



10.0 Marketing and Communications

Website Development and Maintenance

Overview

1. Introduction
2. How to Get Noticed
3. Search Engine Optimisation
4. Managing Content
5. Measuring the Success of Your Site
6. How Can You Add Real Value?
7. Further Information

Introduction

A well-maintained website helps promote your brand, work, and mission. Properly maintaining your site helps to ensure site security, increase the number of new visitors, boost returning traffic, and more. This document sets out what organisations should do to ensure their website performs well and is regularly maintained.



Image: Planning a website layout

How to Get Noticed

Your potential audience should be able to find you easily through a Uniform Resource Locator (URL) that is memorable and easy to guess.

You might want to buy pertinent domain names, e.g. [.cymru](#), [.org](#), [.org.uk](#), [.co.uk](#), or variations on a name, e.g. [mediatrust](#), [media-trust](#), [themediatrust](#).

If your potential audience cannot find you via your URL because they are unaware of your organisation's name, your attention to SEO ([Search Engine Optimisation](#)) will be crucial.

Search Engine Optimisation (SEO)

What is SEO?

SEO stands for **Search Engine Optimisation**, the process of optimising web pages and content to be discoverable by users searching for terms relevant to your website.

Organic Traffic

When searchers type a question, word, or string of words into a search engine, they will get a set of results showing the ads and pages related to the search query.

Organic traffic is the number of visitors your site generates, from people clicking on your webpages when they come up, to search engine results.

Organic search traffic is what you are aiming for within your website. You want a visitor to be looking for something specific, and if you can provide a solution, you'll gain a new subscriber or website visitor.

Site submission

Search engines are the largest source of traffic for most websites. That's why it is important to ensure that they can easily find and rank your website pages.

Search engines will not necessarily find you automatically. Therefore, you should actively go out and register your site with the major search engines, providing keywords in your site's description to help identify your organisation.

Google

Google is the largest and most popular search engine on the planet. For most websites, Google is often the biggest source of traffic.

To register your site with Google, you need to sign up for Google Search Console. It is a free tool offered by Google to help website owners see how their website performs in search results in terms of where it ranks in the list. Google provide a step-by-step guide on how to submit your website [here](#).

Bing

The Bing search console is called [Webmaster Tools](#). The interface provides the same functionality as the Google Search Console and allows you to submit URLs to include in the Bing index.

To submit your website to Bing, you need to sign up for [Bing Webmaster Tools](#). Bing provides a how-to guide on how to submit your website and pages [here](#).

There are commercial organisations who will manage this on your behalf, but they can be expensive. Therefore, many submitters do it manually. Using an automated service is only really suitable for the many 'smaller' engines.

Keyword Ranking

A keyword is a term that encompasses anything searched on a search engine. A single word or phrase is a 'keyword' if it produces a results page on Google or any other search engine. To gain better ranking in a search, your website and its content will need to be optimised to rank on top of search engines' results for specific keywords and long-tail keywords.

A simple way to track your Google ranking for keywords related to your business or products is to do a Google search. The results will show where your website ranks for said competitive keywords. The ultimate goal is for your website to be at the top of the Google search.

Your keywords will need to be relevant to what people are searching for, so they have a better chance of finding your content among the results. This is not necessarily as obvious as you might think. Try getting someone you know, but who doesn't work in your field, to share some words with you too. There are many ways to do find relevant keywords, but the easiest method is to use a keyword research tool.

How to use keywords?

Now that you've found the best keywords, you need to put them to work to get SEO results. There are some basic keyword usage rules you should follow to get started.

You will have to provide keywords when you register your website with the search engine, in the description of the website.

You should also have used unique keywords on each page of your site in the areas that bots and humans normally look to reassure them that you have what they're after.

You should consider using:

- A keyword in the **title** of the page
- A keyword in the **URL** (e.g. online-petstore.com/parakeets/snacks/gourmet)
- A keyword, and variations (e.g. "Welsh Charity") throughout the **page copy**
- A keyword in the **meta tags**, especially the meta description
- A keyword in any **image file paths** and in the images' alt text
- A keyword as the **anchor text** in links back to the page from elsewhere on the site



Definition

Bots: a software application that runs automated tasks over the Internet

Meta tags

Meta tags are invisible tags that provide data about your page to search engines and website visitors. They contain keywords and descriptions of the content of a page. Search engines use this information to rank sites.

In the early days of the internet they were crucial; now some search engines don't support them. However, it is still important to identify relevant keywords for each page on your site and to add a succinct description tag.

Linking strategy

Inbound links, also known as backlinks or external links, are HTML hyperlinks from one website to another. The number of links to your site is particularly important to 'popularity' engines, such as Google and other search engines.

Major search engines count the number of visible links and reciprocal to your site as a measure of its 'popularity' and adjust its ranking accordingly.

Developing a linking strategy is vital to ensure a higher ranking. Look to link with relevant sites but be creative. Return the favour by adding their link to your site.

Managing Content

The golden rule is to provide as much information into your website as possible while keeping each section short and simple enough to scan.

A quick guide to managing your site

- Plan a monthly and annual content schedule
- Identify key tasks and responsibilities
- Write, design and build new content
- Establish quality assurance guidelines (see below)
- Establish a sign-off process

Planning a content schedule

Identify 'dynamic' content - that is, material which needs to be updated regularly. Think about content areas that you might use:

- Micro-content - short headlines and links
- News - remember to link to other relevant pages of your site
- Events and training
- Campaigns

'Static' content is that which only needs to be updated as and when necessary, such as 'About us' or 'Contact us' sections.

Make it readable

When you write, design and build content, it is important to remember that users read about 20-28% of the text on a webpage. Break up the text using sub-headings and bold text - both make the text easier to read. Make sure new content links to old content and vice versa. Keep layout consistent using templates.



Image: Creating website content

Simplifying what you want to say is difficult! There are tools available online to help you find language that will be more accessible to everyone, such as the [Hemingway app](#). This analyses text for its level of difficulty and then helpfully highlights what you could change or simplify.

The score tells you how easy your content is to read (**lower is better**), and the colours show sentences which are difficult and words you should consider changing.

Accessibility

All of your users may potentially have an accessibility need at one point in their life. Designing content in a way that helps them access it will make sure that nobody is excluded.

The Government Communication Service (GCS) has identified the following examples:

Ability	Permanent	Temporary	Situational
Vision	Blink	Cataracts	Eye Irritation
Hearing	Hearing impairment	Ear infection	In a noisy cafe
Motor	Parkinson's Disease	Arm in plaster	On a moving train
Cognitive	Memory issues	Medicine side-effects	Stressful situations

Building accessibility in right from the start

You should build accessibility into your content right from the start. This means you need to start thinking about how users might access and use your service before designing or building anything.

Welsh Language Standards

The **Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011** makes Welsh an official language in Wales. This means it must be treated no less favourably than English.

While not all activity has to be translated in its exact context, an equal balance should be aimed for in terms of both English and Welsh-speaking audiences being exposed to the activity.

Website management

Website management involves many activities including software updates, data backup, website hosting and content updates. It might also include SEO work, software development, content development, visitor analysis and much more.

A website can be a valuable asset for a business or organisation, and a lack of maintenance could result in the site being lost.

As a website is often the first place a person looks when they need information about an organisation, keeping the site maintained is very important.

Website security

Security is a key reason that website maintenance is so important. If your organization is using a Content Management System (CMS) such as Drupal or WordPress, you will want to ensure that your site is keeping up with software patches and security updates. Failing to do so gives hackers an easy target to disrupt your site or steal valuable data.

Maintaining your site

Users expect new and up-to-date information each time they visit your website. They don't care about your resourcing issues. They expect everything to work: no broken links, no missing images, and no typos.

You want them to leave the site having had a positive experience, and therefore you need a level of dedicated resource. The extent of this clearly depends on the size of your organisation and the resources available to you.

Quality assurance checklist

- Users are turned off by spelling mistakes and broken links
- Ask someone else to check your work thoroughly
- Don't let 'un-checked' work go live
- Set an editorial style guide as you would for printed materials

But problems will crop up...

- As content grows, navigation issues occur and you may need to introduce a search facility. The labelling of buttons may become incorrect or inappropriate and will need to be reviewed
- Levels of hierarchy may become insufficient
- Certain areas may become more popular than others
- Old links may become broken
- Information may become obsolete or misleading

In other words, you need to constantly monitor your website, cross-referencing the different sections when new content is added. Websites should be dynamic and flexible. A static website will not get repeat visits or sustain interest.

Measuring the Success of Your Site

Why is Website monitoring important?

Website monitoring has become increasingly essential for organisations and end-users relying heavily on the internet for work or pleasure, the need for website monitoring has become even more crucial. With proper monitoring, companies organisations can be assured that their website is not only up and running but is also performing in the best way possible.

Web statistics

Successful sites employ 'log file analysis' to track site effectiveness. This is done using a file on the web server which keeps track of every file request made by users. Analysis of this data is used to track usage of the site. Your web developer can add a free Google Analytics code to your site to give you a wealth of relevant and accessible statistics.

Google Analytics

Google Analytics is a free tracking tool offered by Google, and it shows you how visitors use your website.

By adding a tiny piece of code to your website (or even simpler, installing a plugin on a WordPress site), you can monitor how visitors interact with your web pages. Analytics will tell you how many visitors you received, which pages they visited, how long they stayed online, and much more.

Google Analytics provides information about user behaviour and valuable insights that can help you shape your organisation's success strategy.

Before you start using Google Analytics, you'll have to set up a [Google account](#). This means you must have a registered Google Account email address and password.

If you are new to Google's Analytics, then Google Skillshop offers a range of [free courses](#) which will help you learn about Google's measurement tools.

Page Views and Impressions

Page Views is a condition which indicates the number of times a particular page is being viewed whereas impressions denote the number of times an element on a web page is viewed.

Page Views

When a user visits a page of the website, it counts as one pageview, and each visitor who is visiting the website will have at least one pageview. If the same visitor clicks on another page and comes into search, it will also be counted as a pageview.

Impressions

Impressions are the number of times a user looks into a specific element of a page, be it an image, text, video or content.

Both pageviews and impressions are important, and they are easy to calculate a website's success. When the count of pageview gets low, then it certainly indicates the problem such as poor website design, call to action, low quality content or bad search engine optimisation.

User Journey

User journeys are the step-by-step journey that a user takes to reach their goal. This journey will often consist of several website pages and decision points that carry the user from one step to another.

The first step in the user journey is your landing page. You may have more than a single landing page on your site too.

For example, if your analytics show that most of your search engine traffic comes because of a specific piece of content, use the content as part of your landing page and include a Call to Action (CTA) at the end of the article.

New Visitors vs Returning Visitors

New visitors are people who are coming to your site for the first time on a device.

Returning visitors have visited your site before. They tend to have a higher engagement — they bounce less, view more pages per session, and have higher session durations.

The ratio of new visitors to returning visitors can be very telling, showing the effectiveness of your inbound digital marketing techniques across the web.

How Can You Add Real Value?

Improve the proportion of new and repeat visitors. Repeat visitors are most valued - if people are returning, they must be getting something useful from your site. However, your statistics can be skewed by the same person returning many times.

Look at 'drop off' points - problem pages where people leave the site. For example, Google analysis may show that the donations page causes people to leave. Consider creating 'user journeys' if your analysis indicates that popular sequences of pages are used. These can be determined by the average length of visit and number of pages per visit.

Analysis of the data leads to recommendations:

- Areas to re-design - problem pages
- Areas to focus on - successful content
- Areas to get rid of - unsuccessful content

Further Information

ICT Hub

ICT Hub

<https://www.ictHub.org.uk/>

Resources for the Voluntary Sector

VolResource

www.volResource.org.uk

ICT Knowledge Base

ICT Knowledge Base

<http://www.ictknowledgebase.org.uk/>

Charity Digital

Charity Digital

<https://charitydigital.org.uk/>



Cefnogi Trydydd
Sector **Cymru**

Third Sector
Support **Wales**

Third Sector Support Wales is a network of support organisations for the whole of the third sector in Wales.

It consists of the 19 local and regional support bodies across Wales, the County Voluntary Councils (CVCs) and the national support body, Wales Council for Voluntary Action (WCVA).

For further information contact
<https://thirdsectorsupport.wales/contact/>

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