

# Website Launch Checklist

Everything to check before launching your website. SEO, performance, security, and more.

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## Content & Copy

- All placeholder text replaced (Lorem ipsum, "Coming soon", etc.)
- Spelling and grammar checked on all pages
- Contact information is correct
- Links to social media profiles work
- Copyright year is current
- Privacy policy page exists (if collecting data)
- Terms of service page exists (if needed)
- 404 error page is set up and helpful

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## Images & Media

- All images load correctly
- Images have descriptive `alt` text for accessibility
- Images are optimized for web (compressed, correct format)
- No broken image links
- Favicon is set up (`favicon.ico` or `favicon.svg`)
- Apple touch icon added (180×180px)
- Open Graph image created (1200×630px for social sharing)
- Videos and embeds load correctly

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## Links & Navigation

- All internal links work (no 404s)
- All external links work and open in new tab
- Navigation menu works on all pages
- Logo links to homepage
- Breadcrumbs work (if applicable)
- Footer links are correct
- Search functionality works (if applicable)

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## Forms

- All forms submit correctly
- Form validation works (required fields, email format, etc.)
- Success/thank you message displays after submission
- Error messages are helpful
- Form submissions are received (test with real email)
- Spam protection in place (honeypot, reCAPTCHA)
- GDPR consent checkbox (if required in your region)

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## SEO Basics

### Meta Tags (check each page)

- Unique `<title>` tag (50-60 characters)
- Unique `<meta name="description">` (150-160 characters)
- `<meta name="robots" content="index, follow">`
- Canonical URL set: `<link rel="canonical" href="...">`

### Open Graph (social sharing)

- `og:title` set
- `og:description` set
- `og:image` set (1200×630px)
- `og:url` set
- `og:type` set (website or article)

### Twitter Cards

- `twitter:card` set
- `twitter:title` set
- `twitter:description` set

### Structured Data

- Schema.org markup added (Organization, WebSite, Article, etc.)
- Test with [Google Rich Results Test](#)

### Technical SEO

- `sitemap.xml` created and up to date

- robots.txt file created
- XML sitemap submitted to Google Search Console
- XML sitemap submitted to Bing Webmaster Tools

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## **Performance**

### **Page Speed**

- Test with [PageSpeed Insights](#)
- Test with [GTmetrix](#)
- Aim for Largest Contentful Paint (LCP) < 2.5s
- Aim for First Input Delay (FID) < 100ms
- Aim for Cumulative Layout Shift (CLS) < 0.1

### **Optimization**

- HTML minified (optional for static sites)
- CSS minified
- JavaScript minified
- Images compressed (use WebP where supported)
- Lazy loading enabled for images below the fold
- No render-blocking resources (or properly deferred)
- Browser caching configured
- Gzip/Brotli compression enabled

### **Fonts**

- Web fonts preloaded
- Font-display: swap used (prevents invisible text)
- Only necessary font weights loaded

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## **Mobile & Responsive**

- Test on real mobile devices (not just browser resize)
- Test on iPhone Safari
- Test on Android Chrome
- Touch targets are large enough (min 44x44px)
- No horizontal scrolling on mobile
- Text is readable without zooming
- Mobile menu works correctly

- Forms are usable on mobile
- `<meta name="viewport">` tag is set

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## **Browser Compatibility**

- Test on Chrome
- Test on Firefox
- Test on Safari
- Test on Edge
- Test on mobile browsers
- No major JavaScript errors in console

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## **Accessibility**

### **Basic Checks**

- All images have `alt` attributes
- Form inputs have associated `<label>` elements
- Color contrast ratio is sufficient (4.5:1 minimum)
- Focus states are visible for keyboard navigation
- Skip to content link exists (for screen readers)
- ARIA labels used where appropriate

### **Testing**

- Run [WAVE Accessibility Tool](#)
- Run [Lighthouse](#) accessibility audit
- Test keyboard navigation (Tab through the site)
- Test with screen reader (optional but recommended)

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## **Security**

### **HTTPS**

- SSL certificate installed
- Site loads over HTTPS
- HTTP redirects to HTTPS
- No mixed content warnings (HTTP resources on HTTPS page)

## Headers (optional but recommended)

- X-Content-Type-Options: nosniff
- X-Frame-Options: DENY or SAMEORIGIN
- Content-Security-Policy configured
- Test with [Security Headers](#)

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## Other

- Admin/sensitive pages protected
- No sensitive info in source code or comments
- Dependencies are up to date (if using any)

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## Analytics & Tracking

- Google Analytics (or alternative) installed
- Analytics tracking verified (check real-time reports)
- Google Search Console set up
- Site verified in Search Console
- Sitemap submitted in Search Console
- Bing Webmaster Tools set up (optional)
- Goal/conversion tracking configured (if applicable)

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## Legal & Compliance

- Privacy policy page (required if collecting any data)
- Cookie consent banner (required in EU/UK)
- Terms of service (if selling products/services)
- Disclaimer (if providing advice)
- Affiliate disclosure (if using affiliate links)
- Copyright notice in footer

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## Social & Sharing

- Test social sharing (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn)
- Use [Facebook Sharing Debugger](#)
- Use [Twitter Card Validator](#)
- [View on Page](#)

- LinkedIn Post Inspector
- Social share images display correctly

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## **Hosting & Domain**

- Domain DNS configured correctly
- WWW redirects to non-WWW (or vice versa) — pick one
- Email delivery works (if using domain email)
- Hosting plan is adequate for expected traffic
- CDN configured (Cloudflare, etc.)
- Backups are set up (if applicable)
- Custom 404 page configured on host

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## **Final Checks**

- Remove any test/development content
- Remove any commented-out code (unless intentional)
- Remove console.log statements
- Proofread one more time
- Test the most important user journey (e.g., contact form)
- Check on a device you haven't used yet
- Ask someone else to review

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## **Post-Launch**

- Verify site is live and accessible
- Submit sitemap to Google Search Console
- Monitor Google Search Console for crawl errors
- Monitor analytics for issues
- Test all forms one more time
- Announce launch (social media, email, etc.)
- Set up uptime monitoring (UptimeRobot, etc.)

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## **Quick Links**

Tool	URL
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PageSpeed Insights	<a href="https://pagespeed.web.dev/">https://pagespeed.web.dev/</a>
GTmetrix	<a href="https://gtmetrix.com/">https://gtmetrix.com/</a>
WAVE Accessibility	<a href="https://wave.webaim.org/">https://wave.webaim.org/</a>
Google Search Console	<a href="https://search.google.com/search-console">https://search.google.com/search-console</a>
Rich Results Test	<a href="https://search.google.com/test/rich-results">https://search.google.com/test/rich-results</a>
Facebook Debugger	<a href="https://developers.facebook.com/tools/debug/">https://developers.facebook.com/tools/debug/</a>
Security Headers	<a href="https://securityheaders.com/">https://securityheaders.com/</a>
HTML Validator	<a href="https://validator.w3.org/">https://validator.w3.org/</a>
CSS Validator	<a href="https://jigsaw.w3.org/css-validator/">https://jigsaw.w3.org/css-validator/</a>

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*UnixPulse – Notes on Linux, VMware & Web Dev*