

THE KILLER WORDPRESS CHECKLIST

By Capsicum Mediaworks



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Web Design & WordPress Agency

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Welcome to 'The Killer WordPress Checklist'

Our “killer” checklist is conveniently divided into 7 detailed checklists, each of which covers every aspect of launching, developing and then maintaining a WordPress website successfully.

All you have to do is follow each step carefully and we guarantee you'll have the WordPress website of your dreams, ready within no time!

✔ Getting Started

We all know the importance of starting right.

If you understand the basics, right from the beginning of the process, the rest of the exercise becomes as smooth as silk.

So make sure you make a perfect start by following these steps systematically to get the best end results.

Select Web Hosting:

Choose a suitable web host depending on your requirements. Some popular options include [Bigrock](#) | [Bluehost](#) | [Hostgator](#)

Download Latest WordPress Version:

[Download WordPress](#) from the official WordPress.org website

Use FTP Client:

[Download FileZilla](#) the best FTP client

Online or Localhost?:

Select an appropriate development environment and then install WordPress. You can choose either of these two options;

- Local service like [XAMPP](#), or
- Host site on a test URL.



✔ WordPress Pre Development Checklist

So where do you actually start?

That's the first question that's probably popped in your head. This checklist is the answer to that very question.

Regardless of whether you are a beginner or a WordPress expert, this particular checklist will benefit anyone who is in the process of developing a new WordPress website.

Choose the Right Directory:

Select a directory and install it under public_html. Do not use 'root' or 'WordPress.'

Change DB Table names:

Use random letters/numbers_table names instead of the default wp_table names. Checkout [Change DB Prefix Plugin](#)

Use Unique Login/Password:

Refrain from using admin/admin as admin login/password. Alternatively, you can follow these examples;

- Username- CMW (e.g.)
- Password- (Use [Strong Password Generator Plugin](#)).
- You may also use your email as login with [WP Email Login Plugin](#).

Hide your Test Website from Search Engines:

Make sure you hide your website from the search engines by checking the option under Settings > Reading "Discourage search engines from indexing this site".

Additional Steps:

Once the installation is complete, here are some of the additional things you will need to do.

- Create a "Coming Soon" page with the free [SeedProd Coming Soon](#) or [WP Maintenance Mode](#) Plugins.
- Now, you will need to make some changes in the settings under General category. Choose a www or non-www URL for the WordPress as well as Site address.

Set Default Date & Time:

Don't forget to update the Time Zone, Date/Time under Settings > General.

Update Blog Title:

Very important to update the blog title and tag line appropriately under Settings > General.

Change Media Settings:

Under Settings > Media, uncheck the "Organize my uploads into month and year based folders" option.



Change Blog Category:

Similarly, under Posts > Categories, rename the 'uncategorized' to set up a default category for Posts.

Password Protect Demo Site:

Increase the security for your demo website by installing the [Password Protected](#) plugin.

Delete Sample Config File:

Finally, don't forget to remove the sample config file, WP-config-sample.php in your root under public_html.

Additional Steps:

- Enable the debug mode

```
define('WP_DEBUG', true);
```

- That you use as many WP default-included third-party JS libraries as possible.
- As the admin, you are able to upload/remove media and install new plugins as per your requirements.



✔ WordPress Development Checklist

Now comes the most important checklist.

There are a million settings and changes you need to make during the development process, in order to build a website that meets all your requirements.

That's why, we have included even the minutest of steps that are important during development, so that you never miss out on anything crucial to your website.

Remove Default Content:

Here, the first thing you need to do is remove the WordPress default content like posts, comments and more.

Create a Sitemap:

Next, create a logical sitemap in Notepad, Word or Excel and add pages like About us, Contact us, etc, according to this sitemap.

Use Dash for URLs:

Make sure you use “-” in your URL's instead of “_”.

Add Blog Categories:

Under Posts > Categories, add appropriate blog categories.

Add Tags & Media:

Once you've added the blog categories, include suitable posts, tags and media files.

Update Menu:

Then, as per the Sitemap, add Menu under the Appearances > Menu section.

Use ALT Tags:

Don't forget to add alt tags to all the website images. You may also use the [Search Friendly Images Plugin](#).

Add Newsletter Subscription:

Include the Email Opt-In Form for newsletter subscription. You may use Newsletter. We use [MailChimp List Subscribe Form Plugin](#).

Make a Plugin List:

Make a list of all the plugins you wish to install. Few recommended Plugins:

SeedProd Coming Soon:

<https://wordpress.org/plugins/coming-soon/>



- WordPress SEO by Yoast:**
<https://wordpress.org/plugins/wordpress-seo/>
 - Google Analytics by Yoast:**
<https://yoast.com/wordpress/plugins/google-analytics/>
 - BackUpWordPress:**
<http://wordpress.org/plugins/backupwordpress/>
 - WordPress Backup to Dropbox:**
<https://wordpress.org/plugins/wordpress-backup-to-dropbox/>
 - Broken Link Checker:**
<http://wordpress.org/extend/plugins/broken-link-checker/>
 - Redirection:**
<https://wordpress.org/plugins/redirection/>
 - WP-reCAPTCHA:**
<https://wordpress.org/plugins/wp-recaptcha/>
 - Contact Form 7:**
<https://wordpress.org/plugins/contact-form-7/>
 - Contact Form 7 reCAPTCHA Extension:**
<https://wordpress.org/plugins/contact-form-7-recaptcha-extension/>
 - BBQ: Block Bad Queries:**
<https://wordpress.org/plugins/block-bad-queries/>
 - WP-Optimize:**
<https://wordpress.org/plugins/wp-optimize/>
 - WP-PageNavi:**
<https://wordpress.org/plugins/wp-pagenavi/>
 - WP Super Cache:**
<https://wordpress.org/plugins/wp-super-cache/>
 - iThemes Security:**
<https://wordpress.org/plugins/better-wp-security/>
 - Revision Control:**
<http://wordpress.org/extend/plugins/revision-control/>
 - Error Log Monitor:**
<https://wordpress.org/plugins/error-log-monitor/>
- Add Social Icons:**
Add social media icons/links for Facebook, Twitter, Google+, Pinterest, LinkedIn, etc. You may use [AddThis](#), [Share This](#) or [Share Bar](#) Plugins



Add Social Feeds:

Also include feed posts for;

- [Facebook Page Plugin](#)
- [Twitter Plugin](#)
- [Google Plus](#)

 Create Social Profiles:

- [Facebook Fan Page](#)
- [Twitter Plugin](#)
- [Google Plus](#)
- [Pinterest](#)

 Style Sticky Post:

Style the sticky posts well and make sure they function well. More info at [RoadtoBlogging.com](#)

 Check for Content Overflow:

Make sure there are no posts with pictures that break the content layout or are too big for the content column. In that case, make Overflow: Hidden.

 Highlight Author's Comments:

Ensure that the author comment is highlighted differently. Checkout How to [Highlight Author's Comments](#) by WPBeginner.

 Use Gravatars:

Check that the User Avatars or Gravatars are displayed properly. TodayMade.com explains this [here](#).

 Add Comment Closed Message:

The comments display form is replaced with a "Comments Off" message or something similar.

 Create 404 Page:

Another important thing is to ensure that the 404 page is created and customized. Check [1stwebdesigner.com](#) to create a Custom 404 page in WordPress.

 Test Search Page:

Please check if the search page is accessible to users. You can check by navigating to <http://yoursite.com/?s=Test>.

 Use & Test Pagination:

Test the pagination using [WP-PageNavi](#) plugin.

 Add Favicon:

Add custom Favicon using [Custom Favicon](#) plugin.



Use Breadcrumb:

Don't forget to use Breadcrumbs for easy navigation. Is a part of [WordPress SEO by Yoast Plugin](#)

Link Logo:

Link the company logo to the Homepage.

Remove Lorem Ipsum:

Lastly, make sure you remove all the Lorem Ipsum text on your website.



✔ WordPress Launch Checklist

Congratulations! You're finally done with the tricky development process!

Now, you must be ready to launch it successfully, without any glitches.

Mind you, there are lots of steps to follow before you actually launch your website. So, we have put in every little thing you need to have in place, before you go live.

Just follow them all and have a hassle-free launch!

Take Backups:

Once you launch your website, its important to take regular back-ups. You can use these plugins for creating back-ups; [BackUpWordPress](#) (Free) | [BackupBuddy](#) (Paid) | [WordPress Backup to Dropbox](#) (Free)

Check Content Structure:

Check the structure and content for everything including pages, categories, URL's, submission forms, etc.

Update Admin Email:

Also, under Settings > General, check social links, contact info and admin email.

Implement Security:

Make sure you have all the security in place, like password strength, files and folder permissions, etc. using the [iThemes Security](#) plugin.

Ensure CBC:

Check if your website is cross browser compatible by extensive testing. Free Trial with [Cross Browser Testing](#).

Enable Site to be Crawled:

Uncheck the option under Settings > Reading of "Discourage search engines from indexing this site" and make website visible to search engines.

Disable Coming Soon Page:

Launch the plugin SeedProd and disable the Coming Soon page.

Test for Responsiveness:

Ensure that your website is mobile friendly. Run [Google's Mobile Friendly Test](#) to determine the same.

Check Loading Speed:

You must also improve the page loading speed with the help of [Google's Page Speed Insights](#).



Compress Images:

Reduce all the image sizes by almost 50% by compressing the PNG and JPG files using [TinyPNG](#) or [WP Smush](#) plugin.

Use Latest WP Version:

Make sure you are using the latest version of WordPress. If not, ensure that you upgrade when you go live.

Upgrade Plugins:

It is also important to upgrade all the plugins on your website before going live.

Open URL in New Tab:

Check if all your external links are working by opening them in new tabs. Use code similar to this for links

```
<a href="#" target="_blank"></a>
```

Check Broken Links:

It is imperative that you check for broken links on your website before going live using [Broken Link Checker](#) Plugin

White Label (Optional):

If you are developing the WordPress website for a client, implement branded WordPress login page using [White Label CMS](#) Plugin

Go Live:

Once all these things are in place, you are finally ready to go live!



✔ WordPress SEO Checklist

You may have the most alluring and well-developed WordPress website, but if you don't have proper SEO in place, then it will all be for nothing.

With our comprehensive SEO checklist, you will not have to go anywhere else to learn about SEO.

Follow each step carefully and you'll have a fully search engine optimized website ready in a jiffy!

Manage 301 Redirects:

Manage your 301 redirection with the help of user [Redirection](#) Plugin.

Enable Site to be Crawled:

Turn on the site visibility under the Settings > Reading, if you haven't done it already.

Use H1 Tag:

Ensure that you have only one H1 tag on each of your pages.

Use H2 Tag:

Also, make sure you have the H2 tag only within the content for headers

Add Alt to Images:

Don't forget to add alt tags to all the website images. You may also use the [Search Friendly Images](#) Plugin.

Test XML Sitemap:

Check if the Yoast's WordPress SEO Plugin's in-built sitemap is working or else install [Google XML Sitemap](#) Plugin

Check Robots.txt:

Next, it's important to have the Robots.txt file in place and is Optimized. More Info @ [ElegantThemes.com](#)

Compress Images:

Reduce the size of the images on your website using [WPSmush.it](#) Plugin

www or non www:

Redirect the 'www' to 'non-www' and vice versa. Use either but stick to one

Signup for Webmaster Tools:

If you have found any issues with the website so far, sign up for [Google's Webmaster Tool](#) and fix those issues.

Ensure that you have submitted both the 'www' as well as the 'non-www' versions.

Test Breadcrumb:

Ensure that links on Breadcrumb are working.



Limit Meta Title (V.V.Imp):

Another thing to ensure is that the Meta Title remains only 55 characters long, including the spaces. WordPress SEO has this feature inbuilt for you.

Limit Meta Desc (V.V.Imp):

Similarly, the Meta Description should only contain 155 characters, including spaces.

Use LSI Keywords:

[LSI Keywords](#) are very important for SEO. Make sure you include enough in your content. Find LSI using [Google Keyword Planner](#), [UberSuggest.org](#) or [Google Search](#) (hint: look for keywords at the bottom of the page after completing the search query)

Check Duplicate Content:

It is very important that all your content is original and that you have no duplicate content on your website. Use [CopyScape](#)

Interlink Content:

Interlinking is also a significant aspect of SEO. So make sure you have contextual links within your website.

Link to External Links:

It is also important to have external links to other resourceful websites, within your content like we have done on this page.

Optimize Site:

Again, it is of utmost importance that you optimize your website using [GTMetrix](#) for HTML and [Pingdom](#) for WordPress, as it will help you save some valuable time to clear errors.

Improve Page Loading Speed:

Improve your page loading speed with the help of [Google's PageSpeed Insights](#).

Ensure Responsiveness:

Ensure that your website is responsive and mobile ready by running [Google's Mobile Friendly Test](#).

Use Schema Creator:

Smoothly add structured data to the content with the help of the [Schema Creator Plugin](#).

Create Short URL:

Opt for a shorter URL for the pages, e.g. <http://www.sitename.com/killer-wordpress-checklist/>

Submit for Local Listing:

If your website is about a local business, make sure you submit it to [Google Business](#).



Review Analytics:

Don't forget to add & review [Google Analytics](#) .

Check Onpage Content:

Check all the aspects related to OnPage SEO before going live. A Must Read [On-Page SEO Guide](#) by Brian Dean from Backlinko.com

Proofread Content:

Make sure you proofread the entire website to check for spelling and grammar errors, before going live.

Use CDN:

It is advisable to use CDN networks like [MaxCDN](#) to ensure better speed and usability.

Exclude IP from Analytics:

Exclude home and office IP addresses in [Google Analytics](#). More information on Excluding Internal Traffic can be found on [Google Analytic Help](#) Section

Add Social Sharing Icons:

Don't forget to include Social Media icons on all pages of the WordPress website. You may use [AddThis](#), [ShareThis](#) or [Share Bar](#) Plugins.



✔ WordPress Security Checklist

Now let me tell you, security is a very important aspect of website development.

Hence, before you present your WordPress website to the world, it is imperative that you have tight web security in place.

Through this checklist, you will get to learn which plugins and additional settings are required to safeguard your precious website from malicious threats.

Prevent Directory Access:

Prevent access to all directories, place this code inside your .htaccess file.

```
# Prevent folder browsing
Options All -Indexes
```

Monitor Site Performance:

Get regular reports of your websites performance with the help of the [P3 - Plugin Performance Profiler Plugin](#).

Delete Install & Upgrade Files:

Be sure to delete /wp-admin/install.php and /wp-admin/upgrade.php after every WordPress installation or upgrade.

Limit Suspicious Login Attempts:

Limit the number of login attempts possible both through normal login as well as using auth cookies by using [Limit Login Attempts](#) or [Login LockDown](#) Plugins.

Use iThemes Security:

We strongly recommend that you use the most comprehensive security plugin, [iThemes Security](#) plugin, because it's free and takes care of almost all the security issues on a website.

Protect your wp-config file:

As wp-config.php file contains all the confidential details of your site. So it is pretty important that you protect it at all costs. An easy way to protect this file is to simply place the following code in your .htaccess file on your server.

```
<files wp-config.php>
order allow,deny
deny from all
</files>
```



❑ Disable Theme and plugin Editor:

If you want to stop the editor links from appearing in the admin area you can add the following to your wp-config.php file so people cannot edit the theme directly in the admin area.

```
define( 'DISALLOW_FILE_EDIT', true);
```

❑ Hide your WordPress Version:

It is important that you hide your current WordPress Version from the hackers. Add the following code to your function.php

```
function remove_version() {  
    return "";  
}  
add_filter('the_generator', 'remove_version');
```

❑ Hide Login Error messages:

Error login messages may expose and give hackers an idea if they've gotten username correct/incorrect, vice versa. It is wise to hide it from unauthorized login. To hide login error messages, simply put the following code in functions.php

```
function wrong_login() {  
    return 'Wrong username or password!';  
}  
add_filter('login_errors', 'wrong_login');
```



✔ WordPress Maintenance Checklist

There! You've finally taken care of everything for your WordPress website.

Now, you need to know how you can maintain it efficiently.

This maintenance checklist will give you stepwise information on how you can run your website smoothly and conduct regular checks to make sure it functions impeccably.

Clean Spam Comments:

Tackle an attack of thousands of spam comments with the help of [Delete Pending Comments Plugin](#).

Test Forms:

Test the functioning of your Contact form by sending an inquiry through it.

Check Broken Links:

Look for broken links on your website with the [CheckMyLink](#) Extension for Chrome & [Broken Link Checker](#) for WordPress.

Post Revision Control:

Gain total control over your post revision system with [Revision Control](#) plugin.

Reply to Comments:

Make sure you check your comments section and answer questions & interact regularly with your readers.

Update Plugins:

Keep a tab on plugin updates and upgrade them regularly.

Take Regular Backups:

Don't forget to take backups of the latest databases and files using [BackUpWordPress](#) (Free) | [BackupBuddy](#) (Paid) | [WordPress Backup to Dropbox](#) (Free).

Check Google Analytics:

Check [Google Analytics](#) regularly.

Review Webmaster Tools:

Similarly, check [Google Webmaster Tools](#) periodically.

Check Resources Used:

Keep an eye on your resources with the [P3 - Plugin Performance Profiler](#).

Monitor Statistics:

Use [WP Statistics](#) plugin to monitor your WordPress website's statistics.



Ongoing Security Checks:

A good plugin which scans your WordPress installation and give the suggestion accordingly is [WP Security Scan](#).

This plugin will check for below things:

- Passwords
- File Permissions
- Database Security
- WordPress Admin protection

Additional:

If you have all these things in place, and still wish to add some additional characteristics to the website then follow these following steps, when using WP-config.php;

Disable the Debug mode:

```
define('WP_DEBUG', false);
```

Disable WordPress Updates:

```
// Completely Disable Automatic Updates  
define( 'AUTOMATIC_UPDATER_DISABLED', true );  
  
// Disable all updates to the Core  
define( 'WP_AUTO_UPDATE_CORE', true )
```

Control Post Revisions:

```
// Limit the number of saved revisions. limit to 10.  
define('WP_POST_REVISIONS', 3); //  
  
// Disable the post-revision feature completely.  
define('WP_POST_REVISIONS', false); //
```

Clear Trash:

```
// Empty every 7 days  
define('EMPTY_TRASH_DAYS', 7);  
  
// Disable Trash Completely  
define('EMPTY_TRASH_DAYS', 0);
```



Increase Memory Limit:

```
// Set Memory Limit to 64MB  
define('WP_MEMORY_LIMIT', '64M');  
  
// Set Memory Limit to 96MB  
define('WP_MEMORY_LIMIT', '96M');  
  
// Set Memory Limit to 128MB  
define('WP_MEMORY_LIMIT', '128M');
```

Define Auto Save Interval:

```
define('AUTOSAVE_INTERVAL', 300);
```



✔ Useful People & Tools

People

Brian Dean (Backlinko):

He's fondly called as the SEO Guru because of his extensive knowledge of everything related to SEO. If you need any assistance with SEO for your website, Brian Dean is your go-to person!

Matthew Woodward:

He's the affiliate marketing expert who loves to share insights about online marketing and show you how much he earns every month.

Neil Patel (QuickSprout):

You ought to be living in a cave if you don't know who Neil Patel is! He's one of the most accomplished bloggers who has very resourceful information to give about SEO and online marketing.

Pat Flynn (The Smart Passive Income):

He's a 32 year old blogger who knows the ins and outs of online businesses. He shares his success stories and techniques through his blog- Smart Passive Income.

Syed Balkhi:

An award winning young entrepreneur with several 7-figure online businesses, Syed Balkhi is THE person to follow if you want to know all the secrets of running a thriving online business.

Carol Tice (Make A Living Writing):

She's an award winning writer who's nailed the art of content creation. She gives extremely useful tips on writing readable content for websites.

Derek Halpern (Social Triggers):

A marketing pundit, Derek has mastered the art of building and marketing businesses. If it's effective marketing strategies you want, then Derek's blog is your place to be.

Tom Ewer (Leaving Work Behind):

Tom is an established blogger who quit a lucrative job to make a living as a blogger. His success stories are a true inspiration for all those wanting to become professional bloggers.

Alex Turner (Groove):

He's another successful blogger who has tons of good insight to share, about how to run startups and effective content marketing strategies.



Glen (ViperChill):

A former Social Media Manager, Glen is one of the youngest bloggers who has an impressive track record in developing websites and affiliate marketing for eminent brands.

Tools

LastPass:

This is an amazing little tool which remembers your passwords for you, so that you never lose access to your website.

Feedly:

A wonderful place which can be conveniently used to save and read all your favourite blogs and articles.

Open Link Profiler:

This is one of the best options to look for fresh, and more importantly, free backlinks.

Buffer:

If you are looking for a means to manage your social media posts, then Buffer is the tool you need. It simplifies and schedules your social media routine.

FreePik:

The best source for hundreds of free vectors, icons and PSD files and photos.

Compfight:

This is a search engine specially designed to find images specific for different kinds of blogs, comps, inspiration and research.

Moz:

The ultimate SEO tool, Moz is a must for your website, if you wish to master the art of Search Engine Optimization.

Free Images:

If you need images for your blogs, then Free Images is just the site you need. It is one of the leading source of free and paid stock photos on the web.



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