

WORDPRESS

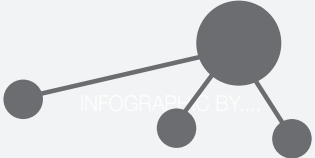
STARTING A BLOG/WEBSITE

CHEAT SHEET



This is a fully upto date (2017) Start a WordPress Blog / Website cheat sheet / checklist that will become a No.1 resource for WordPress Designers, Developers and users.

We've outlined everything that you need to do to start your very own WordPress blog or website. From the pre-development stage right through to launch and beyond, we have the ultimate checklist to help you through the potential minefield of building your own WordPress website.

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WordPress Pre Development

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There's a lot of think about when it comes to setting up your own WordPress blog or website. It can be difficult to know where to start. This handy cheat sheet will help both beginners and WordPress experts focus on the task in hand and give you a better understanding on what to do, pre development.



Pick the Right Directory:
Choose a directory and install the files under public_html. Make sure you do not use 'root' or 'WordPress.'



Update Blog Title:
Very important to update the blog title and tag line appropriately under Settings > General.



Change DB Table names:
Use random letters/numbers_table names instead of the default wp_table names. Checkout Change DB Prefix Plugin.

Change Media Settings:
Under Settings > Media, uncheck the "Organize my uploads into month and year based folders" option if you would like to save all the images under 'uploads' folder. Be aware that large sites with 1000's of images will make this folder very heavy.



Use Unique Login/Password:
Refrain from using admin/admin as admin login/password. Alternatively, you may follow these examples;

- Username- CMW (e.g.)
- Password- (Use Strong Password Generator Plugin).
- You may also use your email as login with WP Email Login Plugin.



Change Blog Category:
Similarly, under Posts > Categories, rename the 'uncategorized' to set up a default category for Posts.



Hide your Test Website from Search Engines
Make sure you hide your website from the search engines by checking the option under Settings > Reading "Discourage search engines from indexing this site".



Lock Down Your Demo Site:
Increase the security for your demo website by installing the Password Protected plugin.



Additional Steps:
Once the installation is complete, here are some of the additional things you should do.

- Create a "Coming Soon" page with the free SeedProd Coming Soon or WP Maintenance Mode Plugins.
- Now, you will need to make some changes in the settings under General category.

Choose a www or non-www URL for the WordPress as well as Site address.

Delete Sample Config File:
Finally, don't forget to remove the sample config file, WP-config-sample.php in your root under public_html.

Additional Steps:
- Enable the debug mode

- Use as many WP default-included third-party JS libraries as possible.

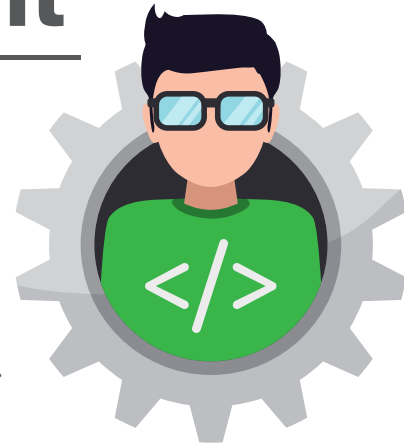
- As the admin, you should be able to upload/remove media and install new plugins as per your requirements.

Set Default Date & Time:
Don't forget to update the Time Zone, Date/Time under Settings > General.



WordPress Development

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This is probably the most important checklist of the whole cheat sheet.

There's no getting away from the fact that there's quite a few settings and changes that you need to make during the development of your WordPress website.

That's why, I have included everything you need to do in the process of building your site. With this check list you'll never miss out on anything crucial to your website or blog.

Remove Default Content:

Check that you have removed the WordPress default content like posts, comments and more.

Change Blog Category:

Similarly, under Posts > Categories, rename the 'uncategorized' to set up a default category for Posts.

Create a Sitemap:

Next, create a logical sitemap in Notepad, Word or Excel and add pages like About us, Contact us, etc, according to this sitemap.

Style Sticky Post:

Style the sticky posts well and make sure they function well.

Use Dash for URLs

Make sure to use "-" in your URL's instead of "_".

Check for Content Overflow:

Make sure there are no posts with pictures that break the content layout or are too big for the content column. In that case, make Overflow: Hidden in you CSS.

Add Blog Categories

Under Posts > Categories, add appropriate blog categories.

Highlight Author's Comments:

Ensure that the author comment is highlighted differently.

Add Tags & Media:

Once you've added the blog categories, include suitable posts, tags and media files.

Use Gravatars:

Check that the User Avatars or Gravatars are displayed properly.

Update Menu:

Then, as per the Sitemap, add Menu under the Appearances > Menu section.

Add Comment Closed Message:

The comments display form is replaced with a "Comments Off" message or something similar.

Use ALT Text:

Don't forget to add alt text to all the website images. You may also use the Search Friendly Images Plugin.

Create 404 Page:

Ensure that the 404 page is created and customized. Though most themes have a default page for content that can't be found, you should also consider setting up a custom 404 error page.

Add Newsletter Subscription:

Include the Email Opt-In Form for newsletter subscription. You may use Newsletter Plugin. We use MailChimp List Subscribe Form Plugin.

Test Search Page:

Please check if the search page is accessible to users. You can check by navigating to <http://yoursite.com/?s=Test>.

Use & Test Pagination:

Test the pagination using WP-PageNavi plugin.

WordPress Development

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Make a Plugin List

- SeedProd Coming Soon
- WordPress SEO by Yoast
- Google Analytics by Yoast
- BackUpWordPress
- WordPress Backup to Dropbox
- Broken Link Checker:
- Redirection
- Contact Form 7
- Contact Form 7
- BBQ: Block Bad Queries
- WP-Optimize
- WP-PageNavi
- WP Super Cache
- iThemes Security
- Revision Control
- Error Log Monitor



Add Social Icons

Add social media icons/links for Facebook, Twitter, Google+, Pinterest, LinkedIn, etc. You may use AddThis, ShareThis or Share Bar Plugins.



Create Social Profiles:

Facebook Fan Page
Twitter
Google Plus
Pinterest



Add Favicon:

Add custom Favicon using Custom Favicon plugin.



Use Breadcrumb:

Don't forget to use Breadcrumbs for easy navigation. It's a part of WordPress SEO by Yoast Plugin



Link Logo:

Link the company logo to the Homepage.



Remove Lorem Ipsum:

Lastly, make sure you remove all the Lorem Ipsum text on the website.

The WordPress Launch

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You've made it!!! Congratulations! You've completed the tricky development process and you're ready to launch! There's a few steps you need to go through to successfully launch without any major issues or problems. There's actually a lot of things to follow before you actually launch your website. I have included every thing you need to do before you go live, so don't worry.



Do Regular Backups Of Your Site:

Once your website is launched, it's vital that you take regular back-ups. Use free plugins to back-up like; BackUpWordPress & WordPress Backup to Dropbox.



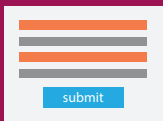
Check Content Structure:

Check the structure and content for everything including pages, categories, URL's, submission forms, etc.



Update Admin Email:

Also, under Settings > General, check social links, contact info and admin email.



Test All Web Forms

Make sure all forms on your site (contact, order,,etc.) are submitting data correctly and that form emails are sent to the right places.



Ensure Cross Browser Compatibility:

Check if your website is cross browser compatible by extensive testing. Free Trial with Cross Browser Testing.



Enable Site to be Crawled:

Uncheck the option under Settings > Reading of "Discourage search engines from indexing this site" and make website visible to search engines.



Disable Coming Soon Page:

Launch the plugin SeedProd and disable the "Coming Soon" page.



Test for Responsiveness:

Test your website is mobile friendly. Run Google's Mobile Friendly Test to determine the same.



Implement Security:

Make sure you have all the security in place, like password strength, files and folder permissions, etc. using the iThemes Security plugin.



Test 3rd Party Tools:

If you're using external tools for CRM, ecom, marketing, or something else, double check that they are present on-site and working correctly.



Check Loading Speed:

Improve the page loading speed by using Google's Page Speed Insights.



Compress Images:

Reduce all the image sizes by almost 50% by compressing the PNG & JPG files using TinyPNG or WP Smush it plugin.



Use Latest Version of WordPress:

Make sure you are using the latest version of WordPress. If not, ensure that you upgrade before you go live.



Upgrade Plugins:

It is also important to upgrade all the plugins on your website before going live.



Open URL in New Tab:

Check if all your external links are working by opening them in new tabs. Use code similar to this for links.



Test Social Buttons:

Check whether social sharing is in place, working properly, and includes the right platforms and profiles.



Check Broken Links:

It's essential that you check for broken links on your website before going live. Use Broken Link Checker Plugin.



White Label (Optional):

If you are developing the WordPress website for a client, implement branded WordPress login page using White Label CMS Plugin.



Test Out Feeds:

If you have RSS, news, social, or other feeds on your WordPress site, ensure they are working as they are supposed to before site launch.



Adhere To Accessibility Guidelines

Don't forget to make sure your site is fully accessible to everyone. Make sure your site adheres to the WCAG.

WordPress SEO

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You can have the most well-designed and well-developed WordPress website in the world, but if you don't have proper SEO best practices in place, then all your hard work will be wasted.

That's why we have come up with a comprehensive SEO cheatsheet so you don't have to worry about missing out on traffic that your website deserves. Take action on each step and you will have a fully search engine optimized website in quick time, ready to take on the internet!

Manage 301 Redirects:
Manage your 301 redirection with the help of user Redirection Plugin.

Make Sure Your Site Can Be Crawled:
Site visibility can be turned on under the **Settings > Reading**. By default this is set to enabled. But if not just uncheck "Discourage search engines from indexing this site".

Use H1 Tag:
Include just one H1 tag on each of your pages.

```
<H1></H1>
```

Use H2 Tag:
Use H2 tag only within the content for headers.

```
<H2></H2>
```

Use Alt text On All Images:
Add in ALT text to all images on your site. There's a WP plugin to help you called "Search Friendly Images Plugin".

Test XML Sitemap:
Check if the Yoast's WordPress SEO Plugin's in-built sitemap is working or else install Google XML Sitemap Plugin

Check Robots.txt:
A correctly placed and optimized Robots.txt file is important aspect of new website.

Compress Images:
Make sure you reduce the size of the images on your website. Use a plugin called WP Smush it

Check Duplicate Content:
Your content has to be original and that you have no duplicate content on your website. Use CopyScape.com

Interlink Content:
Interlinking your content with contextual links is a must when it comes to properly optimizing your website for SEO.

Link to External Links:
Make sure you link out to other resourceful websites, within your content. If it's relevant, then link to it.

Optimize Site:
Another high priority is to optimize your website. Use GTMetrix for HTML and Pingdom for WordPress, and it will help you to effectively clear errors.

Improve Page Loading Speed:
Speed is everything. Use Google's PageSpeed Insights to improve your page loading speed.

Get Web Responsive:
Use Google's Mobile Friendly Test to make sure your website is responsive and mobile device ready.

Schema Creator:
Schema Creator Plugin is a great tool to use to add structured schema data to your content.

Create Short URL:
Use a shorter URL for the pages.

WordPress SEO

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www or non www:

Redirect the 'www' to 'non-www' or vice versa but stick to one

<http://www>



Signup for Webmaster Tools:

If you have found any issues with the website so far, sign up for Google's Webmaster Tool and fix those issues. Ensure that you have submitted both the 'www' as well as the 'non-www' versions.



Test Breadcrumb:

Ensure that links on Breadcrumbs are working.



Limit Meta Title:

Make sure that the Meta Title remains only 55 characters long, including the spaces. Yoast SEO has this feature inbuilt for you.



Meta Descriptions:

Meta Description should only contain 155 characters, including spaces.



Use Latent Semantic Indexing Keywords (LSI):

LSI Keywords are very important for SEO. Make sure you include enough in your content. Find LSI using Google Keyword Planner, UberSuggest.org or Google Search (hint: look for keywords at the bottom of the page after completing the search query)



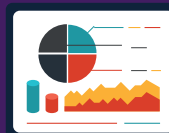
Permalinks:

Make sure the permalink structure is set to your liking ([Settings > Permalinks](#)) and that each page URL contains its main keyword.



Submit for Local Listing:

Submit your site to Google Business if your site is about locally related content.



Check Analytics:

Get insightful data on your site by adding Google Analytics.



Check Onpage Content:

Check all the aspects related to OnPage SEO before going live.



Proofread Content:

Make sure you proofread the entire website to check for spelling and grammar errors, before going live.



Use a CDN (content delivery network):

Use a CDN (content delivery network) like MaxCDN to ensure better speed and usability.



Keyword Focus:

If you are using an SEO plugin, each post and page should also have a defined focus keyword. This will give you important information on how to further optimize them.



Exclude IP from Analytics:

Exclude home and office IP addresses in Google Analytics. More information on Excluding Internal Traffic can be found on Google Analytic Help Section



Add Social Sharing Icons:

Don't forget to include Social Media icons on all pages of the WordPress website. You may use AddThis, ShareThis or Share Bar Plugins.

WordPress Blog Security

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You've spent a lot of time and effort building out your WordPress site, so the last thing you need is it getting hacked and destroyed by hackers. Security is vitally important when it comes to WordPress development.

So before you switch the site live and unleash it to the world, it is imperative that you have water tight security in place.

With this checklist, you'll get to grips with what plugins to use and all the additional setting that you'll need to protect your website from malicious threats and hackers.



Block Directory Access:
To prevent access to all directories, you need to place this code inside your .htaccess file.

```
# Prevent folder browsing
Options All -Indexes
```

Disable Theme and Plugin Editor:
If you want to stop the editor links from appearing in the admin area you can add the following to your wp-config.php file so people cannot edit the theme directly in the admin area.

```
define('DISALLOW_FILE_EDIT', true);
```



Keep An Eye On Your Site Performance:

Get regular and up to date reports of your website's performance with this handy plugin – **Plugin Performance Profiler Plugin**.

Hide your WordPress Version:
It is important that you hide your current WordPress Version from the hackers. Add the following code to your function.php

```
function remove_version() {
    return "";
}
add_filter('the_generator','remove_version');
```

Delete Install & Upgrade Files:
Be sure to delete /wp-admin/install.php and /wp-admin/upgrade.php after every WordPress installation or upgrade.

Limit Suspicious Login Attempts:

Use Limit Login Attempts or Login LockDown Plugins to limit the number of login attempts possible both through normal login and using auth cookies.

Hide Login Error messages:
Error login messages may expose your website and give hackers an idea if they've gotten username correct/incorrect, vice versa. It is wise to hide it from unauthorized login. To hide login error messages, simply put the following code in functions.php.

```
function wrong_login() {
    return 'Wrong username or password;';
}
add_filter('login_errors','wrong_login');
```

iThemes Security:
The most comprehensive, watertight security plugin around is, iThemes Security plugin. It's free and takes care of almost all the security issues on a website.



iThemes Security Pro

Secure your wp-config file:

```
<files wp-config.php>
order allow,deny
deny from all
</files>
```

Wp-config.php file contains a lot of confidential details of your site, so it's vital that you protect it with your life! The way to protect this file is to simply place the following code in your .htaccess file on your server.



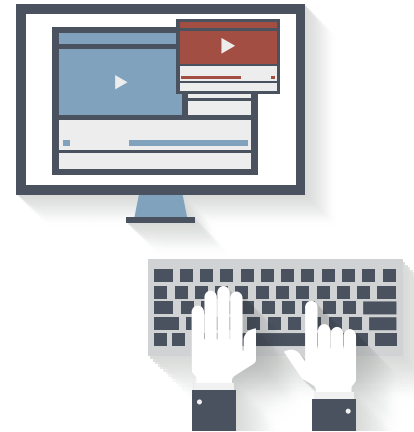
Go live:
Once all these things are in place, you may either go live at this stage and follow the SEO Checklist after or vice-versa.

Ongoing Maintenance

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So it's all live and going smoothly. To continue the smooth running of a WordPress website, you need to know how you can maintain it efficiently.

This ongoing maintenance checklist will give you stepwise information on how you can run your website smoothly and conduct regular checks to make sure it functions impeccably.



Empty Spam Comments:

Tackle an attack of thousands of spam comments with the help of Delete Pending Comments Plugin.



Test Contact Forms Every Week:

Test the functioning of your Contact form by sending an inquiry through it.



Check Broken Links:

Look for broken links on your website with the CheckMyLink Extension for Chrome & Broken Link Checker for WordPress.



Post Revision Control:

Gain total control over your post revision system with Revision Control plugin.*



Reply to Comments:

Make sure you check your comments section and answer questions & interact regularly with your readers.



Update Plugins:

Keep a tab on plugin updates and upgrade them regularly.



Take Regular Backups:

Don't forget to take backups of the latest databases and files using BackUpWordPress(Free) | BackupBuddy (Paid) | WordPress Backup to Dropbox (Free).



Clean Spam Comments:

Manage the thousands of spam comments with the help of Delete Pending Comments Plugin or Akismet.



Check Google Analytics:

Check Google Analytics regularly.



Review Webmaster Tools:

Similarly, check Google Webmaster Tools periodically.



Ongoing Maintenance

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Check Resources Used:

Keep an eye on your resources with the P3 – Plugin Performance Profiler.

Monitor Statistics:

Use WP Statistics plugin to monitor your WordPress website's statistics.

Ongoing Security Checks:

A good plugin which scans your WordPress installation and gives you suggestions accordingly is WP Security Scan. This plugin will check for below things:

- Passwords
- File Permissions
- Database Security
- WordPress Admin protection
- Additional: If you have all these things in place, and still wish to add some additional characteristics to the website then follow these following steps, when using WP-config.php;

- Disable the Debug mode:

```
define('WP_DEBUG', false);
```

- Disable WordPress Updates: (Should be used by Experts Only)

```
// Completely Disable Automatic Updates  
define('AUTOMATIC_UPDATER_DISABLED', true);  
// Disable all updates to the Core  
define('WP_AUTO_UPDATE_CORE', true)
```

- Control Post Revisions:

```
// Limit the number of saved revisions. limit to 10  
define('WP_POST_REVISIONS', 3); //  
// Disable the post-revision feature completely.  
define('WP_POST_REVISIONS', false); //
```

- Clear Trash:

```
// Empty every 7 days  
define('EMPTY_TRASH_DAYS', 7);  
// Disable Trash Completely  
define('EMPTY_TRASH_DAYS', 0);
```

- Increase Memory Limit:

```
// Set Memory Limit to 64MB  
define('WP_MEMORY_LIMIT', '64M');  
// Set Memory Limit to 96MB  
define('WP_MEMORY_LIMIT', '96M');  
// Set Memory Limit to 128MB  
define('WP_MEMORY_LIMIT', '128M');
```

- Define Auto Save Interval:

```
define('AUTOSAVE_INTERVAL', 300);
```