive officer and Stephanie Ciccarelli, chief marketing officer. Traffic at Voices.com is growing at a fast clip—as is the number of different devices people use to access the service. With about one third of the site’s two million monthly page views coming from mobile devices and another 20% coming from tablets, David Ciccarelli and his team are meeting the mobile challenge using creative tools and services in Adobe Creative Cloud to deliver a comprehensive digital presence with the same look, feel, and functionality regardless of the device used to touch the brand.

Using a combination of tools and services in Adobe Creative Cloud—specifically Adobe Edge Reflow CC, Photoshop® CC, and Dreamweaver CC—the company adopted a responsive web design approach, which focuses on how to accurately and efficiently resize and present content from one code base to any screen, regardless of its scope or orientation.
The goal of Voices.com was to cost-effectively deliver consistent user experiences on all devices and platforms, as well as position the company to meet future demands as the adoption rate of mobile devices and tablets continues to outpace desktop Internet use.

"Seeing the number of users accessing our service from mobile devices increase 43% year after year made it abundantly clear that we needed to strengthen our mobile presence in a sustainable way," says Ciccarelli. "Our entire business model relies on customers being able to quickly identify and hire voice talent from any number of touch points that exist today and that have yet to be invented."

A consistent user experience

Prior to undertaking this responsive design project, Voices.com had a rudimentary mobile site at m.voices.com that failed to deliver key user experience to its clients. Mobile visitors wanted more functionality; 85% of users were skipping through to the website because they couldn't listen to audio files. The company also built a standalone mobile app for iOS, followed by one for Android™. User experiences and functionality varied from screen to screen, and neither the mobile apps or the desktop site addressed the unique needs of tablet users.

While there were 20,000 downloads of the mobile app, Ciccarelli and his team knew that the future of the company depended on a more sustainable, scalable web strategy. They needed a plan that would maximize the resources of just one design and development team and that simplified the building and expansion of a single code base deployed to one set of URLs with device detection.

The company set out to achieve a "one web" approach that would enable the team to propagate changes to all devices and platforms at once, keep page load times fast by keeping code clean, move processing from the server side to the client, eliminate the need to redirect users, and unify product releases.

Designing once for different devices

Using a variety of tools and services in Creative Cloud to develop a flexible and fluid design that adapts to all devices, the Voice.com team established product specifications and built wire frames of every page using Photoshop. A single template served as the basis for three separate files—phone, desktop, and tablet. Initial layouts were designed in Photoshop, making extensive use of shared assets while creating layers for each of the three files. To help speed page loading, the team also used Photoshop to create CSS sprites for icons.

The small project team, which included a mobile developer, a front-end developer, a system administrator, and a web designer, then took the mockups into Edge Reflow CC, where the heavy lifting of responsive design was made easy. Edge Reflow CC templates helped the team understand and visualize expected behavior as content adapted on the fly to various screen sizes.
"Adobe Edge Reflow CC is an amazing tool, and anyone considering responsive web design should be using it, ideally through proof of concept to project completion," says Ciccarelli.

By setting breakpoints—page widths that cause design elements to dynamically reshuffle—the team could visualize exactly what would happen on different screen sizes. All design elements became fluid and flexible. Images, type, and navigation re-flowed and re-scaled automatically in between breakpoints, but at breakpoints, content responsively adapted per device type and orientation. Design changes as well as grid adjustments could also be made manually.

Working in the flexible 12-grid structure in Edge Reflow CC enabled the team to visualize every possibility, standardize the look and feel of the entire project, and maintain consistency among sidebars, navigation, and menus across screens. Properties were always visible by simply rolling over an item to reveal its automatically generated CSS3 code.

Screen designs were finalized in Photoshop and handed off for slicing into CSS with Dreamweaver CC for coding. To make sure stray code stayed out of the new site, the team recoded from scratch. Dreamweaver CC enabled the developers to quickly view how the site was coming together as they edited. When a workable site emerged, customers were invited in to test the designs before features were locked down.

Responsive design drives results

From an efficiency perspective, use of Edge Reflow CC resulted in a faster quality assurance process. It also reduced support and overhead for a leaner, more collaborative design and development team, less outsourcing of separate native development efforts, and a reduction in code and domain maintenance costs over time.

As a result of the Voices.com responsive design project, visitors are more engaged—with 86% of members visiting daily—and stay 17% longer than prior to launch of the new site. Visitors enjoy consistent experiences, features, and functionality no matter what device they use to interact with the brand.

As Voices.com continues to grow, the organization is well positioned to leverage its fully responsive website to cater to its increasingly mobile talent buyers and sellers. "Half of our users are already coming to us via mobile," says Ciccarelli. "Our ongoing analysis tells us that those numbers are only expected to increase. With tools and services in Adobe Creative Cloud such as Adobe Edge Reflow CC and Dreamweaver CC, we can meet the challenges of a modern, mobile web and successfully drive our business."

For more information
www.adobe.com/products/creativecloud.html
http://html.adobe.com/edge
www.adobe.com/products/dreamweaver.html