WP
LEARNING LAB

THE ULTIMATE 17-POINT

# WordPress Launch Checklist

# Quick Overview

Once you have your WordPress site is complete and it's waiting to be revealed to the world this is the checklist you grab to make sure you've crossed all the t's and dotted all the i's.

The full checklist in point form is on the next page. Following that I go into detail on each point.

Wherever possible I've included videos to help explain complex topics. On some pages you can view video right in the PDF on there are multiple links to videos on YouTube.

If you have any questions please let me know. Contact details are at the very end of this document.

# The List

This is the 17-Point Pre-Launch Checklist in all its' glory!

- ☐ 1. Back It Up
- ☐ 2. Double Check Your Content
- ☐ 3. Update To The Latest Version Of Wordpress
- ☐ 4. Update Plugins and Themes
- ☐ 5. Make Sure The Site Is Responsive
- ☐ 6. Cross-Browser Compatibility
- ☐ 7. Secure Your Site
- ☐ 8. Change The Admin Email
- ☐ 9. Make Sure Your Site is "Crawlable"
- ☐ 10. Check Page Load Speed
- ☐ 11. Compress All Images
- ☐ 12. Check For Broken Links
- ☐ 13. Check All Internal and External Links
- ☐ 14. White Label The Site (Optional)
- ☐ 15. Check For Proper SEO
- ☐ 16. Disable Coming Soon Page
- ☐ 17. Go Live!!!

# About The Author

Hi, I'm Bjorn and I build websites. But that's just my day job.

What I really am is a husband to a beautiful woman, father to three amazing children, owner of a wonderful dog and full-time enjoyer of life.

The reason I can enjoy life full-time with my family is because of the websites I've built.

Let's start you on this journey by applying this checklist to launch your website!

If you have any questions feel free to email me at bjorn@wplearninglab.com or join our **private Facebook group** or leave a comment on any of my **YouTube videos**.

Let's get started!

*Bjorn Allpas*

WPLearningLab.com

"You don't have to be great to start, but you have to start to be great."

Zig Ziglar

It's Go Time!

Bjorn

# #1 Back It Up

Take it from me, the fastest way to the loonie bin is creating an awesome website, not backing it up, having something go wrong and losing everything.

There is no excuse not to backup your website these days because it's so easy. Just install a plugin and run it.

The one I use and recommend is WPVivid.

In the video below I give you all the details. You can play the video right in this PDF!

**Pro Tip!** *There is a free version and paid version of the plugin. The paid version is way better than the free version. But here's the trick.* **Go through this link** *and sign up for the 14 day free trial. When the trial runs out you get to keep the full-featured premium version of the plugin! The catch is you don't get the updates, but you could do the same trick again to get updates ;)*

# #2 Double Check Your Content

Take a minute or two or a half hour before launch and double check that all your content is structured as it should be.

Are all the posts and pages there? Are the **permalinks set properly**? Are the post **tags and categories correct**? Are the submission forms working? You get the idea.

**Pro Tip!** *Do your testing in a different browser so that you can do it while NOT signed into your WordPress admin area. You can be logged in one browser and logged out in the other. That way you can see your site how a regular visitor would.*

# #3 Update To The Latest Version Of WordPress

The latest releases of WordPress have security patches, maintenance updates and other goodies that help your site run more effectively.

So, make sure you update before your site goes live.

**Pro Tip!** *Make sure you update your site whenever there is an update available. The #1 way WordPress sites get hacked is WordPress core files, plugins or themes not being updated with the latest security patches.*

Check out this video for 9 more common security mistakes I see over and over again on WordPress sites.

# #4 Upgrade Plugins and Themes

Just like you should update WordPress itself, make sure you update plugins and themes. Like I said in #3, the most common entry vectors for hackers are security exploits found in out-of-date WordPress core files, plugin files and theme files.

Long story short, update before you go live AND update whenever an update is available. If you have lots of sites, or plan on creating lots of sites, check out this **free plugin (full tutorial)** that will help manage them all including 1-click updates of.

There's nothing worse than an update going wrong (which happens sometimes). Make sure you backup your website files and database before you update WordPress core files, plugins or themes.

Refer back to tip #1 if you need help with backing up your site.

# #5 Make Sure The Site Is Responsive

A responsive website is one whose layout and contents change based on the screen size of the visitor's device. If a website is fully responsive it will be readable and usable on any modern gizmo.

I know that sounds like a given, but it's actually a very difficult thing to get right. Even in the most popular page builders like Elementor, you need to go through each page or page template to make sure it looks as it should on tablets and mobile phones.

If you're not using a pge builder, then you can test responsiveness using Google's Mobile Friendliness test. Here's a video tutorial on how to run this test properly.

# #6 Cross-Browser Compatibility

This type of testing ensures that your website works and is usable in as many different browsers as possible (preferably all of them). If you have multiple browsers installed on your system then you can test in those.

It's smart to use online tools to help with testing. Check out http://browsershots.org/. Simply enter your URL on that website and check the box beside the browsers you want to test. Currently you can test in over 150 browsers and browser versions!

Here's a video tutorial for it:

# #7 Secure Your Site

Over 50,000 WordPress sites are hacked every day, so it's VERY important that you take your site security seriously.

You might think that since your site is new and has no traffic hackers don't want it. That's the case. In the video below I show you 11 reasons hackers hack websites.
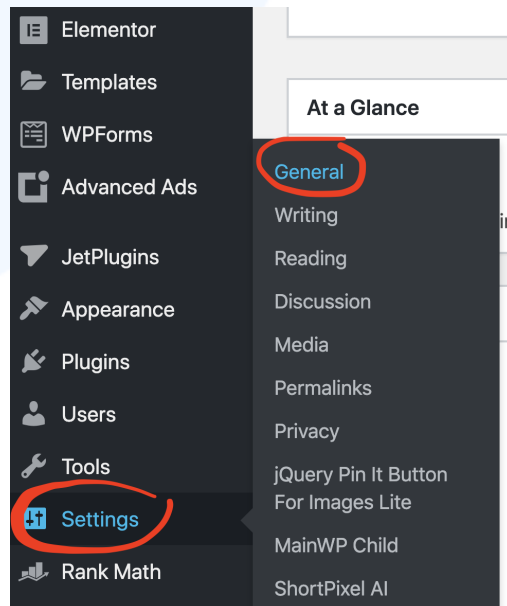
A number of those reasons don't require your site to have traffic.



If you want a crash course on security your site, check out my WP Security Action Plan.  You can get it for just $7  (regular $47) through this **special link**.

# #8 Change The Admin Email

The admin email is found inside your WordPress admin panel. On the left hand side menu hover over Settings then click General. You will find the admin email address on that page.



A lot of plugins will send notifications to that email address. So make sure it's one that you monitor. There have also been issues with changing the admin email address. **Check out this tutorial**

# #9 Make Sure Your Site Is 'Crawlable'

Inside your WordPress admin panel under Settings and then Reading, there is a little known setting that causes a lot of frustration.

It is designed to stop search engines from crawling and indexing your website during the design phase. If you forget to uncheck the box labelled *"Discourage search engines from indexing this site"* during your prelaunch you may get very little search engine traffic and not know why. MAKE SURE IT'S UNCHECKED!
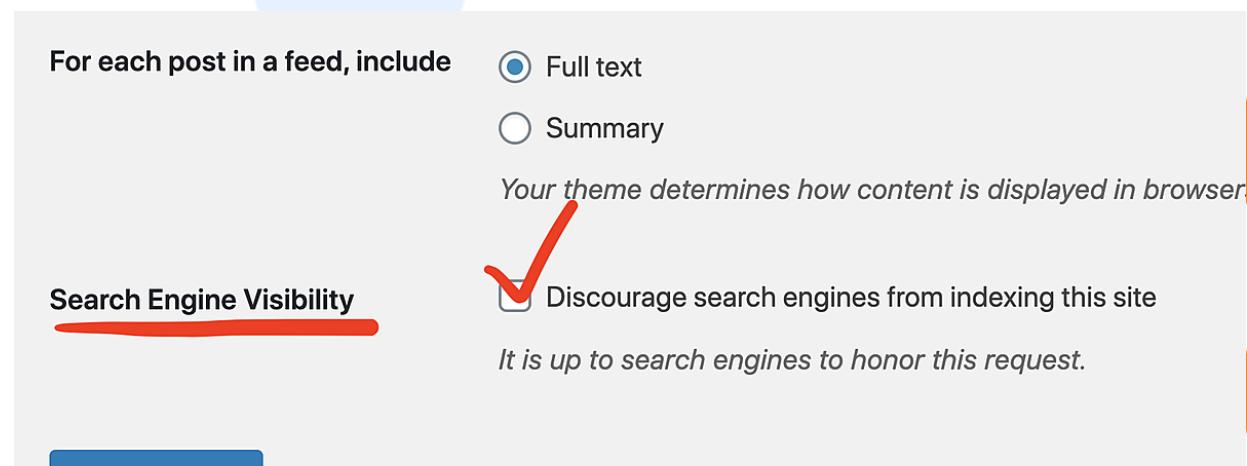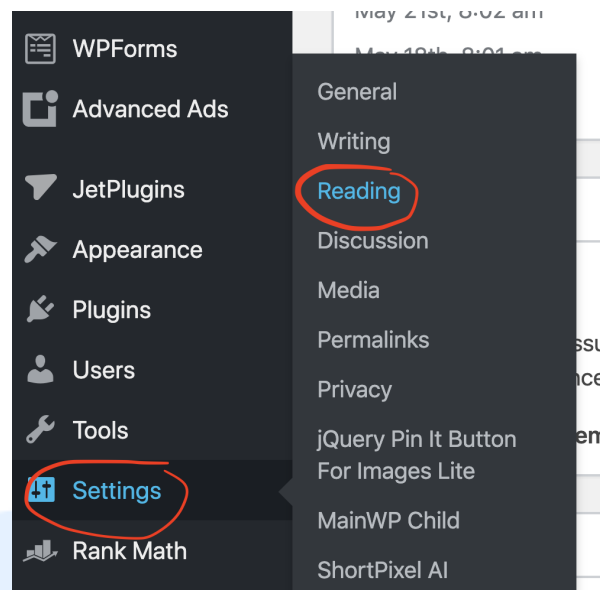
# #10 Check Page Load Speed

Use Google Page Speed Insights or GTMetrix to improve your page. It's good for user experience and site speed is a ranking factor in Google.

On my YouTube channel, I have a **whole playlist of videos** that will help you speed up your website.

I've included the most-viewed of the videos in that playlist below. It's the most-viewed, so it must be the most valuable!

# #11 Compress All Images

A quick and easy way to improve page speed is to compress all of the images on your website (JPGs, PNG, GIF, WebP). You can do this manually or you can install a plugin.

The only plugin I use and recommend for this is ShortPixel. The video below gives you a full overview of how ShortPixel works and how it can help improve your site speed.

**BONUS FOR YOU:** *ShortPixel has a free and a paid version. The only difference between them is how many images you can compress in a month.*

*The free version allows you to compress 100 images per month. So if you're uploading less than to your site, then the free version is perfect for you. Plus, if you go through my* **affiliate link***, you'll receive a bonus 50% more compressions per month forever, even on the free version.*

*So you'll get 150 compressions a month if you* **go through my link here***. If you decide to upgrade to a paid plan in the future then you'll get 50% more compressions as well because you went through my link. That's a win-win :)*

# #12 Check For Broken Links

This is a very important step. It is easy for links to break when you are doing lots of last-minute changes before your site goes live.

When a link "breaks" it means that the page a link was pointing isn't there. When this happens the visitor will see a 404 error. That's why broken links are also called 404's.

Why does it matter if you have some 404's? Two reasons, your visitors aren't getting what they're looking for and Google doesn't like to see lots of 404's on a website.

**So we need to make sure there aren't any.**

I recommend that you install the **Broken Link Checker Plugin** to find all the broken links on your website and fix them before you launch your site.

Before you do that, watch the video below where I show you a fancy free plugin that will monitor your site 404's once it's live and automatically fix them.

# #13 Check All Internal & External Links

You probably did this is in the testing environment, but it's always good to do one last pre-launch check to make sure that all links are going where they are supposed to.

The link checker from the last point only checks if a link works; it doesn't check whether it's going to the right place or not.

Make sure all links that leave your website are set to open in a new tab or a new window. That way your site stays open and the visitor may come back to it.

You can also set your links to rel="nofollow" which means that your page won't pass any SEO power to other websites. There's a big in the SEO community debate about whether this really matters.

And this debate has been going on for years.

Below is an older video from Matt Cutts (Head of Web Spam at Google at the time of this recording). He shares his opinion on the "nofollow" debate.

# #14 White Label The Site (Optional)

There are various ways you can make WordPress not look like WordPress. This is useful when you're doing client work and you don't want your client to know that you're using WordPress. Or you may want to provide them with a custom WordPress admin experience.

One way to do this is with an Admin Theme. **Here's an example on Code Canyon**.  That one you have to pay for, but there are also free options. Here's a **video I made showing some free admin theme options**.

You can also code your admin theme manually using CSS. I have **a video for that here**.

And lastly, if you're using the Elementor page builder or Beaver Builder, here's the video you'll want to check out:

# #15 Check For Proper SEO

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SEO stands for Search Engine Optimization. It's a fancy term that simply refers to getting visitors from search engines to your site.

There is a lot that goes into making sure your website is SEO friendly. In fact, I have two courses on it **here** and **here**.

The first step is making sure your website is 'crawlable' (see checklist item #9 in this document).

Following that, you'll need to make sure your permalinks are set to **/%postname%/.**

Then, you'll need to do topic research for all the pages you publish to make sure that you are targeting topics that actually being searched for in search engines.

With your traffic-getting topics in hand, make sure you focus on that the topic is in the title of the page or post, in the URL and in the content.

If you want to learn more about SEO check out the two courses I mention earlier **here** and **here**.

With good SEO, this is what your traffic curve can look like (this it taken from one of my new niche sites. It is monthly unique visitors from Google and the site is only 4 months old.)
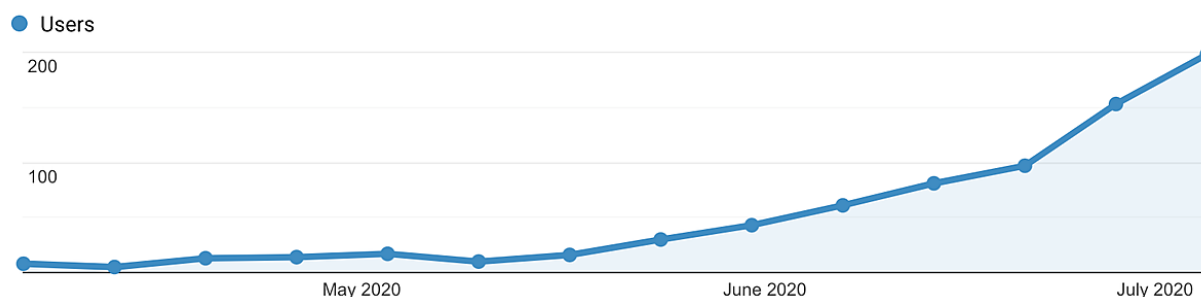
# #16 Disable Coming Soon Page

We're finally here.

This is the last step.

You've crossed all your t's and dotted all your i's.

Now it's go time!

If you have a coming soon page this is the time to turn it off. A coming soon page is commonly used to develop a site on a live server while it's hidden from public view. Your client's can view the site while you're developing it this way.

Find out how to do this **in this video**.

If you are developing your site on your computer and you need to migrate it to your hosting account then I have a whole playlist for you.

You'll only need one of the videos in the playlist, but there are so many variations to migrating sites that I made videos for the different ways to do it. **This is the most popular of my migration videos**.

And finally, if you don't have a hosting account yet, I recommend SiteGround. Why I recommend them can't fit into this small space. That's why I created **this blog post**. Check it out if you're shopping for a host.

# #17 Your Site Is Live!!!

This isn't really a step, but it should be celebrated. Congrats on making it this far on your journey towards a successful website :-)

Now it's time to kick back with your favorite drink and celebrate this moment...

When you're done celebrating, it's time to get back to work because once your website is live, that's when the real work begins!

See the next page for the very next step you should take on your site.