

Website Optimization

PRESENTED BY
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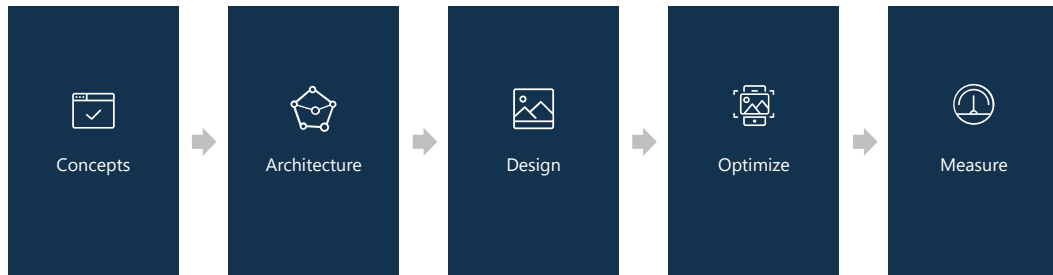
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- 7 years experience in SEO, writing for the web
- 10 years experience in Content Management Systems
- Experience Building small and large brands
- 2 years experience in Business development
- 2 years experience with building eCommerce sites and startups
- Over 5 year social media management and digital marketing

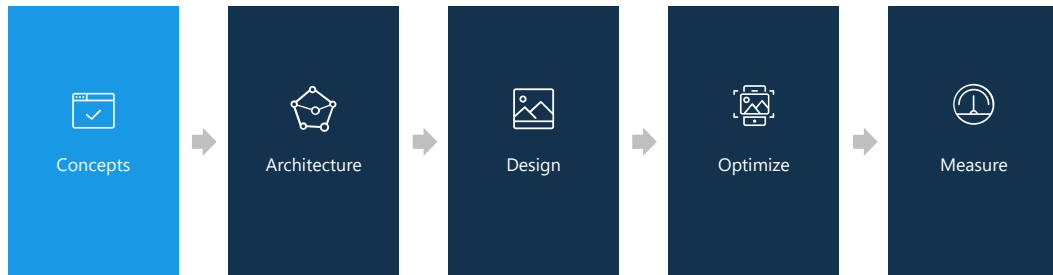


Website Optimization






Website Optimization





 WEBSITE OPTIMIZATION

Concepts

 AGENDA

1. Website Optimization
2. The Purpose of Website Optimization
3. Components of Website Design



Website Optimization

What is it?



Website optimization is the art of creating and continuously improving websites to optimize the visitor experience, resulting in high visitor satisfaction, better user experience, and high repeat visit and conversion rates.

[REF] 2.1.1.1

[LECTURER NOTES]

Website optimization continues to evolve, but its primary focus is optimizing the visitor experience to make sure your target audience finds what they are looking for on your website. There are many factors that go into whether or not your target audience will find what they are looking for on your site. It's a mixture of useful design elements, clear content, and an easy-to-use navigation. Website optimization involves designers, developers, writers, and SEO experts all working together to give users a better experience. All roles have an important part to play when it comes to the best possible website design to represent your organization.

[REFERENCES]

<https://www.optimizely.com/optimization-glossary/website-optimization/>



Website Optimization

What does it involve?



UX



Design



Display

[REF] 2.1.1.2

[LECTURER NOTES]

Website Optimization involves making sure that websites:

- Are easy-to-use (UX, or user experience)
- Are well-designed (website design)
- Effectively display content and graphics

All of these are aspects to website optimization because they have shown to directly improve click-through rates, time on site, and website traffic numbers. If a website is easier to use, users will be much more likely to return and make a purchase or complete a conversion. Great graphics and content also contribute to helping users not only find what they are looking for, but to convert on the website (whether your conversion goal for the website is a purchase, email sign up, or something else).



Website Optimization

What is SEO?



Search Engine Optimization involves making sure that the website's information and quality are optimized correctly, according to best SEO practices.

[REF] 2.1.1.3

[LECTURER NOTES]

You will learn more about SEO later in the course but for the purposes of Website Optimization, there are some basics of SEO that are important to know because we can clearly see how they tie into the optimization of the website. Because design and development may work with the marketing team to implement these changes, knowing basic terms can help us understand how SEO ties into website optimization in this module.

Terms include:

- **Meta data:** the meta titles and descriptions, which are shown to users in search results and in the title bar of internet browsers. There are character limits to meta tags - 70 for titles and 160 for descriptions. Search engines use this to determine the content of the page and whether or not to display it in search results.
- **Sitemaps:** this is a list of all the pages on your website, including blog posts, media, and forms. This list helps search engines index your content to potentially show it in search results. Most websites built on CMS platforms have sitemap plugins that update this automatically.
- **Website content pages:** these are all the informative pages on your site that aren't blog posts. Examples include About Us, Contact, Services. These pages are usually created once and are only updated when there is new information to be added. However, regularly adding new information or pages that provide more niche information can help with SEO.
- **Blog posts:** these are articles that are published in blog post format– usually with the title, author, and date on the page. These are sometimes treated differently by search engines, depending on their content, date, length, and topic. Due to the Google freshness factor, websites with new content can get preference in search results.

[REFERENCES]

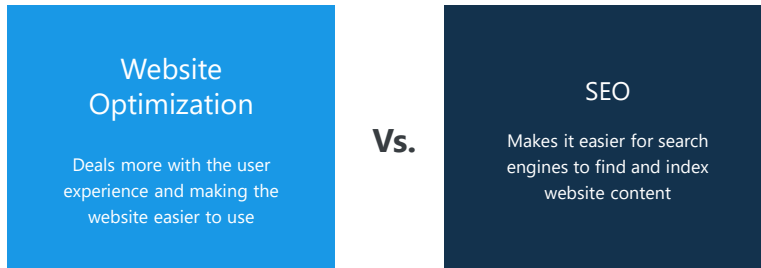
<https://moz.com/blog/google-fresh-factor-new>

<https://yoast.com/meta-descriptions/>



Website Optimization

The difference between Website Optimization and SEO



[REF] 2.1.1.4

[LECTURER NOTES]

Website optimization: deals more with the user experience and making the website easier to use. Examples include website layout, design, content formatting, buttons, interactive elements, color, etc.

SEO: makes it easier for search engines to find and index website content. Examples include keyword usage, what content is in the headers, title, and page description, internal linking, schema tags etc.

SEO has an effect on the visitor ***before they get to your site*** whereas Website Optimization affects your visitor ***when they arrive on your website***.

It doesn't matter how much you optimize your site rankings in Google if your website isn't fully optimized to meet your visitors needs and convert them when they engage with your site. These two types of optimization work together to create an effective user experience. Organizations get more conversions, meet business objectives and users get to find what they are looking for.

[REFERENCES]

<http://www.seobook.com/learn-seo/seo-basics/>

<https://qualaroo.com/website-optimization/>



The Purpose of Website Optimization

The importance of Website Optimization



Increases user
time on site



Provides a
better user
experience



Leads to more
return visits



Increases
e-commerce
sales

[REF] 2.1.2.1

[LECTURER NOTES]

Website optimization is important because it has a lot of value for both the users and the organization:

- **Increases user time on site:** when a website is easy to navigate, users are much more likely to stay on the website because they are finding the information that they are looking for.
- **Provides a better user experience:** users are not only able to find what they are looking for, but they are also left with a better impression of a company because of their great website optimization.
- **Leads to more return visits:** when a website is pleasant to use, users are much more likely to return. A Shopify study (linked below) found that 25% of users abandon their online shopping cart if the website is hard to use, 21% if the checkout process takes too long, and 15% if the website times out (stops working).
- **Increases e-commerce sales:** if it saves them time or is easier than competitors, many customers are likely to use a better-optimized site, even if the cost is higher or the products and services aren't quite the same. They just want the best experience possible. Time is money!

[REFERENCES]

<https://www.invespcro.com/blog/customer-acquisition-retention/>

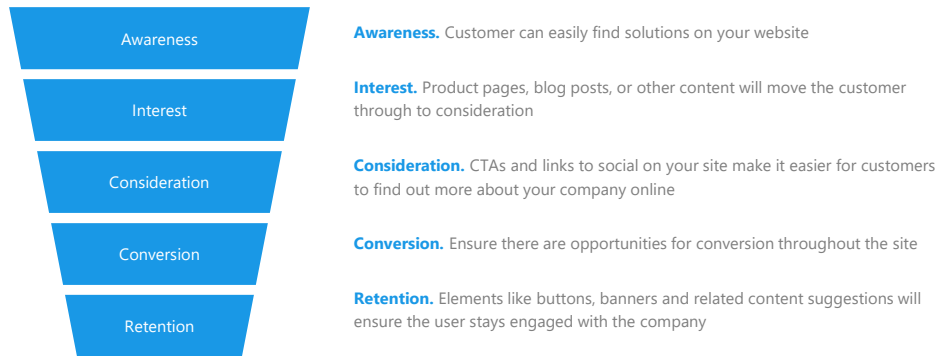
<https://www.shopify.com/blog/8484093-why-online-retailers-are-losing-67-45-of-sales-and-what-to-do-about-it>

<https://hbr.org/2011/12/know-what-your-customers-want-before-they-do>



The Purpose of Website Optimization

How does it affect the buyer's journey?



[REF] 2.1.2.2

[LECTURER NOTES]

This slide shows how website optimization will affect all the areas along the buyer's journey:

1. **Awareness:** The buyer becomes aware of what they are actually looking for (e.g. a solution to their problem). For instance, if a small business owner wants more walk-in customers, one solution they might find is local SEO. Better website optimization helps ensure that solutions are more easily found.
2. **Interest:** The buyer finds your company and its products, which might include product pages, blog posts, or other content about the company/products. Displaying this information clearly and making sure it's easily found on the website will convince users to move into the consideration step.
3. **Consideration:** The buyer starts considering buying something from the company. This could include calling the company, liking them on Facebook, reading blog posts from the company, etc. When these aspects are easily discoverable on the website, it makes movement to step #4 easier.
4. **Conversion:** A user will only convert to a sale or other type of conversion if the shopping experience or form is easy to use and the call-to-actions are clear. Websites should also be optimized to be consistently directing users toward conversion, so changes for conversion should be placed throughout the site.
5. **Retention:** Once a user has converted, the focus should be on keeping them as a recurring paying customer or regular user/recipient of the company's products, content, and services. In terms of website optimization, this includes buttons, banners, related content suggestions, and more to ensure the user stays engaged with what the company has to offer.

[REFERENCES]

<https://www.conductor.com/learning-center/what-is-the-buyers-journey/>
<http://contentmarketinginstitute.com/2016/05/model-buyers-journey/>
<https://marketeer.kapost.com/6-different-types-of-buyer-journey-maps/>



The Purpose of Website Optimization

Making it easier for a user to convert



[REF] 2.1.2.3

[LECTURER NOTES]

Website Optimization makes it easier for a user to convert by removing any potential roadblocks that could cause a user not to complete a purchase or conversion, including barriers like:

1. **Confusing navigation:** if a user doesn't know where to find the information or product that they are looking for, they are likely to get frustrated and leave the website entirely, possibly to never return.
2. **Slow checkout process:** if the conversion process isn't quick, easy, and simple, then users are much more likely to exit before the conversion stage.
3. **Unclear benefits to converting:** users want to know what they get when they buy something or give a website their information. The layout of benefits should be clear and concise, and easy-to-read. For instance, too many animations or not enough contrast between the website background and the text can cause fatigue and frustration. Usually black text on a white background is best.
4. **Slow website:** if website elements or content doesn't load quickly on every device (tablet, smartphone, and computer), users are much more likely to leave a site.

[REFERENCES]

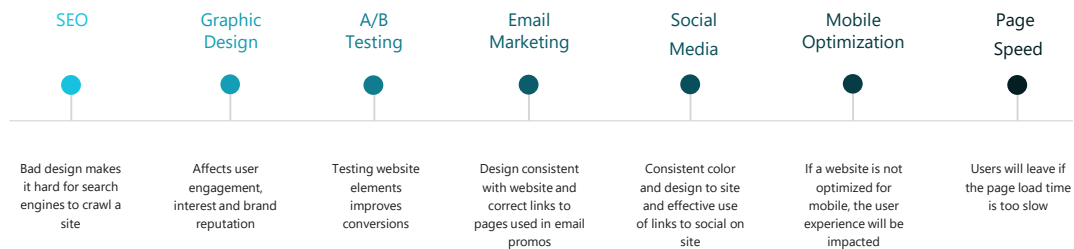
<https://blogs.oracle.com/marketingcloud/5-roadblocks-your-content-strategy-needs-to-avoid-in-the-buyers-journey>

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The Purpose of Website Optimization

How does it affect digital marketing activities?



[REF] 2.1.2.4

[LECTURER NOTES]

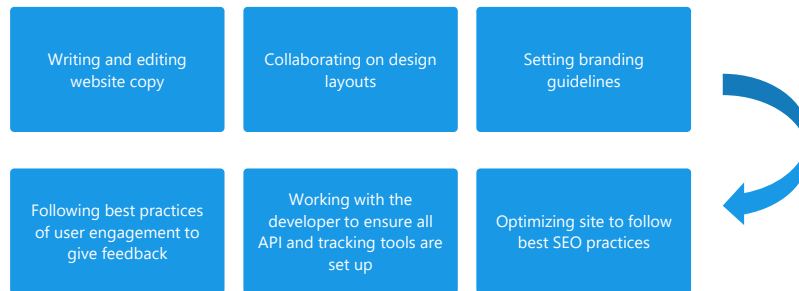
Website optimization affects the following digital marketing areas:

- **SEO:** bad design and navigation can make it hard for search engines to crawl a site in order to index it (which then affects whether it is shown in search results).
- **Graphic design:** good design is a cornerstone of website optimization. How a site is laid out and what graphics it uses influences user engagement, interest, and brand reputation.
- **A/B testing:** testing different elements of the website plays into its optimization. For instance, factors like layout, CTA button text or color, length, and placement on the site are all A/B tests that can be done to test user metrics, like conversions and engagement.
- **Email marketing:** the links used in email promotions play into what the user will see on a website when they click on a link (there also may be different links according to if there are A/B tests). Additionally, the design, color, and layout of the emails should also be congruent with the design of the website to create trust and a more cohesive experience for the user.
- **Social media:** like email, design and color should be similar to the website. Links and what parts of the website to promote on social media is dependent on how the website is optimized.
- **Mobile optimization:** if a website isn't optimized for mobile (e.g. responsive), then users aren't going to have the same experience that they would have on their desktop computer or tablet. Mobile optimization ensures a better user experience, no matter how a user accesses a website.
- **Website page speed:** users will leave a website if it loads too slow, causing a higher bounce rate, more abandoned shopping carts, and a lower return visit rate. Website optimization considers plugins, code scripts (e.g. JavaScript and CSS), and other design elements to make sure a website and all its pages load as fast as possible.



The Purpose of Website Optimization

The role of a marketer in website design



[REF] 2.1.3.1

[LECTURER NOTES]

Marketers work with website designers, programmers, and developers to craft a website that is appealing to both users and search engines.

This includes:

- Writing and editing website copy including CTAs. The way the content is written and laid out is a collaboration between the designer, developer, and the marketer.
- Collaborating on design layouts based on experience in user engagement. Marketers can share their experience with other campaigns and how certain elements or designs have influenced user engagement.
- Setting branding guidelines, including color and font format. These need to be consistent among all marketing and advertising materials to maintain brand consistency.
- Optimizing the site to follow best SEO practices, both for search engine visibility and user experience.
- Working with the developer to ensure all API and tracking tools are set up correctly so metrics can be tracked properly.
- Following best practices of user engagement to give feedback on best practices for better metrics (e.g. time on site, lower bounce rate, higher click-through rate). Deciding what to test and track is a collaboration between the developer and marketer as well.



Components of Website Design

The four key components of website design



Architecture



Design



Content



Optimization

[REF] 2.1.4.1

[LECTURER NOTES]

The four key components of website design are:

1. Architecture
2. Design
3. Content
4. Optimization

We'll cover these in detail in the next four slides.



Components of Website Design

Architecture: How a website is built



Architecture

1. Choose a hosting provider, CMS, and domain name
2. Install CMS and required plugins/features
3. Build out layout and design
4. Add elements, text, and SEO
5. Test
6. Launch
7. Monitor for bugs

[REF] 2.1.4.2

[LECTURER NOTES]

The steps involved in building your website:

1. Choose a hosting provider, CMS, and domain name: where the website is built, what platform it's built on, and it's address (URL)
2. Install CMS and required plugins/features: the backend features of the site that add functionality, like search forms or animated elements, as well as how content is added and organized. We will go through this in more detail in later slides.
3. Build or install design/theme: the look, layout, and feel of the site.
4. Add graphic elements, text, and SEO: additional add-ons to the design and content
5. Test: testing the site before it goes live on its URL
6. Launch: putting the finished site on its URL so it's public and can be accessed by users.
7. Monitor for bugs as needed: looking for errors that need to be fixed once the site is live.

We will go into detail in each of these areas as we progress through this module.



Components of Website Design

Design: What a website looks like



Design

1. Create mockup of website
2. Get feedback
3. Implement changes
4. Work with developer
5. Work with team to finish

[REF] 2.1.4.3

[LECTURER NOTES]

The steps involved in designing your website:

1. Create mockup/wireframe of website layout: the map of each website page and its main elements
2. Get feedback on mockup from marketing and developers
3. Implement changes and get design approved by supervisors and other team members
4. Work with developer to get design placed onto website
5. Work with team to finish components to launch site

We will go into detail in each of these areas as we progress through this module.



Components of Website Design

Content: What copy is included on your website



Content

1. Create list of pages
2. Write website content
3. Copy edit content
4. Add content onto built website

[REF] 2.1.4.4

[LECTURER NOTES]

The steps involved in deciding what copy to include on your website:

1. Create list of needed pages for website, which is added into the wireframe
2. Write website content for each page, which will be added to the pages once they are built
3. Copy edit content for grammar, flow, and spelling
4. Add content onto built website once design has been uploaded. Make sure the layout is correct.

We will go into detail in each of these areas as we progress through this module.



Components of Website Design

Optimization: How a website's information is organized



Optimization

1. Set up SEO best practices
2. Set up metrics reports in Google Analytics
3. Ask colleagues or outside users for website feedback

[REF] 2.1.4.5

[LECTURER NOTES]

The steps involved in organizing a website's information so that it is best presented to users:

1. Set up SEO best practices for your website (this includes analytics, search console, meta and description tags and proper internal linking).
2. Set up metrics reports in Google Analytics based on goals that need to be tracked (this is dependent on your own site and industry).
3. Ask colleagues or outside users for website feedback, using a tool like [UserTesting.com](https://www.usertesting.com). Ideally you'd want current or target customers to test your site.

We will go into detail in each of these areas as we progress through this module.

[REFERENCES]

UserTesting.com



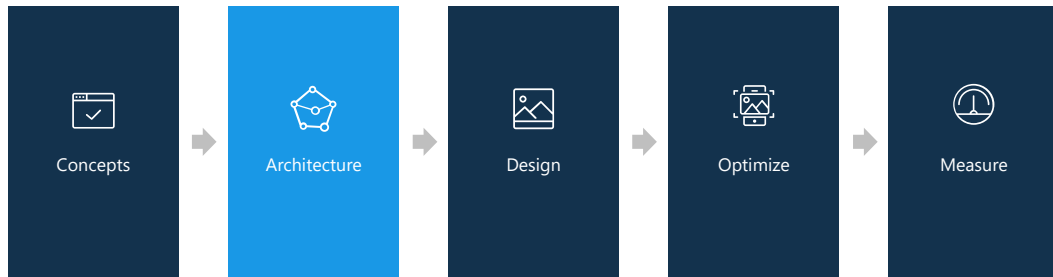
Summary


Concepts


- The purpose of website optimization is to: increase user time on site, provide a better user experience, lead to more return visits, and increase sales.
- Website Optimization involves making sure that websites are easy-to-use, well-designed, and effectively display content and graphics.
- Website optimization will have an affect on every stage of the buyer journey.
- The 4 key components of effective website design are:
 - ✓ Architecture
 - ✓ Design
 - ✓ Content
 - ✓ Optimization



Website Optimization





 WEBSITE OPTIMIZATION

Architecture

 AGENDA

1. Website Hosting Options
2. Build a Website
3. Create a Layout For Your Site

[REF.] 2.2.1

[LECTURER NOTES]

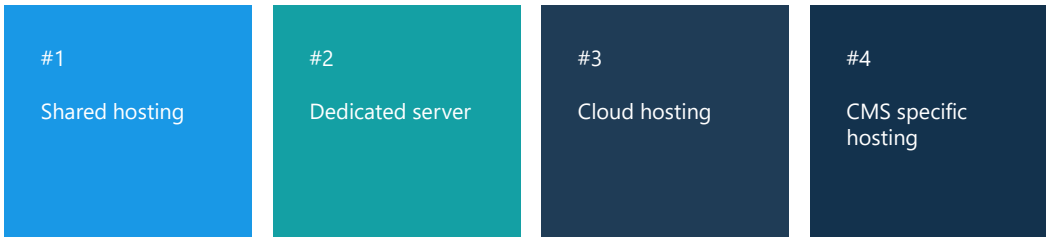
The goals for this section are:

- To differentiate between a variety of web hosting options available
- To set up a basic website using wordpress.org
- To create an attractive layout for the pages of your site



Website Hosting Options

What are the common website hosting types?



[REF.] 2.2.1.1, 2.2.1.2

[LECTURER NOTES]

Identify types of hosting setups and providers:

1. Shared Hosting: this is where your website shares a server with many other users. These websites and users don't share information, but they are physically stored in the same server. This is usually the most affordable solution.
2. Dedicated Server: this is the opposite of shared hosting. Your website is hosted on a private server. This allows for more server options and also can help the server (and therefore, the website) handle more traffic.
3. Cloud Hosting: instead of resting on one server only, the website is hosted in the "cloud," which means it is spread across several different servers. This is ideal for large sites or to decrease website downtime. Even if one server goes down, because there are copies of the website across different servers, it is likely to never crash or not load.
4. CMS-Specific Hosting: some hosting providers offer shared hosting, but groups the websites into clusters based on the CMS they are using. This can ensure the server caters to that CMS' needs, leading to better scaling, security and up times.

[REFERENCES]

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https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dedicated_hosting_service

<https://www.lifewire.com/understanding-what-cloud-hosting-is-3473557>

<https://www.godaddy.com/garage/webpro/development/type-web-hosting-service-best-client/>



Website Hosting Options

Benefits and limitations of hosting options

Hosting Option	Security	Affordability	Support	Downtime	Specific Requirements
Shared	4	1	1	4	The hosting provider may require a specific CMS, website size, monthly traffic etc. for a specific hosting plan
Dedicated	1	4	1	1	
Cloud	3	3	3	3	
CMS Specific Hosting	2	2	2	2	

[REF.] 2.2.1.3, 2.2.1.4

[LECTURER NOTES]

Benefits of some hosting options:

- More security: dedicated servers and CMS-specific hosting are usually more secure
- Affordability: shared hosting is usually the most affordable
- More support: dedicated and CMS-specific hosting usually get the most support
- Less downtime: all but shared hosting usually have less downtime

Limitations:

- Cost: Any hosting option, other than simple shared hosting, is usually more expensive. Cloud and dedicated hosting are the most expensive.
- Specific requirements: the hosting provider may require a specific CMS, website size, monthly traffic, or other requirements for a specific hosting plan.

[REFERENCES]

<https://www.dreamhost.com/hosting/shared/what-is-shared-hosting/>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dedicated_hosting_service

<https://www.lifewire.com/understanding-what-cloud-hosting-is-3473557>

<https://www.godaddy.com/garage/webpro/development/type-web-hosting-service-best-client/>



Build a Website

WordPress.org vs WordPress.com

Websites are free and
run on WordPress
servers



vs



Websites use the
WordPress.org CMS

[REF.] 2.2.2.1

[LECTURER NOTES]

There are roughly two types of CMS: cloud hosted platforms like wordpress.com, and self-hosted platforms like wordpress.org.

The differences between wordpress.com and wordpress.org websites include:

- **WordPress.org** websites use the WordPress.org CMS, which is installed onto a website that is self-hosted on its own domain. Users need to buy and set up their own hosting and domain. This is better for professional sites that want to have their own domain that isn't hosted on WordPress.com.
- **WordPress.com** websites are free and run on WordPress servers, and their domains are usually something like, websitename.wordpress.com. Users can pay to have their own domain (e.g. website.com), but free hosting will still require ads on their site. This is easier to set up for beginners.

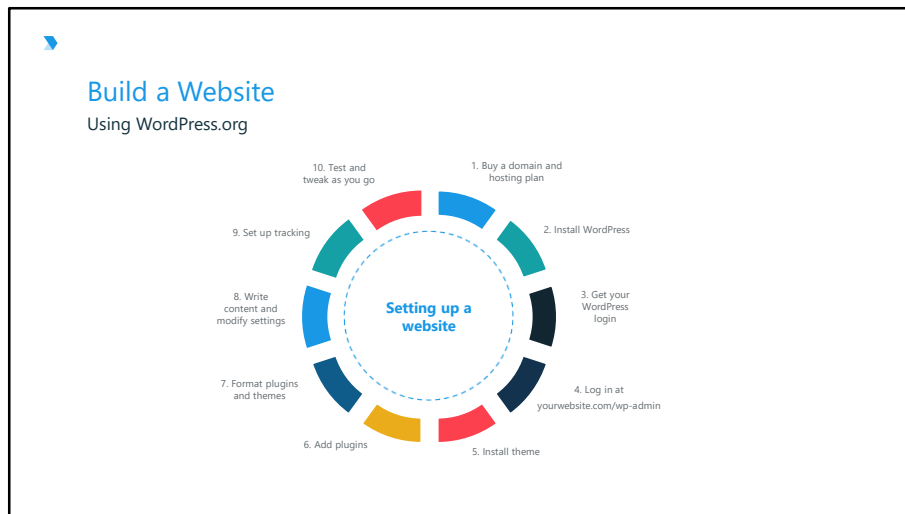
About 25% of all websites are built on WordPress.

[REFERENCES]

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<https://en.support.wordpress.com/com-vs-org/>

<http://dailypost.wordpress.com/2013/11/14/com-or-org/>



[REF.] 2.2.2.2

[LECTURER NOTES]

1. Buy a domain and hosting plan from a provider like HostGator, Bluehost, or GoDaddy.
2. Install WordPress onto the website using a service from the hosting provider (some will do it for free), or by downloading it from Wordpress.org and upload it using FTP or a File Manager. It is free to download.
3. Get your WordPress login, which you will get during the setup process through your hosting provider and WordPress. Make sure you keep a written record of it somewhere.
4. You can now use WordPress in the backend of the site by logging in at yourwebsite.com/wp-admin.
5. Install the desired theme (website layout/design), using one of the free ones in the Appearance section of WordPress. You can also buy a theme at a marketplace like ThemeForest. This gives you a zip file, which you then upload in its entirety into the WordPress under Appearance: Themes: Install Theme.
6. Add plugins. You can search under Plugins to find applicable plugins, but some recommended ones are Yoast SEO for basic SEO, a Google Analytics one, social bookmarking (e.g. AddtoAny), and a contact form plugin.
7. Format plugins and themes as needed for your website.
8. Write the website content and modify any settings as needed, such as the desired URL slugs.
9. Set up Google Analytics and Google Search Console for website tracking. Verify by adding a line of code in WordPress or by logging into a hosting provider, if applicable, during the setup process.
10. Tweak and test website as you go!

You will find a tutorial going through these steps in the resources section.

[REFERENCES]

Hostgator.com
Bluehost.com

Godaddy.com
WordPress.org
WPBeginner.com
ThemeForest.com
analytics.google.com
<https://www.google.com/webmasters/tools/>
Yoast.com
<https://wordpress.org/plugins/>
<https://wordpress.org/plugins/add-to-any/>



Creating a Layout for Your Site

What is a WordPress theme?



A WordPress theme is a set of code and design files that create the overall look and feel of your website.

[REF.] 2.2.3.1

[LECTURER NOTES]

A WordPress theme is a set of code and design files that create the overall look and feel of your website. There are several free and paid themes available but often free themes will include undesirable hidden code, links, or ads, so paid is best.



Creating a Layout for Your Site

Categories of WordPress themes



Blog or Newspaper



Beauty



Business & Services



Sports & Travel



E-commerce



Fashion

[REF.] 2.3.3.2

[LECTURER NOTES]

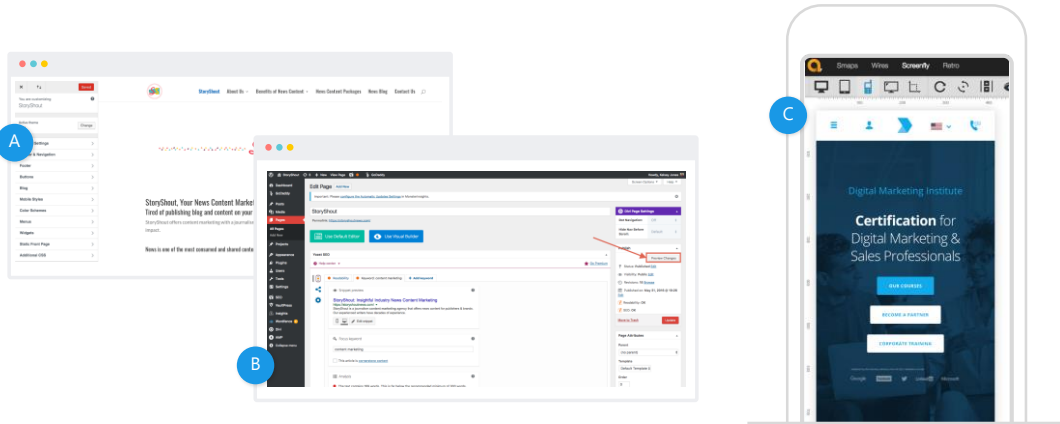
There are different types of themes based on their purpose. These include:

- Blog
- Newspaper
- Business
- Service-based, like plumbing
- E-commerce
- Beauty
- Sports
- Fashion



Creating a Layout for Your Site

Testing themes across devices



[REF.] 2.2.3.4

[LECTURER NOTES]

Screenshots shown are:

- A. Customizing at theme level
- B. Where the preview button is on the edit page in WordPress to preview changes
- C. Previewing what DMI's website looks like on a mobile phone using Screenfly

To see how a change to your website looks before it's published live, use Appearance: Customize: [Your Theme] in WordPress to view changes at the site-wide, theme level. To go there directly, go to <https://YOURDOMAIN.com/wp-admin/customize.php>.

You can also preview changes on pages by clicking "Preview" in the edit screen.

Use a service like Screenfly to see how your live website looks across multiple devices.
<http://quirktools.com/screenfly/>.

You should test mobile, tablet, and desktop in a variety of different models (iPhone, Android, Mac, PC, etc.).



Creating a Layout for Your Site

Reputable sources of WordPress themes



[REF.] 2.2.3.5

[LECTURER NOTES]

- Find reputable sources of WordPress themes by looking for highly rated theme sites that have a good reputation. Examples include ThemeForest, ElegantThemes, and TemplateMonster.
- Test themes to determine their usability across multiple devices by looking at theme demos that are offered on the theme information landing page.
- Be able to view themes on multiple devices. If you already have a theme installed on your site, you can use the WordPress preview feature in the backend (/wp-admin, under appearance and themes), to preview themes and changes to layout before saving and publishing.

[REFERENCES]

Themeforest.com
Wordpress.org/themes
TemplateMonster.com
ElegantThemes.com



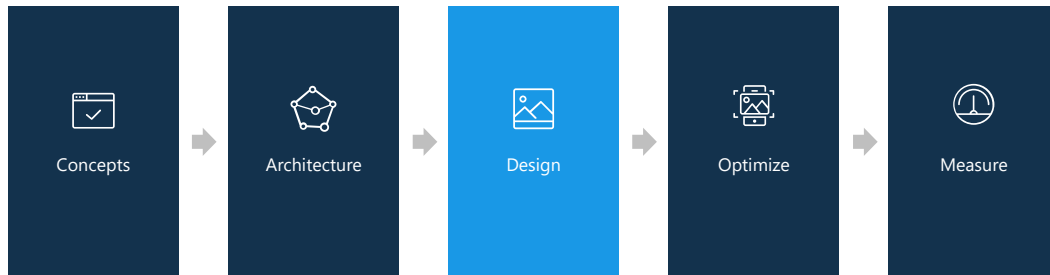
 Summary


Architecture

- There are four options of website hosting: shared, dedicated, cloud, and CMS-specific.
- Follow the ten steps shown to set up a basic website using WordPress.org.
- Choose the most suitable WordPress themes based on your type of product or service and your business goals.
- Be sure to test your layout and theme across multiple devices.



Website Optimization



 WEBSITE OPTIMIZATION

Web Design & Content

 AGENDA

1. Design Principles
2. Mobile First Design
3. Website Copy
4. A/B Testing

[REF.] 2.3

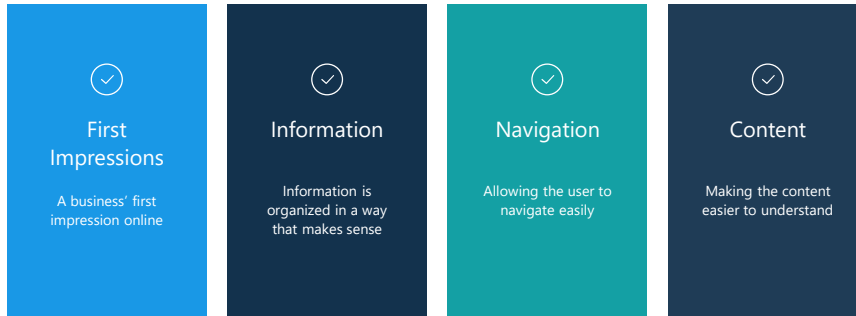
[LECTURER NOTES]

- Learn to identify principles of effective website design
- Learn to recognize the importance of a mobile-first approach to design and how that relates to SEO
- Learn how to create effective copy for your website
- Learn how to conduct a/b testing for layout, CTAs, and copy



Design Principles

The importance of web design



[REF.] 2.3.1.1

[LECTURER NOTES]

Great web design should be to make everything self-explanatory and easy as possible for the user.

Web design is important because it is:

- **A business' first impression online:** when a user visits a company's website for the first time, the design plays into their first impression of the business as a whole. Thus, it's important to have high quality design because it influences users' opinions and behavior.
- **Properly organizing information:** information is organized in a way that makes sense.
- **Allowing the user to navigate easily:** users are able to find the information they are looking for quickly and easily, without becoming confused or frustrated.
- **Making content easy to understand:** users can read and interact with the information on the site in a way that flows and makes sense. The layout of the content makes it easier to understand.



Design Principles

The key aspects of web design



1. Simple design
2. Easy to navigate
3. Consistency of information
4. Usability
5. Consistency of design
6. Concise and honest information

[REF.] 2.3.1.2

[LECTURER NOTES]

The principles of design are:

1. Simple design: the design isn't distracting and makes the website easy to use and understand. It should also have a modern look that doesn't look outdated, as this influences users' opinion of a website and the business as a whole.
2. Easy to navigate: users are able to get the information or complete the actions they want to through navigation without becoming confused or wondering where something is.
3. Information is consistent: pages are correct and all information is updated and the same. This means there shouldn't be conflicting information across pages (e.g. prices, hours of operation, names, etc.).
4. Website is usable across different devices: e.g. user can access the same pages on mobile that they can on desktop. This often requires adding a "view as desktop" link at the bottom of mobile websites.
5. Design is consistent: colors, layout, and design is the same across all areas of the site. This includes branding, link colors, photo formatting, etc.
6. There is concise and honest information to build credibility and be a thought leader in the industry. Website content should be published that is providing education and information to the users.

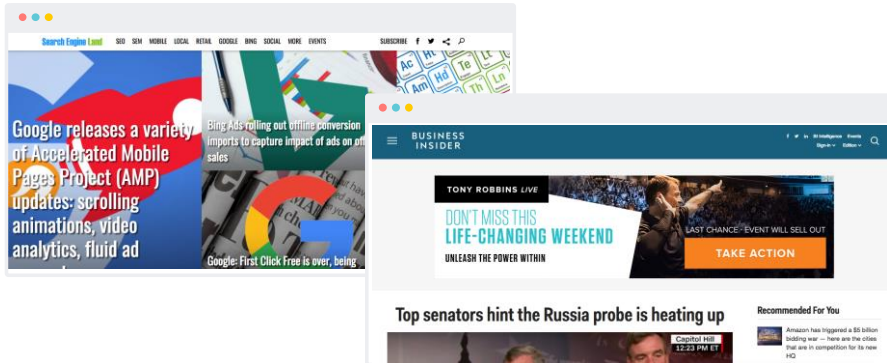
[REFERENCES]

<https://www.smashingmagazine.com/2008/01/10-principles-of-effective-web-design/>



Design Principles

#1 Simple design



[REF.] 2.3.1.2

[LECTURER NOTES]

The design should be easy to navigate and understand. Users shouldn't be at a loss when it comes to making sure they are on the right page. The visual effects shouldn't be overwhelming. On this slide, the left is really cluttered with all the images from the latest articles, making it a little overwhelming. Conversely, Business Insider has a collapsible menu (the three lines in the left corner) so the homepage isn't cluttered. This is the latest trend in UI/Navigation (the three lines marking a collapsible menu).

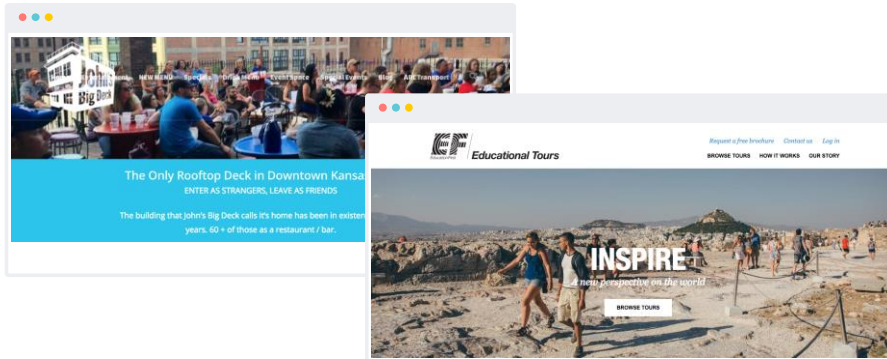
[REFERENCES]

From screenshots: searchengineland.com, businessinsider.com



Design Principles

#2 Navigation



[REF.] 2.3.1.2

[LECTURER NOTES]

Navigation should let the user know the parts of the site where they can find what they are looking for. In the above right example, EF Tours (which was mentioned before) has a simple navigation that sticks to what most people come to their site for— looking at available tours, how their tours work, and their background. Conversely, John's Big Deck, a bar and restaurant, has a confusing navigation that you can't even see when you load the page. The menu items are also confusing. What is ARC transport? This may turn users off.

[REFERENCES]

Screenshots: johnsbigdeck.com, eftours.com



Design Principles

#3 Consistent information



[REF.] 2.3.1.2

[LECTURER NOTES]

Information should be the same across multiple pages. If you offer something on the homepage, users should also be able to see it on interior pages. Numbers, offers, stats, phone numbers, etc. should be consistent across the entire website.

In this example, ModCloth offered a sale on their home page. When you click on the banner, you see the exact same offer (with consistent branding/images/colors) to purchase the sale. If their offer went to the women's clothing section, it would be confusing to the user.

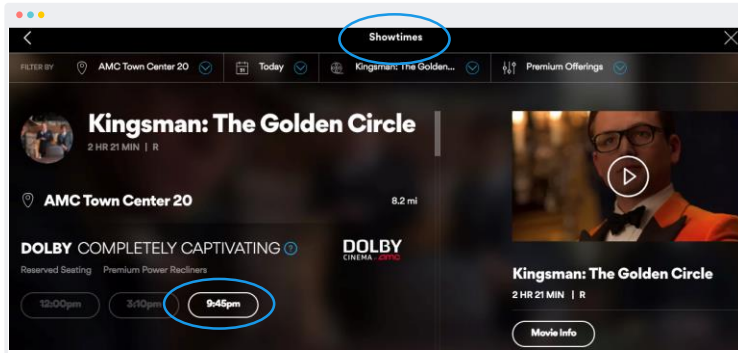
[REFERENCES]

Modcloth.com



Design Principles

#4 Usability



[REF.] 2.3.1.2

[LECTURER NOTES]

Sites that take a user through a funnel or purchasing process should be as easy to use as possible. In this American theater chain example, you can easily filter by location, date, movie, and additional offerings. Then, you simply choose the time you want to purchase the tickets.

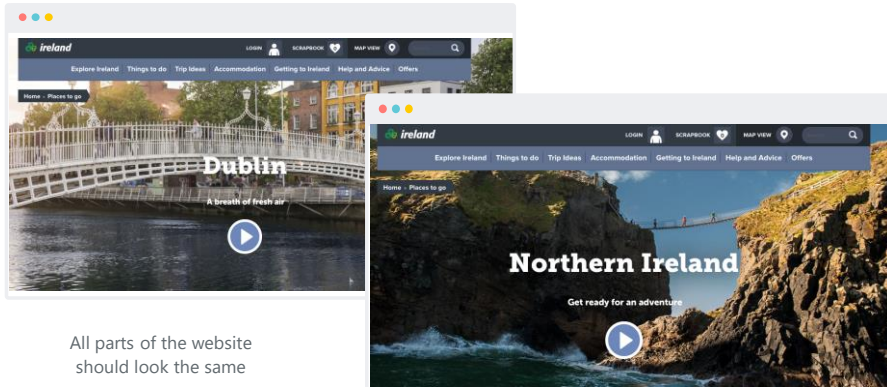
[REFERENCES]

Screenshot from: [amctheatres.com](https://www.amctheatres.com)



Design Principles

#5 Consistent design



All parts of the website
should look the same

[REF.] 2.3.1.2

[LECTURER NOTES]

All parts of the website should look the same. This includes the blog. Ideally the blog should be hosted on the main domain, and not be an external website, like companyblog.wordpress.com.

In this example, no matter the part of Ireland, the official Ireland tourism website uses the same format and design. This makes it easier for visitors to get familiar with the site and navigate their way around. They can compare different parts of Ireland using the same format of information to plan their trip.

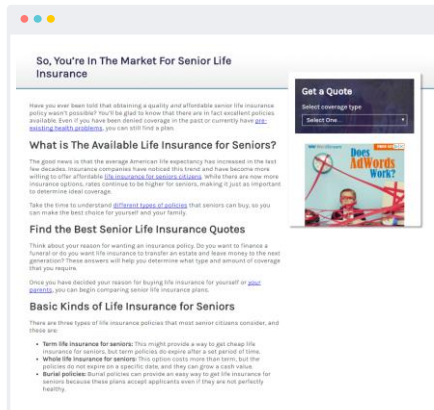
[REFERENCES]

Screenshots from <http://www.ireland.com/>



Design Principles

#6 Concise and honest information



Make sure websites are concise, truthful, and don't overdo content when it's not needed

[REF.] 2.3.1.2

[LECTURER NOTES]

Websites should focus on giving users the information they need, not “dumping” all possible information onto their website pages. In the example above, there is too much information on the homepage, making it overwhelming for the user. Focus on being concise and save the longer content for blog posts and eBooks, if it's needed. In this case, it would have been better from a design perspective to separate these blocks into their own subpages instead of putting it all on the home page.

[REFERENCES]

Screenshot from SeniorLifeInsurancePlans.com



Mobile First Design

How does “Mobilegeddon” play into web design?



- “Mobilegeddon” was an announcement from Google stating that websites that are not mobile-friendly may not be shown to users in mobile search results
- Because of this and Google’s mobile-first index, mobile is the priority for SEO

[REF.] 2.3.2.1

[LECTURER NOTES]

- Understand the impact of “mobilegeddon”: this was an announcement from Google that announced that websites that are not mobile-friendly (meaning they are not easy to use and read on mobile devices) may not be shown to users in mobile search results. This led to a greater push for designers, developers, and SEOs to create responsible websites that are easy to use on any device.
- Google’s move to a mobile-first index announcement and how it affects SEO and website usability: mobile is now more of a priority than desktop, as there is more mobile internet traffic than desktop. This means that it’s more important that your website is easy to use on mobile than desktop. It also means that Google is going to prioritize mobile search results.

[REFERENCES]

- Image from: <http://leaddogmarketingsolutions.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/Mobile-vs-Non-Mobile-Sites-2.png>
- <https://webmasters.googleblog.com/2016/11/mobile-first-indexing.html>
- <http://fortune.com/2015/04/21/google-mobilegeddon/>



Mobile First Design

Mobile-friendly versus responsive

Mobile Friendly

A different version of a website
that is shown to mobile users

Vs.

Responsive

The website design is formatted to
its ideal fit for the screen it's on

[REF.] 2.3.2.2

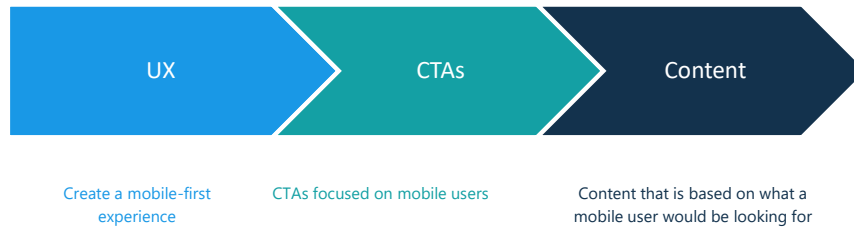
[LECTURER NOTES]

Mobile-Friendly versus Responsive: mobile friendly is a different version of a website that is shown to mobile users. Responsive means the website design is formatted to its ideal fit for the screen it's on. Responsive is ideal and Google recognizes both as being optimized for the mobile user. Think of mobile-friendly as a step between nothing at all and a responsive site.



Mobile First Design

How do SEO and website optimization work together in mobile?



[REF.] 2.3.2.3

[LECTURER NOTES]

- Create a mobile-first experience through responsive design
- CTAs focused on mobile users (e.g. location and contact information)– what a user is looking for on mobile is different than what they are likely looking for on desktop. It also affects their checkout time availability.
- Content that is based on what a mobile user would be looking for. For instance, they may not want to view blog posts first if it's an informative website about a local business– they are more likely to be looking for phone number, address, reviews, and other info that allows them to make a decision “on the go” about the business (e.g. whether or not to go there versus its competitors).



Website Copy

The basics of effective copy

Clear

"We offer air conditioning units to restaurants and hotels."

Enticing

"We offer award-winning, certified air conditioning units to restaurants and hotels. No other competitors offer our same 10-year warranty."

Unique

"No other competitors offer our same 10-year warranty."

[REF.] 2.3.3.1

[LECTURER NOTES]

The basics of effective copy are:

- **Clear:** the purpose of the copy should instantly be understandable. For instance, "We offer air conditioning units to restaurants and hotels" is clear, versus "Our top-of-the-line-system offers the highest possible AC performance for your hospitality business."
- **Enticing:** the copy should pique the user's interest. It should make them curious to complete the CTA or learn more about the offering. For instance, "We offer award-winning, certified air conditioning units to restaurants and hotels. No other competitors offer our same 10-year warranty." is much more interesting, versus "Our top-of-the-line air conditioners are perfect for your restaurant or hotel." You must explain *why* in an intriguing way to get your point across.
- **Unique:** be sure to point out how your products, services, and what you offer is different than your competitors. Be specific. How does what you offer stand out from everyone else? For instance, "We stand behind our restaurant and hotel air conditioning units. No other competitors offer our same 10-year warranty." versus "We outperform our competitors with our air conditioning units."



Website Copy

Website content

1. Easy to read

2. Easy to find

3. Ease to understand

4. Includes a call-to-action on each page

5. Pages work together

[REF.] 2.3.3.2, 2.3.3.4

[LECTURER NOTES]

Each website page should:

- Be easy to read through proper website design and layout: the layout should be intuitive and not make it difficult to read the content and interact with the website. The design and layout should have the sole focus of making the experience easy and seamless for the user.
- Be easy to find through proper website architecture and optimization: the user should immediately be able to find what they are looking for in a few clicks. Some designers and developers follow the three-click rule, which means a user should be able to find whatever they are looking for on a website within three taps or clicks (essentially 3 pages). This is disputed though— see references below for more insight.
- Be easy to understand through proper website content and layout: as mentioned in the previous slides, copy needs to be easy to understand but keep up the user's interest at the same time. Be specific and don't overwhelm the user with too much information that users aren't actually interested in. Most users only care about what is directly important to them, so cater to their needs.
- Include a call-to-action on each page: on every blog post and content page include a call-to-action that is directing the user to complete a conversion or go to a related page with more information. For instance, if there was a landing page that was about a specific air conditioning model for pizza restaurants, your conversion could be completing an appointment form for a sales call or a contact form to request a pricing estimate for a specific business.
- Pages work together: pages with similar content should link together in a logical way to be as effective as possible.

[REFERENCES]

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Three-click_rule

<http://uxmyths.com/post/654026581/myth-all-pages-should-be-accessible-in-3-clicks>



Website Copy

Make sure to include CTAs



- Use a clear, concise command
- Highlight how the offer benefits the user
- Show social proof
- Show sense of urgency

[REF.] 2.3.3.3

[LECTURER NOTES]

- Use a clear, concise command to tell the user to do something, using phrases like “Click here,” “Buy now,” or “Email us”. These give directive which users are more likely to follow than a suggestion.
- Highlight how the offer benefits the user, e.g. “Buy now and get 50% off.”– this makes it harder to object to the request or offer because you are “fighting” off their excuses to say no.
- Show social proof, e.g. “Join 100,000 other subscribers by joining our mailing list”– this is another way to break down objections to completing the conversion. If several others of your peers are doing something, it’s hard to be the one person that doesn’t (social pressure).
- Show sense of urgency, e.g. “This offer is only available for 48 hours. Buy now to lock in this low rate.” By showing that something is only temporary, you are putting more pressure on them that is time sensitive. This enables less waffling between deciding to take the next step or not.

We will go through some best practices when it comes to CTAs later in the module.

[REFERENCES]

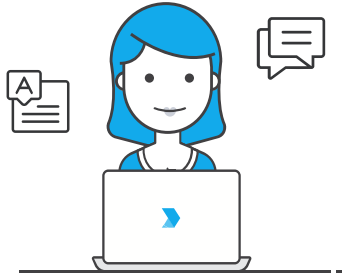
<https://conversionxl.com/blog/is-social-proof-really-that-important/>

<https://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/social-proof-examples>



Website Copy

Creating a cohesive experience



- Home page offers should appear on interior product pages
- Key messaging should remain the same on all pages
- Voice and tone need to be the same (e.g. stay in 1st or 3rd person)

[REF.] 2.3.3.4

[LECTURER NOTES]

Website copy across multiple pages should work together to create a cohesive experience. This means that the wording of the site, as well as the information, is the same no matter what page the user is on. It is OK to have different offers based on different campaigns or promotions, but the tone, company voice, and key messages should always be the same. The reason for this is because if users are getting different messages on separate pages on your site, then they may become confused or frustrated and leave the site or not complete a conversion.

Examples of this include:

- A product offer that is portrayed on the home page is carried through to the product page
- The company tagline/mission statement/main selling points are the same across all pages
- Tutorial pages link to one another with applicable references
- Conference or event agendas are different
- Sponsors or offerings aren't the same on all applicable pages



A/B Testing

What is it?



A/B testing means comparing two different elements of a website to determine what gets more clicks, conversions, and engagement.

[REF.] 2.3.4.1

[LECTURER NOTES]

A/B testing means comparing two different elements of a website to determine what gets more clicks, conversions, and engagement.

This could include:

- Pricing: lower versus higher sales
- Offers: a percentage discount versus a set amount off discount (could equate to the same or different values)
- Colors: e.g. does a patterned background make users buy more than a grey background?
- Placement of CTAs on the page
- Timing of animations or pop-up banners: 5 seconds versus 10 seconds

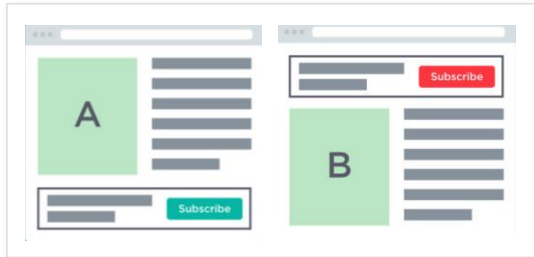
[REFERENCES]

<https://www.optimizely.com/ab-testing/>



A/B Testing

Where can it be used?



- Calls-to-action (CTAs)
- Headlines
- Graphic elements
- Wording & Content
- Type of promotion or offer

[REF.] 2.3.4.2

[LECTURER NOTES]

Here we see several examples for where A/B testing can be used:

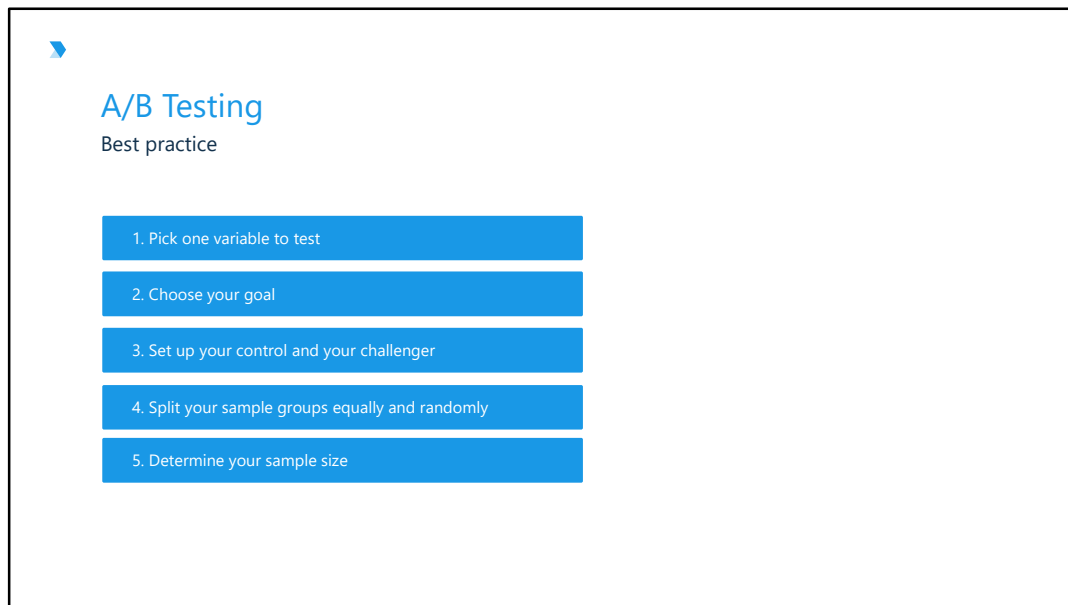
- CTAs: For example, a green CTA box versus a red CTA box, or different offers, such as 50% off versus \$50 off for a \$100 item.
- Headlines: You could write two different headlines for a blog post and test both of them to see which one gets more click-throughs.
- Graphic elements: You could test illustrations against stock imagery and see which works best for your audience.
- Wording & content: Which works better for your audience, a long landing offer page or a short and concise one?
- Type of promotion or offer: For example 'Buy one get one free' versus '\$50 off when you spend over \$100'.

Some CMS, like WordPress, have plugins that will do the A/B testing for you or there are tools like Optimizely that you can set up to run an A/B test on your site.

Remember: It's important to only test one element at a time!

[REFERENCES]

<https://www.optimizely.com/ab-testing/>



A presentation slide titled "A/B Testing" with the subtitle "Best practice". It features a list of five steps in blue boxes:

1. Pick one variable to test
2. Choose your goal
3. Set up your control and your challenger
4. Split your sample groups equally and randomly
5. Determine your sample size

[REF.] 2.3.4.3

[LECTURER NOTES]

A/B testing can be ineffective if too many tests are running at once: running more than one A/B test on a website doesn't give us a clear picture on what actually worked.

The steps of A/B testing are:

1. Pick one variable to test: this could be something like CTA button colour, page layout, campaign offer (e.g. \$50 versus 10% off, even though they are the same value).
2. Choose your goal: what do you want to accomplish with this test? Choosing a specific goal will help you determine whether or not making these changes permanent will make a difference. An example of a goal would be: "Increase conversions 5% in the next 8 weeks." Make sure it is specific and actionable.
3. Set up your control and your challenger: only test one thing at a time, and always have a "control," where the element doesn't change. This is so you can make sure that specific element actually makes a difference or not. For instance, if you wanted to test your offer, you would keep your "control" as your existing offer, say, \$50. That would be the "A" in the A/B test. Then, you test the "B" part of the test, the challenger, like 10%.
4. Split your sample groups equally and randomly: you must have the same sample size in order to have a proper test. If one side was bigger than the other, then it may have the advantage.
5. Determine your sample size: figure out how big your sample sizes are going to be. This is dependent on what you're testing. For instance, if it was through email, the number of email subscribers helps determine the sample size (e.g. If you have 1000 email subscribers with a 4% click-through rate on average, you can assume 40 people will click through to the landing page you're testing. This would mean 20 would be shown test A (the control) and 20 would be shown test B (the challenge), on average. In most cases, the A/B test software randomizes or alternates it.

For instance, if we tested both the promotional offer and the headline of the landing page at the same time, and at got a higher conversion rate, we don't know if it was the headline OR the promotional offer that actually caused the higher conversion rate.

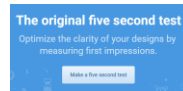
[REFERENCES]

<https://conversionxl.com/blog/ux-research-and-ab-tests/>



A/B Testing

Tools and plugins to test layouts, CTAs and copy



[REF.] 2.3.4.4

[LECTURER NOTES]

Be sure to only run one test at a time:

Running more than one A/B test on a website doesn't give us a clear picture on what actually worked.

A/B testing **plugins** for WordPress (for WordPress sites only):

- NelioABTesting.com: good for testing different elements on a WordPress site
- SimplePageTester.com: focused more on testing landing pages

Other **tools** that can implement A/B testing include:

- Optimizely: works across several different types of websites
- Five second test: only offers initial impressions (the first 5 seconds) to gather users' first impressions
- VVMO- test duration calculator: calculates how long to run a test

There are more examples below in the resources. Whatever test that works best for you depends on your CMS, budget, and what you want to test.

[REFERENCES]

A/B testing WordPress plugin examples:

- NelioABTesting.com
- SimplePageTester.com
- <https://conversionxl.com/blog/ux-research-and-ab-tests/>

More A/B test tools:

- <https://www.optimizely.com/>

- <https://support.google.com/analytics/answer/1745152?hl=en>
- <https://fivesecondtest.com/>
- <https://wordpress.org/plugins/wordpress-ab-theme-split-tests/>
- <https://vwo.com/ab-split-test-duration/>



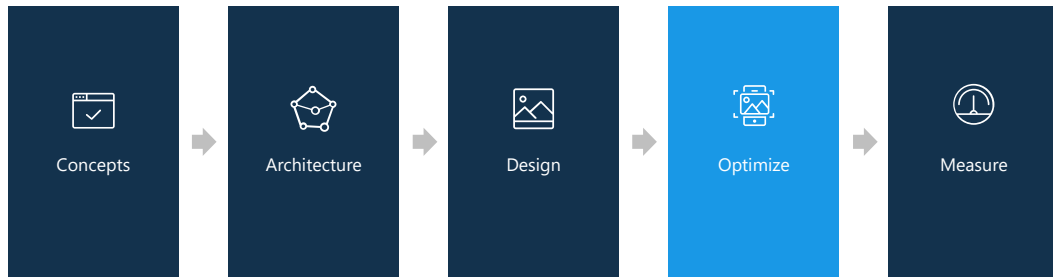
Summary

Design

- The priority for great web design should be to make everything self-explanatory and easy as possible for the user.
- The principles for effective web design are:
 - ✓ Simple design
 - ✓ Easy to navigate
 - ✓ Consistency of information
 - ✓ Usability
 - ✓ Consistency of design
 - ✓ Concise and honest information
- A mobile-first response to design is vital.
- Effective website copy should be clear, concise, and unique.
- CTAs should be persuasive through language, time limitations, social proof, and an enticing offer.
- Only one A/B test should be done at a time.



Website Optimization





 WEBSITE OPTIMIZATION

Optimize

 AGENDA

1. UX versus UI
2. UX and UI Principles
3. Assess UX
4. Improve UX
5. Optimize a Website



UX versus UI

What is user experience?



User experience is defined as a person's perceptions and responses resulting from the use and or anticipated use of a product, system or service.



[REF.] 2.4.1.1

[LECTURER NOTES]

UX as outlined by the International Organization for Standardization is a "person's perceptions and responses resulting from the use and or anticipated use of a product, system or service." UX is influenced by a variety of factors, including how a user users and navigates a website, what they are expecting from a website (and the company), and what they are looking for. UX encompasses the users entire experience with a company's online presence.

[REFERENCES]

<https://www.usertesting.com/blog/2016/04/27/ui-vs-ux/>
<https://www.nngroup.com/articles/definition-user-experience/>
<https://www.usability.gov/what-and-why/user-interface-design.html>
<http://inspiredm.com/ui-design-exactly/>



UX versus UI

What is a user interface?




UI is the platform on which the user and website interact with one another. This includes elements like clickable links, forms, and other actions a user can complete on a website.

[REF.] 2.4.1.2 & 2.4.1.3

[LECTURER NOTES]

The definition of UI (user interface) is the platform on which the user and website interact with one another. This includes elements like clickable links, forms, and other actions a user can complete on a website. This is basically *how* (the conduit) a user uses a website.

UX and UI work together by providing a better overall picture of how users interact with and get information from a website. Many elements of UX have to be implemented in the UI in order to give users the best experience possible.



UX versus UI

The difference between UX and UI

UX - <i>The experience</i>	UI - <i>The medium</i>
Interaction design	Visual design
Based on data, emotion & user research	Based on design trends & brand guidelines
Wireframes, site map & personas	Colors, typography and layout

[REF.] 2.4.1.4

[LECTURER NOTES]

UX: The Experience

- Interaction design: the elements that users can interact with, meaning they can watch, read, click on, enter information, or browse.
- Based on data, emotion, and user research: A/B testing, how users interact with specific colors, words, and layouts, and the website's target audience all goes into its UX.
- Wireframes: the "Map" or list of all the pages that will be on a website. This includes Home, About, Contact, Services, etc.
- Sitemap: an automatically-generated list of ALL the pages on a website. This includes all blog posts, images, and other files. Can be auto-generated using the Yoast SEO WordPress plugin.
- Personas: marketing personas that are fictional people that designers use to create a website for. Includes their demographics, likes/dislikes, wants, hobbies, and other personal attributes.

UI: The Medium

- Visual design: the graphic elements of a site, like the branding, header images, photos, and other graphic elements.
- Based on design trends and brand guidelines: uses the brand's color palette as created by the designer and uses the latest in design to craft the appropriate "feeling" of a website (e.g. modern, classic, old-fashioned, etc.).
- Colors: what colors the website uses for the graphic elements, the background, the text, links, footers, and header.
- Typography: what font and font layout is used throughout the site. Depending on branding guidelines and the desired "feeling" of the website (what you want it to convey).
- Layout: how the website looks visually, and the order elements go in (e.g. the home page could have a

menu, header, featured post image and text, recent blog posts, ad, text box, and footer.

[REFERENCES]

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Persona creator: <http://www.makemypersona.com/>

Yoast SEO WordPress plugin: <https://wordpress.org/plugins/wordpress-seo/>



UX and UI Principles

The benefits of UX and UI



More traffic



Deeper emotional connection



Increased retention



More conversions



Increased time on site



Better return rates

[REF.] 2.4.2.1, 2.4.2.2

[LECTURER NOTES]

UX and UI are important to website optimization to provide a better website that gives users the information they need, when they need it.

The benefits of UX and UI:

- **More traffic to your website:** the easier a site is to use and navigate, the more it's likely to be shown to users in search engine results and the more its content will be shared on social media by customers/users. This all leads to more website traffic.
- **Increased retention:** if information is easy to find and comprehend, users are more likely to be repeat users and customers.
- **Increased average time on site:** when users can find products and/or information they are interested in, they are more likely to browse related content and product pages as well. (This is why linking to related pages are so important).
- **Evoke an emotional connection with your audience:** by playing up the design and usability to reach users on an emotional level, they will feel a greater connection with your brand and products. This can lead to better customer loyalty, a more positive brand sentiment, and possibly more conversions. Non-profits or brands with a cause like TOMS shoes are good examples of this. TOMS shoes donates a pair of shoes for every pair bought, leading every customer to feel like they are making a difference in the world whenever they are making a purchase.
- **Increased conversions:** if a user is frustrated with a website and can't find what they are looking for, they will likely leave the website immediately, sometimes after mere seconds. This leads to higher bounce rates, abandoned shopping carts, and high exit rates on conversion pages. By providing the user with a better experience, they are more likely to stay on the site and make a purchase or complete another conversion.
- **Return rates:** online users value their time and want convenience. As a result, they are much more likely to

visit or buy repeatedly from a website that saves them time and has high quality information or products. They are also more likely to recommend the company or website to their colleagues and loved ones.

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<https://www.growthfunnel.io/ux-tips-for-maximum-conversion/>

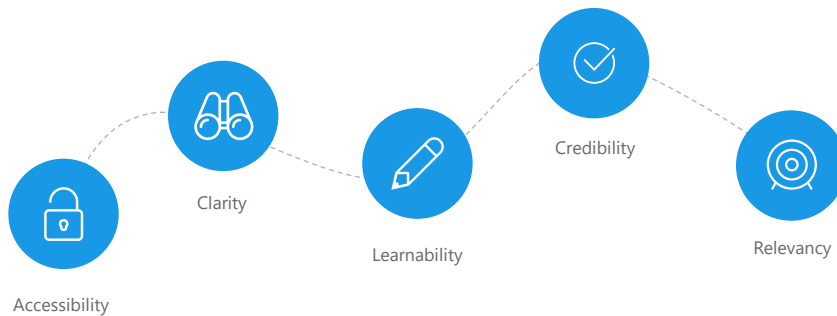
<https://www.orbitmedia.com/blog/website-improvement-tactics-for-ux/>

<http://www.convinceandconvert.com/digital-marketing/improve-user-experience/>



UX and UI Principles

The five key principles



[REF.] 2.4.2.3

[LECTURER NOTES]

The principles of UX and UI are:

- **Accessibility:** ensuring that the website is easy to use for any user, including vision or mobility impaired users. This should follow w3 guidelines (referenced below) but also follow design best practices to make text easy to read and making sure any design elements aren't interfering with the user experience.
- **Clarity:** the website is easy to understand and its purpose is clear – this should be key in all pages that are built. While a user could likely take many paths on your website, the goal is to build funnels that are taking them toward completing a conversion. For instance, on an e-commerce site, the home page might have different categories, like Women's, Men's, and Children's clothing. If they click on Women's, they should ideally be then taken to a page where they can search or narrow down into more niche Women's categories, like Pants, Shoes, Dresses, or Accessories. This journey should be as clear as possible.
- **Learnability:** the website provides valuable information that answers the user's query or need. In addition to offering products or services that they are interested in, the website should also offer additional resources that allow the user to learn more about the industry, the company's offerings, history, and more. For instance, a clothing store that's been open since 1912 could have a page that shares the history of the company and the building its in. This makes the company feel more personal to the user and also gives them some more background on how its run, which helps increase brand trust.
- **Credibility:** the website uses reliable information from reputable sources to prove its point or educate the user. In addition to establishing its own credibility through reviews, history, awards, or recognitions, the website design itself provides credibility by being easy to use and find information on.
- **Relevancy:** the website layout and content is kept up-to-date with best practices for the industry, making it relevant to the user. If there is an outdated design or information, it decreases user trust and brand sentiment.

[REFERENCES]

<https://www.w3.org/standards/webdesign/accessibility>

<https://conversionxl.com/blog/website-credibility-checklist-factors/>



Assess UX

What should you test?



[REF.] 2.4.3.1, 2.4.3.2, 2.4.3.3, 2.4.3.4, 2.4.3.5

[LECTURER NOTES]

- **User intent:** what is the user looking to accomplish on a page? (Include examples of a few different intent actions, such as an e-commerce website and a landing page to sign up for an email newsletter).
- **Points of friction:** what is stopping a user from completing a desired action on your website? Places to examine include pages that have the highest bounce rate, abandoned shopping carts, landing pages that do not convert, CTAs on pages that aren't clicked.

Causes of friction include:

- Hard-to-understand content
 - Disruptive design elements (e.g. the color yellow may turn some buyers away)
 - Shipping costs are too high
 - Order fulfillment time too long
 - Forms too complex and time-consuming
-
- **Influence of web design on UX:** how bad design can create a bad user experience, even if the website is useful and the company is well regarded. This could include off-putting or outdated colors or design elements, hidden CTAs, not enough content about products and services on the home page.
 - **Navigation:** navigation layout and process can vary—should it be collapsible (like many mobile navigation layouts are) or should navigation expand with mouse hovers? Additionally, testing nesting of pages is important. E.g., where sub-pages go in the navigation—would the products page get more clicks if it was on the main navigation instead of as a subpage under “about us”?



Assess UX

Examples of bad website design



- No menu
- Text hard to read
- No benefits to users listed
- Bad CTA
- Not modern
- Not mobile-friendly

[REF.] 2.4.3.1, 2.4.3.2, 2.4.3.3, 2.4.3.4, 2.4.3.5

[LECTURER NOTES]

This is a website with a poor UX and UI because:

- There is no menu so the user can't get to other pages on the site
- The background and text contrast could be difficult to read
- It doesn't lead with how it benefits the user
- The Facebook button is leading the user away from the website (where they make a conversion)
- The layout is not modern or mobile-friendly, so it's more difficult to use

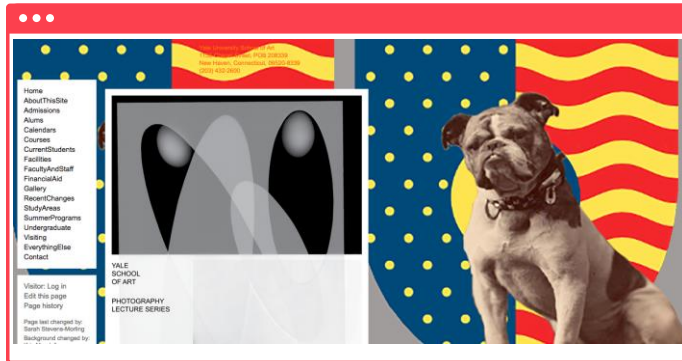
[REFERENCES]

Cloud9walkers.com



Assess UX

Examples of bad website design



- Text hard to read
- Not mobile-friendly
- Menu hard to read
- No CTAs

[REF.] 2.4.3.1, 2.4.3.2, 2.4.3.3, 2.4.3.4, 2.4.3.5

[LECTURER NOTES]

This is a website with a poor UX and UI because:

- The red text at the top of the page with contact information is hard to read
- The site isn't mobile-friendly so it's hard to use on different devices
- The menu navigation is hard to read because the words run together, so users may get frustrated or confused
- There's no CTAs, so users don't know what to do with the information that is on the site.

[REFERENCES]

Art.yale.edu



Improve UX

The importance of proper website navigation



Gets more clicks
and traffic



Increases time on
site and decreases
bounce rate



Makes it easier for
search engines to
crawl the site

[REF.] 2.4.4.1

[LECTURER NOTES]

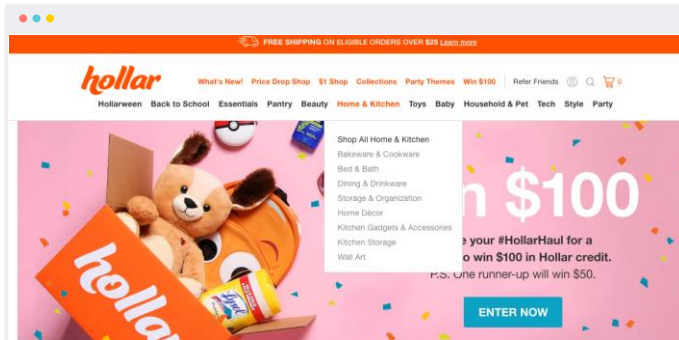
Good website navigation:

- Gets more clicks and traffic to interior sub-pages. This can help the user get around the site more easily and find pages they may have not been able to find on their own before.
- Increases time on site and decreases bounce rate because users can find what they are looking for. This gives users a better impression of the company and its website and makes it more likely that they will make a purchase or complete a conversion.
- Makes it easier for search engines to crawl the site for better indexing. This leads to better visibility in search results.



Improve UX

Improving user experience through navigation



- Clear text
- Categories are broken out in a way that makes sense
- Drop down menu

[REF.] 2.4.4.1

[LECTURER NOTES]

This is an example of good e-commerce website navigation because it is black text on a white background, the categories are broken out in a way that makes sense, and there is a drop-down to each top navigation item that lets users go straight to the most specific category page they are looking for.

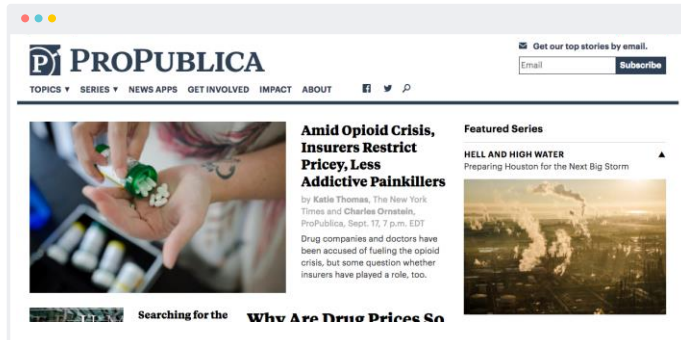
[REFERENCES]

Hollar.com



Improve UX

Improving user experience through navigation



- Clear text
- Effective CTAs
- Content is listed first in the navigation menu

[REF.] 2.4.4.1

[LECTURER NOTES]

This is an example of good website navigation because it is dark text on a white background, there are CTAs in the navigation and there is a red button in the top right corner (key since this is a non-profit), and what is most important (the content), is listed first in the navigation (topics). Users who go to this website want to learn more about the issues in a non-partisan, well-researched way, and that's what this site does.

[REFERENCES]

Propublica.org



Improve UX

The importance of a responsive website across different devices



Much better
user experience



Higher
preference in
search results



Better design
across devices

[REF.] 2.4.4.2

[LECTURER NOTES]

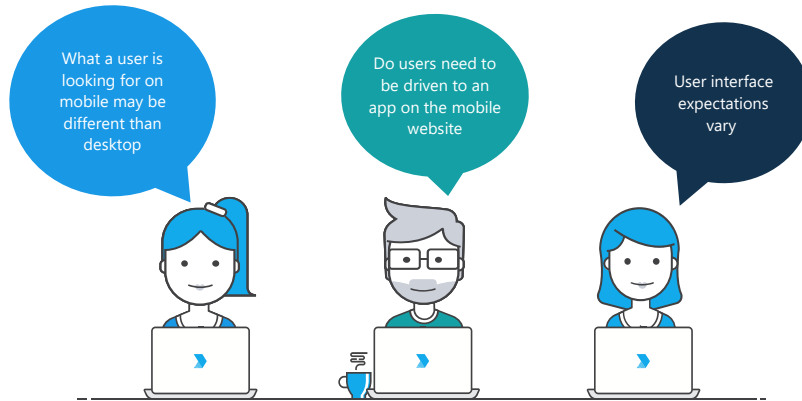
A responsive website across desktop, mobile, and tablet devices is better because:

- **Much better user experience:** users are able to see all the information on the page and they aren't having to pinch the screen, squint, or try to see something that is cut off. It also makes the text easier to read and the navigation easier to use.
- **Higher preference in search results:** as mentioned earlier, Google announced that they are giving preference to websites that are mobile-friendly in search results over sites that aren't.
- **Better design across devices:** this is good for branding and credibility, as it makes the site look higher quality. This, in turn, is a reflection of the business.



Improve UX

User expectations and intent differ across different devices



[REF.] 2.4.4.3

[LECTURER NOTES]

User expectations and intent differ across different devices:

- What a user is looking for on mobile may be different than desktop: A/B test placement of contact information, reviews, services, and CTAs across different devices to see what gets more clicks.
- Do users need to be driven to an app on the mobile website: e.g. would your app work better than the website on mobile? For some e-commerce sites, like Amazon, that is usually the case because the app has more features, like searching by photo and faster product page and search result load times.
- User interface expectations vary: on mobile you need call links for the phone number and the number formatting for fields that ask for phone number or specific number. This makes the mobile site easier to use.



Improve UX

Creating the perfect CTA so users know what to expect

- Use action words
- Create urgency and scarcity
- Minimize risk
- Focus on value
- Invite readers inside
- Get personal
- Foster curiosity and anticipation
- Show benefits and social proof



[REF.] 2.4.4.4

[LECTURER NOTES]

How to create the perfect CTA:

- **Use action words:** this inspires users to take action. Examples are: Click now, Buy now, Get ___, Order, Purchase, Contact.
- **Create urgency and scarcity:** only offer things for a limited time or in limited quantities so users feel more pressured to buy right away. Something like, "Only 22 books remain" or "This sale only lasts for 24 hours," or use a feature like a countdown timer to show when it will no longer be available.
- **Minimize risk:** offer money-back guarantees so users feel more confident about making a purchase. Users will feel like it's not so permanent and that they have more of a choice.
- **Focus on value:** offer a list or honest perceived value (e.g. "Buy now for only \$49, a \$499 value") so customers know what they are getting for their conversion or purchase.
- **Invite readers inside:** give them an exclusive look or offer that they won't get anywhere else. This makes them feel more exclusive and they feel like they are part of an exclusive club.
- **Get personal:** use mass personalization on website and in email campaigns, like mentioning users by name, listing their location, or using retargeting.
- **Foster curiosity and anticipation:** make sure the user can interact with the page through elements like, "click to read more" or "see what discount you get." You could also set a countdown timer until a certain sale goes live.
- **Show benefits and social proof:** testimonials, comments on social media, photos of customers using the products, and other forms of social proof show potential customers that others enjoy the product. Listing out the benefits and what you get with the purchase also breaks down the hesitancy to buy.

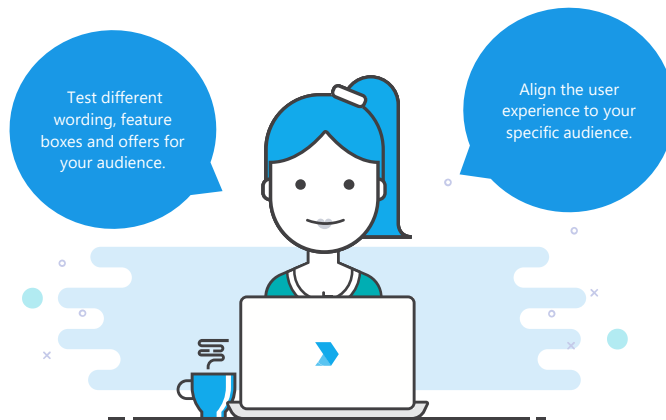
[REFERENCES]

<http://optinmonster.com/how-to-create-the-perfect-call-to-action/>



Improve UX

Selecting the right CTA for your audience



[REF.] 2.4.4.4, 2.4.4.5

[LECTURER NOTES]

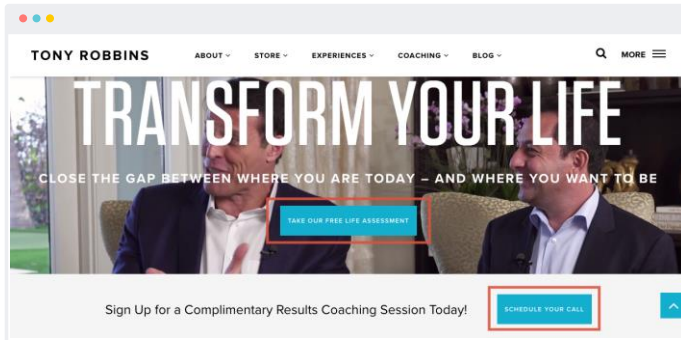
User expectations and intent differ across different devices and audiences. Thus, you should shape your CTAs and user experience accordingly.

- Select the best CTAs for your audience through testing different wording, feature boxes, offers, and more. (These may also vary by device). For example, "Call us today to get an appointment" with a link to call directly on mobile would likely get more clicks on mobile than a similar link on desktop.
- Align the user-experience to your specific audience: some audiences want a simpler experience, while others expect something more complex. For example, an older audience that is above age 60 would likely appreciate larger font sizes and bigger headers, with less animations since they read slower. Conversely, a tech-savvy crowd would expect more innovative and forward-thinking web design, like interactive elements (quizzes, games, etc.).



Improve UX

Optimizing CTAs for your specific audience



[REF.] 2.4.4.4, 2.4.4.5

[LECTURER NOTES]

These 2 CTAs are good for Tony Robbins' audience because they focus on taking action to change their life, which is something that led them to the site in the first place.

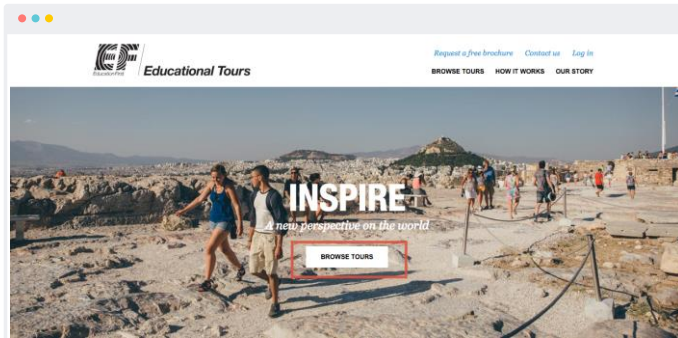
[REFERENCES]

TonyRobbins.com



Improve UX

Optimizing CTAs for your specific audience



[REF.] 2.4.4.4, 2.4.4.5

[LECTURER NOTES]

This CTA works because it's easy to find, simple, and will be what their specific audience is most likely to want to know when first going to their website. They likely don't want country guides or blog posts; they want to know what tours EF Tours has available first.

The format also appeals to their audience – it has a photo of a global location, the text pulls them toward exploring the world, which is what EF Tours offers its customers.

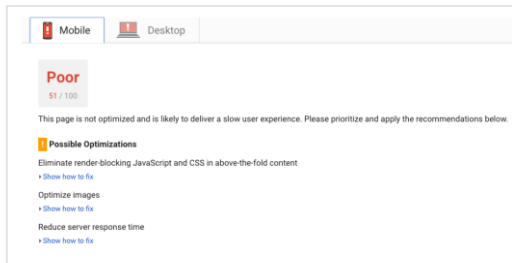
[REFERENCES]

EFTours.com



Optimize a Website

Page speed



- Page speed is a ranking factor
- Mobile users are much more likely to leave if it takes longer than **3 seconds**
- Page speed is an indicator of other issues with the site

[REF.] 2.4.5.1

[LECTURER NOTES]

Why is page speed for websites important for website optimization and SEO?

- Page speed is a ranking factor for Google: they announced that for their mobile-first index, page speed will be a factor.
- Mobile users, for instance, are much more likely to leave a page if it takes longer than 3 seconds to load. This is one of the reasons why Google invented AMP – to cache pages so they load faster.
- Page speed is an indicator of other issues with the site such as bugs in code, plugins aren't updated, some interactive features or images that need to be compressed or removed.

[REFERENCES]

<http://www.marketingdive.com/news/google-53-of-mobile-users-abandon-sites-that-take-over-3-seconds-to-load/426070/>

<https://developers.google.com/speed/pagespeed/insights/>

<https://moz.com/blog/how-to-achieve-100100-with-the-google-page-speed-test-tool>

<https://gtmetrix.com/>

<http://searchengineland.com/mobile-page-speed-important-not-yet-seo-270474>

<https://yoast.com/page-speed-ranking-factor/>

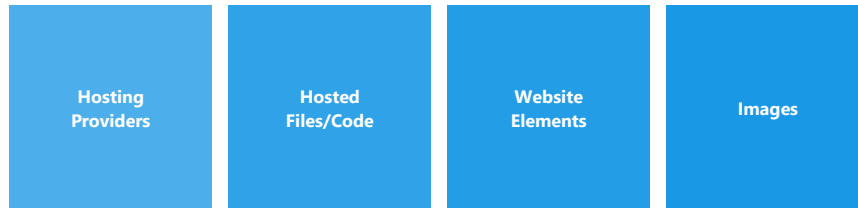
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Accelerated_Mobile_Pages

Screenshot from google pagespeed insight tool



Optimize a Website

How hosting and website design affects page speed and optimization



[REF.] 2.4.5.2

[LECTURER NOTES]

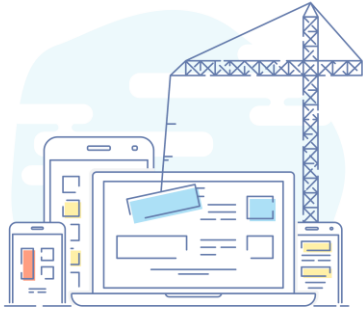
Hosting and Website Design affects page speed in the following ways:

- Some hosting providers are faster than others, some private hosting options make websites load faster (highly dependent on the provider and your own website).
- Hosted files/code: some of the code and files on websites cause them to load more slowly. This could include several plugins that are outdated or unnecessary.
- Website elements: some elements, like widgets, animations, or sliders can affect page speed. If they take a long time to run (which can happen especially if they are outdated), it will affect page speed. Some elements end up not loading at all, which can affect the website layout and optimization, as mentioned below.
- Image sizes: if image sizes are too big, this can affect page speed, because they take longer to download and display on the website as it loads.



Optimize a Website

How hosting and website design affects website optimization



- Elements that don't load correctly lead to other "broken" areas of the site
- Errors can affect what information is shown to user

[REF.] 2.4.5.3

[LECTURER NOTES]

How does website design errors affect website optimization?

- Some elements don't load correctly, leading to other "broken" areas of the site. E.g., if a slider is broken, the animations and images won't load.
- Errors can affect what information is shown. E.g., if navigation doesn't work, the user can't properly access different areas of a site.



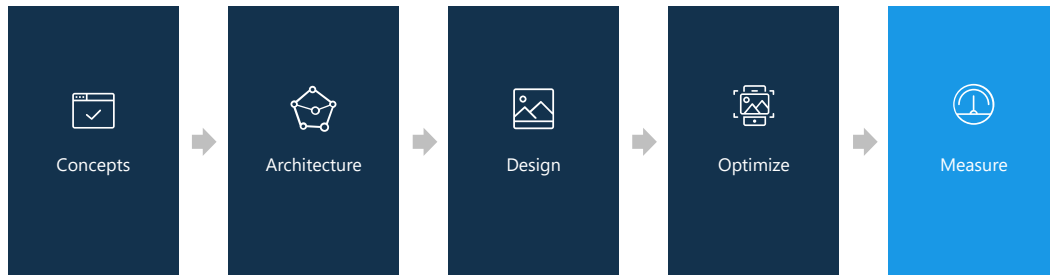
Summary

Optimize


- UX is user experience, which is experience through UI, or the user interface, which is where the user interacts with the website.
- UX and UI can drive more traffic, sales, time on site, and return rates.
- UX and UI principles are accessibility, clarity, learnability, credibility, and relevancy.
- When assessing user experience, make sure to test user intent, points of friction, web design, and navigation to determine what users like best.
- Improve the user experience through better website navigation, a responsive design, better CTAs and UX that is built for your target audience.
- Page speed is an SEO ranking factor and may be an indicator of other site errors, which can cause a bad user experience.



Website Optimization





 WEBSITE OPTIMIZATION

Measure

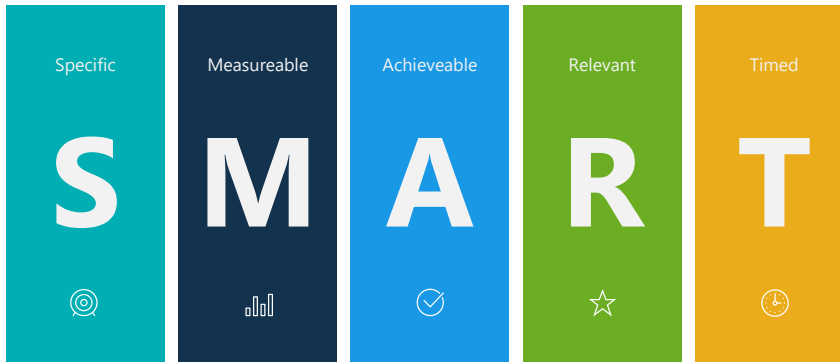
 AGENDA

1. Website Metrics
2. Evaluate a Website
3. Monitor and Report



Website Metrics

SMART goals



[REF.] 2.5.1.1

[LECTURER NOTES]

Your goals must be SMART:

- **Specific:** the goal should be as specific as possible so they are clear and easily-understood. "Get more website traffic" isn't as clear as "get 10% more new website visitors to product pages".
- **Measureable:** the goal should be able to be measured with concrete numbers and data, so you can prove that you've met it. Use a percentage or set number.
- **Achievable:** the goal should be attainable and not impossible to complete in the time allotted. For instance, a new business setting a goal of \$1 million dollars in 12 months likely isn't achievable. But maybe \$100,000 is, depending on the product.
- **Results-Focused:** the goal should focus on the end factor, not the process to get there. For instance, "be more organized" isn't a SMART goal, but "streamline work process to work 5 less hours per week" is better.
- **Time-Bound:** the goal should have a time deadline. This should be reflective of its attainability within that time frame. What can happen in a week is likely different than a quarter.

[REFERENCES]

http://www.hr.virginia.edu/uploads/documents/media/Writing_SMART_Goals.pdf



Website Metrics

The most useful metrics for your website



Conversion Rate



Return Rate



Referral Source



Cart Abandonment Rate



Time On Site



Bounce Rate

[REF.] 2.5.1.2

[LECTURER NOTES]

The most important metrics for your website are (in order):

1. **Conversion rate:** the percentage of converting users to overall users on the website. A conversion varies by website and could be a sale or something like a newsletter sign up or e-book download.
2. **Return rate:** the percentage of users that are returning users to your website. This is tracked by sales and tracking cookies.
3. **Referral source:** this is the website or medium (like an app) that led users to your website. This is important for learning how users are finding out about your website, which can help you decide how to spend your efforts. For instance, if you get the majority of your social media traffic from Facebook and only 15 visits a month from Instagram, it makes sense to spend more time on Facebook content (or to experiment with Instagram ads to get your referrals up from that channel).
4. **Cart abandonment rate:** the percentage of users that leave your website and "abandon" their online shopping cart without checking out. The average is 60-80%, according to Wikipedia.
5. **Time on site:** this is how long a user spends on your website.
6. **Bounce rate:** this is the percentage of users that leave after only visiting one page on your website (which isn't always the homepage). The lower the percentage, the better.

[REFERENCES]

<https://contently.com/strategist/2015/08/18/how-loyal-are-your-customers-this-metric-has-the-answer/>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abandonment_rate

<http://help.analyticsedge.com/googleanalytics/misunderstood-metrics-time-on-page-session-duration/>



Evaluate a Website

How do you know if a website is effective?



Is it hitting its metric goals?



Is the website viewable and accessible from a variety of different devices?



Can someone accurately complete a task without confusion?



Is all desired information included?

[REF.] 2.5.2.1

[LECTURER NOTES]

A website is effective if:

- It is hitting its metric goals, as defined using the SMART goal creation process and then assigned specific data points to track.
- A colleague or random test reviewer can accurately complete a task without confusion (e.g. "Buy two shirts in men's Small and women's Large"). If there is confusion, note where and why on the website the tester is confused so you know what needs to be fixed.
- The website is viewable and accessible from a variety of different devices, tested manually, including tablet, iOS and Android phones, and different computers (Mac and PC).
- All desired information is included: there aren't any common questions or product information that needs to be included on the website and it isn't.

[REFERENCES]

<https://www.ox.ac.uk/public-affairs/making-effective-websites?wssl=1>

<http://www.eyequant.com/blog/the-3-ws-a-simple-framework-for-effective-visual-hierarchy-on-websites>



Evaluate a Website

Website optimization tools



[REF.] 2.5.2.2

[LECTURER NOTES]

Available resources to make sure your website is following the latest best practices in website optimization include:

- Google Analytics for metrics testing
- Fetch as Google tool in Google Search Console
- SEO tools that audit your website, like PowerMapper, SEMRush, or SE Ranking

[REFERENCES]

<https://try.powermapper.com/Demo/SortSite>

<https://support.google.com/webmasters/answer/6066468?hl=en>

<https://seranking.com/>

<https://semrush.com>



Monitor and Report

Setting up regular monitoring on Google Analytics

#1

Create automated reporting and/or custom dashboards

#2

Build a tracking spreadsheet that will show progress

[REF.] 2.5.3.1, 2.5.3.2

[LECTURER NOTES]

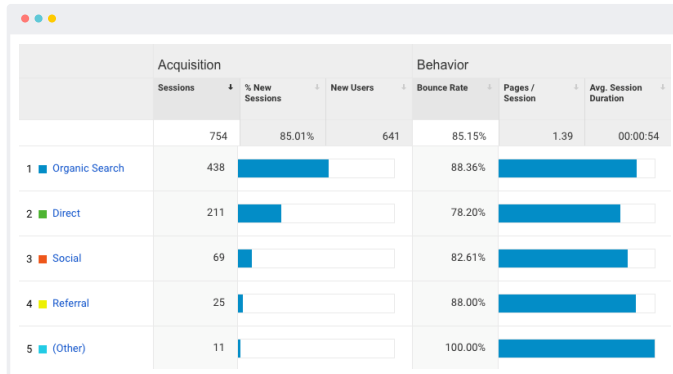
Determine effectiveness of a website by setting up regular reporting on Google Analytics to track metrics and goals:

- Create automated reporting and/or custom dashboards in Google Analytics (or other reporting software)
- Build a tracking spreadsheet that will show progress from month to month



Monitor and Report

Examples of website metric monitoring



[REF.] 2.5.3.1, 2.5.3.2

[LECTURER NOTES]

Here's an example of referral sources for a website in the last 28 days. By tracking website data, we are able to determine whether or not a website is performing to the best of its ability. Poor metrics or unmet goals mean that the website needs to be further optimized.

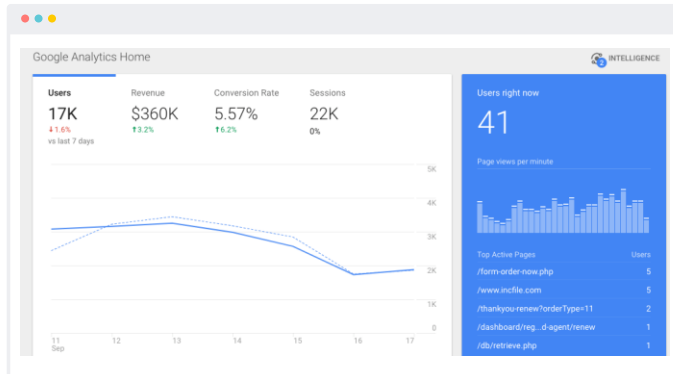
[REFERENCES]

<https://analytics.google.com>



Monitor and Report

Examples of website metric monitoring



[REF.] 2.5.3.1, 2.5.3.2

[LECTURER NOTES]

Here's an example of the Google Analytics dashboard for an e-commerce website for the last 28 days.

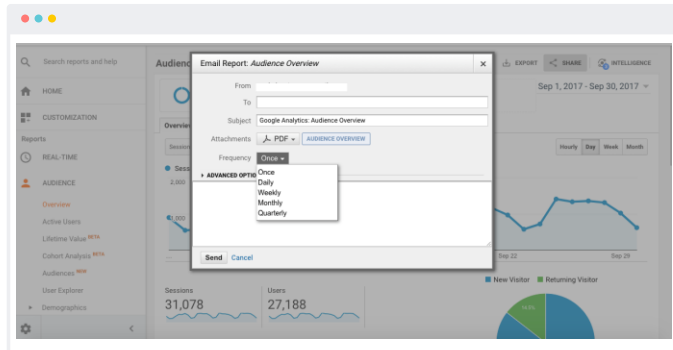
[REFERENCES]

<https://analytics.google.com>



Monitor and Report

Create a schedule of metrics reporting and action implementation



[REF.] 2.5.4.2

[LECTURER NOTES]

Create a regular schedule of metrics reporting and action implementation based off metric results by having a dedicated time monthly and quarterly with the involved team members to set one to three specific goals for the next month or quarter, based off results. Then repeat the process of testing, recording, making changes, which then repeats on a regular basis. Website optimization is always a continuous process!

To schedule a metrics report in Google analytics, go to the dashboard you want to view. In the example, it is showing the Audience Overview. Click on Share in the top right corner. From there, you can decide the frequency of the report, the format, and who you want to send it to. PDF is the easiest to read version. Send the report to involved team members as needed.

[REFERENCES]

<http://google.com/analytics>



Monitor and Report

Optimize your website based on goal performance

#1

Examine which metrics are down and their corresponding pages

#2

A/B test page elements to see if that positively affects metrics

#3

Make the change permanent if an increase is reported

[REF.] 2.5.4.1

[LECTURER NOTES]

Adjust website optimization accordingly, based on goal performance:

1. Examine which metrics are down and their corresponding pages: for instance, if users always abandon their cart at the payment page, test different payment options or processes to see if that decreases cart abandonment rate.
2. A/B test page elements to see if that positively affects metrics: often times, more links or different CTA buttons or text can lead to more clicks, conversions, and time on site.
3. Make the change permanent if an increase is reported: if you see a positive increase, you know your change worked. End your A/B test and go with the change that worked best.



Summary

Measure

- Choose SMART goals to determine what metrics to track.
- The most important metrics for your website include conversion rate, return rate, referral source, and cart abandonment rate.
- Evaluate website effectiveness by having test users complete tasks, tracking goals, making sure website is accessible across devices, and includes all necessary information.
- Use tools like Google Analytics, Google Search Console, SEMrush, and SE Ranking to track goals and data.
- Do more A/B testing and optimize website further depending on goal and metric outcomes each month or quarter.



Module complete. Well done