

Introduction

Visitors love sites that offer a great user experience and having a slow site can kill the UX before it ever gets started. Website speed is also considered as an essential component in search engine rankings.

Credit: Travis Bliffen, Stellar SEO

<http://www.websitemagazine.com/content/blogs/posts/archive/2-016/06/14/10-tips-for-better-page-speed-for-seo.aspx> ::

1. Invest in Quality Hosting

Failing to research and select a hosting service matching the needs of your website can create a page speed nightmare. Some sites will only receive limited traffic, making inexpensive hosting a possible solution while other sites may get flooded with traffic. There is not one perfect solution for hosting your site but do not mindlessly sign up for a hosting plan without researching the performance and reviews of your potential hosting

2. Limit the HTTPS Requests

Usually, 80 percent of the loading time calls various page elements (ie scripts, images & Flash. Thus a request for HTTP is created every time a component gets downloaded. The greater the number of requests are, the longer it will take to load the page.

To decrease the HTTPS requests, minimize the number of style sheets by combining them into a single sheet.

3. Utilize Content Delivery Network (CDN)

With a geographically widespread audience and a website that's resource-heavy, you should consider using content delivery network (CDN). It's a hosting service where the files are kept in data centers near the visitors, and the dynamic content comes from the central server. This saves around 60 percent of the bandwidth, while improving the site loading at the same time.

CDN are capable of making the site more responsive and reduce the possibility of DDoS attacks.

4. Monitor the Response Time

Google advises website owners to reduce the response time into 200 milliseconds or less, because this is the usual time needed to load the HTML after the request has been made. For website owners that already have a reliable hosting company and were able to control the HTTP requests, then the response time would be based on how the server resources are being used and the amount of traffic the website is getting.

Use Google Analytics to regularly check the response time of a website to detect any future issues.

5. Compress the Pages

Pages packed with images, video and a wall of text may have elements critical for the site visitor. Enable website compression which webpage components are compressed upon transfer, to accelerate the website speed.

6. Decrease the Number of Plugins Being Used

If the site has several plugins, this is probably why it takes forever to load, create security issues, and it can even cause crashes and other technical difficulties that could affect the website's overall performance.

If possible, deactivate and delete the plugins that aren't needed.

Don't forget to weed out the apps and plugins that are probably slowing the site speed as well. To do that, selectively disable plugins and check the server performance. Doing this would help in identifying which among them is harming the site speed. While we used the term "plugins" this also applies to extensions, modules, or any add on features that your website platform supports.

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7. Prioritize Above-the-Fold Content

Aside from using a single CSS stylesheet, as well as avoiding inline CSS, there's another thing that should be considered to speed up the website. It is also possible to improve the user experience if the above the fold loads faster. This can help a lot even when the whole website takes forever to load.

The goal of this strategy is to give priority to the elements that display the viewable portion of the page while delaying non visible components. One such example could be a live chat feature. On WordPress a "lazy loading" plugin could be used to delay the loading of that script until the above the fold content was fully displayed. There are plugins for most popular content management system (CMS) platforms that will allow you to accomplish this or it can be done with raw code as well

8. Reduce Redirects

Used properly, redirects can help you site preserve valuable traffic and link sources. As with most things, sloppy redirects can cause site speed issues and leave users frustrated. In my experience there are two types of redirects that cause the majority of page speed issues: redirect chains and erroneous desktop to mobile redirects.

A redirect chain is when it takes more than one step to reach the actual intended destination (like if someone types in "www.xxxxx.com" but is redirected to "https:xxxxx.com", those would create unnecessary redirect chains). It is important to make sure any redirect on your site takes them to the intended destination with only one redirect. E-commerce store owners, this one is even more important for you so check it out.

Another redirect issue that frustrate users is incorrect redirects from the desktop to mobile version of a site. For site owners with a dedicated mobile site, one of the most common issues was sending a user to the wrong page on the mobile version. Imagine going from a specific topic to the home page, frustrating to say the least.

9. Enable Website Caching

Each time the user clicks or makes a request on a page, the browser is required to gather the hosted files of the site, so that the components can be properly displayed. This would take a lot of time, especially if the user is trying to access the heavier pages of the site. Solve this problem through the help of browser caching.

Browser caching essentially stores some of the static components of your website in the browser of users who visit your site. The first visit to your site may be slower but future visits from the same browser will result in much faster load times.

10. Optimize Image Sizes

Many unknowingly upload an image much larger than it will ever be displayed on their site. Let's say for example you upload an image that is 5000 X 3000 pixels and place it in a container that will not exceed 250 x 250. Even though the image needed for the page is much smaller, the full image size has to be loaded each time to display the smaller version. Imagine this on a page with 5-10 images, now picture it across a website with thousands of images.

The solution for this is simple, understand the actual size your images will be displayed and re-size photos prior to uploading them. If you have images on your site that need to be displayed in large sizes, look at using image compression plugins or programs to "smush" the image, reducing file sizes without reducing the visual quality of a photo.

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