

# 50 Mistakes to Avoid When Making Your Website



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# Domain Name Mistakes

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## 1. Not Buying Your Own Domain

If you are just getting started with blogs and websites, then using a free hosted solution like [Blogger.com](https://www.blogger.com) or [WordPress.com](https://www.wordpress.com) is fine.

As soon as you learn the basics, however, you should buy your own domain name and get a hosting plan. This is the best choice for several reasons.

First of all having your own domain gives your website much more credibility. Secondly, getting a hosting plan will give you more flexibility regarding the software and features you can have on your site. Finally, you'll actually own the domain and website, and you'll be able to sell them in the future if you so decide.

## 2. Not Choosing a .com, .net or .org Extension

When purchasing a domain name you'll be able to choose among many different extensions. However, there are only three that you should consider. The first one is the .com, which should always be your first choice.

If you can't get the .com version of the domain you want, then going with .net or .org should be fine.

Just stay away from extensions such as .biz, .us and .info because most spam and malicious websites use these extensions, meaning that both human visitors and search bots will get suspicious when visiting your site.

## 3. Choosing a Domain That Is Too Long

The shorter your domain, the better. As a rule of thumb, try to aim for fewer than 10 characters, and never exceed 20.

As for the number of words used within a domain name, one-word domains are gold, two-words are good, and domains with three words or more are average.

The only exception to this rule are domains that match a keyword exactly (our own domain is an example: [HowToMakeAWebsite.net](http://HowToMakeAWebsite.net)).

## 4. Choosing a Domain That Is Hard to Spell

Your domain needs to be easy to spell, or else your visitors will end up on some other website. This means that you should avoid tricky and foreign words if possible.

For example, CappuccinoBar.com might be problematic for English speaking visitors. Cappuccino is an Italian word, and not everyone is aware where the doubles are placed.

## 5. Choosing a Domain That Is Hard to Remember

Apart from being short and easy to spell, your domain name should also be easy to remember, because many Internet users simply type the address of their favorite websites when they want to visit them.

For instance, brcwnc.com is a short domain, but it is not easy to remember at all, so you could lose some visitors along the way because they simply would forget your domain name.

## 6. Adding Numbers to the Domain

Some people resort to using numbers in their domain names, which makes the process of finding an available domain easier.

For example, instead of TickertsForYou.com you could register Tickets4You.com. This strategy should

be avoided, however, because it will confuse your visitors, and many of them will end-up at the wrong website.

## 7. Adding Hyphens to the Domain

Another tactic people use to find available domain names is to add a hyphen between the keywords.

For example, instead of AutoPartsCentral.com you could register Auto-Parts-Central.com. Again, this would be a bad idea if you are trying to build an authority website, because many visitors would forget to add the hyphens, and would end up at your competitor's website!

## 8. Forgetting to Use the Auto Renew

Virtually all domain registrars have a feature called "Auto Renew." Once you activate it, your domain name will be renewed automatically at the expiration date. It is very important to always use this feature, as these days domain squatters will take your domain away the same day it expires, and you'll lose time and money recovering it.

## 9. Forgetting to Lock the Domain

Another important feature you should remember to use is the "Domain Lock." This will basically protect your domain from unauthorized transfer requests, making it harder for malicious users to steal and hijack your domain.

# Web Hosting Mistakes

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## 10. Using A Free Web Host

It is possible to host your own domain name for free, but this would be a very bad idea. First of all most of those free web hosts make money by displaying their ads on top or at the bottom of your website.

Second, you'll find that the service quality is terrible. At best your website will be available, but very slow to load. At worst you'll have frequent downtimes and people won't be able to visit your website.

## 11. Choosing A Cheap Web Host

A similar mistake is to choose a cheap web hosting company. For example, companies that offer unlimited disk space and unlimited bandwidth for \$1.99 monthly.

Remember that you get what you pay for, and the hosting is a vital part of your website. In other words, invest money into a quality hosting plan if you plan to make a quality website.

## 12. Not Researching The Web Host

Before making a decision about your hosting company, research on the Internet. First of all look for hosting review sites, and check what other clients are saying about the companies you are considering.

Second, test the customer support department of the companies, evaluating how long it takes for them to get back to you.

Finally, ask for examples of websites that are hosted with that company, and visit them to see how fast they load.

## 13. Choosing A Windows Based Hosting

When signing up for a hosting plan you'll notice that the two main options you have are Windows based plans and Linux based plans.

Does it make a difference which one you pick? Absolutely! You should go with a Linux based plan.

Note that this has nothing to do with the operating system you use in your computer. A Linux based hosting means that your web server will be using Linux, regardless of your own OS.



Linux based hosting plans are superior for several reasons. First of all they are more secure and reliable. Secondly, they use a web server software called Apache, which is faster and has more feature than the Windows alternative.

## 14. Choosing A Hosting Without cPanel

The last point you need to pay attention to when choosing a hosting plan is the control panel. Some companies use their own control panel software. You should avoid them.

Instead look for a company that uses cPanel, which is the industry standard. Apart from having more features, cPanel allows you to easily backup, restore and transfer your websites, meaning that you'll be able to move to a different web host in the future if necessary.



## 15. Using Small Fonts

Visitors need to be able to read your content comfortably, or they will move on to another website.

Practically speaking, the smallest font size you should use is 11, but use bigger ones whenever possible.

## 16. Using The Wrong Font Color / Background

Apart from using a large font, you should also make sure that the font and background colors are producing a good contrast.

For example, it is very hard to read a yellow font on a white background. If possible stick with the basic color palletes: dark font on white background or white font on dark background.

## 17. Not Testing On Different Browsers

Different browsers interpret HTML code differently, so it is important to check how your website is loading at least on the major browsers (e.g., IE 8, IE 7, Firefox, Safari and Opera).

You can use a tool called [BrowserShots.org](http://BrowserShots.org) for this purpose. It is free and easy to use.

## 18. Making Links Look Like Normal Text

Your visitors must be able to identify what is clickable and what is not on your website.

The standard is to underline links. Alternatively you can change the color of the links.

## 19. Not Changing Color of Visited Links

It is also important to change the color of visited links. This is a common practice around the web, as it allows visitors to know what pages they have been to in the past.

## 20. Playing Background Music

Playing background music was widespread in the mid 1990s, but nowadays it should be avoided.

If you must use an audio file (e.g., a description of your product or a sample recording), let the user start and stop it as he or she chooses.

## 21. Making The Site Too Narrow

It is estimated that 90% of the Internet users around the world are using a screen resolution of 1024x768 or higher.

This should also be the width of your website. If you opt for a smaller width (e.g., 800 pixels) your website might look dated, and you'll waste space above the fold.

## 22. Making The Site Too Wide

Be careful to not design a website with a width larger than 1024 pixels, however. This is a widely used resolution (with around 35% of the market), and if your website is larger users will need to scroll horizontally to view your content, which should be avoided.

## 23. Not Optimizing Images

The images on your website have a significant impact on its overall loading speed. You can't use only text, but you can optimize your images to make sure they will be as small as possible.

Simply use an image editing software (e.g., Photoshop) to compress your images under the .jpg format. Some image editors also come with a "Save for the web" option, which will optimize the images automatically for you.

## 24. Using Flash Extensively

If possible, avoid using Flash altogether. Why? Because not all browsers and computers can handle it efficiently, and because search engines can't crawl Flash sites either.

If you use Flash some of your visitors will have trouble viewing your website, and your search engine rankings might suffer as well.

## 25. Using Animated GIFs

Animated GIFs were popular in the mid 1990s, and just like background music, these days they should be avoided.

The only exceptions are animated banners from advertisers, and even them should be used with moderation, because they are very distracting for your visitors.

## 26. Not Checking For Spelling Mistakes

Remember that text is an essential part of any website, and as such you should make sure that there are no spelling and grammar mistakes around.

At the very minimum proofread your main pages a couple of times. If possible get some friends to proofread the pages for you, as different eyes will catch different mistakes.

## 27. Not Using The ALT and TITLE Attributes

When using images it is important to include the ALT and TITLE attributes. They basically create the text you see when hovering the mouse over the image.

Apart from helping your search engine rankings, these attributes are very important for Internet users with special requirements (e.g., blind people).

# Usability Mistakes

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## 28. Using An “Intro” Page

Also called “splash page”, this is nothing more than a page that only introduces your website, asking the visitors to click on a link to proceed to the homepage.

Using such pages is a big mistake, because they will add an unnecessary step between your visitors and your content.

## 29. Not Showing What Your Site Is About

Remember this rule: your visitors must understand what your website is about within seconds of coming to it.

In order to achieve this goal you can use a descriptive logo, a tagline, display a lot of content above the fold and so on.

## 30. Not Writing Scannable Content

Internet users are natural multi-taskers, and they also have very short attention spans. As a result, your content must be scannable, or they might leave your website.

Practically speaking, make sure to use visible headers and sub-headers, bullet points, bold and italics typeface when suitable and so on.

## 31. Breaking Content Into Several Pages

Many mainstream websites break their articles into several pages. This tactic is used to increase the number of page views, but it is incredibly annoying to users.

If you can, therefore, make sure to display your articles and other information on a single page.

## 32. Not Having a Search Box

Internet users rely on search boxes for almost anything these days. If they can't find something on your website right away, it is likely that they will use the search box, and that is why it is essential to have one.

## 33. Not Having a “Contact” Page

If you don't have a “Contact” page or an “Email us” link on your website you'll lose in two ways.



First of all some of your visitors will get frustrated because they won't be able to get an answer to specific questions they might have.

Second, you'll lose valuable feedback over the long run exactly because you won't know the common questions your visitors have.

### 34. Not Having a Sitemap

Another important section of your website is the Sitemap. This is nothing more than a page that lists and links to all other important sections and pages (for a blog this would be the “Archives”).

The Sitemap is useful because it allows visitors to quickly find the specific page or information they are looking for. You can see a live example on HostGator.

### 35. Not Linking The Logo to the Homepage

Make sure to link the logo of your website to its homepage. This is a common practice, and people are already used to clicking on the logo of the website whenever they want to return to the homepage.

If you want to make navigation even easier, add a “Home” link to your navigation menu.

### 36. Not Having A Clear Navigation Structure

Try to make the navigation of your website as clear

and as simple as possible. For example, it is a good idea to use a single navigation bar, with all the important links. Having multiple navigation bars can confuse visitors.

Secondly, avoid drop-down menus if you can. Users might not remember what items are included under each menu, and therefore finding the right one will be difficult.

### 37. Opening New Browser Windows

Whenever you include links on your website, you have the option to make them open a new window on the user's browser (you can accomplish this by adding the `target="_blank"` attribute to the link).

Many people use this tactic to keep visitors on their website, but this is actually a mistake. Why? Because opening new browser windows is annoying for most users, and it might actually cause them to leave your website.

Secondly, you should not worry about users leaving your website when clicking on a link. If the your content/service is good, the user will certainly come back in the future.

# Search Engine Optimization Mistakes

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## 38. Not Having a Title Tag

The title tag is basically the title of the pages on your website. Here is how it looks as HTML code:

```
<title>Title Goes Here</title>
```

The title will then be displayed on top of the user's browser.

You should never forget to create a title tag for your pages, because this is the most important SEO factor. Secondly, make sure to include your main keywords in the title tag, as this will help with the search rankings.

## 39. Having Duplicate Title Tags

A common mistake that bloggers and webmasters make is to have duplicate title tags. For example, they'll use the name of the blog as a title tag on all pages.

Google explicitly recommends webmasters to have unique and descriptive title tags, so make sure to do this for each page on your website.

## 40. Having Duplicate Content

Google also frowns upon duplicate content. That is, large blocks of text that appear on two or more pages, within or across websites.

For example, displaying your articles on several pages inside your website would be a bad idea. Similarly, submitting the articles you published on your website to other websites (e.g., article directories) should be avoided.

The rule of thumb is: each page on your website should contain unique content that cannot be found anywhere else (be it on other pages of your own website or on other websites).

## 41. Having A Deep Site Architecture

The architecture of your website is the collection of folders you'll use to organize content. A deep site structure uses many folders. For example, if you have a website about cars you could have the following architecture:

<http://supercars.com/sport-cars/tesla/roadster.html>  
<http://supercars.com/sport-cars/ford/mustang.html>  
<http://supercars.com/luxury-cars/porsche/911.html>

However, having a deep site architecture is a

mistake, because search engines might have trouble crawling and indexing the different folders and pages.

A better architecture would be a flat one, meaning that you'll have few folders to organize your content, if any at all. For example, the same website we mentioned above could have the following flat structure:

<http://supercars.com/tesla-roadster.html>

<http://supercars.com/ford-mustang.html>

<http://supercars.com/porsche-911.html>

Remember that the closer a page is to your root domain, the more importance it will have in the search engine's eyes.

## 42. Not Having Keyword-Based Permalinks

Another important point to pay attention to is the permalink structure. You'll notice that many content management systems produce permalinks based on numbers and special characters. For example, your blog posts could have the following permalinks:

<http://www.myblog.com/p?=123>

<http://www.myblog.com/p?=1034>

Where `p?=123` and `p?=1034` are the code used to designate posts number 123 and 1034. The problem with such link structure is the fact that both search engines and human visitors won't know what the post is about before visiting it.

A better alternative is to use a permalink structure based on the main keywords of your pages (in the case of blog posts, based on post titles). For example, these same two posts could have the following permalinks:

<http://www.myblog.com/how-to-lose-fat/>

<http://www.myblog.com/10-tips-to-eat-healthier/>

Now human visitors would have an idea of your content even before visiting the page, and search bots would also be able to associate keywords with your pages, thus benefiting your search rankings.

### 43. Not Using H1, H2 and H3 Tags

H1, H2 and H3 tags are used by search engines to understand your content. Keywords placed inside these tags will have a higher importance, and you should use this in your favor.

Practically speaking, include the main keywords you are targeting inside the H1 tags, and use variations of these keywords in the H2 and H3 tags if possible.

### 44. Not Using Descriptive Anchor Text in Links

Many webmasters create their links using the “click here” anchor text. This is a bad practice for two reasons.

First of all it hurts the user experience on your

website, because readers won't know what the link is about.

Secondly, using a descriptive anchor text (e.g., the title of the page you are linking to) will help with your search rankings because Google will associate the keywords used in the link anchor with the content of the page that is being linked to.

## 45. Trying to Manipulate Search Engines

Any SEO practice that is not aligned with the interests of your human visitors might get you in trouble, so avoid them. For example, repeating your main keyword in your pages over and over again is a clear sign of search engine manipulation, and it could get your website penalized.

Other examples of search engine manipulation include the usage of hidden text, the over optimization of link anchors, and stuffing of keywords on meta tags and so on.

Remember, the more natural your SEO efforts are, the better.

# Monetization Mistakes

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## 46. Inserting Ads Too Early

Virtually all Internet users don't like ads. If your content or service is top notch, however, the users will bear the ads, and occasionally click on them.

The problem with inserting ads too early in the game is that some visitors will move away even before getting a chance to read your content or try your service (probably to never come back).

If possible, therefore, wait until your website is already trusted by the users before inserting ads.

## 47. Having Too Many Ads

You should also avoid having too many ads. If users get the impression that the sole purpose of your website is to make money, they will move away.

Similarly, if they suspect that there are more



advertisements around than actual content, they will move away.

## 48. Trying to Game Google AdSense

When you start using Google AdSense you certainly notice how easy it is to game the system. All you need to do is to ask some friends around the world to click on your ads, after all.

We highly recommend you to not do this, for two reasons. First of all this is an illegal and unethical activity, which is plenty of reason alone. Even if you don't care for ethics, though, you should know that Google has a very sophisticated system to detect click fraud.

And what is worse, once you get banned from the AdSense network it is for life. There is no coming back, so don't risk it.

## 49. Having Intrusive Ads

Secondly, make sure that your ads are not distracting the user when he is trying to consume your content or use your service.

Examples include pop-ups, pop-downs, interstitial ads and so on.

## 50. Having Deceiving Ads

It is important to make clear what is an ad on your website and what is editorial content. If users can't

distinguish the two things they will feel deceived.

In-text ads are one example. These are sponsored links that appear inside the articles of websites. Sometimes they carry a double underline.

The problem with these ads is that they look like normal links, and thus most users won't know they are actually ads.

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