



Digital  
Marketing  
Institute

# WEBSITE OPTIMIZATION

Transcript

# Website Optimization

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# **LESSON 1: WEB DESIGN AND WEBSITE OPTIMIZATION**

## WEBSITE OPTIMIZATION

[1.1.1.1] So what is website optimization? Well, it's the art of creating and continuously improving websites to improve the visitor experience, which is going to help result in higher visitor satisfaction, a better user experience, and high repeat visit and conversion rates. So it involves a lot of aspects, which we're going to go into.

[1.1.1.2] First, UX is short for user experience. So that's how a user is actually using your website. It needs to be as easy to use as possible. Next, is design, so how your website is laid out. So the visual components of your website, you know, is a sidebar on one side, where's the navigation? That all goes into design. And then finally, how a website displays information, so the graphics and the text of a website.

All of these things work together to create a better more optimized website experience. It's going to also help users find the information that they're looking for and lead them to make a purchase, sign up for your email list, you know, whatever else you want them to do. So you go into SEO in a later module, but we're going to talk a little bit about search engine optimization, SEO, in this module.

[1.1.1.3] So SEO is basically making sure that a website's information is organized correctly, so that's going to make sure that your website is optimized correctly for SEO, and that's going to make sure that your website can be found on search engines by users. So there's a few terms that you need to know for SEO best practices, a few of those include metadata, which is the meta title tags and description.

So, that's the information that users see when they're looking at search results. And then a site map, and that's basically a list of all the pages on your site including blog posts and search engine crawlers use these to index your website. I go into a few other common terms you need to know in the notes on this slide.

[1.1.1.4] So the difference between web site optimization and SEO, basically website optimization deals more with the actual experience of the user, so making the website easy to use, that's going to be the formatting of the content, the buttons they click on, the interactive elements, the branding, the color, images, things like that.

That all goes into the website optimization. Conversely, SEO is making it as easy as possible for search engines to find and index your website content, and search engines also want your content and your website to be user friendly so it works really well together. So things like keyword usage, what content or text is in the headers and titles, that all plays into SEO.

So SEO is basically, what is in place to help your website viewers get to your website and then website optimization is their experience once they get there.

## THE PURPOSE OF OPTIMIZATION

[1.1.2.1] The purpose of website optimization, why is it so important? There's four main areas.

First, it increases user time on site. When a website is easy to navigate, users are much more likely to stay on the website because they're finding the information that they're looking for. The longer a person is on a website, the more likely they are to make a purchase or complete a conversion.

Further, it provides a better user experience. Users can not only find the information they're looking for, but they're also left with a better impression of the company because of their great website. Frequently, users will equate a well-designed website with the company's reputation.

When a website's easy to use, users are also more likely to return. Twenty-five percent of users abandon their online shopping checkout because the site is too hard to use. Users just don't have patience nowadays to go through a poorly designed website. Conversely, with an easy to use website, users are not only more likely to convert, they are also more likely to come back.

Last but not least, website optimization increases e-commerce sales. If a website is really fast and easy to use, people are going to spread the news. They are going to tell their friends and family about the website and the company, and that's going to lead to more sales.

[1.1.2.2] How does website optimization affect the buyer's journey? There are five key areas.

The first is awareness. The buyer is aware of a problem and they're trying to find initial solutions. For example, this might be an air conditioner that's broken, but the owner doesn't quite know how to fix it. Their initial journey is going to be: Why is it broken? What's the noise coming from?

The next step is interest. They might have found your company and the services you provide, and they're just finding out more about you. What's it like to work with you? Maybe they're looking for company reviews, things that are easily found on a website, and that it's your job to show them.

The next step is consideration. They're considering making a purchase from you. They're almost there, and having additional marketing materials, testimonials, and reviews will help your customers find out more about you online.

Finally, they go to conversion. For some brands, that's completing a sale on their website. For others, that's an email sign up or a download of a white paper. That means that they either bought something, or they've turned into a customer on your funnel.

The last key area is retention. Building a relationship is going to help keep customers active in your company and with your company. It's your job to keep sending them information and products that they're interested in to ensure you keep them coming back.

[1.1.2.3] The purpose of website optimization is to make it as easy as possible for users to convert.

Some of the problems that we commonly see in website optimization is a confusing navigation. If the 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. That's one of the easy problems to solve. What's required is just better navigation.

In addition, your checkout process needs to be as fast and simple as possible. If the conversion process isn't quick, easy, and simple, then users are much more likely to exit before the conversion stage.

Users also need to know why it's in their interest to convert or make a purchase from your company. If the information is too confusing, if it's hard to understand, then they're less likely to make a purchase. The layout of benefits should be clear and concise, and easy to read. Black text on a white background works best.

And then, finally, as users lead increasingly busy lives online – and have less time to waste – it's important to have a faster website that avoids creating delays or frustration. If website elements or content doesn't load quickly on every device, users are much more likely to leave.

That all goes into website optimization.

[1.1.2.4] Website optimization affects all areas of digital marketing.

- SEO
- Graphic Design
- A/B Testing
- Email Marketing
- Social Media
- Mobile Optimization
- Website Page Speed

For example, bad navigation and website design can make it hard for search engines to crawl the site, which in turn affects whether it is shown in search results.

Graphic design and website optimization work together to affect how a website is laid out, and how users can use the site and interact with the information.

Testing different attributes of the website, such as its layout or CTA button color, play into its optimization. This can also help in the testing of user metrics including conversions and engagement.

The links used in email promotions play into what the user will see on a website when they click a link. The design, color, and layout of your company emails should align with the design of your website. This creates trust and a more cohesive experience for the user.

The same goes for social media. Your branding is going to be the same on the website as it is on social media. Links and what parts of the website to promote on social media are dependent on how the website is optimized. The information that's shared in social media is also shared on the website. If there is a disconnect between the two, you risk your users becoming confused.

If a website isn't optimized for mobile, then users aren't going to have the same experience that they would have on their desktop computer or tablet. It's very important that users don't have a hard time trying to scroll or find what they're looking for even though they're on their phone. Mobile optimization ensures a better user experience, no matter how a user accesses a website.

And then finally, the speed that your pages load on your website. Not only is this a ranking factor for SEO, it also greatly improves the user experience when pages load quickly. Users will leave a website if it loads too slowly, causing a higher bounce rate, more abandoned shopping carts, and a lower return visit rate. Website optimization considers plugins, code scripts (such as JavaScript and CSS), and other design elements to make sure a website and all its pages load as fast as possible.

[1.1.2.5] The role of a marketer in website design is both important and crucial.

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

- Writing
- Editing

- Collaborating
- Branding
- Optimizing
- Monitoring
- Engagement

It is important to note that marketers not only write and edit the actual website copy. They also set brand guidelines and give feedback on design layouts. They optimize the site to follow best SEO practices, and make sure that the information is optimized. They also work with the development team to ensure all API and tracking tools are set up and working correctly.

And then finally, marketers make sure that the best practices of user engagement are being followed, so users are not only getting a good experience, but are also providing valuable feedback.

## COMPONENTS OF WEBSITE DESIGN

[1.1.3.1] The four key components of website design are: architecture, design, content, and optimization.

Architecture covers the steps involved in building your website. You're going to choose a hosting provider, a CMS – also known as a content management system – and then a domain name. Next, you're going to install a CMS and the required plug-ins and features. You're then going to build out the layout and design. That's the actual look and feel of the site. You're going to add elements like buttons, graphics, text, and then the SEO of the site. At this stage, you're going to test the site and launch it. And then, as the launch rolls out, you're going to look for and fix anything that isn't working; things that people notice that you didn't catch during the test phase.

Design covers the steps involved in designing your website. It's what a website looks like on the front end. The way that works is, first, there's a mock-up of a site from the designer. It's a long-form wireframe drawing that shows all the pages of the site, and examples of what it'll look like. Next, you're going to get feedback from the developer and the marketing team, and implement changes based on that feedback. Then, the website is going to go into a live design with the developer. After that's done, you're going to work with the team to finish the site, and ideally put it on the staging platform before it goes live.

Content covers the steps involved in deciding what copy to include on your website. All the information on your website, including downloadable files, PDF guides, infographics, blog posts, and images, are included in the content. First, what you're going to do is create a list of pages. You can use the wireframe from the website design and fill it in with the website content. Next, you're going to copy-edit the content, so that's going to involve someone other than the original writer. They're going to look for grammatical errors and spelling mistakes, and also check for sense, readability, and content accuracy. And then, finally, you're going to add the content onto the built website.

Optimization covers the steps involved in organizing a website's information so that it is best presented. You're going to follow the best SEO practices, making sure that the content is best optimized not only for the user but also for search engines. You're going to set up metrics reporting in Google Analytics and test what works and what doesn't. And then, finally, you're going to ask colleagues or outside users for website feedback. If you don't want to use actual customers, there are platforms you can use such as UserTesting.com.

# **LESSON 2: PUBLISHING A BASIC WEBSITE**



## WEBSITE HOSTING OPTIONS

[1.2.1.1] So, in terms of website hosting, there's currently four big options. Shared hosting, which is the most common and also the most affordable. So, websites are basically sharing a server all on one huge server. They don't know each other, they're not related, it's all separate customers just all sharing a server. Like I said, this is usually the most affordable.

A dedicated server is next. That's going to be a server that's just for your website or your group of websites that you own. So for a really, really big website like The New York Times website, they probably have a few dedicated servers just because there's so much traffic, but it's also good because it's more secure.

It also prevents any downtime for your website if that's a big concern. Cloud hosting is next. This is the newest option. So this is when your website is hosted on the cloud, which means several different servers and computers are hosting the website equally, so that leads to a lot less downtime. And then finally, CMS specific hosting, it's a lot like shared hosting, but it is only for specific CMS's, so if you had a WordPress site and you had CMS specific hosting for other WordPress sites, this helps the developers and whoever is monitoring the servers make sure that if there's any developments or updates with the CMS, that it's better controlled since it's all one CMS on that host.

[1.2.1.2] So, in the table on the screen, you can see the main attributes of the hosting providers that I am showing you, the hosting options. So I ranked them one, being they're the top for that section, and four, the lowest. So, as you can see, dedicated obviously has the most benefits, but it's also the most expensive, and then cloud is basically in the middle with CMS specific, and then shared is going to be the best option for affordability and support.

## BUILD A WEBSITE

[1.2.2.1] A content management system (CMS) manages the creation and maintenance of digital content. There are generally two types of CMS: cloud-hosted platforms like WordPress.com, and self-hosted platforms such as WordPress.org.

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 (such as website.com), but free hosting will still have ads on the site. This is easier to set up for beginners.

Conversely, 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.

[1.2.2.2] There are ten main steps to setting up your own WordPress website.

First, you will need to buy a domain and hosting plan from a provider. There are plenty of options out there. The top ones include HostGator, Bluehost, and GoDaddy. You can usually get the domain for a year at a time. Usually, people buy it for one to five years. The hosting plan can be paid monthly or in multiple years, depending on your budget.

Next, you need to set up is to install WordPress. Some hosting providers – GoDaddy, for example – will do this automatically for you, especially if you bought CMS-specific hosting. Otherwise, you can download the CMS from WordPress.org and upload it to your hosting plan.

From there, you're going to get set up on WordPress and get your WordPress login.

Then, you're going to log in at "yourwebsite.com/wp-admin" – this is how you're going to access the back-end of your site to write and upload content, upload plugins, and check data.

Once you log in, you can start installing the themes, which is the design of the site. Some bigger sites will have their own themes designed. But for this section, we're just going to go over a couple of places where you can buy themes that have already been built for you, and that you can simply customize.

The next step is to add plugins. There are thousands and thousands of plugins, both free and paid, that you can use for almost anything you could imagine. That can be SEO, image effects, social sharing for social media, etc. WordPress has a great community of reviewers, so you can see at a glance which plugins will work effectively and meet your requirements.

You will also need to format the plugins, along with the design theme of your site, to make sure it all looks right before launching. This includes branding, colors, logo, and graphics, for example.

Then, you'll add the content. That will be entered into the pages, and then you also tweak any settings as necessary.

Next, you're going to set up tracking and Google Analytics.

And finally, you're going to test your website, and then once you launch, you're going to tweak it as you go.

It's important to note that WordPress plugins and themes that have updates available will display an alert banner in your WordPress dashboard. You'll be updating those as they roll out.

## **CREATE A LAYOUT**

[1.2.2.3] A WordPress theme is a set of code and design files that create the overall look and feel of your site.

There are different themes to choose from, based on the purpose of your site. These can include features that apply to your specific industry – everything from blogging, news, business, and services, to ecommerce, beauty, sports, and fashion.

You can have multiple themes added to WordPress and you can test them across multiple devices to see what looks best and what's easiest to work with.

[1.2.2.4] Once you have a theme installed and it's active on your site, you can go into a preview mode within WordPress and test it. You can make changes in the theme settings, and it'll show you what it looks like.

You can also enter a preview mode when you're writing a page or a blog post on the site. The preview button is on the right hand side of the edit screen in WordPress.

In addition, you can test what the website is going to look like on different devices. There's a lot of different tools you can use for free. For example, you can use a service such as Screenfly to test the theme on mobile, tablet, and desktop in a variety of different models.

[1.2.2.5] There are many highly-rated theme sites that have a good reputation, and offer different business models to customers.

For example, on ThemeForest you can buy themes one at a time. The prices for themes range from \$10US up to \$200US or more, depending on the design.

On Elegant Themes, you can buy either an annual or lifetime pass, and you get an unlimited access pass to all of their themes.

Finally, TemplateMonster is a lot like ThemeForest, so it will let you buy themes on demand.

# **LESSON 3:**

# **DESIGN**

# **PRINCIPLES AND**

# **WEBSITE COPY**

## DESIGN PRINCIPLES

[1.3.1.1] So, we're going to talk a little bit about why website design is important. So, it's going to give the first impression to your visitors of your brand online. So, a high quality, well designed website is going to be your initial business card or introduction to your visitor and potential customer. It also provides information about your products and services.

So, it's going to be information that's organized in a way that makes sense, and it's going to give visitors what they're looking for, hopefully helping them find a solution. It's going to have really great navigation, so the user can find information that they're looking for really easily. They don't have to get confused or go to a page and go back because they didn't find what they were looking for.

A really great navigation is going to prevent that confusion. And then, finally, content is really important with website design because it deals with the layout. So, when the content is laid out really easily, then it's easier to read and users are going to spend more time on the site, and they're going to be able to digest and enjoy the content more.

[1.3.1.2] So, there are six key aspects of website design.

So first, the design should be simple. It shouldn't be distracting, it shouldn't be overwhelming, it shouldn't make users get distracted and forget why they came. It also needs to be modern and not look outdated, especially in web design, you know, we see new designs coming out all the time. So it's important to be updated so you can keep up to date and even be better than your competitors.

The website needs to be easy to navigate. So users want to find the information they're looking for quickly and easily, and a good navigation will do that.

The information needs to be consistent. So, if you have a deal or a special on your home page, then on the interior order pages, then the users need to be able to find that information and it'll be the same across any page on the site.

The website needs to be really easy to use. So, buttons need to be easy to click on. If they're mousing over something, it needs to not disappear and they need to be able to see what they're doing.

The design needs to be consistent. So, the about page obviously needs to look the same as your other interior pages. The layout needs to be consistent. And again, that's just helping your website be more reputable through design.

And then finally, the information needs to be concise and honest. So, you need to make sure that you're not being overly wordy, and you're also telling the right information, because it's up to you to be a thought leader in your industry and provide really good information to your potential customers. So, let's go through some good and bad examples of the design principles we just went through.

[1.3.1.3] So, the first one is a simple design. You will see on your slide on the left-hand side, is an example of a poorly designed website. As you can see, they used the featured images from their blog post as the top part of their website. And so, it's overwhelming. Users don't really know where to go next.

They see so many colors and they just get a little overwhelmed. On the right, you'll see that this is also a publisher site. But the navigation is collapsible, which you don't have to do, but that's an

upcoming trend in navigation with the three lines on the left-hand side of the screen shot. But it has an ad and then it has the top story at the top, and then recommended for you on the side.

So, it's instantly giving them information. The navigation is easy to use when the bread crumbs are expanded from the left-hand side menu. And then, it also is personalizing the information for the user.

[1.3.1.4] Next up are navigation examples. So, on the left, you can see this is a bar in my hometown of Kansas City, in the States. So, on this website, you can barely see the navigation.

It's white on a photo background. So, you can't really see what the menu is trying to say. It doesn't really have a call to action above the fold, which means what's shown in the screen before they scroll down. So, you don't really know what you're looking for, and even if you did, it's hard to find it. On the right, you'll see a tour company, EF Educational Tours.

They have a really simple design, which works really well. And the navigation is super easy to understand. So, they know that users are looking for tours, they want to know how the tours work, and then users also, if they have a specific question, they can just click on the question in the navigation and that's going to help them get their questions answered through a support module.

[1.3.1.5] So, the consistent information. So, like I mentioned earlier, making sure that what you have on your homepage reflects interior pages. So, I don't have a bad example of this. I just have a good example. So, ModCloth is an online clothing retailer and you can see on their homepage on the left, they are doing their stylish surprise sale.

So, they do bundle packages of items. And so, if you click on that banner, it takes you to an interior page that lets you choose what package you want. So, as you can see, not only are the graphics the same across two pages, but it's taking me right to ordering the stylish surprise, ordering what I want. So, I could just click on the dress example and it's going to take me to the order screen with the dress example in my cart.

Easy to use, consistent, I didn't have to hunt for the sale, it took me right to the pages to purchase, and that's what you want to do with consistent information.

[1.3.1.6] Next up is usability. So, making your website as easy to use as possible. This goes hand in hand with navigation as well. So, in this example, it's another just good example. This is a local movie theatre site. So, as you can see, show times is what the pages were on and it's for a specific movie. And I can look across the navigation. I can see what location, the date, what movie, and then premium offerings like reserved seats, menu ordering and things like that.

And then, I can easily select the time I want and then once I select the time, a button pops up that says Add to Cart or Check Out. Really easy to use, simple, fast. That's what users want. All right.

[1.3.1.7] So, consistent design is also really important. The country of Ireland has a tourism website that does a good job of this. So, all their interior pages about areas in Ireland, all look the same.

There's a really cool featured video and then you scroll down and it shows cool areas of Dublin or Northern Ireland and what visitors can do. So, because the design is consistent, when I'm doing research about Ireland, then I know where I can look for the information I want on each page, where I can compare. If I was trying to decide between going to Dublin or Northern Ireland, I could compare similar information on both pages to help me plan my trip.

[1.3.1.8] So finally, like I said, the information needs to be concise and honest. So, you don't want to be too worried you're going to lose reader's interest and your customer's interest. So in this example, it's actually a homepage, but as you can see, instead of focusing on call to actions or what they can do when they get to the site, it just has way too much information that would probably be better on separate interior pages.

So, you don't want to dump the information on the user and make them feel overwhelmed. You also want to make sure that the information is accurate and easy to read, and it is up to date to the best of your knowledge. That's just important to providing a really good website optimization and user experience.

## **MOBILE-FIRST DESIGN**

[1.3.2.1] The mobile-first principle is very important in product design since mobile is first priority for Google.

“Mobilegeddon” was an announcement from Google, made in 2015, that websites that aren't mobile-friendly are not going to be shown as much in search results if at all. In other words, if your website isn't optimized for mobile and somebody tried to access it or search for something related to your key terms in the search results, your website might not show up at all.

It's a pretty big deal for all types of businesses and websites. Furthermore, since internet is now accessed more on mobile phones than desktop computers, Google has moved to a mobile-first index. This index prefers websites that are optimized for mobile-first, and it's also focusing more on mobile users versus desktop users. They've been rolling that out slowly across 2017 and 2018.

There are two basic website design approaches in terms of a mobile-first design: mobile-friendly and responsive website design.

[1.3.2.2] A mobile-friendly website is a different version of your website that's shown to mobile users. It is hosted on a subdomain of your site.

Conversely, the responsive website design is formatted to its ideal fit for the screen it's on. It's important to note that most of the WordPress themes are responsive. If they're responsive themes, that means that it's all one version of your site and it just automatically adjusts to fit the screen that the user is accessing the website from.

Responsive is what most websites are now moving towards because it's just easier to maintain. There has been a degree of controversy and questions raised within the SEO community regarding whether mobile versions of websites are indexed in the same way as regular versions. Google says they are, but it's better just to play it safe and go with a responsive website.

[1.3.2.3] SEO and website optimization work together to create a mobile-first experience through responsive design, CTAs focused on mobile users, and content that is based on what a mobile user would be looking for.

The responsive design is making it as easy as possible for mobile users to use the website and find the information that they're looking for.

CTAs is another component of how SEO and website optimization work together. The CTA might be different based on mobile versus desktop. For example, if you searching for a restaurant from your phone, you're probably more likely to want to look at reviews, maps, and phone numbers because

you're on the go and you want to make a decision right away. On the other hand, on desktop, you might want to look at reservations or menus. That is something that can be changed on a responsive design, based on the theme or design you have.

Content is another area in which website optimization and SEO work really well together. When you think about the way the content is displayed, think about what your target audience is going to be looking for on their phone and make sure that that information is at the top and is easy to access. For instance, if I'm on my phone, I might want to see the call button first, whereas on the desktop version of a site I might prefer a blog post or information first.

## **WEBSITE COPY**

[1.3.3.1] So now we're going to talk about Website Copy. So copy is basically the content on your website that could be your homepage, your about page, services, products, everything that's going to give users information about your products and services. So you want your copy to be clear. So in the example we have here, we offer air conditioning units to restaurants and hotels. That's not confusing, it's not using overly flowery language that's going to confuse the user or make them feel put off or they don't know what you're talking about. So when they say copy needs to be enticing, you want to say something that picks the reader's interest, and going to make want to click through a completed conversion or learn more about your products and services. So in this example we have, we offer award winning certified air conditioning units to restaurants and hotels. No other competitors offer our same 10-year warranty. So that's basically providing users with what they'll get if they go with your company. You also want your content to be unique. So I touched on it in that example with the "no other competitor offer our same 10-year warranty." So you want to point out what makes you different from your competitors and what you offer that other competitors aren't. That way users know what to expect when they decide to go with your company.

[1.3.3.2] So, your website content, every page on your site should have five things. First, it needs to be easy to read so the content is broken up effectively into smaller paragraphs. You use headers to break up the content so it's easier to digest, just making it easier for the reader to stay on the page longer. You also want it to be easier to find. So, that goes a little bit into SEO, but also goes into proper website architecture and then optimization. So, they want to be able to find what they're looking for in just a few clicks. If I go to your homepage, I should be able to see what services you offer just in a few clicks just...And I get the detailed information, you know, in a few seconds if I wanted to. The information also needs to be easy to understand so even if you have a really technical product or service, you need to break it down at a lower reading level just so people can understand. Maybe they're going to be new to your industry, or new to your product, they don't know what they're looking for, you need to make it easy to understand so they'll be able to engage with it and hopefully, complete a conversion on your site.

[1.3.3.3] A Call to Action, is also really important for every page on the site. So A Call to Action is basically something like, "Contact us today, or call now to learn more, set up an appointment, send this to your email, sign up for our newsletter," anything that's having them complete an action, which can be a conversion on your site depending on what your site scores are. That's important to have on every page because you want to give them as many places as possible to complete that conversion. And then finally, all the pages should work together. So you should have pages linking together when they make sense. Let's say, you know, I had a detox services page about my writing services and I mention my graphic design services. In that case, I should be linking to my graphic design services page. So just making sure that the copy is linking and we're referring to each other and working together in order to be as effective as it can. So a little bit more about call to action, you want to use a clear, concise command that has direct language. You don't want to say anything like,



"Please call us" or, "If you want" You want to say, "Click here, buy now" direct actions that are going to spur the reader into action and actually make a decision.

So you also want to highlight how the offer benefits the user. So you want to make it impossible to resist. You want to make it hard for them to say no. So, you know, "Buy now and you'll get this for 50% off." Just kind of show what they get immediately if they buy something from you, or sign up for more information on your site. You also want to show social proof. So one thing that I've seen that works really well is it'll say, "Join 10,000 other email subscribers, sign up for our newsletter today." I see that and I think, "Wow, 10,000 other people have signed up for the newsletter, what am I missing out on, I should sign up too." And that's just showing people that other people are believing in your product so they should as well. And then you want to show that sense of urgency. So you, know, maybe this offer is only available through the end of the month, or only available for 48 hours. You want to make sure that they are kind of rush, they feel a little bit pressure to complete the conversion. Maybe it won't always be there, the offer, or the deal, or what have you. So you want to make sure that that's going to spur them to complete the action that you want.

[1.3.3.4] So, as this all goes together, you want to create a really cohesive experience. That means that all the pages are going to be offering the same information. So, like I said in the math clock example earlier, the same sales that you offer on your homepage, you should also be offering on interior product pages. The key messaging should all be the same. So if you have a tag line, or a mission statement, that should be the same across all pages, maybe your values should be reflected in all the work you do and all the services you provide. And then the voice and tone also needs to be the same. So, let's say, if I was speaking in first person, you should do this, it should be like that on all the pages on my site versus the business would enjoy, that's third person. So, make sure that that's the same. It's all little things like that that just create a better experience for the user. You also want to make sure that pages are linking well with the navigation, with the interior pages just providing that good experience that all works together.

## **A/B TESTING**

[1.3.4.1] A/B testing is comparing two different elements of a website to determine what gets more action. Anything that a user is seeing can be A/B tested. Think about what could impact their experience and then do a test on it.

Areas where A/B Testing is useful:

- Call-to-actions (CTAs)
- Headlines
- Graphic elements
- Wording and content
- Type of promotion or offer
- Pop-ups

Even little things can be A/B tested and actually make a huge difference. For instance, the color of the call-to-action buttons, where the call-to-action buttons are placed, the fonts that you use – all of these elements can be tested and tweaked to increase impact.

The headline. You can write two different headlines for a new blog post and test both of them to see which one gets more click-throughs, and which leads to more time on the page you're testing.

Graphic elements. For example, you can use illustrations instead of stock photography; this can actually increase time-on-site and conversion.

The wording. Maybe you have a really long landing offer page versus a short and concise one. What gets more visitors and sales? It does make a difference.

The type of offer. Maybe you'll offer the pricing at different ranges. Maybe a couple of dollars or euros off the offer. You can test \$20 off versus 25% off. It might be the same discount – you're just presenting it in a different way – but some users respond better to percentage off because they feel like they're getting a better deal. It depends on your audience.

For some CMSs, like WordPress, there are plugins that can do A/B testing for you. There are also tools like Optimizely that can run on your site and carry out automatic A/B testing.

[1.3.4.2] 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 you a clear picture of what actually worked. For example, what if you tested both the promotional offer and the headline of the landing page at the same time, and you got a higher conversion rate? You don't actually know if it was the headline or the promotional offer that caused the higher conversion rate.

The steps and best practices associated with A/B testing are:

- Pick one variable to test. This could be something such as the CTA button color, page layout, or campaign offer, such as \$50 versus 10% off.
- Choose your goal. What do you want to accomplish with this test? Choosing a specific goal will help you determine whether making these changes permanent will make a difference. An example of a goal would be, "Increase conversions 5% in the next eight weeks." Make sure it is specific and actionable.
- 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 whether that specific element actually makes a difference. For instance, if you wanted to test your offer, you would keep your "control" as your existing offer. That would be the "A" in the A/B test. Then, you test the "B" part of the test, the challenger, for example, 10% off.
- 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.
- 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 is through email, the number of email subscribers helps determine the sample size. So if you have 1,000 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. In most cases, the A/B test software randomizes or alternates it.

[1.3.4.3] There are many tools and plugins you can use for A/B testing. You can experiment and see what works best for you, depending on what your goals are.

Let's take a look at some examples:

- [NelioABTesting.com](https://www.nelioabtesting.com) is good for testing different elements on a WordPress site.
- [SimplePageTester.com](https://www.simplepagetester.com) is focused more on testing landing pages. It is an A/B testing plugin.

- ↗ Optimizely.com works across several different types of websites.
- ↗ FiveSecondTest.com only offers initial impressions to gather users' first impressions.
- ↗ VWO is a test duration calculator. It calculates how long to run a test.

These tools are going to help you figure out what you want to test, and how you want to test it.

# **LESSON 4: USER-CENTERED DESIGN AND WEBSITE OPTIMIZATION**

## UX VERSUS UI

[1.4.1.1] So, what's the difference between UX and UI? So, user experience is defined as a person's perceptions and responses resulting from the use and/or anticipated use of a product, system, and advice. That's the official definition. So, basically, it is how somebody uses their website from their perspective. Anything from clicking on a site to filling out a form, that's all part of the user experience.

[1.4.1.2] Conversely, the user interface is the platform that the users are using to complete the actions or go through their experience. So it is the code, the links, the forms they fill out. Anything that's interactive, that's going to be part of the user interface. So the main difference is, UI's the medium, and UX is the experience.

[1.4.1.3] So, while UX deals with interaction design, so anything that they're going to watch, or read, or click on, UI is going to be the medium through which it goes. So the player of the video that they're going to watch, the infographics that are displayed, and how those are displayed, that goes all into UI. UX is more based on data motion and user research.

So, a lot of testing goes into UX, figuring out what the users like. And then UI takes that feedback and also mixes it with the current designs and brand guidelines for the site. So, it's a mixture between what the users are looking for in terms of their experience with the site, and then the actual practical elements, like the design and the code that goes into it.

So, in terms of building a better UX, you want to make sure that you have, you know, a wireframe, sitemaps, and personas. Those go all into customizing the user experience. And then, conversely, UI is all about the layout of a site, what it looks like in terms of colors, elements, topography, how content's laid out, things like that.

## UX AND UI PRINCIPLES

[1.4.2.1] Good UX and UI design are important to website optimization; combined, they provide a better website that gives users the information they need, when they need it.

**More Traffic** – The easier your website is to use and navigate, the more likely it's going to be shown to users in search results and the more its content will be shared on social media. That's going to give you more traffic.

**Increased Retention** – It's also going to increase your retention rate. This means that customers that buy something from you, and have a good experience on your website, are more likely to buy something from you again.

**Increased Time on Site** – Good UX and UI design are also going to help increase the time-on-site. Studies have shown that the more time a user spends on a website, the more likely they are to not only come back, but to buy something and increase their overall purchase lifetime buying amount from your company. When users can find products 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 is so important.

**Deeper Emotional Connection** – UX and UI designed to reach users on an emotional level is going to give users a deeper, more personal connection with your brand and products. This can lead to better customer loyalty, a more positive brand sentiment, and possibly more conversions. The easier your

site is to use, the more they're going to learn about you. They might trust you more, and they're going to give you more credibility.

**More Conversions** – Good UX and UI design ultimately leads to more conversions. When a site is easy to use and is displaying the information in a way that's easy to find and understand, it's a pleasant experience. That's going to make it more likely that users will stay on the site and convert, either to a sale or another conversion.

**Better Return Rates** – And then finally, better return rates. Online users are much more likely to visit or buy repeatedly from a website with good UX and UI design. They are also more likely to recommend the company or the website to friends and family.

[1.4.2.2] There are five key principles to UX and UI.

**Accessibility.** You need to make sure that your website is easy to use for anyone, even those that might have vision or mobility impairments. You need to follow W3 guidelines, referenced below in this slide, to make sure that your website is accessible for anybody to use and to get the information from.

**Clarity.** You need to make sure that your website is easy to understand, that its purpose is clear, and that it is giving users a clear path to follow. No matter where users currently are in their buyer journey, you're taking them on a road that's going to, hopefully, lead them to a conversion and a long-term relationship with your company.

**Learnability.** The website needs to provide 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 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 it's in. This makes the company feel more personal to the user, and also gives them some more background on how it's run. Ultimately, this helps increase brand trust.

**Credibility.** The website should use 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 navigate.

**Relevancy.** You need to keep the website layout and content up to date with best practices for the industry, making it relevant to the user. If there is an outdated design or piece of information referenced, it decreases user trust and brand sentiment.

## **ASSESS UX**

[1.4.3.1] What should you test in terms of user experience to make sure that you're providing the best possible website for your users?

The first thing you need to look at is user intent. In other words, what is a user looking to accomplish on your pages? If you have an ecommerce website, for example, they might be looking to purchase a specific type of clothing or a specific type of product, and you need to build pages and the experience around what they are looking for. And what really helps with this is actually asking users and customers what they want, and what they expect from your website. Don't assume that you

know what they want; your perception of customer need might be different to an actual customer operating on the brand side.

You also want to think about the influence of website design on user experience. Poor design can create a poor 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 call-to-actions, not enough content about products and services on home page.

We already talked about layout but you also want to think about the trends and what's popular in terms of website design. Usability is always changing; there's always new software you can use, or new plugins on WordPress, for example. You need to constantly assess how software and plugins can make the user experience easier; test each new element and see if it works well for your audience.

Another thing you need to look at is points of friction. Causes of friction include:

- Hard-to-understand content
- Disruptive design elements
- Shipping costs are too high
- Order fulfillment time too long
- Forms too complex and time-consuming

For example, if analytics reveals a high bounce rate, which is the percentage of users that close out of a website on a specific page, you have identified a point of friction.

For instance, if you had a really high bounce rate on the second slide of your checkout process, and that was where users could customize their order, that might show that your ordering process might be way too hard to understand and way too complicated, and users just get sick of it and they leave.

Look for points of friction and test them. Do an A/B test to figure out what's going to work best and what's going to lower the bounce rate or lead to more sales. Besides lowering the bounce rate, another thing you can look at is whether your changes result in more sales, because that's going to show you that it made the journey of the buyer a lot easier.

And then finally, navigation. Navigation layout and process can vary. Navigation needs to balance your brand's look and feel with intuitive functional design. You can look in the analytics of your website to see how your users are navigating a site, and to see where they're dropping off. Additionally, testing nesting of pages is important. You want to make sure that anyone who's using the navigation can find the information that they're looking for.

[1.4.3.2] Let's go through some bad examples of website design.

Cloud 9 Walkers. This is a website with a poor UX and UI.

- 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
- The layout is not modern or mobile-friendly, so it's more difficult to use
- [1.4.3.3] Another bad example here is an art department website.
- The red text at the top of the page, which includes 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

## IMPROVE UX

[1.4.4.1] Let's talk about improving user experience and why a proper website navigation menu is so important.

Good navigation is going to help you get more clicks and traffic to sub-pages. When a user can easily find what they're looking for using a navigation menu, they're going to spend a lot more time browsing the site. They're going to be able to find pages that maybe they didn't even know existed because they see it in the navigation.

It also increases time on site and decreases your bounce rate. Users are going to interact more with your site, they're going to click through to more pages, and they're going to spend more time on each page. This all ties back into not only the content, but also how a website is structured through its navigation.

It also is easier for search engine spiders to crawl your site. If your navigation has all the pages added, you are providing search engine crawlers with the list of all the pages on your site. The more pages they crawl, the more pages they're likely to index, and then show in search results. This leads to better visibility in search results, and you being shown as a result for more user searches.

[1.4.4.2] This is an example of good ecommerce website navigation.

- The text is easy to read. It uses black text on a white background.
- It is broken down by category. This saves time, it's easy to understand, it's fast, and that's what users want.
- 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.
- [1.4.4.3] This is another example of good website navigation.
- The text is easy to read. It uses dark text on a white background.
- There are CTAs in the navigation plus a red CTA button in the top-right corner. This is important since this is a non-profit organization.
- The content is listed first in the navigation. 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 offers.

[1.4.4.4] Having a responsive website is really important for user experience.

Having a better user experience on mobile means that users are able to find the information they're looking for on a phone or a tablet without having to pinch the screen, for example, to see something that is cut off. The content is going to be on one single column that they can just scroll and look for the information they need. It also makes the text easier to read and the navigation easier to use.

As mentioned earlier, if your website is responsive or mobile friendly, it is going to be given preference in search results versus websites that aren't. That's a big differentiator in terms of your competitors, especially if they don't have that advantage.

Better design across multiple devices means your website looks great on mobile, desktop, and tablet. Whatever device a user is accessing your website from, you want them to have a really good



experience. That ties back to usability and the interface, and making sure that everything is cohesive no matter how a user is choosing to access your website. This is good for branding and credibility, and reflects well on the business.

[1.4.4.5] The expectations in terms of what a user wants to experience on your site is very different across multiple devices. What they're looking for on mobile might be different than desktop. They might want to call you on their phone, versus emailing you through a desktop. A/B test placement of contact information, reviews, services, and CTAs across different devices to see what gets more clicks.

Another consideration that you need to think about with mobile is that some companies have an app version rather than a mobile website. If your app is actually going to give users the experience that they're looking for, then you might want to make sure that your website on mobile is driving them to the app download. Amazon is a good example of this. They have an app that lets you search by camera or barcode, and they are recommending on their mobile site that you should use or download the app instead of using their mobile site. This doesn't mean that you should make your mobile website unusable so users have to download the app. You always want to give them the option, but make sure that they know why the app might be better; that's just giving them a better experience.

It's also important to note that user interface expectations may vary across different devices. For example, on mobile you need click-to-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.

[1.4.4.6] Another important aspect of UX is the perfect CTA. You also want to think about how a user is going to experience the call-to-action, and how they're going to look at it visually.

Here are some best practices for CTAs:

- Use action words. This inspires users to take action. Examples include: “Click now”; “Buy now”; “Order”; “Purchase”; “Contact”; and “Download”.
- Create urgency and scarcity. Only offer things for a limited time or in limited quantities so users feel more pressure to buy right away. For example: “Only 22 books remain” or “This sale only lasts for 24 hours”. Or alternatively, use a feature such as 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 of honest perceived value. For example, “Buy now for \$49, was \$499”. This lets 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; like they are part of an exclusive club.
- Get personal. Use mass personalization on website and in email campaigns, such as 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 such as “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, reviews, 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.

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

When you're selecting the right call-to-action for your audience, you want to think about testing to see what works. 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.

You'll never know what works until you test it, and then align the user experience to your specific audience. You might think about the personas that you have created for marketing to your audiences, and make sure that you're tailoring your CTA to what they would want and need. For example, an older audience would likely appreciate larger font sizes and bigger headers, with fewer animations, since they tend to read more slowly. Conversely, a tech-savvy crowd would expect more innovative and forward-thinking web design, such as interactive elements, quizzes, games, and so on.

[1.4.4.8] Here is an example of CTAs optimized for specific audience.

We have Tony Robins, he's a life coach. He writes books and conducts seminars. His audience are people that want to change their lives; they want to do something different, they want to make an impact with what they offer in the community.

The CTAs are really easily identified: they're in blue, they're all in caps, and they take action, which is what somebody is looking for when they're going to [tonyrobins.com](http://tonyrobins.com). They can choose two actions to go through, and there are immediate things that they can do right away.

[1.4.4.9] Here is another good example. This CTA works because it's easy to find, and simple. Also, it will be what their specific audience most likely wants 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, and the text pulls them toward exploring the world, which is what EF Tours offers its customers.

## **OPTIMIZE A WEBSITE**

[1.4.5.1] So now, we're going to go into a little bit more of the technical aspects of optimizing a website for users. So, the first thing I wanted to touch on is page speed. So, there's a lot more that goes into this besides what we're going to talk about today, but I just wanted to make sure to give an overview, because page speed is really important. It is a ranking factor in SEO. So, it's one of the many, many things Google looks at when they're deciding how to rank a website in search results.

So, if your pages on mobile or on desktop load really slow, that's going to affect how your website is shown in search results, and it's also going to affect your user experience. And that ties into everything we've been talking about, in terms of website optimization. So, page speed is really, really important, especially on mobile.

Users have a little bit shorter of an attention span on mobile. They are much more likely to leave a page if it takes longer than three seconds to load. And that doesn't seem like a lot, but if you counted out to yourself, you can see that the waiting for it to load could add up. So, one way to do this is through AMP, Accelerated Mobile Pages, and that's something a little bit more technical than we're going to talk about.

But that is a way that Google has been trying to get website owners to have more streamlined versions of their site. So, that might be something for you to look a little more into if you're interested, if you have a lot of content pages, like blogs on your site. Page speed is also an indicator of other issues on the site. So usually, a site isn't loading slowly just because.

There's always something that is causing it to load really slow. So, if you're getting a bad test result on the Google testing tool, which I link to in the resources of this slide, there might be a lot of things to blame. Really big images, your JavaScript or plugins aren't loading correctly, certain things on the back end of the site just aren't loading right.

[1.4.5.2] So, page speed can help you identify what's not working and how to fix it, and that's going to help with your user experience. So, there's a couple ways that hosting and website design are going to affect page speed and optimization. So, some hosting providers are faster than others, just due to the capacities they have, their quality of servers, their team, a lot of different factors.

So, make sure that you look at the reviews and their average load time for pages, whenever you're deciding what hosting provider to choose. Also, the hosted files and the code. So, things like your page content, the code if there's a lot of code that doesn't really need to be used on the back end of a site.

A lot of times this happens if you paste something in from Word, into a WordPress Editor, a new blog post screen. That might have a lot of excess code that doesn't need to be there, that needs to be taken out. It might seem like a little thing, but these all add up to really affect your page speed. The elements of a website can really slow it down as well.

I know it seems really cool to add all these interactive elements. But again, if that's not really helping users convert or giving them the information they're looking for, it might not be worth it to have on your site. So, a lot of times, I'll see elements like website sliders. They are those automated slideshows on home pages of websites that automatically cycle through an image, and then a link to information.

That actually might be something that's really, really slowing down your site. So, you might want to consider, is this really worthwhile to have in my website if it's going to affect the page speed? Other things that could happen, widgets, animations. If you have a tool that's really interactive, if it's not streamlined to be as little code as possible and take up a little bit of file space, then it could be slowing down the page speed, because every time a website page is displayed, the hosting provider is actually calling that from your hosted files and displaying it.

So, the bigger a file is, whether that's code or widget or whatever, that is actually the more time a hosting provider's going to have to take to load your site. Images are also a really huge thing that affect page speed. So, if you always use the default image size, maybe you download images from a stock photo provider, and they're the big sizes, 2,000 by 2,000 pixels.

If you load those onto your site, then every time you're hosting provider is going to have to display that huge image. When possible, always make those as little as you can. So, if the width of your website is 700 pixels or that column, you should only make the image 700 pixels, if it goes across.

[1.4.5.3] Just little things like that, in terms of images, are really going to help with the page speed. Some other things that can affect website optimization, besides page speed, are also related to hosting and the design of your site. So, if elements are broken, let's say you have a plugin that's

outdated or it's using code that just doesn't work anymore, that can cause your whole site not to work properly.

Maybe something won't load right and it'll show an error screen, or maybe whole pages of your site just won't load at all. These errors can affect what information is shown to the user. So, I've seen websites that use some weird plugin for their navigation, and when that's broken, the entire navigation just disappears. So, those types of things are really, really key to make sure that they're up to date and they're coded right, and that's going to help with your optimization for your website.

# **LESSON 5: WEBSITE METRICS AND DEVELOPING INSIGHT**

## WEBSITE METRICS

[1.5.1.1] So first, let's talk about what types of goals you should be setting. You might have heard of this acronym before, but it's SMART, S-M-A-R-T. This means that your goals must be S, specific. So the goal needs to be as specific as possible so everyone is on the same page about what you expect. So it shouldn't be, "Get more website traffic." It should be, "Get 10% more website visitors to product pages by the end of this quarter."

It needs to be M for measurable. So it needs to have something that has a concrete number attached to it, so, you know, 10%, this many dollars, a certain revenue amount. So make something that's a specific number that you can then track. A, for achievable. So this is something that isn't impossible to achieve because nobody likes, you know, chasing an impossible goal.

They want something that they can actually attain. So something like \$1 million in 12 months when you only have, you know, revenue of \$10,000 probably isn't achievable. You want to make something that is realistic and could actually be achieved in the timeframe that you're setting. So, R, relevant and results-focused. So you want your goal to be on-task and on-topic of what you're trying to achieve.

It needs to be related to actually what you're trying to change. So something like increase in-store visits might not be relevant to your website if it's not tied to get users in the door. You finally want to be time-bound. So you want to have a specific end date.

You don't want to be something like, "Get 10% more website visitors," you want it to be, "Get 10% more website visitors by September," something that has an end date so people know what to work towards.

[1.5.1.2] So, here are some of my favorite and most recommended metrics to track for your website. Again, this is going to vary by your audience and industry, and depending on what your specific goals are, and what your conversions are, you know, what you're going to count as a conversion because it might not be a sale, it might be something else.

So, the first thing is your conversion rate, so that's the percentage of your overall traffic, and over that, how many people actually converted. So, downloaded an eBook of yours, made a purchase, anything like that is your conversion rate, and you want to make sure that that is steadily increasing if possible.

Your return rate, so that's how many of your overall website viewers are coming back for another time. So, either they like what they saw, or maybe they want to purchase something else, that's always good to track because then you know that your content and your website experience is making an impact on your audience and they're coming back to experience it again.

Referral sources are also a really great way to see where your marketing team is doing really well and how that can tie back into your website. So if you have a lot of referrals from social media, then that might be something you want to put more efforts in versus if you're not getting a lot of referrals from your paid search ads or your email marketing.

That might be something you want to drop or something that needs to improve if you want to keep it. It's a good way of, kind of, seeing where your efforts are being put to use the best. Cart abandonment rate is a really good one for e-commerce sites. So that is the percentage of users that leave and don't complete a purchase, but they put something in their cart. So you want to look at that

and look at the specific pages that they left so you can determine what you need to test and tweak to decrease that abandonment rate to get more sales.

Time on site is really important. Usually, there's a correlation between the time a user spends on site and the likelihood that they'll convert or make a purchase. And then finally, bounce rate. That's the percentage of how many users leave a page after that page. So if I was on your about page and I closed out, that would be the bounce rate percentage of the about page.

## **EVALUATE A WEBSITE**

[1.5.2.1] How do you know if a website is actually effective? There are a lot of questions you can ask and answer with your data.

The first question is: Is it hitting the metric goals that you've set using your SMART goals setting method? If it's not hitting those goals, then there's something you need to change. Or perhaps your goals need to change; assess specifically whether your goals can actually be achieved.

Is the website viewable and accessible? Using the testing tools that we mentioned before, test to see if the website is viewable and accessible from a variety of different devices, including tablet, iOS and Android phones, and different computers. We recommend setting reminders on your calendar to do regular tests, depending on the frequency of updates you're doing. If you do any big updates, you ideally should be testing immediately across different devices to make sure everything still looks okay.

Next, you want to see if a colleague or random test reviewer can accurately complete a task or a series of actions on your website without any confusion or frustration. For example, if you were an online clothing retailer, you could say, "Buy two shirts in men's Small and women's Large." If the test user can do that without confusion, then you know that your checkout process is pretty seamless and will probably work with most users.

Finally, is all desired information included? Is everything that a user could possibly want to know about your website findable? And any questions they might have, do you address them in an FAQ section? Any perceived problems they might have with your product, are these issues listed alongside information about why they shouldn't worry about it? You want to know that all desired information is included on your website, and that it is as effective as it can be.

[1.5.2.2] There are a couple tools that you can use to ensure your website is following the latest best practices in website optimization.

For metrics testing, to make sure that you're hitting your marks you can use Google Analytics. It's free to use, and you can set up automated reporting.

The Google Search Console (previously Google Webmaster Tools) is also free. It provides information about your site's Search traffic and performance, as well as alerts on issues or missing pages. That's very important to look at when determining if your website is effective; make sure all the pages are working.

You also need to choose an SEO tool to audit your website, such as PowerMapper, SEMRush, or SE Ranking. Your choice will depend on your budget and the features that you need.

## MONITOR AND REPORT

[1.5.3.1] So, in addition to tracking the metrics, what goes into that is setting up regular reporting. So, for the purposes of this section, we're going to talk about Google Analytics specifically. But again, like I said, that's not the only analytic tracking software that's available. So, the first thing you can do is create automated reporting. So, that's basically setting up a PDF or an Excel file that's automatically sent to you at the time interval you choose.

So then, your reporting's already done for you. You don't have to worry about it. All you have to do then is analyze the data. You also can set up custom dashboards. So, basically, when you log into Google Analytics, you can see instantly how your website's performing, based on the metrics that you want to focus on. So, a dashboard can have little boxes of the metrics you want to track, so you can see at a glance, what's working and what's not.

You can also then, build a tracking spreadsheet that's going to show progress, and this is important to share with your team and everyone else that's involved in the project, and then maybe your leadership or management as well, if they want to see how your website's performing. So, a tracking spreadsheet's just going to take that data that you got in Analytics, and breaking it down if they want to see a more data-driven approach, instead of the PDF export that comes out from the Analytics.

[1.5.3.2] So, here's just a really quick example of referral sources from a website. So, this is just referral sources from the last 28 days. Google Analytics likes to use 28 days, because the months have different days, number of days in them. So, 28 days is a good metric to compare. So, we can see that the majority of their traffic came from organic search, and then it went down from there.

And Analytics lets you drill down and click on each of those sources so you can see specifically, for example, in social, what percentage was Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, whatever. This is going to help you figure out again, where your referral sources are coming from, and if your website's optimized properly for these sources.

[1.5.3.3] So, here's an example of a custom dashboard for a client of mine. They do an informational product. So you can see, right on the home screen when you log in, how many users there are in the last 28 days, what revenue they've gotten from their website, and this is something you set up in Analytics to track the conversions.

The conversion rate and then sessions, which are how many overall people were on the site, which is different from page views, which is separate pages. I also like that it shows how many users are on the site right now. It's just kind of cool to see, at certain times of the day, what pages people are viewing on the site.

[1.5.3.4] So, there's basically three steps in terms of optimizing your website based on goal performance.

So, the first thing you want to do is look at which of your metrics are down, and their corresponding pages. So for instance, if you notice on your overall average bounce rate, it's pretty low, but on your specific product pages, it's a little bit higher, then you know that your product pages might have a problem with your bounce rate. So from there, you can then test and see if you can get that bounce rate lower.

So for instance, you can AB test maybe having images on the page, if you don't have any. So, you can run that test for a while and see if that actually increases the amount of time that users spend on



your product pages, and if that leads them to go to other pages on your site. If it did, then you can make the change permanent, and that's going to lead to, hopefully, a lower bounce rate in the future, which is what you want.

So, here's an example of how to set up automated reporting in Google Analytics. You go to Share and this pop up button pops up, and you want to make sure that it's at the view you want. So, maybe it's your custom dashboard or a segment in the reporting metrics. In this example, we just did audience overview, which is just an overall view of how your website's performing, in terms of sessions and page views.

So from here, you can figure out who you want to send it to. So, maybe it's your whole team, maybe it's just you so you can prepare the report, and then what format you want. I like PDF because it uses the graphs and it's more colourful. But I think Excel is also an option. And then, you can also choose the frequency. So, a lot of times, monthly is good enough. But if you want to look at your big picture stuff, quarterly might work better.

So, I go into more detail about how to get to these steps in the lecture notes on this slide.

