

The
ULTIMATE
WordPress
Owner's Guide

Security,
Speed &
Performance



**FREE TO
DOWNLOAD!**

Busy SMB Owners

With this guide, SMB owners like you can easily manage your WordPress website. By dedicating a small amount of time regularly, your website will stay in great shape. This guide will help to keep your website:

- **Secure:** Protecting your website from cyber threats safeguards your business data and customer information.
- **Fast & Efficient:** A fast-loading website keeps visitors engaged, improves search engine ranking, and ultimately boosts conversions.
- **Up-to-Date & Reliable:** A well-maintained website reflects professionalism, builds trust with your audience, and positions you as an industry leader.

Understanding WordPress Maintenance

Think of WordPress maintenance as a car's routine service. Regular oil changes, tyre rotations, and inspections prevent breakdowns and keep your vehicle running smoothly. Similarly, website maintenance involves a series of tasks that ensure your website performs at its peak.

Here's a breakdown of the key areas we'll explore:

Security: Protecting your website from unauthorised access, malware, and data breaches.

Enhancing Performance: Techniques to make sure your website loads fast and provides a smooth user experience.

Backups & Disaster Recovery: Creating safeguards to recover your website in case of unforeseen technical issues.

Content Management: Strategies for keeping your website content fresh, informative, and engaging for visitors.

Updates & Compatibility: Implementing regular updates to the WordPress core, themes, and plugins.

Analytics & Monitoring: Tracking key metrics to understand website performance and identify areas for improvement.

Security: Your Website's Fort Knox

Why Security Matters

A hacker can gain access to your website and steal customer data or inject malicious code. A security breach can damage your reputation, lead to financial losses, and erode customer trust.

Essential Security Practices

- **Strong Passwords:** Use strong, unique passwords for your WordPress login and administrator accounts. Consider password managers to generate and store complex passwords. BitWarden is recommended as it is free for personal use and just as secure as any paid password manager.
- **Two-Factor Authentication (2FA):** Add an extra layer of protection by enabling 2FA. This requires a second verification code, typically sent to your phone, in addition to your password when logging in. There are plenty of free plugins in the WordPress repository.
- **Regular Security Updates:** Outdated WordPress core software, themes, and plugins can contain vulnerabilities. Regularly update all components to benefit from the latest security patches. BBI offers an affordable maintenance plan to take care of these basic tasks for you.
- **Security Plugins:** Consider installing a reputable security plugin that offers features like malware scanning, login attempt monitoring, and firewall protection.
- **Limit Login Attempts:** Prevent brute-force attacks by limiting the number of consecutive login attempts allowed before temporarily locking the account.
- **User Permissions:** Assign user roles and permissions within your WordPress dashboard. Grant only the minimum level of access necessary for each user. Not every user needs admin rights, as this could spell disaster!

Pro Tip: Schedule regular security scans using a website security scanner to identify and address any vulnerabilities before they are exploited. BBI can regularly scan your website so you can focus on running your business.

Performance Optimisation: Speed is King

Why Website Speed Matters

If your website takes too long to load, visitors will bounce and head to your competitor. Studies show a one-second delay in page load time can result in a 7% conversion rate drop.

Optimising your website for speed

- **Image Optimisation:** Images are often the biggest culprits behind slow loading times. Use tools to compress image size without sacrificing quality. Consider using a Content Delivery Network (CDN) to deliver images faster to visitors in different locations.
- **Caching:** Caching stores frequently accessed website elements, allowing them to load faster for returning visitors. Utilise a caching plugin to significantly improve website speed. The caching plugin you use will depend on your choice of hosting; some hosts have their own caching plugins which are highly optimised to the environment.
- **Minimise Plugins:** While plugins offer great functionality, they can also slow down your website. Regularly review your installed plugins and deactivate or delete any that are not actively used.
- **Choose a Reliable Hosting Provider:** Your website hosting provider plays a crucial role in website speed. Consider upgrading to a hosting plan optimised for WordPress performance. BBI can help with your WordPress hosting needs, covering WordPress hosting as well as hosting suited for other content management systems.
- **Minify Code:** Minification removes unnecessary characters and formatting from your website's code, resulting in smaller file sizes and faster loading times. Plugins can automate this process.

Pro Tip: Use a website speed test tool to measure your website's loading speed before and after implementing optimisation strategies.

Backups & Disaster Recovery

Why Backups Matter

It is easy to lose all your website content because of a server crash, accidental deletion, or a malicious attack. Backups are your safety net, allowing you to restore your website to a previous state and minimise downtime.

Types of Backups

- **Full Website Backup:** This is a complete copy of your website, including all files, databases, themes, plugins, and settings. Full backups are crucial for recovering from major disasters.
- **Database Backup:** The WordPress database stores all your website's content, such as posts, pages, comments, and user information. Regularly backing up your database ensures you can restore this critical data if needed.

Backup Frequency

The recommended backup frequency depends on how frequently your website content changes. For websites with daily updates, consider daily or bi-daily backups. Websites with less frequent updates can schedule weekly or bi-weekly backups.

Backup Storage

- **Do Not Store Backups on the Same Server:** This creates a single point of failure, meaning if the server crashes, both your website and backups become inaccessible.
- **Cloud Storage:** Online storage services offer a secure and reliable way to store website backups. Choose a reputable cloud storage provider with strong security measures and data redundancy.
- **Local Storage:** Backups can also be stored on an external hard drive. However, this method requires manual intervention and is more susceptible to physical damage or loss.

Backup Automation

Manually creating backups can be time-consuming and error-prone. Utilise reliable backup plugins that automate the backup process and schedule regular backups according to your needs.

Testing your Backups

Regularly test your backups to ensure they can be restored successfully. Create a staging environment or use a test server to restore a backup and verify everything functions properly.

Content Management

Why Updated Content Matters

- **Engages Visitors:** Regularly updated content keeps visitors coming back for new information, products, or blog posts. This fosters long-term engagement and builds relationships with your audience.
- **Improves Search Engine Ranking (SEO):** Search engines like Google reward websites with fresh, high-quality content. By consistently adding new content, you improve your website's visibility in search results, driving organic traffic.
- **Establishes Authority:** Providing valuable and informative content positions you as an expert in your field. This builds trust with potential customers and establishes your brand as a thought leader.

Content Management Strategies

- **Develop a Content Calendar:** Plan your content strategy with a calendar that outlines topics, publication dates, and author assignments. This ensures a consistent flow of fresh content.
- **Focus on High-Quality Content:** Content should be well-written, informative, and relevant to your target audience. Prioritise providing value and addressing your audience's needs and pain points.
- **Variety is Key:** Experiment with different content formats like blog posts, articles, case studies, infographics, or videos to keep your audience engaged.
- **Optimise for SEO:** Include relevant keywords throughout your content to improve search engine ranking. Utilise SEO plugins to assist with keyword research and optimisation.
- **Promote Your Content:** Share your content on social media, email marketing campaigns, and industry publications to maximise reach.

Pro Tip: Repurpose existing content into different formats. For example, a blog post can be adapted into a video script or an infographic. This maximises the value you get from your content creation efforts.

Updates and Compatibility

Why Updates Matter

Regularly updating WordPress core software, themes, and plugins ensures optimal performance, security, and compatibility. Developers frequently release updates that address bugs, introduce new features, and patch security vulnerabilities.

Updating your WordPress website

- **Develop an Update Schedule:** Establish a routine for checking for updates at least once a week. Updates are typically easily accessible within your WordPress dashboard. BBI can help with this; our service is perfectly suited to businesses that do not have the time to worry about WordPress maintenance. Let us handle the heavy lifting!
- **Test Before Updating:** It's always a good practice to back up your website before installing any major updates. Consider testing them in a staging environment first to avoid unexpected issues on your live website.
- **Update WordPress Core:** This is the foundation of your website. Update the core software whenever a new version is available to benefit from the latest features and security patches.
- **Update Themes & Plugins:** Similarly, update your themes and plugins as new versions become available. Outdated themes and plugins can introduce compatibility issues and security vulnerabilities.
- **Theme & Plugin Compatibility:** Choose themes and plugins that are actively maintained and compatible with the latest version of WordPress.

Pro Tip: Repurpose existing content into different formats. For example, a blog post can be adapted into a video script or an infographic. This maximises the value you derive from your content creation efforts.

Analytics & Monitoring

Why Analytics Matter

Website analytics provide valuable insights into website performance and user behaviour. By tracking key metrics, you can identify areas for improvement and make data-driven decisions to optimise your website for better results.

Essential Website Analytics Tools

- **Google Analytics:** This free tool offers a wealth of information on website traffic, user demographics, page views, conversions, and bounce rates.
- **Search Console:** Another free tool from Google that provides insights into how your website performs in search results and helps you identify opportunities to improve your SEO.

Key Metrics to Track

- **Website Traffic:** Monitor the number of visitors to your website and analyse trends over time. Identify traffic sources and understand how visitors find your website.
- **User Engagement:** Track how users interact with your website. Analyse metrics like bounce rate, average session duration, and page views per visit.
- **Conversions:** Define your website's conversion goals, whether it's making a purchase, subscribing to a newsletter, or downloading a white paper. Track conversion rates and identify areas to improve your website's lead generation capabilities.
- **SEO Performance:** Monitor your website's ranking for relevant keywords and track how changes to your content strategy impact search engine visibility.

Pro Tip: Use analytics data to create audience personas representing your ideal customer. This helps you tailor your website content and marketing efforts to their specific needs and interests.

Additional Website Maintenance Considerations

- **Database Optimisation:** Over time, your WordPress database can accumulate unnecessary data like revisions, spam comments, and transients. Regularly optimising your database can improve website performance and efficiency. Utilise plugins specifically designed for database optimisation.
- **Broken Link Checker:** Broken links can frustrate visitors and negatively impact SEO. Use a plugin to scan your website for broken links and redirect them to the correct pages or remove them altogether.
- **Spam Prevention:** Spam comments can clutter your website and damage your reputation. Utilise a robust anti-spam plugin to filter out unwanted comments and protect your website.
- **Accessibility:** Ensure your website is accessible to everyone, including people with disabilities. Consider using accessibility plugins and following best practices for web accessibility (WCAG).
- **Mobile-Friendliness:** In today's mobile-first world, a responsive website design that adapts seamlessly to different screen sizes is crucial. Regularly test your website on various devices to ensure optimal mobile user experience.
- **User Reviews & Testimonials:** Positive user reviews and testimonials build trust with potential customers. Encourage satisfied customers to leave reviews on your website and Google My Business listing.
- **Social Media Integration:** Integrate social media sharing buttons on your website to encourage visitors to share your content and expand your reach.
- **Legal Compliance:** Ensure your website complies with relevant legal regulations such as GDPR regarding data privacy and user consent.
- **Manage User Accounts:** Regularly review user accounts and permissions within your WordPress dashboard. Remove inactive accounts and adjust permissions as needed.

BBI Brandboost is here to help

By following the strategies outlined in this comprehensive guide, you can effectively maintain your WordPress website and ensure it remains a valuable asset for your business. Remember, website maintenance is an ongoing process.

Dedicate a small amount of time each week or month to these tasks, and you will reap significant rewards in terms of website performance, security, and user experience.

For a more comprehensive website maintenance plan or help with more advanced tasks, consider partnering with a professional WordPress maintenance service. We offer a range of solutions tailored to the unique needs of your business.

Please reach out to BBI Brandboost today to discuss your WordPress maintenance needs.