5 WordPress Optimization Tips

WordPress is a very powerful content management, website and blogging platform that is very well optimized out of the box. Over time, most websites can experience slowdowns due to technology changes and lack of maintenance. These tips will get you well on your way to having a very fast website.

☑ WordPress core

WordPress periodically releases updates to the core software that include new features, bug fixes, security updates and performance improvements. Keeping WordPress up-to-date will prevent a lot of problems and help speed up your website.

☑ Third-party plugins

Plugins are extensions to WordPress and need to be kept up-to-date for the same reasons as the WordPress core software. Outdated plugins can cause all sorts of problems and may even fail completely, if not kept current. If the plugins aren't updated regularly, it's best to find an alternative plugin. While you're working with plugins, it's a good idea to uninstall any unused plugins as well.

☑ Maintain your database

WordPress is very efficient in it's use of the database, but over time the database can become filled with unneeded records from plugins that have been removed, as well as page and post revisions history. Using your host's database management tool, usually PHPMyAdmin, these outdated and unneeded records can be removed through optimization and repair. A smaller database will respond quicker to queries.

☑ Optimize images

We're talking about using the appropriate dimension images with the smallest file size without compromising image quality. Photoshop is great at resizing images and gives you a preview of what the image would look like at different compression (quality) levels, but it can be quite expensive and cumbersome. If the images you plan to use are already the correct dimensions, then Compressor.io would be a good tool for reducing the final file size. Responsive Image Breakpoints Generator converts high resolution images to a variety of sizes to present on desktop, tablets and mobile phones.

☑ Migrate to PHP 7

PHP is the programming language that is required to run WordPress sites and this makes it a critical component. Migrating from any older version to PHP 7 will result in significant improvements in website performance. Web hosts such as WP Engine make this process simple and provide a tool to test your website for compatibility with PHP 7.