

## 5 Steps to Maintaining Your WordPress Website

Websites are like cars, they need regular servicing to keep them running optimally and avoid problematic break downs at the most inconvenient moments. Here are the five most important steps you need to perform on a regular basis, to maintain your WordPress site.

### 1. Backup, Backup, Backup

Backups are your number one insurance policy, in case of a hack, technical glitch, server meltdown, theft of your laptop, office/house fire or other disaster. A current backup is what's going to get your site up and running again ASAP! ZP Creative recommends saving three copies of your backup, one to a cloud platform like Dropbox, and one each saved to your computer and external hard drive. We also suggest keeping six months of retrospective backups at a time.

### 2. Update it

It is essential to the function and security of your website that both your WordPress core files, plugins and theme are up to date. Old files can make a hacker's job easy, and won't give you the benefit of bug fixes and improvements. Ensure your site is backed up immediately before any WordPress or theme update.

### 3. Stay Secure

Passwords are not for sharing. If other people need access to your site, they should have their own profile. A user profile can be created easily by going to Users > Add User.

It is best to allocate strong passwords to new users using the password generator in their profile. If remembering strong passwords is a problem, use a service such as LastPass or Dashlane to save your passwords securely on your computer.

### 4. Create Content

Publishing regular content draws repeat visitors to your website and improves Search Engine Optimization. Create yourself a realistic publishing calendar to help keep yourself on track.

Engagement is key. If you have chosen to enable comments on your site, ensure you respond in a timely manner and encourage conversation between visitors.

### 5. Search Engine Optimization (SEO)

SEO improves your websites visibility and ranking with search engines such as Google, Yahoo and Bing with the aim of increasing traffic to your site. More traffic means more sales, and who doesn't want that? At

[ZPCreative.net](http://ZPCreative.net) there is a monthly SEO Maintenance Checklist to help you get the best out of your website.

Sounds like a lot of fussing around and time you don't have? Consider a ZP Creative maintenance package, which includes all the above mentioned tasks. Choose from month-to-month payments (cancel any time) or pay for 11-months and get one free. [Contact us here](#) for pricing and inclusions.

## SEO Checklist

### What is SEO?

Search Engine Optimization (SEO) improves your websites visibility and ranking with search engines such as Google, Yahoo and Bing with the aim of increasing traffic to your site. More traffic means more sales, and who doesn't want that?

### What do search engines want?

Search engines strive to deliver their users the most accurate and highest quality results for their search. The methods in which their "bots" search the internet are constantly tweaked and improved to keep up with developing technology and keep pesky hackers on their toes. Unfortunately, this means that SEO is a never ending task with constantly moving goal posts. However there are some fairly consistent and reliable principles and methods to ensure your website is Search Engine Optimized.

### What can I do?

ZP Creative recommends scheduling time each month to run through regular maintenance tasks on your website. A portion of this time will be spent on SEO and the checklist that follows is a great way to keep track of the most important tasks.

#### Content Creation

- Use [Google AdWords: Keyword Planner](#) to determine the best keyword for each page/post.
- Write for humans, not for search engine bots. In other words, don't write your content with an unnatural number of keywords – this is called "keyword stuffing" and is frowned upon by search engines.
- Link to other pages on your website where they are relevant to the content. Internal website links indicate to search engines that your content is interrelated and relevant.
- Take the time to label your media accurately. Search engine bots are clever, but they cannot see pictures. Unless you label your photos, videos and other media, they will not be picked up.
- Keep your website up to date, if the core of your site does not need to regular updates, blogging is another great way to show search engines that your website is fresh and active.

#### Website Maintenance

- Check for broken links and update them.
- Use 301 redirections to re-route links when content changes location i.e. you change the URL on a page or post.
- Check the footer, is the copyright year current? Are your business contact details current?
- Encourage customers to check in and leave reviews.

Sounds like a lot of fussing around and time you don't have? Consider a ZP Creative maintenance package, which includes all the above mentioned tasks. Our monthly maintenance packages have no contracted timeframes, just easy month to month payments - cancel any time. [Contact us here](#) for pricing and inclusions.

## 8 Questions To Ask Your Graphic Designer

1. **“Can you view the designer’s portfolio?”** A designer’s portfolio will give you a feel their style and the type of work they have the most experience in.
2. **“Can the designer walk you through a chosen piece in their portfolio?”** Listen for how the designer addressed a previous clients brief in their design solution. Some designers get caught up in how attractive the work is and forget that it needs to achieve specific goals for your business.
3. **“What do you need to provide?”** Help your designer create what you need by answering their briefing questions thoroughly. You may need to provide an existing logo or design files, copy and/or images, depending on the project. Doing this as soon as possible will assist your designer in keeping to your agreed timeline.
4. **“Who owns the copyright at the end of the project?”** Does the designer retain copyright over the designs while licensing you the right to use them, or do they sign over copyright completely. If your designer retains the copyright you may be tied to go on using that designer, and they may charge you a large fee to buy the full rights later. It is normal for a designer who is handing over the full copyright, to retain permission to use the design in their portfolio to show future clients and employers.
5. **“Will the designer hand over the source files?”** Further to question four, source files are the original, layered design files that you’ll need to make permanent changes later on. If a designer is signing over copyright they should have no hesitation in handing over copies of the source files. Those who only license you rights to use the design may insist they hold onto the original files.
6. **“How much will it cost?”** Is an important question, even more important is “what may change the price as the project progresses?” For example, going beyond a certain number of revisions or expanding the scope of the project are likely to increase the original quote. So too is purchasing assets such as custom artwork or stock images. Find out how the designer charges for extra time and assets.
7. **“Can the designer complete the project in your timeframe?”** Ensure you are clear about your deadline and ask for an approximate timeline including when you should expect to see drafts.
8. **“Who will handle the printing?”** Where applicable you should discuss with the designer who will hire the printer. If you are dealing directly with the printer, don’t hesitate to put your designer in touch with them so they can talk about the technical specifications needed to get your print job right.

If you would like to know the ZP Creative answers to these questions, see the FAQ page on our website:

[zpcreative.net/faq/](https://zpcreative.net/faq/)

## Why Wordpress?

### 1. It will save you money!

WordPress is free—you can go to the WordPress website right now and download yourself a copy. Not only that, but because WordPress is user friendly you have the potential to save money by not needing a developer to update and maintain your site in the long term.

### 2. Open source

The source code for WordPress is publicly available which means that there are thousands of people contributing their expertise to build extensions and themes for the software. There are also many people writing about the software, so learning and support are never far away.

### 3. SEO friendly

WordPress has been built and maintained to fulfill many search engine preferences such as: fast loading speeds, good coding standards, easy navigation, image optimization and social media integration. This means that it provides a higher baseline SEO for websites built on the platform and if you want to do even more to boost your search rankings, specialist plugins are available.

### 4. Mobile friendly (responsive)

WordPress recognizes if a person is browsing the web on a mobile device and configures the content to be viewed on a smaller screen. This is also referred to as being “responsive” and is a must for websites in an era where mobile devices have overtaken desktop computers for internet use.

### 5. High security standards

WordPress maintains high security standards, employing a specialist team who work full time at keeping the core software safe from attacks such as infections and viruses etc.

### 6. Supports multimedia

Adding media such as images, video and audio to your WordPress website or blog is quick and simple. WordPress also supports OEmbed enabled websites, allowing you to embed content from YouTube, Instagram, Twitter and SoundCloud.

### 7. Simplicity

WordPress is relatively simple to learn - no complicated coding required, you just need an internet connection and a web browser to create and edit your own content and perform general website maintenance.

These are just some of the reasons ZP Creative builds websites exclusively on WordPress. Check out our small business website packages over at [zpcreative.net/packages/](https://zpcreative.net/packages/)

## Handy Website Content Checklist

Not sure where to start gathering together content for your new website? Use this handy checklist to guide you through the process. This is a general list made as a guide, so add and subtract content as necessary.

### How to use this checklist

The table below explains the terminology and information you may like to provide for each page of your website. Following, are four blank tables provided for the most common website pages, and that can be duplicated for further pages as required. Fill these out accordingly and give them to the web developer/designer creating your site.

<b>Page Name</b>	This is the page name for internal purposes. For example: Home, About, Products, Services, Contact, Blog, News, Case Studies
<b>Keyword</b>	What is the focus of this page in one word or phrase?
<b>Title</b>	What title should appear on the page? It may or may not be the same as the page name above. For instance, the title on the contact page may be "Get in touch".
<b>Copy</b>	The text content of the page. Don't forget to use subtitles to break up large blocks of content. Subtitles are recommended to help your website guests quickly locate the information they are after, and therefore are smiled upon by the Search Engine Optimization (SEO) gods.
<b>Internal Links</b>	Think about where in your copy, you can link to other pages or content on your website. A network of internal links, tells Google that your content is cohesive and relevant.
<b>Media</b>	Logo, graphics, photos, video, audio, map etc. Place file names or descriptions of the media here.
<b>Call to action (CTA)</b>	Calls-to-action keep visitors progressing through the purchase process, towards your final goal, such as a buying a product or making an enquiry. Create clear calls to action on each page, for example "schedule a consultation" "enquire here" "follow us on Facebook" "sign up for our newsletter" "tell us what you think in the comments below."

<b>HOME</b>	HINT: Consider what your company does for your customer. Focus on customer needs and their pain points - what value/solutions do you provide?
<b>Keyword</b>	
<b>Title</b>	
<b>Copy</b>	
<b>Internal Links</b>	
<b>Media</b>	
<b>Call to action (CTA)</b>	

<b>CONTACT</b>	HINT: How can people get in contact with you? A contact form in place of publishing your email address reduces spam. Where is your business physically located? A Google map can be helpful.
<b>Keyword</b>	
<b>Title</b>	
<b>Copy</b>	
<b>Internal Links</b>	
<b>Media</b>	
<b>Call to action (CTA)</b>	

<b>PRODUCTS/ SERVICES</b>	HINT: What products and services do you offer? How do your customers refer to them? Is it different to how you would express them as a professional. Write in the language your customer uses.
<b>Keyword</b>	
<b>Title</b>	
<b>Copy</b>	
<b>Internal Links</b>	
<b>Media</b>	
<b>Call to action (CTA)</b>	

<b>ABOUT</b>	HINT: Who are you? What is your history? Where did you start out? What are you building to in the future? If it's appropriate, include bios and photos for your employees.
<b>Keyword</b>	
<b>Title</b>	
<b>Copy</b>	
<b>Internal Links</b>	
<b>Media</b>	
<b>Call to action (CTA)</b>	

## Additional Content

Additional content you may choose to provide for your website includes but is not limited to the below. Note that some additional content may require additional pages to be added to your website structure e.g. it is ideal to have your Privacy Policy on a separate page.

- **Logo** – Vector format preferred, however a .jpg and/or .png are fine
- **Social media** - Account information to be integrated into website e.g. share buttons and/or links to social media accounts.
- **Privacy Policy** – A “Privacy Policy” agreement is required by law if you’re collecting personal data from users. Personal data is any kind of data that can identify an individual: email address, first and last name, billing and shipping address, credit card information etc.
- **Terms and Conditions** - Website Terms and Conditions are not legally required however they are a good idea to address your intellectual property rights. Terms and Conditions may include how the website can be used, such as sharing your blogs with attribution to you, and prohibited conduct e.g. a competitor using your website or its content.
- **Case studies and testimonials** – One of the best ways to market your business is through the power of your existing customers. Not only can they literally tell people how great you are, they can also provide examples of how your products and services can be implemented. What’s more, their narratives are the social proof of success that future customers want to see.
- **Frequently asked questions (FAQ)** – Providing answers to the most common questions that your customers ask can save you time and help maintain customer’s momentum through your sales funnel.
- **404 Error page** – An option to customize the page that will be seen by website visitors if a link becomes broken or other website error occurs.
- **Careers/Hiring information** - Use your website as a recruiting tool by publishing position advertisements or offering a channel for job candidates to contact you. This could be an additional contact form that goes to a specific HR email address.

Have an existing website that needs a refresh? ZP Creative offers an obligation-free website evaluation report! We provide a comprehensive analysis of areas such as Content, User Experience, Technical Performance, Security and Search Engine Optimization in a customized report, when you request a proposal for having your website refreshed or rebuilt.

Contact us here for your FREE report valued at \$150!