



5 ROOKIE MISTAKES THAT WILL RUIN YOUR NEW WEBSITE'S SEO

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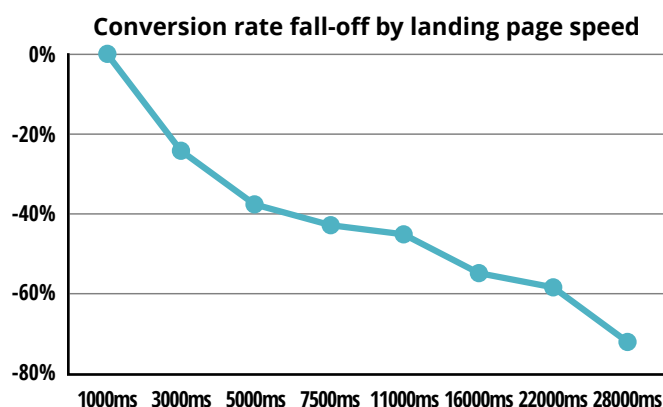
DIY website builders can help you make an impressive page, but the “if you build it, they will come” cliché is far from true on the internet. Even if you’ve hired a web developer with a visually impressive portfolio, these five common oversights could seriously limit the visibility of your website.



It's Too Slow To Load

Are there big images on the landing page? Are the images optimized? A few years ago, Google announced that site speed is taken into consideration for search rankings, but that left a lot of room for interpretation. Overall site speed is based on a sample of different pages from the site. “Page speed” can be broken down either as “time to first byte” or “page load time.” The first of these, the time it takes for a browser to receive the first byte of information from the server, [has been shown](#) to correlate to search rankings. “Page load time” more noticeably affects the user experience, but it can also impact SEO. For example, with a limited crawl budget, search engines can crawl further through sites with faster page load times.

Ultimately, both types of page speed should be addressed. [According to Moz](#), “No matter how you measure it, a faster page speed is better. Many people have found that faster pages both rank and convert better.” Pages that are noticeably slower to load have higher bounce rates and lower conversions. To identify bounce rates, click through rates, and other key data, you'll need to be using some kind of analytics. If you can't tell there's a problem, there's no way to address it.



You're Not Allowing The Site To Be Crawled

Failing to allow your site to be crawled is a very common rookie mistake when moving WordPress sites from staging to a live server. Web crawlers are a type of software that explore publicly visible websites, going from link to link and bringing back information for the search engines. Googlebots, the most well-known crawlers, are sometimes blocked by firewalls, or the webmaster may be attempting to control how the site is crawled and indexed. Configuring the URLs and proper use of the robots.txt file are safe ways to control Googlebot's access without a loss of search ranking.

It's also important to understand the difference between crawling and indexing. A page has been indexed when the crawler's findings have been recorded to the database of the search engine. A web crawler having visited a page does not confirm that the page has been indexed. In rare instances, it's even possible for a page to be indexed without having been crawled. Allowing access to crawlers on the wrong pages, such as infinite calendar scripts, can cause server issues for some sites. Pages may unintentionally be allowed to appear among search results. Alternatively, blocking all web crawlers can prevent the website from appearing at all.

It Isn't Mobile-Friendly

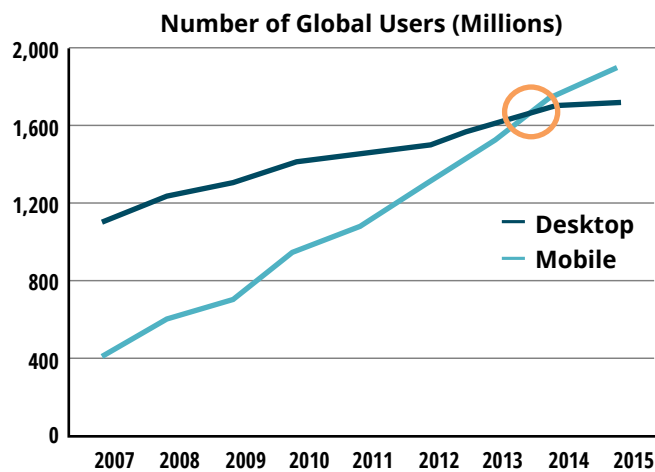
You put a lot of thought into how your site will look and function on a laptop, but more [Google searches happen from phones](#), and those users are ready to bounce if your site is cluttered or unreadable. Mobile visitors may





be watching TV, multitasking, or have only a few moments to spare, and so the initial user impressions make a big difference. Google prefers responsive sites, but you can also use dynamic serving sites or parallel URLs.

The good news is that, with phones in hand, mobile visitors are ready to call and convert into actual customers. Mobile users are less likely to fill out detailed forms, so keep the user in mind with your responsive site.



It's The Wrong Kind Of Flashy

A few of the most eye-catching website designs (like single page sites and heavy emphasis on Flash elements) can cause huge complications when it comes to SEO and making sure visitors become actual customers. Designed for a mouse and keyboard, Flash doesn't do much for tablets and mobile phone users. Back in 2010, Apple made waves by not even including

Flash on the iPad. Common with Flash and single-page websites, navigation that isn't intuitive takes longer for a visitor to understand.

In addition to slower load times, having everything on one page means that you miss opportunities for additional URLs and all the on-page optimization that comes with multiple websites. Conventional sites can have several landing pages and pages for each service or product, meaning opportunities to target several unique audiences. When users explore a conventional site, you can observe which pages draw and hold their attention, metrics for user behavior that are difficult to track on Flash-based sites.

The Content Is Weak

"Oftentimes, people get too caught up in having a lot of imagery on their site to make it attractive to users, but they forget that users go to a site to read and learn more. So you have to have a balance between the imagery and the actual content," said Michelle Neuhoof Boyd, Internet Marketing Team Lead at Search Influence. The content on the page should be unique and informative, appropriate for the customers in your target audience.

With updates to Google's algorithms over the years, the old-school SEO techniques of keyword stuffing can hurt more than they help, but you still need to have clear and descriptive metadata. Alt text on images are a free chance to tell Google more about the page content and improve rankings for popular search terms. Rich content speaks in the language of the customer and leads to a clear call to action. Do you want the reader to schedule a consultation? Download your app? Whether that page is a sales pitch or an informative DIY guide, it should be well written and valuable to the reader.

