SURF'S UP!

15 SUMMERTIME WEBSITE OPTIMIZATION TIPS

Bogged down by a slow site? Over time websites tend to accumulate clutter, which can make your site run like molasses and turn visitors away. To fix this, consider trimming the fat; summertime is the perfect time to kick back and tackle this checklist before the holiday traffic onslaught is brought forth by fall.

Here are some essential decluttering tips to check off this summer for enhanced site optimization, which in return will result in increased profits and a better user experience.

☐ RUN A CHECK-UP FOR MALICIOUS SOFTWARE ON YOUR SITE

To make sure your site hasn't been compromised by malware, use a service like *Sucuri SiteCheck, WordFence, WP Antivirus Site Protection*, or *Quttera Web Malware Scanner*. Should you find malware, see *this article* for how to combat it.

☐ DELETE UNUSED PLUGINS AND THEMES

The most unnecessary form of website clutter comes in the form of unused plugins and themes. You can use a tool like *P3* to see which plugins are bogging your site down. (Also be sure to deactivate the plugins you rarely use and delete any unused themes you no longer use.)

☐ RUN UPDATES FOR ALL COMPONENTS

Go to Dashboard > Updates to update the remaining components of your WordPress site. To allow WordPress to install core updates automatically, check out *this article*.

☐ REMOVE POST REVISIONS AND LIMIT THEM FOR THE FUTURE

As you save a new post, over time this creates an infinite amount of revisions that expand your WordPress database. To limit future revisions and delete the ones stored on your site, add the following line to **wp-config.php** (the number denotes how many revisions are saved per post):

```
define( 'WP_POST_REVISIONS', 3 );
```

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☐ DELETE UNNEEDED POST AND PAGE DRAFTS

To delete old posts and page drafts, go to **All Posts** (or **All Pages**) and click the link on top that says Drafts. You can then use **Bulk Actions** to move items to the trash. After you move the items to the trash you must completely delete them -- click on **Trash** at the top of the screen, then **Empty Trash**.

☐ TACKLE COMMENT SPAM

If left unchecked, your comments section could accumulate an excessive amount of spam comments. Try one of these anti-spam plugins to help with this problem: *Antispam Bee*, *Anti-spam*, *WP-SmapShield Anti-Spam*, *Akismet (paid)*.

☐ DELETE UNUSED MEDIA FILES

To sort out your media library, go to your media library and choose **Unattached** from the drop-down menu that says **All media items**. You can then select and delete all media files not attached to a post or page. You can also use a plugin like *Media File Cleaner* to help you out with this task.

☐ FIND AND REMOVE BROKEN LINKS

Broken links can make for a bad user experience, and search engines don't like them either. Use the site *Dead Link Checker* to figure out if there's any broken links or images on your site so they can be fixed or eliminated.

☐ MANAGE WORDPRESS TAXONOMIES

To clean up unused taxonomies, go to **Posts > Categories** and click on the **Count** link in the list on the right. This will order your taxonomy items by the number of posts they are used in. The same can be done with tags. By checking all categories and tags with the count number zero, you can then easily delete them via the **Bulk Action** menu.

☐ REMOVE OLD SHORTCODES

Use *Remove Orphan Shortcodes* or *Hide Unwanted Shortcodes* to search for shortcodes that don't have components. Rather than deleting the shortcode, the plugin will hide the shortcode from visitors (which can look a bit ugly when left visible).

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☐ CLEAN UP THE WORDPRESS HEADER

Eliminating excess code and links from your header is important because it will speed up how fast the page loads. To remove extraneous assets from the header, you can use a tool like *WP Head Cleanup* or *WP Asset Clean Up*.

☐ CLEAN AND OPTIMIZE THE WORDPRESS DATABASE

To clean your database of clutter and optimize tables, you can do so manually via phpMyAdmin or by using a plugin like *WP Clean Up Optimizer* or *Plugins Garbage Collector*. If doing so manually, select all tables (use the **Check All** checkbox at the bottom), choose the **Optimize** table from the drop-down menu and click **Go**.

☐ REMOVE UNUSED WIDGETS

To delete widgets you no longer need, go to **Appearance > Widgets**. You can then delete those you no longer need or place them in the Inactive Widget pile in the lower left corner if you are not sure.

☐ CLEAN UP THE FRONT END

Look through the main pages of your site and see if anything can be removed. Ensure that all design elements work toward a certain goal. Ask yourself, "how can the user experience be further improved or streamlined?"

☐ UPDATE YOUR CONTENT

Figure out which content brings in the most traffic and then turn those posts into even bigger magnets. You can update popular posts by adding new information, long-tail keywords, and also updating the structure/ writing and updating the personal information of about pages, author bios, etc.

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LOOKING FOR ADDITIONAL WAYS TO OPTIMIZE YOUR SITE?

Check out WP Engine's *Page Performance*, a performance intelligence solution that provides real-time data about how your site runs. Page Performance runs an elaborate diagnosis on your site to give you actionable insights to quickly and dramatically improve its speed.

Try it now...

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