



STEP-BY-STEP WEB DEVELOPMENT CHECKLIST

Courtesy: Arch Web Marketing

Follow this comprehensive 12-point checklist as your road map to launching a successful lead-generating website for your business. Thinking about building (or revamping) your website but just don't know where to start? We've compiled a detailed, step-by-step list of every key element you'll want to address as you (either on your own or working with a developer) create your business site.

Get started now: take one step at a time, get help where you need it, keep moving forward, and you'll be launching a website you can be proud of in no time!

Steps Points to consider when completing this step:

1 Register your domain name

Research available names

Decide on .com, .ca, .UK, org, etc.

Select Registrar Company

Set up domain privacy

Lock domain

2 Plan the site structure and write your website copy (Depending on the size of the site, this step can be time consuming.)

Decide on the main site goals and objectives

Outline the main sections for the website

Perform preliminary keyword research

(based on your ideal client profile(s).

Complete site outline with second- and third-level topic pages

Write search engine optimized copy for each page, including:

Title, Target key-phrase, Meta description, Keyword-rich headings, Main page content and Call to action

3 Sign up for web hosting

Evaluate hosts and hosting packages (bandwidth, disk space, email hosting & quotas, PHP 5, # of databases, tech support availability, server location, speed, reliability (up-time), customer service, concurrent processes, PHP memory limit, c Panel, & pricing –see bkmkd page re: hosting)

Redirect domain name to point to host server

Create FTP user (make the login credentials different than the ones for your main web hosting account)

Select FTP software and test connection to your web host

4 Set up email accounts

Create an email address for yourself (use your name to make it personal) and other team members (your VA, partners, etc.) Like curtis@moneyinmedia.com

Create at least one additional email for general inquiries (this account can be used for email marketing, website inquiries, and admin notices) Decide whether to forward email the new email account(s) to an existing email address, access it via webmail, or set it up in your email software

5 Install and configure WordPress

Create new database with strong user account password

Upload latest version of WordPress via FTP

Configure the wp-config.php file Amend default prefix to include random digits Use the secret key generator

Configure WordPress Create strong admin account credentials (don't use "admin" as username, use a unique strong password – not one use by any of your other accounts) Set file permissions to 755 (folders) and 644 (files) for most, except if WP required edit access Default settings to update: permalinks for page URLs time zone home page layout (blog posts or static page) privacy (turn this on until the site is ready to launch)

6 Install essential WordPress plugins Backup Backup plugins let you restore your site if your server crashes or you accidentally "break" something. Having a backup also makes it easy to move to another web host quickly, if needed. Two we use are WP-DBBackup (free) and BackupBuddy (paid)

Security Security plugins help keep you safe from site intrusions and hacking attempts. WordPress Firewall and Secure WordPress are two we use extensively. See here at [Money in Media](#)

Anti-spam If you allow comments on your site, you'll want to protect your blog from comment and trackback spam. WordPress comes with Akismet already installed which you can activate for a small monthly fee on



Business sites (personal sites are free) or select an alternate plugin to automatically detect and filter spam. Copy

Search engine optimization There are a number of SEO factors you need to consider to optimize your WordPress site for the search engines. A good SEO plugin can guide you through all the most important elements. A couple good ones are WordPress SEO by Yoast and All in One SEO Pack. An XML sitemap helps search engines like Google, Bing, Yahoo and Ask.com to better index your blog by making it easier for the crawlers to see the complete structure of your site and notifying search engines when the site is updated. We like Google XML Sitemaps.

7 Create and post placeholder “Coming Soon” page

Include your email and other contact information

Install a “maintenance” plugin like Maintenance Mode to hide the full site from the public while under development

8 Design the site and code the WordPress theme files (The theme controls the layout and display of every page and post on your site.)

Select a pre-built template, customize an existing theme, or have a layout designed and coded from scratch

Include page layouts for: Home page Static content pages with sidebar and secondary navigation Single blog posts Blog archives Search results

Plan sidebar requirements for home, content pages and blog posts Home pages often omit sidebars entirely and follow a unique layout Content page sidebars often include email sign up forms, testimonials, and advertisements while blog page sidebars usually display blog categories, popular posts, search and RSS feed links.

9 Build all site pages and navigation

Create each page in the site outline

Code main and secondary menus following page hierarchy

Import and format page copy

Add your unique page title and Meta description

Find and purchase appropriate images to reinforce the main messages in your content (or create your own photos and illustrations)

Web optimize, crop and position graphics (be sure to include ALT tags)

Insert keyword-rich links between site pages (and externally, as needed)

Code feedback form(s) to collect visitor comments and requests for more information

10 Structure site blog

Plan post categories based on keywords and target audience personas

Set default category

Assign user accounts for authors

Write author bios (preferably with photos)

Create styles to display comments, with avatars and nested replies

11 Email subscriber list and newsletter (e-zine)

Select your email marketing tool

Set up a new subscriber list

Import email addresses for existing clients

Plan your email message frequency and content

Create an email template with your company branding (and ideally matching your website)

Add email list sign up forms to your website in highly visible locations, including the home and blog post pages, sidebars, or popovers

Offer an incentive for new subscribers to join your list (usually offered as a free download)

Write and set up your list confirmation and welcome autoresponder emails

Create confirmation and welcome/incentive download web pages

Ensure your list and email communications comply with the CAN-SPAM Act (as well as any applicable legislation in countries outside the U.S. where you do business)

12 Perform final site check Make sure the site includes: Favicon Print stylesheet Link to RSS feed Meaningful error pages (page not found) Copyright Privacy policy

Review website in at least the most current version of each browser on the PC, Mac and mobile platforms



13 Launch website

- Sign up for free Google Analytic account
- Add the Google Analytic tracking code to every page of your site
- Make sure the “privacy” setting in WordPress is turned off
- Generate your XML sitemap
- Turn off your “maintenance mode” plugin
- Make one final review of the live site
- Announce the site launch to your contact list (and invite them to sign up for your email list!)

14 Social media

- Create profiles on the social media platforms most frequently used by your target audience Popular social sites include Facebook, Twitter, Google+, YouTube, LinkedIn, Pinterest, Tumblr, Flickr, StumbleUpon, Digg
- Link social media icons from your website to your various SM accounts
- Add “share” links to your blog posts and pages
- Connect your blog feed to your SM profiles

15 Ongoing Maintenance after Launch

- Plan regular site updates update WordPress and plugins (both active and inactive) quickly when new versions are released regularly create new content (usually through your blog) to improve search rankings, build reader engagement, and enhance credibility
- Monitor your website statistics to see how many visitors your site receives and what content attracts the most visitors and interaction. Strategize and implement changes, then review again.
- Increase the number of links from other sites back to yours (link building)

Next Steps Armed with this list of all the steps that go into creating a website, identify the tasks that you have the resources to manage internally and which ones will require outside assistance. Get started now on the steps you plan to do yourself and use the checklist as your hiring guide when interviewing prospective web designers to make sure they can cover all your bases. If you'd rather find out right away how [Money in Media](#) can help you create your website, just get in touch with us. We'll help you map out the best ways to promote your business and services online.