

From the bestselling author of
"Insert future bestseller here"

The Ultimate Website Evaluation Guide

How to know if your website
is 💩 and in need of a redesign



Written by Patrick Antinozzi

So, you've already got your own website. That's great! (and if you don't even have one yet, boy, do I have [an infographic to show you](#))

But, does your website...



Offer a killer user experience that keeps people coming back



Look and feel clean, minimal, and beautiful



Tell a compelling and human story that moves people to take action



Pop up in Google and answer the questions your visitors have



Keep your visitors safe and inspire confidence in your brand

If you answered no to any of those five questions, it may be time to consider a website redesign. Let's break this down a bit, shall we?

Here are the five things that go into making an amazing small business website:



User Experience



Design



Content



SEO



Security

Let's take a look at these **one by one.**

User Experience



This section, right here, is the **#1 most overlooked** and neglected aspect of small business website design. Everything, and I mean everything, about great web design comes down to one thing: user experience.

We are bombarded by information on a daily basis. Our attention spans have shrunk so much that we actually have a better chance of holding the attention of a goldfish. (I'm not making this up, it is now a statistical fact.)

If your visitors aren't having a crazy memorable experience when visiting your website, they won't come back. And they definitely won't buy whatever it is you're selling.

If you want to know whether your website puts your user first, and leaves a lasting impression, put it face to face with these **16 questions**:

Your 16 Step User Experience Checklist

- Is there a clear statement of **purpose** of your site? (The purpose must be clear within a few seconds.)
- Do you have a **clear call to action** on each page?
- Is your website **100% responsive** and optimized for mobile devices?
- Does your website make you look like a **credible expert**?
- How many clicks does it take to get to the CTA (Call to Action) of your website?
- Does any part of your site use Flash?
✓ If yes, burn it with 🔥
- Do clickable items clearly indicate that they are clickable?
- Is your website stupid-easy to navigate?
- Is it easily readable? (Consider typeface, font size, color contrast.)
- Is a logical site map available? (it's ok to say you don't know, I didn't either)
- Do you have a clear and easy to use feedback/contact option?
 - Do you have a contact form?
 - Do you have an instant chat option?
- Do you use transparent pricing?
- Do you have a search feature?
- Are you **using any annoying popups**?
- Are you **using any annoying ads**?
- Does your website **have as little content as possible to powerfully convey your story**?

Design



Here's the thing about website design: it doesn't have to be complicated. So many professional web designers pour their heart and soul into creating a piece of art worthy of hanging in the Louvre.

And that's why website design often costs so damn much.

Modern website design needs to be simple, clean, minimal, and beautiful. It needs to convey a clear and powerful message, without overcomplicating things.

And, most importantly, your website needs to tell visitors **exactly** what they need to do.

Use this 23 point checklist to make sure your website passes the wonderful design test:

23 Step Checklist to Having a Beautifully Designed Website

- Is your website's design aesthetically appealing? (i.e. 😊)
- Do you have a modern, sexy logo?
- Is the logo prominently placed?
- Is your critical content all "above the fold"? (meaning, can your visitor get the gist of your message without scrolling down)
- Is your home page easy to digest in 5 seconds?
- Do you make sure **not** to use a splash page?
- Is your navigation menu clear and easy to navigate?
- Do the colors used align with your brand?
- Are the color choices visually accessible?
- Is the design audience appropriate?
- Are the fonts easy to read on various screen resolutions?
- Does **every page** have at least some text in the content?
- Are your images and graphics in high resolution and proper formats?
- Are your images all 100% mobile responsive?
- Does your website contain elements designed to encourage repeat visits and virality? (i.e. a contest, newsletter, tell-a-friend feature, downloadable toolbar, etc)
- Does your website work in multiple browsers and operating systems?
- If you use ecommerce on your site:
 - Is it super-dead-simple to buy your stuff and checkout?
 - Do you have high quality images of your products?
 - Can you accept credit card payments? And securely?
 - Do you have fast and affordable shipping options?
 - Do you display customer product reviews?
 - Is it a **freaking delight** to buy stuff from you?

Content



If user experience is the skeleton, and design is the muscle, then content is the heart and soul of your website.

Your content needs to move people. It has to make them feel things. Your words, images, videos, and sounds need to come together to tell a compelling and human story.

In short, you need to be a **great story teller**.

I can't tell you how many websites nail the user experience and design, only to fall completely flat on content. And I don't blame them. Creating this type of content is an art.

If you're wondering whether or not your current website has powerful and engaging content, use this 30 point checklist to decide for yourself:

30 Question Checklist to Determine How Interesting Your Content Really Is

- Does your tagline make your company's purpose **clear**?
- Do you combine text, images, graphics, and video to tell a compelling story?
- Does the content **meet user needs, goals, and interests**?
- Is the content timely and relevant?
- For how long will the content be useful?
 - When should it expire?
 - Has its usefulness already expired?
- Is the content **understandable to customers**?
- Is the content organized logically & coherently?
- Does the content contain factual errors, typos, or grammatical errors?
- Do images, video, and audio meet technical standards, so they are clear to the visitor?
- Does the content seem to have a style?
 - If so, does the content adhere to it **consistently**?
- Do you use attractive stock photos that people won't realize are stock photos?
- Is your website's copy succinct but informative?
 - Does the copywriting style suit the website's purpose and 'speak' to its target audience?
 - Are bodies of text broken into easy to read chunks?
 - Does the content make use of bulletpoint lists?
 - Is the content readable at a **Grade 6 level**?
 - Is text broken into small, readable chunks and highlighted using headings, sub-headings?
 - Does the text emphasize features where appropriate to assist in **skimming**?
- Does the contrast between text and background color make it easy to read?
- Within articles, are there links to more detailed explanations of subjects?
- Do you avoid using industry jargon?
- Do you have published written testimonials?
 - Do you have **video testimonials**?
- Do you update your content regularly?
- Have you integrated your social media accounts and content?
- Is it **easy to share** your content on social media with sharing icons?
- Do you have a Help/FAQ page?

SEO

Search Engine Optimization



“ I want to be on the first page when someone searches for X. ”

Yah, I know. Me too!

SEO has changed a lot. Google is constantly evolving their algorithms to give more importance to, you guessed it, the **user experience**.

Gone are the days where you merely stuffed your website with keywords, submitted it to a few big directories, and called it a day.

It is possible to get on the first page of Google for pretty much anything. It just comes down to how much time and money you're willing to invest. (If you Google **fast web design**, guess who pops up? 😏)

Of course, you have to start with the fundamentals. Use these 25 steps to ensure that you've set yourself up for SEO success:

Review This 25 Step Checklist If You Want Your Site to Rank in Google

- Have you **researched the keywords** you want your website to rank in Google for?

- Is your website content properly optimized for search engines?
 - Is essential text emphasized?
 - Are the title tags relevant?
 - Is the title text presented in H1 headers?
 - Are outbound links reliable and contextually related?

- Does the content follow search engine optimization (SEO) guidelines, such as using keywords, **without sacrificing quality** in other areas?

- Are your URLs optimized for search engines?
 - Do your URLs incorporate target keywords?
 - Do they use simplified link structures?
(www.rapidweblaunch.com/socialmedia/facebook instead of www.rapidweblaunch.com/marketing/?type=socialmedia&network=facebook)

- Do your page title tags clearly indicate what the page is about?

- Have your **images and graphics been compressed** to the smallest size possible?

- Are 'alt' tags in place on all images?
 - Do those alt tags incorporate your target keywords?

- Does your website load quickly? (should be less than 5 seconds)
 - Especially for **mobile users**?

- Are all links (internal and external) valid and active?
 - Are links labeled with anchor text that provide a clear indication of where they lead?
 - Does your site link to **authoritative sources**?

- Is your website free from server-side errors?

- Is there a site map available?

- If you were researching your content, would **you** find your website helpful? Would **you** link to it?

- Is your website integrated with Google Analytics?

- Do you have any **high quality links** back to your website?

- Have you listed your website on major local listings sites?

Security

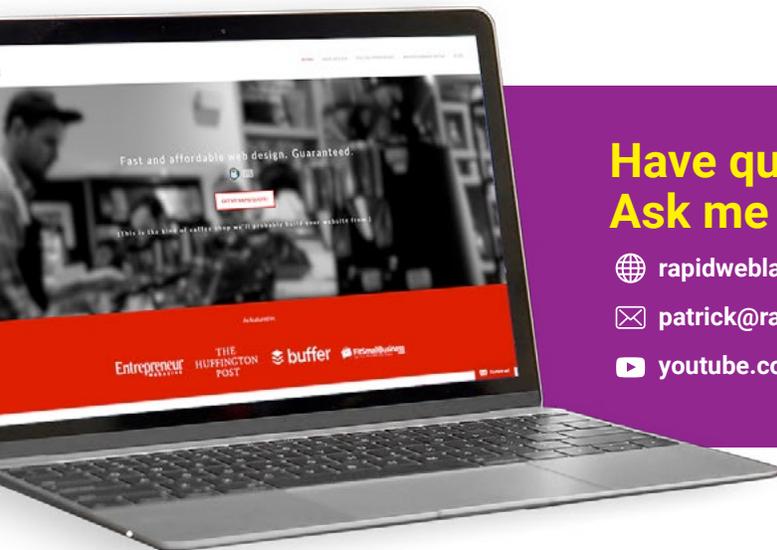


As the world continues to move everything online, and with major hacks plastering headlines on a weekly basis, it's never been more important to ensure your website is secure.

If you're selling stuff on your website, this is simply non-negotiable. You need to have these 9 security features in your website:

9 Questions You Need to Ask Yourself If You Want Your Website to be Secure

- Does your website have any obvious security flaws?
- How resilient are your website's forms to special characters?
- Do you use Captcha for all of your forms?
- Are private pages password protected?
- Is customer data stored online?
 - If yes, is this database appropriately safeguarded against external access?
- Does your website have an SSL certificate?
- If your website requires personal info to be entered, does it have HTTPS protocol installed?
- Do you have a Privacy Policy displayed? (especially if you collect data, email, names, and web analytics tracking cookies)?



**Have questions? Need help?
Ask me**

 rapidweblaunch.com

 patrick@rapidweblaunch.com

 youtube.com/rapidweblaunch

 blog.rapidweblaunch.com

 [@pattitudez](https://twitter.com/pattitudez)

