

Touchstone Managed Web Services

How to Audit Your Website

This resource provides a guide on how to audit your website looking at five factors key to a successful WordPress website: conversion optimization, technology, security, user experience, and SEO.

1. Conversion Optimization

In marketing, the definition of conversion is getting consumers to respond to your call-to-action. A call-to-action can consist of joining an email list, registering for an event, buying a product, or all of the above.

Create a Clear Call-to-Action

Your call-to-action should be clear and obvious. There should be no confusion as to how to contact, buy, or register. Including additional CTA's on your homepage is a great idea to provide multiple avenues for conversion, just be sure your primary CTA is above the fold and it stands out the most.

Don't Ignore Analytics

[Google Analytics](#) gives insight to sales, conversion rates, and how your site is found and used. This in-turn allows you to understand how/if your call-to-action is being responded to.

Link to Social Media Accounts

Social media sites like Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn are frequently browsed by almost everyone. Does social media for your site exist? Is it up-to-date? Social media sites are a great way to gain new customers and build credibility among existing ones. Remember to always link people back to your website from your social sites.

Your Blog Builds Your Brand

Blogs are high-traffic areas on a site. An captivating blog with high quality content builds a community around your brand where users regularly visit your site for new postings and information. This increases your company's worthiness and credibility. Try to maintain a regular blogging schedule (this will vary depending on the size of your website and audience) to keep your audience engaged.

2. Technology

Beneath the fancy designs of a site, there are many underlying technologies that allow it to run efficiently and effectively.

Choose Hosting Wisely

A proper hosting site ensures quick load times and server up-time. If users are bogged down by slow load times they may never make it to the site.

Perform Backups

Do you backup your site on a regular basis? Make sure you have this capability and you are doing it. This is your safety net- if something does go wrong, your site can be restored quickly.

Make it Mobile Responsive

We all know by now that mobile has become the preferred search and browsing method for many users today. That means it is no longer just a nice to have feature, but rather a necessity if you want to keep up with your competitors. Mobile responsive sites rank higher and provide a better UX. [Test your website's mobile friendliness](#) now!

Implement Clean Code

Are the correct HTML and proper headings being used? Is your code easy to read, understand, and change? Remember, this is the basis for your entire website. Get an experienced developer on board from the get go to avoid problems down the line.

Check Your URL

Do visitors retrieve the same site with or without typing in “www”? If not, this could cause poor UX and be detrimental to SEO. Make sure users reach your site whether they include the “www” or not by creating a 301 redirect.

3. Security

A secure website is crucial, not only to your business and profits, but to your clients and customers as well. Even if you’re not dealing with monetary transactions, it is still your responsibility to protect the data of anyone who visits your site, including email addresses, names, and affiliation.

Get SSL Certification

A website that begins with “https” is secure; if it begins with “http” it is not. Google is going to start cracking down on insecure sites in the coming months, labeling them “Insecure” in the Chrome’s address bar. To obtain SSL certification, your site must go through a validation process.

Privacy Policy

Depending on the state your business operates in, privacy policies are sometimes required by [federal or state law](#). Having a privacy policy also builds trust with clients and consumers.

Terms & Conditions

Terms & Conditions legally protect you should a dispute arise. This documentation relays to the visitors of your site what they can expect from you and vice versa. It also serves as a disclaimer.

Refund Policy

Do your products have a refund policy? Safeguarding your customers in this way means they’ll be more likely to trust you and come back for other products or services in the future. It is very important that the refund policy is clear and easy to locate.

Copyright Notice

The importance of a copyright goes without saying. Ensure you have one for your own protection.

4. User Experience

User experience (aka UX) is extremely important because a poor UX means the user will likely not stick around very long on your site, negatively impacting ranking and conversion.

Address Site Speed Roadblocks

There are several things that can increase your site’s load time. If load times are unusually slow and your hosting is not to blame, check image sizes, code, and videos for issues. Use [Pingdom](#) to see how your site scores on speed.

Keep the Design Simple

You never want your website's design to detract from your message and what you actually do/offer.

- Choose an easy to read font
- Take whitespace into account (your pages should look visually balanced).
- Avoid flashy and annoying elements like pop-ups that disrupt the UX, videos that play upon page entrance (and that you can't turn off), and seizure-inducing animations.

Navigation Should be Easy

- Enable breadcrumbs; they help people get around your site easily as well as provide valuable information to Google on how your pages are connected.
- Use intuitive URLs. In other words opt for URLs which are keyword rich and reflect the post name, and avoid long strings of numbers and characters in your URLs.
- Utilize internal linking to direct users to other parts of your site. For instance, in your blog posts you can suggest more posts on the same or a related topic.

Don't Overcomplicate Your Contact Page

This may seem obvious, but there are sites out there where the contact page is a hassle to find. Don't get fancy with naming your contact page--Contact or Contact Us are ideal. Including your contact info in your site's footer in addition is not a bad idea either, as it is where many people naturally look.

Spelling & Grammar Matters

One or two errors probably won't tarnish your reputation for most users, though you still want to be vigilant about checking and re-checking your content.

Loads of spelling and grammatical errors on the other hand is unprofessional and tanks any chances of being taken seriously.

5. SEO

Search Engine Optimization is critical to your site being found by Google and in turn by your users. Dedicate some serious time to your SEO both upfront and as an ongoing endeavor.

Set Focus Keywords

Take some time and do some thorough keyword research. Understand your niche market, who your audience is, and what they are searching for.

Then, set a focus keyword for every page on your site. You can even target multiple keywords per page with the Yoast SEO Premium plugin.

Set Alt Text for Images

Make sure to set your alt text (aka alt tags) for all images on your website. You can also set the title tag while you are at it, but it is not required. According to [Yoast](#), "Google places a relatively high value on alt texts to determine what is on the image but also to determine the topic of surrounding text."

When creating your alt text ask yourself: What is this literally an image of and how does it connect to the content? What does it say/show/describe? It's okay to be descriptive--in fact it's ideal. It's

important to include your focus keyword as well, if possible.

In WordPress, pull up your image in the media library (or directly within the post) to set the alt text.

Monitor Competitors

Identify your competitors and keep tabs on what they are doing, so you can adjust accordingly to stay one step ahead. [SEMRush](#) is great for this--just set your competitors and then compare how you rank, side by side.

More SEO Elements to Check

- Use headings (H2s, H3s, etc.) appropriately.
- Write a useful meta description.
- Set the SEO title.
- Make sure your content is keyword rich (but not stuffed).
- Make sure your content is easy to read (short paragraphs, sentences and words that are not overly complex, follows a logical progression, etc.).

Fix Broken Links

This could also fit into UX seeing as your users expect that if they click a link, it will work, but broken links are also bad for SEO because they prevent those pages from being crawled and indexed.

You can identify broken links via a tool like [Sitebulb](#). Redirect all broken links or designate them as 410 Content Deleted.

Test It

Here are a few free tools available online to quickly analyze the above factors on your site.

- [Nibbler](#) - general website test that scores 10 key areas
- [SEO SiteCheckup](#) - SEO site analysis and monitoring
- [WooRank](#) - SEO checker and website review
- [Pingdom](#) - website speed test

We suggest using one or more of these tools as a final check, after you've reviewed and feel you've made the necessary changes. Alternately, you can scan your site before making any adjustments, so as to get a solid idea of your "before" picture and then scan again later for the "after".

Maintenance

Don't forget, your website needs to be maintained to continue functioning at peak performance. Make sure to keep an eye on WordPress updates (if you use it) and plugin updates as new versions can contain important security and bug fixes.

Keep in mind sometimes these updates can actually break parts of your site. Plugin developers are human too, and sometimes bugs can slip through. To be cautious when updating plugins, here is some great advice from [wpbeginner.com](#):

"Before you update the plugin, it's important that you click on the View version details link to see what changes the plugin author has made.

This will keep you informed as to what changes were made should anything not work properly.

Unless the version details specifically say security update, we usually wait one full week before updating the plugin. In this time, all errors usually get caught, reported, and fixed.”

Ready to Audit Your Website?

Sitebulb, a desktop website crawler, provides you with a detailed audit report of your website, allowing you to take instant action on many of the issues mentioned in this guide, all using a single tool.

Start improving your ranking and make sure your website is always functioning at peak performance.

[Get Sitebulb](#)

Feeling overwhelmed? Not sure where to start?

[Contact us](#), and we'll help you identify and fix any problem areas on your website.