Native mobile apps cost tens of thousands of dollars to build, require separate iOS and Android codebases, and need Apple and Google approval before a single user can download them. A Progressive Web App turns your existing website into an installable, offline-capable mobile experience for a fraction of the cost — and it is live the moment you deploy it.

You Already Have the Foundation

Your website is already doing the heavy lifting. It has your branding, your content, your contact information, your service pages, and your call-to-action flows. Visitors are already using it on their phones — mobile traffic accounts for over 60 percent of all web visits globally. The only thing missing is the app-like experience: the home-screen icon, the full-screen launch, the offline access, and the push notifications that keep users coming back.

A Progressive Web App (PWA) bridges that gap without starting from scratch. Instead of building a separate native application, a PWA adds a thin layer of technology — a manifest file, a service worker, and caching logic — on top of the website you already have. The result looks and feels like a native app to the user, but it runs on the same codebase you are already maintaining.

What a PWA Delivers

When someone visits your PWA-enabled site on a mobile device, the browser offers an "Add to Home Screen" prompt. One tap later, your icon sits alongside native apps on their phone. From that point forward, launching it opens a full-screen experience with no browser chrome — no address bar, no tabs, no back button. It looks like an app because, to the user, it *is* an app.

- **Home-screen install** — your brand icon launches a full-screen experience indistinguishable from a native app
- **Offline caching** — service workers cache critical pages so menus, contact info, and key content load even without a connection
- **Push notifications** — re-engage users with updates, promotions, or appointment reminders without going through an app store
- **Fast repeat visits** — pre-cached assets make subsequent loads near-instant, even on slow mobile connections
- **Auto-updates** — users always get the latest version the next time they open it. No "please update your app" friction
- **Single codebase** — your website *is* the app. One deployment serves desktop browsers, mobile browsers, and the installed PWA

The Cost Comparison

This is where the conversation usually ends for small and mid-sized businesses. Building a native mobile app — one that works on both iOS and Android — typically costs between $30,000 and $80,000, with ongoing maintenance running $5,000 to $15,000 per year. A hybrid approach using React Native or Flutter can bring that down to $15,000 to $40,000, but you still need to manage app store submissions, review cycles, and platform-specific updates.

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A PWA built on top of your existing CMS-powered website typically costs a fraction of those numbers and carries minimal ongoing overhead because all updates happen through your normal content workflow. The website you are already paying to host and maintain becomes the app.

Who Benefits Most

PWAs are particularly well suited for businesses and organizations that already have a content-rich website and want to give mobile users an elevated experience without the overhead of a native app:

- **Restaurants and food service** — menus, online ordering, loyalty rewards, and location hours available even when the connection drops
- **Service businesses** — booking forms, contact info, and appointment reminders via push notification
- **Local retailers** — product catalogs, store locators, and promotional alerts without app store fees
- **Membership organizations** — member portals, event calendars, and protected content that works offline
- **Content publishers** — offline reading, push notifications for new articles, and a branded reading experience

The common thread is that these organizations already invest in a website. A PWA lets that investment do double duty.

What a PWA Cannot Do

Honesty builds trust. A PWA is the right solution for the majority of small and mid-sized businesses, but it is not a complete replacement for a native app in every scenario:

- **No App Store presence** — users will not find you by browsing the Apple App Store or Google Play, which removes one discovery channel
- **Limited hardware access** — advanced camera controls, Bluetooth pairing, and NFC are not fully available through the browser
- **iOS limitations** — Apple has gradually expanded PWA support, but background sync and badge counts still lag behind Android

For most businesses, these limitations are irrelevant. If your customers need your menu, your hours, your booking form, and your latest promotions — and they need it fast, offline-ready, and always up to date — a PWA delivers all of that without the app store tax.

Adding PWA to an Existing Website

The good news is that converting an existing website into a PWA does not require a redesign or a rebuild. Any competent web developer can add the necessary components — a web app

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manifest, a service worker, caching strategies tailored to your content, and push notification support — on top of the site you already have. The process works with any CMS or custom-built platform.

The result is that your existing website visitors can install your site as an app, get faster load times, access key content offline, and receive push notifications — all without a single line of app store bureaucracy. Your customers get the convenience of an app. You get it without the five-figure price tag.

Take Our Free Website Assessment

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