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21 WORDPRESS WEBSITE TASKS FOR 2021

Contents

02

Introduction

05

Key Security Tasks

12

Website Maintenance Tasks

16

Block Editor Tasks

19

Marketing Tasks

24

Analytics Tasks

25

Misc Website Tasks

INTRODUCTION

As we enter into a much-needed New Year, now is the best time to catch up on the latest trends in WordPress that you may not be taking advantage of quite yet.

Keeping up with the latest trends in WordPress may be a daunting task, so this checklist is designed to help you bring your website into 2021 with a fresh start.

This year, let's tackle website-related tasks you may have been putting off. Obviously, putting off important tasks is something we all do from time to time. To overcome this habit, however, it's important to set certain reset milestones that put important tasks back at the forefront of our priority lists.

Remember, as the WordPress platform continues to improve and develop, it's normal to feel a bit left behind by technology. This is especially true for us procrastinators that haven't been keeping up with all of the changes WordPress has been making in real time. But now is the right time to get fully caught up.

To bring a fresh energy and new business approach into the New Year, here are the 21 tasks that will help launch your WordPress site into what's sure to be a promising 2021.

Define **PROCRASTINATION:**

"To delay or postpone action;
put off doing something."



WHAT ARE SOME OF THE CONSEQUENCES OF PROCRASTINATION?

- You lose time
- You miss out on opportunities
- You fail to reach your goals
- You could lose your business
- You make poor long-term decisions
- Your reputation may be damaged

KEY SECURITY TASKS

Without top-level security, your website is more vulnerable right now than it ever has been before. Just looking at the recent Solar Winds cyberattack shows us how important security is on every WordPress site.

1. Implement Two-Factor Authentication for Your WordPress Admin Login

If you're not yet using two-factor authentication, it's definitely time to take the leap.

Two-factor authentication is a way for your site to verify a user's identity by requiring them to use two different methods of personal verification.

Google tells us that the simple step of implementing two-

factor authentication will stop literally 100% of bot attacks.

It's also an added step of security that benefits your users. Learn more about [how to implement two-factor authentication](#) with the iThemes Security Pro plugin.

2. Turn on Passwordless Logins

Using strong and unique passwords, coupled with two-factor authentication, will stop nearly all brute force cyberattacks. However, there are a lot of people who still keep reusing the same hackable passwords.

These same people also aren't using two-factor authentication.

If you haven't heard of [Passwordless Logins](#), the exciting news is that they've arrived and are the answer to weak passwords and skipped two-factor authentication.

Passwordless Logins are a new way of verifying the identities of your users without requiring them to use a login password.

Sound too good to be true? It's not. [Get started with Passwordless Logins](#) and set the trend instead of chasing it.

3. Activate reCAPTCHA for All Login Forms

Google's reCAPTCHA keeps the bad bots and brute force attackers from engaging in harmful activities on your WordPress site, such as:

- Brute force break ins and DDoS attacks
- Compromising passwords
- Posting spam
- Scraping content

However, using reCAPTCHA, legit users can easily and safely login, view pages, make purchases and create new

accounts. If you're not using reCAPTCHA on your WordPress site yet, here's [how to activate reCAPTCHA for all your login forms](#).

4. Enforce a Strong Password Policy

It's important to use a tool that not only sets your password policy, but also enforces the policy.

By enacting the Password Requirement feature in the WordPress security plugin called iThemes Security Pro, you'll be able to force members of user groups to:

- Use strong passwords
- Choose when their passwords will expire

- Refuse passwords that have been compromised
- Force a change of passwords on your entire site, ensuring that everyone complies with the new, stronger password policy

[Here's how to get started enforcing a strong password policy.](#)

5. Start Logging Website Security Activity

One of the most important WordPress site tasks for 2021 is going to be keeping track of important security events that happen on your site in real-time. Each specific event is important to monitor because they can indicate when or if a breach in security occurred.

The security logs for your website are key pieces of an effective security strategy. Information in these important records can be utilized to:

- Keep bad actors off your website
- Highlight unwanted changes to your site
- Identify and patch successful attack points-of-entry

Start logging security activity and stay a step ahead of malicious attackers.

6. Perform a Security Audit

A WordPress website security audit needs to find an answer to ten important questions:

1. Is your online store on the correct platform?
2. Is your store running on the best web host?
3. If you have an ecommerce shop and is it PCI-DSS compliant?
4. Do you collect excess data from your customers?
5. Do you encrypt the communication between yourself and your customers?
6. Are all of your customer accounts completely secure?
7. Is the software that's running your eCommerce platform up-to-date?
8. Do you visit the front-end of your site on a regular basis?
9. Do you use WAF and CDN
10. If you work in public areas, do you properly protect your wireless connection.

Check out this helpful [WordPress ecommerce security audit checklist](#).

7. Plan for Software Vulnerabilities

In your security strategy, it's incredibly important to keep your software updated. Updates aren't only intended for fixing bugs or rolling out new features. These same software updates also include security patches that are critical to your site safety and security.

Without updating these patches, you're leaving your computer, phone, router, server and site open to potential attack.

A tools such as Version Management will help keep you abreast of updates as they're needed.

Beyond that, part of exploring

potential software vulnerabilities requires performing routine site scans.

Your site scanner needs to check for:

- WordPress core vulnerabilities
- Theme vulnerabilities
- Plugin vulnerabilities

Check out the [iThemes Security Pro plugin's Site Scan](#) to secure and protect your WordPress website from the number one cause of all software attacks: outdated, vulnerable WordPress themes, plugins and WordPress core.

WEBSITE MAINTENANCE TASKS

Maintaining your WordPress website is just as important as keeping it secure. These are the most important WordPress maintenance tasks to take care of as we head into 2021.

8. Turn on Backup Schedules

Website backups exist to help you avoid the loss of precious data. For your WordPress site, this means that you always need to have a saved copy of your site any time it changes.

Some examples of website changes are:

- Editing or adding new content in posts or pages
- New transactions, such as customer purchases
- Version updates to WordPress core, themes and plugins

- Uploading and activating new themes and plugins
- New user registrations
- New user comments
- Settings changes

Of course, some websites, such as portfolio sites, don't get updated very often. However, more active websites may change on a moment-by-moment basis.

Check out these [10 tips for WordPress backup schedules](#).

9. Update To Latest Versions of Your Plugins, Themes and WordPress Core

A WordPress update is a change to the [WordPress core](#) software. This is the software that runs all of the functionality presented by the WordPress platform.

The specific term "WordPress Update" refers to the WordPress core version updates that are routinely made available in your admin dashboard.

However, [WordPress updates](#) also applies to the more broad updates to plugins and themes that you're running. Plugin and theme updates are

also routinely released, and these need to always remain updated.

Please take a few minutes to dig in here and learn the importance of updates and [how to update WordPress](#).

10. Review Your Website's Accessibility and Privacy Statements

How long has it been since you've reviewed the details of your accessibility and privacy statements?

If you're like most, you probably set them when you first launched your website and haven't given them much of a thought since.

Remember, your business is constantly changing and evolving. Chances are, the accessibility and privacy

statements need to be updated along with your changing business.

Also make sure that you're operating under [current ADA compliance](#).

11. Review Your Google Lighthouse Score

Google Lighthouse is an automated tool that's used for improving the quality of your website's pages. As with most other Google products, it's open-source.

The tool has audits for accessibility, performance, SEO and progressive web apps. And that's just for starters.

To learn how to integrate Google Lighthouse with iThemes Sync Pro, start [here](#).

BLOCK EDITOR TASKS

Are you still clinging to the WordPress Classic Editor because you don't much care for change to the Gutenberg block editor?

We've all been there at one point.

But as we move into 2021, it's time to...

12. Finally Adopt The New Block Editor

The [new Gutenberg WordPress editor](#), commonly referred to as [the block editor](#), is a brand new page building tool that is included in WordPress 5.0+.

The block editor adds content blocks and page-building functionality to every WordPress site that's running a current version of WordPress core.

It replaces the classic editor that used TinyMCE as the content editor for pages and posts. With the block editor, you add content in blocks rather than one large content area.

If you're not using the block editor yet, here are [10 things you need to know](#).

13. Turn Off the Classic Editor

Turning off the [classic editor](#) is simple. All you need to do is update to the newest version of WordPress core, and the Gutenberg block editor will immediately be your default content editor.

Of course, before you update to the newest version of WordPress, make sure you're running a WordPress backup

plugin like [BackupBuddy](#) in case there are any conflicts with your site after the update is activated.

14. Explore WordPress Block Patterns and Reusable Blocks

WordPress block patterns are predefined block layouts that are ready for you to insert into your designs.

They are groupings of blocks in WordPress that allow you to create any amount of complicated layouts by clicking a few buttons.

Block patterns were introduced as one of the premier features in WordPress 5.5. Since then, they've been paving the way for the block editor to function as a powerful all-purpose page builder.

If you haven't learned about block patterns, now is a great time to do so.

WordPress reusable blocks are found in the block editor. They allow you to save, in an instant, any block that you plan to use on a regular basis. Then, you'll be able to reuse the saved blocks in other posts and pages throughout your website with a simple click of a button. Take a minute to get familiar with reusable blocks.

MARKETING TASKS

No matter how solid your website security and website maintenance strategies are, your site wouldn't even exist without an impactful marketing strategy.

In 2021, there's never been a better time to revisit your marketing approach and see what new successes the New Year might bring.

15. Experiment with a New Digital Marketing Technique

Nobody knows your business better than you do. But have you been too locked into the same familiar way you've been doing things that you may fail to see where the business climate is heading in 2021?

If so, have you been missing out on new digital marketing trends that could give your business a

much-needed boost and leg up on the competition?

Here are a few ideas to get you started with experimenting with new digital marketing techniques that can bring your business explosive growth in the New Year:

- Use more social media to engage and retain customers
- Go all in on Local SEO and Google listings. Side bet on DuckDuckGo SEO
- Improve your customer communication on product availability
- Implement automated bidding for your Google ads
- Experiment with the power of voice search
- Use segmentation to improve customer retention

- Use more interactive marketing content and get involved with video marketing. Seriously.
- Focus on customer engagement like never before

Choose two or three of these that resonate with how you do business. Test how your new techniques perform, then narrow down to the most impactful changes before moving to scale.

16. Implement Content Upgrades

Have you heard of **Content Upgrades**? No, we're not talking about just spending time creating better blog content (although that's always an important factor in your marketing campaign).

But blogging alone isn't what's going to build your email list. And as you may know, email marketing gives the best ROI of any other marketing strategy.

In fact, email marketing pays back around \$44 for every \$1 you spend.

This means that you need an email opt-in strategy that actually produces real results by growing your list exponentially.

Content Upgrades is an impactful email opt-in strategy that can be used on any page or blog post throughout your site. When a user provides you with their email address, they are immediately offered a

download that's related to the page or post that reeled them in.

Start offering a Content Upgrade and see how many more email sign-ups you'll get on the very first day.

17. Experiment with Landing Pages

Your landing page is meant to drive conversations, not drive you crazy.

An impactful landing page should be designed with one simple purpose: To drive forward a single call-to-action.

The call-to-action might be:

- Sales, coupons, special promos
- eBook downloads
- Retargeting ads
- Email course lead magnets

- Pre-launch early access list building
- Webinar registration pages

No matter what, you need a tool that makes it as easy as possible to experiment with new landing pages that can increase conversions.

And this is the exact tool you need for WordPress: [an easy-to-use WordPress landing page plugin](#).

18. Perform an SEO Audit

How have your chosen keywords been performing? Have you been updating your SEO strategies to keep up with keyword trends that are important to your niche and business?

With as quickly as life changed in 2020, keyword trends were changing even faster. This makes it important to create a new keyword strategy that matches the new realities of the world in 2021 and beyond.

To capture and maintain qualified traffic for your site, it's never been more important than now to keep your finger on the pulse of what people in your niche are searching for.

You can learn everything you need to know about WordPress SEO in our [SEO Bootcamp course](#).

ANALYTICS TASKS

If you're not using up-to-date Google Analytics 4 tools, you're missing out on new AI-powered insights that track users across multiple devices. It also provides data controls that are more granular.

19. Upgrade to Google Analytics 4

Google Analytics 4, which is the latest version of the Google website analytics platform, has been available since October 2020.

This new version includes:

- Highly expanded predictive insights
- Better Google Ads integration
- Measurement capabilities across multiple user devices

- Granular data controls
- The update marks the first huge step forward in evolving analytics beyond Universal Analytics.

Even better, the small learning curve isn't bad at all.

MISC WEBSITE TASKS

After those nineteen tasks, what's next? Aren't we done yet?

Almost!

20. Update Testimonials or Your Portfolio To Reflect Your 2020 Projects

What have you been up to in 2020?

Have you been so busy with projects that you haven't made time to show your customers exactly what you've been doing?

If you've ever been to a website that featured

testimonials or portfolios that weren't fully up-to-date, you already know that it gives a horrible first impression. In fact, you've probably re-considered giving your business to these outdated websites.

Before we get too deep into

2021, spend a few dedicated hours adding important projects or clients to your portfolio.

And try not to make it an after-thought. After all, for a lot of customers, the testimonial and portfolio sections are the first place they go when they want to know more about you.

After you've made the updates, consider setting a monthly reminder to continue keeping your testimonials and

portfolio up-to-date at all times.

The time you spend on this will pay you back many times over.

21. Refresh the Design of Your Website

If it's been a year or more since you've last visited the design of your site, now is a great time to do it.

Website design trends are moving at breakneck speeds, and the effective trends aren't always major design rebuilds.

Sometimes, a design change as simple as a button color change can make a huge impact.

Spend some time considering new approaches to your site design, based upon the analytics data that you've collect-

ed over the last twelve months.

Then, implement some A/B testing with different design elements to see how they perform against each other. As you begin to spot obvious performance trends, scale up those design changes incrementally.

Keeping things fresh and new is going to give you a big advantage in the New Year.

Your WordPress Tasksfor 2021: **Your New Normal Is a New Level of Success**

Most of us have experienced unprecedented changes in 2020. In fact, if someone were to tell you one year ago today what the world would be like right now, you probably wouldn't have believed them.

Correction: There's no way you would have believed them.

There's no reason to believe that the changes coming in 2021 aren't going to come just as fast. The difference is, these changes look like new waves you can ride to success in the New Year and beyond.

To get fully prepared, it's important that you spend a significant amount of time pouring through each of the twenty one items in this checklist.

While there's no such thing as a guarantee for success, this important tool will put you in a place of great advantage.

Happy New Year!

- [The Team at iThemes](#)