



WEBSITE UX AUDIT CHECKLIST

- Business Objectives
- Analytics Data
- Competitors
- Core Templates
- Usability Review
- Accessibility
- Performance

Introduction

What is a UX Audit?

A UX Audit is a deliverable that identifies problem areas and potential improvements on a website or application.

It follows a data-driven approach to help you identify, document, and improve parts of an experience that could be performing better (higher conversions, lower bounces/exits, higher time on page) by looking at things like usability, performance, responsiveness, and accessibility - just to name a few.

Why run a UX Audit?

A UX Audit will give you a list of EXACTLY what needs to be optimized so that your team can focus on fixing the right things, the things that will actually impact conversions and boost your ROI.

That's because you won't be GUESSING what will help, you'll be following a proven process to generate recommendations based on REAL DATA not OPINION.

As a lead-in offer, it lets clients get a feel for what it's like to work with you, without having to commit thousands of dollars upfront.

Think of it as a way to get PAID to run a discovery phase BEFORE DESIGNING ANYTHING. You can even offer to discount the audit price from the price of a much larger follow-up project.

This is the exact strategy we use for uxhacks.com to close web design deals for well over \$10,000. Here's the process we follow:

How to run a UX Audit in 8 steps

- 1 Establish Business Objectives
- 2 Pull Insights from Analytics Data
- 3 Conduct a Competitive UX Analysis
- 4 Identify Core Website Templates
- 5 Generate Usability Suggestions
- 6 Document Accessibility Concerns
- 7 Test Performance & Document Fixes
- 8 Prioritize Based on Impact and Effort

Step #1

Establish Business Objectives

Before you start making recommendations, you need to first spend some time understanding the goals of the business.

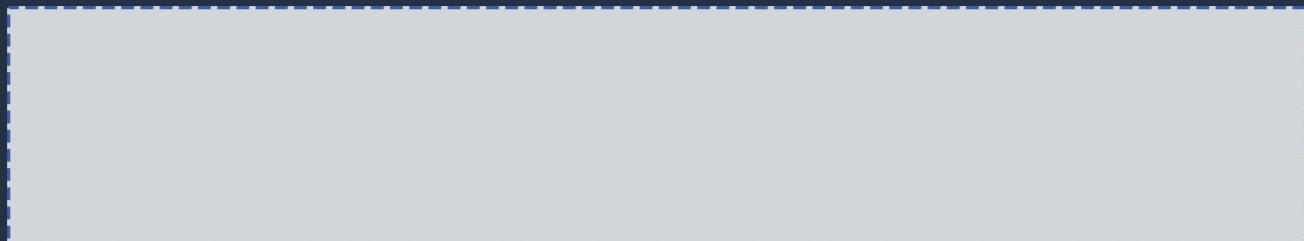
Maybe the business want to increase sales for a specific product, or maybe they want to increase the amount of inbound leads they get every month.

It's important that you start any audit by speaking to stakeholders and making an effort to understand how a UX Audit can help them accomplish some of their business objectives.

Q: Which subdomains or features should we include as part of the UX Audit? Please be as specific as possible.



Q: What business goals are you hoping to accomplish by optimizing your website? What is the timeline for reaching those goals?



Step #1

Establish Business Objectives

Q: What goals or conversion points should be included as a part of this audit? What does your current marketing funnel look like?

Q: What products or services do you offer? Can users purchase through your website? Describe your current sales cycle.

Q: If a customer has an issue how would they normally contact you? What are the different contact options available through your site?

Step #1

Establish Business Objectives

Q: Who are your existing customers? What problem are you solving for them? Be as specific as possible.

Q: Who are your target customers? Are they different than your existing customers? If so, what has changed?

Q: How are you acquiring new customers? What channels will be the most important for you in the next 3-9 months?

Step #1

Establish Business Objectives

Q: How are you currently qualifying leads through your website? What specific information helps you qualify them?

Q: How are you capturing new traffic that arrives on your website? Do you offer users a lead-magnet or promotion to add them to your list?

Q: How are you currently getting users back on your website? What are the different ways you engage and nurture leads outside of your site?

Step #1

Establish Business Objectives

Q: What is your Unique Selling Proposition (USP)? What is the benefit customers can expect from working with you?

Q: Who are your most notable competitors? Please list at least 3 direct competitors and 2 indirect competitors.

Q: What do you think are the biggest areas for improvement on your website? Which part of the experience needs the most work?

Step #2

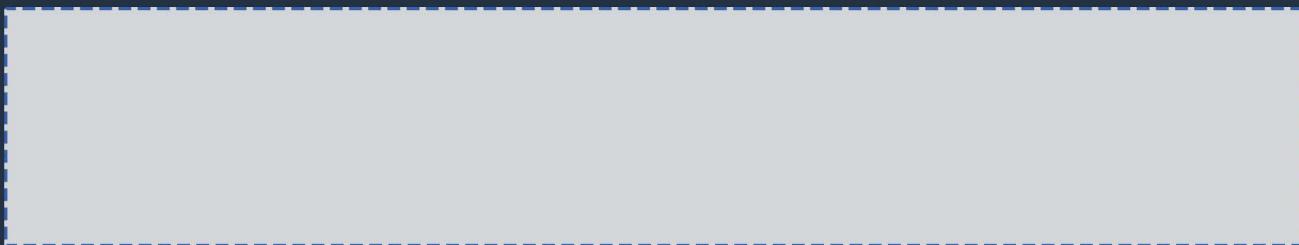
Pull Insights from Analytics Data

If you want to build a website that actually generates leads and sales, you need to spend some time understanding the story behind all of the data users generate on the website.

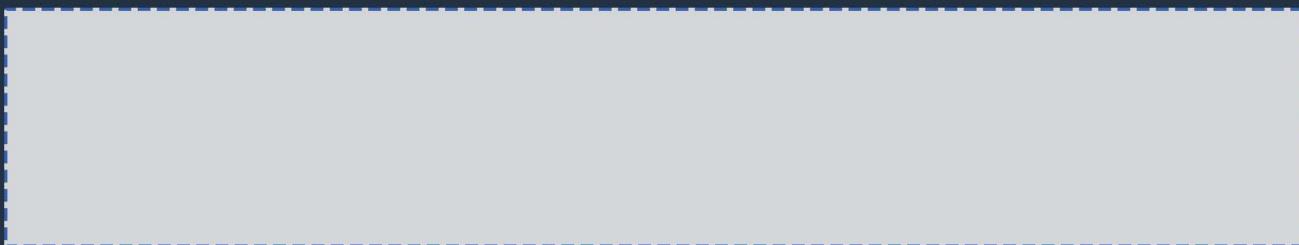
This means you'll have to check to see what data (if any) is available so that you can use them to generate useful insights about users.

For starters, make sure you have access to **Google Analytics** (or a comparable alternative), and ask to see if there are additional sources they can share, like heatmaps, visitor recordings, etc.

Q: How much **monthly traffic** does the website receive on average?
Include info about Users, Sessions, Pageviews, and Bounce Rate.



Q: How long is the **Average Session Duration**? How many **sessions per user**? What about **pages per session**?



Step #2

Pull Insights from Analytics Data

Q: What is the breakdown of **New vs Returning** visitors? Include AVG Session Duration, and Bounce Rates for both groups if possible.

Q: What is the breakdown of **Male vs Female** users? Which age ranges are most commonly seen on the website?

Q: Which **countries** are accessing the website? Which states or cities are users visiting from? What **languages** are they browsing in?

Step #2

Pull Insights from Analytics Data

Q: What is the breakdown of the **channels** that are sending traffic to the website? Does user data change based on what channel they use?

Q: What is the breakdown of the **devices** that users are using to access the website? Does the audience change based on what device they use?

Q: Are there any **channels** or **devices** that are showing relatively high bounce/exit rates or low conversions? Make a note of them here.

Step #2

Pull Insights from Analytics Data

Q: What are the most **popular pages** on the website (most pageviews)?
Make a note of the top 5, and their AVG TOP, and Bounce/Exit Rates.

Q: What are the most **popular landing pages** on the website? Make a note of the AVG Session Duration, Bounce Rates, & Conversion Rates.

Q: What are some **underperforming pages** that need to be improved?
Look at high exit rates, high bounce rates, low conversions, or low TOP.

Step #2

Pull Insights from Analytics Data

Q: What are the **goals** that are being tracked and how are they performing? Make a note of which goals have monetary value (i.e. sales)

Q: If using Google Analytics, make a note of the **Top Conversion Paths** so we can see how different channels interact when converting users.

Q: If this is an **e-commerce website**, make a note of the e-commerce conversion rate, Average Order Value, and top selling products.

Step #3

Competitive UX Analysis

Before you dive into any website to start making recommendations, make it a habit to check competitors and market leaders.

Not because we want to copy them (we don't), but because we need to establish a baseline for the industry, and see exactly where the current website fits in.

Think of it like looking at all of the houses on the block before you start investing all of your time and money fixing your own house. That way you'll naturally see opportunities to outdo them (or learn from their mistakes).

- Use the competitors that were mentioned on **page 8** and take full-page screenshots of every major template (Home, Contact, Blog, etc)
- Upload the screenshots into a digital mood board tool like **Invision**, **Miro**, or **Mural** and **organize them by template**.
- Make a note of all of the **pros and cons** of each template that you took a screenshot of. Look at the layout, copy, and CTAs on the page.
- If you see something mentioned **more than once**, mark it as an opportunity, we'll go back to this when generating usability suggestions.
- Now go back and take screenshots of each of **YOUR templates**. We want to see how the site we're auditing stacks up against competitors.
- Upload them to your mood board and make a note of any pros and cons now that you've seen what's out there. This will show you exactly how you stack up to your competitors and what you can do to beat them.

Step #4

Identify Core Website Templates

The best way to tackle any big website project is to group pages by page template - which are predesigned web pages that can be customized to fit a specific use case.

So instead of trying to optimize hundreds of pages, we can break them down into a dozen (or so) page templates, that way we can look at optimizations that will impact conversions site-wide.

If a page doesn't fit into one of these templates but still gets a substantial amount of traffic, then you'll need to make a note of it for on-page optimizations for the next step: the usability review.

- | | | | |
|--|------------------------------|--|-------------------------------|
| | Home Page Template | | Search Results Template |
| | About Page Template | | 404 Page Template |
| | Services Page Template | | Products Page Template |
| | Service Detail Page Template | | Product Detail Page Template |
| | Blog Page Template | | Cart/Checkout/Payment Pages |
| | Blog Post Template | | Locations Page Template |
| | Category/Tag Page Template | | Location Detail Page Template |
| | Contact Page Template | | Reviews/Testimonials Page |
| | Other Page Templates | | |

Step #5

Generate Usability Suggestions

Next we want to look at our website and conduct a **heuristic evaluation** - a fancy UX term that essentially means we're going to manually review the current UI (user interface) to find any issues or opportunities, starting with these common website features:

- Contact form
- Blog with posts
- Links to affiliate products
- Lead-magnet
- Related posts
- Call-to-action on every page
- Consistent design style
- Links to social media
- Simple navigation
- Responsive on mobile/tablet
- About the company
- Clear value proposition
- Language switcher
- Contact information
- Locations and directions
- Exit-intent popup
- GDPR compliant forms
- Sitewide search
- Social proof (i.e. testimonials)
- Press and/or awards
- Frequently asked questions
- SSL Certificate
- SEO friendly URL structure
- Legal pages (privacy policy, TOC)
- No broken links or errors
- 404 page

Step #5

Generate Usability Suggestions

If the website you're auditing is an **e-commerce shop**, there are a few additional things you'll want to check the website for:

- Shop All Products
- Detailed Product Pages
- Add to Cart
- Checkout Process
- Transactional Emails
- Abandoned Cart Emails
- High Quality Product Photos
- Product Videos
- Relevant Product Filtering
- Up-sells and Cross-sells
- Order & Shipment Tracking
- Support (Chat, Phone, Email, etc)
- Related Products
- Return Policy
- Shipping Information
- Product Specifications (Size Chart)
- Search includes Products
- Sitewide search
- Posts with Relevant Content
- User Generated Content
- Helpful Content on Category Pgs.
- Promotions or Giveaway
- Helpful Reviews (with media)
- Alternate Payment Methods
- Financing Available
- Wholesale Page

Step #6

Accessibility Concerns

Your website needs to be something ANYONE can use, regardless of age, or any disabilities - this is called **web accessibility**.

Any company that does business in the United States is legally required to provide equal access to ALL people following **Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act** (ADA).

There are various laws related to ADA that also prohibit ANY FORM of discrimination against individuals with disabilities (i.e. **Section 508**).

In the past few years, we've seen a lot of these laws extend into website accessibility - which resulted in the development of standards for building and maintaining accessible websites known as **WCAG** (Web Content Accessibility Guidelines).

As recently as 2019, precedent was set by the supreme court when a blind man **successfully sued Domino's Pizza** because they could not access their website or app even with a screen reader.

This means the need to understand web accessibility is at an all time high, and for certain clients, not having an accessible website could leave them open to potential lawsuits (or lost contracts).

So it's your job as someone who is auditing the website to understand accessibility - but note this IS NOT an exhaustive checklist for running a website accessibility audit.

Instead, I'll share a simple method you can use to test a website for different accessibility issues to discover whether or not they need to invest in a manual audit, or an accessibility tool.

Step #6

Accessibility Concerns

U.S. courts and the Department of Justice (DOJ) have referenced the **WCAG 2.0 Level AA** success criteria as the standard to gauge whether or not a website is accessible and ADA compliant.

It's comprised of 38 requirements (including those from Level A), which is what we mean when we say "success criteria".

But how do you know if you need to match **Level A or Level AA**?

Generally if it's something that receives public funding, like federal agencies, schools, state and local governments, or public accommodations and commercial facilities (like factories or warehouses) all need to be Level AA compliant.

Other sites, like those for banks or attorneys can also be liable.
Here are some things to check:

Section 1: Alternatives

- All images and non-text content has alt text
- All video-only and audio-only content has a downloadable text transcript
- All video with sound contains accurate closed captioning
- Videos have alternate option with audio description or relevant text
- Any live video presentations must have closed captions
- An audio description is optional under 1.2.3 level A but not in 1.2.5 AA

Step #6

Accessibility Concerns

Section 2: Presentation

- Proper markup technique is used to structure website content
- Content is presented in a meaningful order so that it makes sense
- When providing instructions, users don't have to rely on a single sense
- Color is never used exclusively to convey information
- All audio can be paused, stopped, or muted
- There is sufficient color contrast between text and background
(use a tool like accessible-colors.com to test combinations)
- Text can be resized up to 200% without making things unusable
- Do not use images of text unless necessary (like for your logo)

Section 3: User Control

- All content and functionality can be access with the keyboard ONLY
- Keyboard users can navigate forwards and backwards without getting stuck
- If there are any time limits, users can turn it off, adjust or extend it
- If there's content that blinks, scrolls, or moves, users can pause/stop/hide it

Step #6

Accessibility Concerns

Section 3: User Control (continued)

- Web pages don't contain anything than flashes more than 3x in 1 second
- A "Skip to Content" or "Skip Navigation" link is present on the site
- When providing instructions, users don't have to rely on a single sense

Section 4: Understandable

- Each page has a unique and descriptive page title
- Users can navigate through the website in a logical sequential order
- Descriptive link names are used (i.e. nothing says "click here")
- There are multiple ways to access different pages on the website (search bar, navigation menus, sitemap, breadcrumbs, on-page nav)
- Headings and labels are clear, descriptive, and concise
- Any control that received focus from a keyboard user indicates that it's the currently selected (you can add a light border to indicate focus)
- The language for the website is set (check HTML markup)
- Any language changes are indicated on the page or website

Step #6

Accessibility Concerns

Section 5: Predictability

- Nothing changes on focus, users must activate items with an action
- Forms do not auto-submit, users must be able to manually submit info.
- Navigation layouts are consistent throughout the website's pages
- Components that have the same function are identified consistently
- Form errors are easy to identify, understand, and correct
- Forms have adequate labels and instructions so users know what to do
- If an input error is detected, then suggestions to correct it are provided
- For pages that create legal or financial commitments (i.e. a contract or a purchase) or submit any other important data, one of the following is true:
 - Submissions are reversible
 - The user has an opportunity to correct errors
 - Confirmation is available that allows users to review and correct before submission
- HTML code is clean and free of errors. HTML elements are properly nested.
- All UI components have a name, role, and value that can be read and is compatible with assistive technology (i.e. screen readers)

Step #7

Test Performance & Document Fixes

Performance is a critical aspect whenever we're trying to optimize a website's usability for rankings and conversions.

That's because users don't want to deal with a slow website, especially when they're accessing it on their phone's network.

With the increase use of mobile devices, even Google has shifted to analyzing sites based on a **mobile-first index** - meaning they look at how things load up on a mobile device with average speed and using that information when ranking pages and building SERPs.

Here are some easy ways to test a website for performance to find different opportunities and issues that should be reviewed:

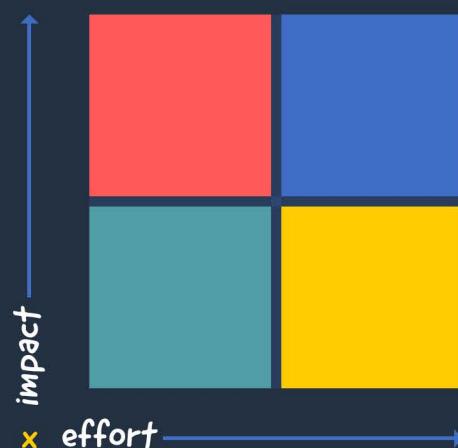
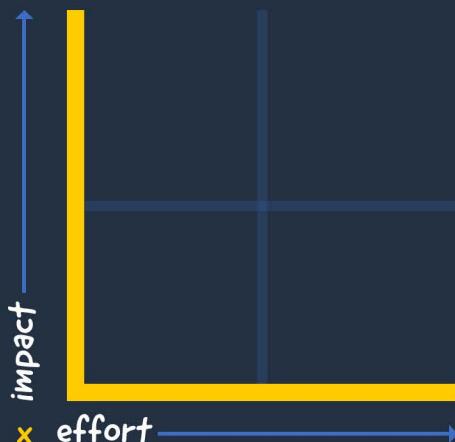
- First, check what technology is being used on the website, you can use a tool like [builtwith.com](#) to get a better idea of what can be updated (note that some sites, like wix, squarespace or shopify have limitations)
- Next, use a tool like [Google's Lighthouse](#) or [GTmetrix](#) to test the site's speed and find performance optimizations (I personally use Lighthouse because it gives you performance, accessibility, and SEO suggestions).
- Make a note of all of the potential improvements, these will be reported and prioritized during the final part of the UX Audit process.
- These tools only test single pages - If you want to check multiple URLs, you'll have to do them one-by-one.
- Bonus: Use a tool like [ahrefs](#) or [semrush](#) to check for SEO to see if the website has backlinks, and how many keywords they rank for.

Step #8

Prioritize Based on Effort and Impact

In my experience, you don't want to overwhelm the client with too many things that need to be fixed - instead you want to group each suggestion into buckets based on effort and impact.

- Take all of your suggestions and make sure they are ACTIONABLE. If they sound like vague suggestions, make them more concrete by turning them into an action (or set of actions) that we can take to accomplish that suggestion. If you can't, consult someone or trash it.
- Next, write all of your suggestions down, either on a spreadsheet, or on sticky notes. While creating the list, make sure to add information on what that task involves (UX, Design, Development, Content, etc) and make sure to reference what page it was mentioned in the audit .
- Draw an **Effort/Impact scale** and place each task on the board based on the impact it will have on the business goals that we established, and the effort it will take to complete (by you or the client). If you're using a sheet create a column for effort and impact and label them either high or low - if you're delivering this to a client don't skip the spreadsheet.



- How To Prioritize**
- do these ASAP
 - create as project
 - create as task
 - ignore completely

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