If you wanted to improve the performance of a web app you were working on, what are some things you would look at / try?

When looking to improve the performance of a web app, I generally would start with the database. And so, I would first look at my logs to take a snapshot of say a page load or some workflow. In the logs, I’m typically looking for queries that are executing longer than expected. With the database, I would be looking to optimize indexes, allocate more RAM to the database for caching indexes for faster lookups and even data for quicker reads.

Also in the logs, I would look for any N+1 queries, which are easy to create in web applications that need to load relational data. N+1 queries impact performance significantly but most of them are easy to solve.  
  
Next in the logs, I would look for data reads that are repeated for the same data. Such request could be a good candidate for caching.

Lastly, I would inspect the logs for repeated data writes to the same table. If any, I would consider using a bulk insert option for saving the data.