

WEBSITE AUDIT CHECKLIST

THE 20 BASIC ESSENTIALS FOR EVERY WEBSITE

Hi there! I hope you find this list helpful as you audit your website. It is by no means an exhaustive list of things you can consider and/or integrate. It's simply a list of features and best practices that I've found are applicable to most sites, and are essential to conversions, functionality, design, and a great user experience. Happy auditing!

ASHLEY

LAYOUT + DESIGN

- ☐ **Simple navigation.** Typically, 4-7 navigation links is ideal. Any more becomes overwhelming. Make it easy for your audience, organize it logically, and only put essentials in the primary navigation.
- ☐ **Easy on the eyes.** Use non-harsh colors, a clean layout, and make use of white space.
- ☐ **Professional photos.** Nothing will make your visitors leave faster than ugly photos. Shoot your own, hire a photographer, or use stock photos. Beautiful photos equate to a better experience.
- ☐ **Simplify the fonts.** Use fonts that are easy to read. It's ideal to use just 2-3 fonts. One for the body/copy, one for headings, and maybe an accent font. Don't get crazy with it.
- ☐ **Stick to your branding.** Make sure your fonts, colors, and style are consistent throughout your site.

HOMEPAGE

- ☐ **Clear purpose.** Can visitors easily understand what your site is all about and how you solve a problem/need they have? Don't make them search for it. Lay it out there and refrain from using confusing terms or wording. If they can't figure out what you do, then they'll leave.
- ☐ **Make it Personal.** Do you have a photo of yourself and a way for people to learn more about who you are? Visitors love to know who they're working with or learning from.
- ☐ **Services/products listed.** Is it clear what you have to offer? Don't add all the info on the homepage. Add a little info to encourage them to click to a separate info or sales page. This helps SEO too!
- ☐ **Add Credibility.** Do you have a space where people can see testimonials, your portfolio, or your work in action? Show them that what you have to offer is actually beneficial and credible.
- ☐ **Less is more.** Too much text on the homepage is overwhelming. Use buttons/links to guide visitors to your pages that contain more info or content. Simplify.

ENGAGEMENT

☐ **Ways to connect.** Do you have your contact info or a contact form? Are your social media platforms clearly linked either on your homepage, navigation bar, or in your footer?

☐ **Search option.** Can your visitors search your site and find what they're looking for? Make it easy by adding a search bar either in your navigation bar, sidebar, or footer.

☐ **Email list.** Make sure you have some sort of email opt-in form. Whether you have a pop-up, a static form, or a link to a landing page, make sure you're gathering visitor email addresses to send out a newsletter, updates, product release emails, new content, etc. It's one way to keep them coming back.

☐ **Exciting Content.** Do you have content that will make visitors click? An enticing title, beautiful image, and interesting excerpt/content will give your visitors a reason to read your content.

☐ **Guide them.** Make sure your posts and pages don't lead your visitors to a dead end. Make use of buttons, links, related content, etc. and lead them to more content or information on how you can serve them. Make it easy to explore your site and make it obvious what you want them to do.

TECHNICAL + BACK END

☐ **The legal stuff.** Make sure your site is GDPR compliant. You'll need, at minimum, a privacy policy and cookie notice. Terms & conditions and a disclaimer are also smart to have. You can do a quick Google search on legal requirements for your area, policy generators, and/or resources to learn more.

☐ **Security.** Make sure your site is secure and you have an SSL certificate from your host (or use a plugin). You also need a good password and a security plugin (like Wordfence) if you're on WP.

☐ **Mobile-responsive.** Does your site render well on tablets and mobile devices? It's likely that a significant percentage of your visitors are trying to view your site via mobile, so make sure your site looks great, and functions, on mobile devices.

☐ **SEO.** We could spend hours on this, but you'll need the minimum. Use keywords in all of your content and try to include internal/backlinks and external links. Use page-describing URLs instead of obscure ones that contain a string of numbers. Use clear headlines/headers within your content. Produce high-quality content and make sure if you have videos or podcasts that you also have the transcription of those in the form of a blog post or page. Make sure your brand has a social media presence that's linked to your site. Name your photos by specific titles and add alt text to each. And finally, submit your site to the Google Search Console so it can be crawled and indexed.

☐ **Backups.** Make sure you are making a habit of backing up your site. If your host doesn't provide this service, make sure that you get in there and create a backup at least weekly.