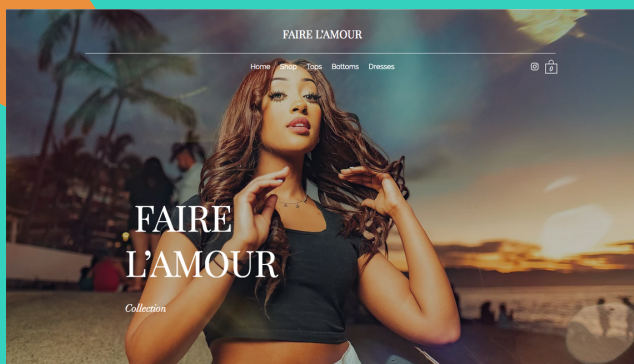# STAND OUT FROM THE CROWD

Best Practices To Enhance Your Websites Performance

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USER EXPERIENCE

USER EXPERIENCE

When creating a website, producing a beautiful design that stands out is just as important as giving your visitors a good user experience. Even more so now, as we live in such a fast-paced world. Businesses expect their site to load fast. Optimizing the design of your website will not only improve site loading time but will also drive traffic, boost conversions, and enhance user experience overall. Sites with fast loading times score higher on speed test tools which leads to your site ranking higher on search engines, like Google.

Your website's performance depends on a number of factors, some in your control (related to your site's design) and not in your control (internet connection speeds).

Throughout this eBook, we'll cover today's best design practices for optimizing the performance of your website in 2021. So keep reading to learn more on how you can provide your visitors the best web experience.

CHAPTER 1
BEYOND THE DESIGN

BEYOND THE DESIGN

You only get one shot at making a good first impression. When it comes to a website, the first impression is its homepage or landing page. Keep it simple! Use the first section to grab your visitor's attention by telling them what different about your business.

The first section or first fold is the top section of a website. This section loads before the rest of the page, making it the first thing your visitors see. Use this load time to tell your visitors about your business, its values and what actions they should take should be clear and concise. These are key ingredients in designing a landing page that pops.

Keep the first fold simple, clean, and easy to understand. Use high-quality images, attention-grabbing headers, subheaders, and a clear call to action (CTA). Doing so will make it easy for visitors to navigate your website and will add focus to where you want them to click.

In A Nutshell: The header of your homepage is your most valuable asset. Keep it simple. Tell your visitors who you are and why they should use your businesses' products or services.

ONLY THE BEST: MEDIA FILES

Images

The saying 'less is more' holds value when it comes to designing your website's home page. As web professionals, we know adding all your favorite photos to your homepage will overwhelm your visitors. From a technical standpoint, adding many images can slow down the performance of your site. Instead of giving your clients everything, choose your top 3-5 photos and optimize them for the web.

Guide to optimizing images for your website:

- **Size:** For best results, upload high-quality images (minimum 2560 X 1440 pixel in resolution).
- **Image Format:** Choose JPEG over PNG. Unless you need images to be transparent.
- **Web Format:** When uploading an image to a site, website builders like Wix automatically convert it to a WebP format.

Galleries

As a best practice, it is better to use one gallery per page. Having multiple galleries on a page may cause some images to load slower than others, making your galleries look incomplete. Having multiple galleries on a page can also be distracting to your site visitors.

Configuring your gallery to display one image at a time and adding a 'Show More' button giving your visitors the option to see more if they choose. Doing so will help your gallery not only load faster but will create a seamless user experience.

Videos

Videos are an excellent way to increase engagement. It's important to consider the placement of your videos on your homepage as they require more loading time than most other elements. For example, if your video isn't essential in creating a powerful first impression for your business, place it below the first fold. Doing so will give the video more time to load before your visitor scrolls down your site.

GIFs

GIFs add personality and a great way to add emotion to a site! However, they are usually larger files and must be downloaded before they play. Adding multiple GIFs on a single page will slow down your site. We recommend converting them into a video format such as MP4, this way they'll load quicker.

ELEVATE YOUR DESIGN

Fonts:

Custom fonts are elements that establish your business's brand. Using unique fonts makes your website stand out and adds personality! However, custom fonts take a bit longer to load. Beware, the more custom fonts you add to your site, the more time your website will need to load for them to appear. It's important to use only a limited amount of custom fonts to ensure a seamless visitor experience.

Guidelines for fonts:

- Limit yourself to four custom fonts per page.
- Font weights (e.x. Bold, underline, and italics) require downloading.
- Consider using system fonts that come with the website builder. Some common ones like Helvetica, Arial, Futura, and Montserrat. These load faster than custom fonts.

ELEVATE YOUR DESIGN (CONTINUED)

Animation

Adding animations to your website brings it to life! They can be a great visual navigation tool for your visitors. As tempting as it may be, adding animations to everything can cause images, text, and buttons to load slower. Do not compromise your website's load time for animated effects. As a best practice, add animations to page elements that are below the fold. Doing so allows your animations more time to load, leading to an overall better visitor experience.

Third-Party Apps and iFrames

Integrating third-party apps and iFrames such as Google AdSense or your Instagram Feed to your website is a great way to run your business. Since they're delivered from external servers, they cannot be optimized and usually take longer to load. As a solution, consider creating dedicated pages for them, instead of taking valuable space on your homepage or landing page.

Bottom Line: Limiting the use of custom fonts and add your animations below the fold. Create dedicated pages for your third-party apps and other integrations.

MOBILE OPTIMIZATION

Did you know that over 50% of people view websites from their phones? And in general, mobile devices have a slower internet connection than computers. With that said, optimizing your website for mobile is critical.

Mobile visitors are constantly bombarded with messages and notifications, so keep the content of your site short and easy to read. Simply adding your business's contact information or a clear call to action above the fold gives visitors everything they need right away. Hiding heavy elements, such as third-party apps, large media files, and pop-ups will help your mobile site load faster.

In A Nutshell: Put essential business info like a clear call to action or contact information above the fold. Remove any unnecessary elements that may slow down your mobile site.

CHAPTER 2
SECURING YOUR SITE

SECURING YOUR SITE

Securing your website will give you peace of mind and improve your site's performance.

HTTPS (Hypertext Transfer Protocol Secure)
You may have noticed that URLs that start with HTTPS://, this is an encrypted URL. It ensures a secure connection between web servers and browsers. Securing your website is essential to protect information like payment details, user accounts, client communications, and most importantly, identity. It makes your website look professional and builds your credibility.

Defending Against DDoS Attacks
DDoS or A Distributed Denial-of-Service attack is an attempted breach of a targeted server, service, or network. This is done by overwhelming the target with a flood of internet traffic. When attacks like these occur, it causes servers to overload and either react slowly or not at all. Using website building platforms like Wix can prevent these kinds of attacks.

In A Nutshell: Creating HTTPS secure websites ensures that confidential information stays confidential. It also makes your website more trustworthy.

GET VISITORS TO THE RIGHT PLACE

There isn't much worse than spending hours creating that perfect website only to have a broken link. Doing a thorough sweep of your site, ensuring all links work, or creating redirects is necessary.

404 Errors

404 errors happen when a visitor searches a page that cannot be found on the server. This can happen when content is changed, a new page is created, or deleted on your site. If a page doesn't exist and there's no alternative page to redirect to, it's a good practice to create a user-friendly 404 landing page. Using this type of landing page tells your visitors that the page they are looking for no longer exists. We recommend adding a CTA (Call-To-Action) that will guide them to a different page.

301 Redirects

Have a relevant site page to redirect to? Prevent your visitors from seeing 404 error pages by creating 301 redirects. A 301 redirect tells search engines that the URL for a page has changed and where the new page is. However, try not to rely heavily on 301 redirects, as they can hurt your site's performance by slowing download time.

In A Nutshell: Resolve bad links by using 301 redirects, and creating user-friendly 404 pages with clear CTA guiding visitors to a different page.

CHAPTER 3

BUILDING FASTER WEBSITES

CREATE FASTER PERFORMING SITES

Now that you've learned a few tips and tricks to create a better experience for your website visitors. Let's talk about site speed. Website building platforms like Wix use advanced tools to accelerate loading time on your site leading to a better user experience. For example, Wix recently implemented new technology to make websites built on their platform run faster than ever! Here are a few of those features:

Faster Media Loading
Wix uses an enhanced JavaScrip execution time so visitors will see images and videos instantly. The more visitors a site gets, the faster it loads. Wix also uses a technique called progressive image loading. Which instantly displays low-resolution images first, preventing visitors from seeing a blank page while the high-resolution images load. By creating this site preview, you lower bounce rates. Once the high-resolution images are ready, they'll automatically replace the low-resolution ones. This technique improves loading time and can help your site rank higher on Google.

Automatic Image Optimization
When you upload an image to your site, Wix will resize the picture to display it in the best quality and improve your site's loading time. If the image is less than 25MB, there isn't any need to compress it before uploading. Wix does it automatically.

CREATE FASTER PERFORMING SITES (CONTINUED)

Faster Layouts
With the latest CSS (Cascading Style Sheets) functionality, Wix site layouts look sharp and display in a pixel-perfect resolution.

Automatic Updates
You can add any functionality to your site with little maintenance. Wix automatically updates their in-house and third-party apps so you don't have to. These updated improve speed, enhance security and fix bugs.

Global CDN Coverage
Wix has data centers around the world. This allows your website to be served from multiple locations. In turn, visitors load these sites from the server closest to them. This way they get optimal site performance wherever they are.

In A Nutshell: With Wix, you'll create fast-loading websites for clients. This will drive more traffic to their sites, boost conversions, and improve customer satisfaction.

CONCLUSION
STAND OUT
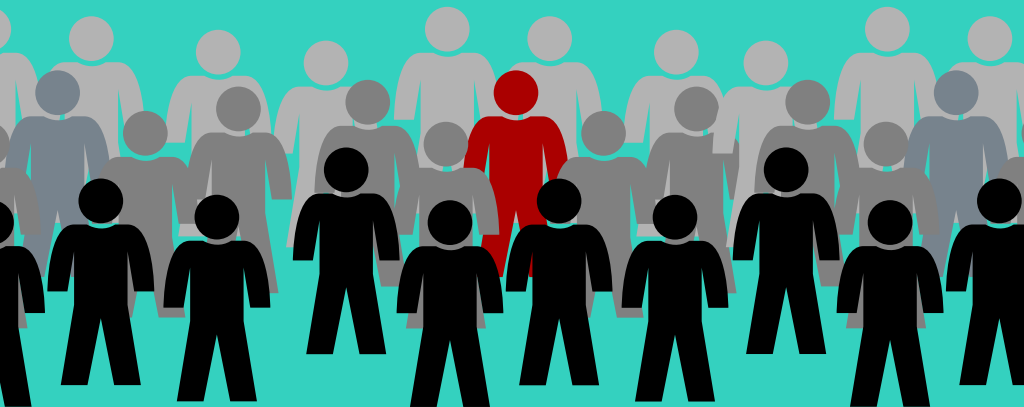
STAND OUT

Making small changes to your website can make a huge difference in its performance. Use these guidelines to create the best web experience for your visitors.

- Use the top fold of your site to make a strong first impression with your visitors.
- Structure your page's hierarchy with the heavier media content below the fold.
- Optimize your website for the best mobile browsing experience.
- Prevent 404 errors by creating a user-friendly landing page.
- Send your visitors up an updated page by creating a 301 redirect.
- Ensure that your site is secure with HTTPS.
- Use a website builder that helps you create a secure and fast-performing website.

By focusing on the small details when building your website can make all the difference when it comes to your visitors deciding if they'll stay on a page or not. From placing animations below the fold to using websites like Wix to build fast-performing websites, there are many tweaks you can make to improve the performance of your site. Use this eBook as your guiding star to create a website that stands out from the crowd!