

50 questions to assess the quality of your site

Here's a detailed list of questions that should be asked to website owners about their own website. If the answer to each question is "YES", you should be very satisfied with your site and can be considered the cream of the crop. Most websites exhibit flaws based overlooking some of these basic necessities.

Accessibility

- Is content structurally separate from navigational elements?
- Is the site compatible with all browsers?
- Is the site compatible with W3C coding standards? Is it valid HTML / CSS?
- Are the 'alt' tags are in place on all important images?
- Are text alternatives in place to convey essential information for images and multimedia files?

Navigation

- Does the text visible on the links provide a clear indication of where they lead?
- Depth - what is the maximum number of clicks it takes to reach a page deep within the site?
- If a splash screen or navigation feature is provided in Java / Javascript / Flash, is a textual alternative also available?
- Reactivity at the click - is a response given immediately (0.1 seconds) after a click is made on a hyperlink?
- Do items visually indicate they are clickable?
- Is it intuitive to navigate? Are there any links or buttons included as text, which are not clickable?
- Do the type and size of fonts used add to the readability of your site?
- Is the PURPOSE of the site clearly identifiable? The goal is to become clear within seconds without needing to read a lot.
- Is a call to action present on every page?
- Is a logical site map is available? Otherwise, is search by keyword available? Note: large sites should have a search function for ease of use.

Design

- Is the site design aesthetically appealing?
- Are the colors harmonious and logically related?
- Are the choice of colors are visually appealing?
- Is website design appropriate for your audience? The standard size of the text should be readable for visitors who do not know how to adjust their browser.

- Are fonts should easily readable, and degrade gracefully? This should give good results with various screen resolutions.

Contents

- Is the site content succinct but informative?
- Is the writing style of the site suitable for and "speaks" to the target audience?
- Is the body of the text limited to less than 80 characters per line?
- Can the text be resized through the browser or the does the CSS do this resizing?
- Is the contrast between text and background color enough to make reading easier?
- Is the text is broken into small, readable chunks and highlighted using headings, sub-headings and emphasis to help the skimming?
- In the articles, there should be links to more detailed explanations on topics or definitions of jargon terms. Are you doing this?
- Do you have a page "About" to identify the content author or credits to source for items that were not written by the site owner himself?
- Do you have testimonials and publish them on your site?
- Do you get updated content regularly?

Security

- Are there no obvious security flaws?
- Are your forms resistant to special characters?
- Are your private directories protected by passwords over .htaccess?
- Are the public directories (cgi-bin, images, etc.) indexable or have you established permission settings to block access?
- Is customer data are stored online? If so, is this database still adequately defended against external access?

Other technical considerations

- Does the site load quickly - even for users with a modem?
- Are all links (internal and external) valid and active?
- Are the scripts are free of errors?
- Is the site error free server-side?

Other Marketing Considerations

- Is the site is correctly optimized for search engines (essential text emphasized, relevant title tags, title text presented in H1, outbound links reliable and contextually related, etc)?
- Does the home page encourage visitors to go further in the site or to a shopping cart?

- Does the site contain elements designed to encourage future visits or virility (that is to say with a contest, newsletter functionality "tell a friend", a forum with an option to registration, a downloadable toolbar, RSS feeds, etc ...)?
- Do you have different titles for each page that start (or at least as 2nd or 3rd word) with the keyword that describes the most relevant content or subject of the page better. (If you had to explain what the subject of the page in 2-3 keywords or phrases, what would they be?)
- Is the Robots.txt file configured?
- Is a Sitemap is available? (both HTML and XML)
- Is each page is accessible at least by a hard link HTML (no link in JavaScript or Flash)?
- Do all pages have at least a portion of text in their content? (How much text is there on the page if you remove all images, videos, flash animations, Java applets and JavaScript code? Is the remainder still states that the objectives of the page?)
- Is each page is only accessible via a single URL or are several URLs available (and worse, used) to access the same page? The solution to a problem of duplicate content: canonical URLs (= unique for each page).

Legal / Reinsurance

- Does your contact page have a real address, phone number (free) and a contact form via email? Basically, we must propose a clear and easy to use to get in touch. Give them a form to structure their communications.
- Are the Terms and Conditions available where you specify what you are doing and why and what visitors have to agree to if they want to use the site? This is to protect you against claims or about the things that you cannot easily control, such as links to third party websites or ads from automated systems such as Google AdSense etc.
- Are your privacy policies available (especially if you collect data, e-mails, names, and cookies analytics)?

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