Process Street

This document was created by exporting a template from Process Street – http://process.st.

You can get the interactive version of this checklist by creating an account with Process Street and copying the Website Launch Checklist from the examples section.

Inside Process Street you can edit the checklist as you wish, track the progress and collaborate with your team.

Website Launch Checklist

Venture Inc

☐ 1. Content:

☐ 2. Typography and Layout

☐ 3. Spelling and Grammar Consistency

☐ 4. Check Context

☐ 5. Ensure No Test Content on Site

☐ 6. Check all 'Hidden Copy'

☐ 7. Check Forms

☐ 8. Proof Read

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☐ 10. Design:

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Content

☐ 2. Typography and Layout

- Check for incorrect punctuation marks, particularly apostrophes, quotation marks and hyphens/dashes

- Check headings for where you could potentially use ligatures

- Check for widow/orphan terms in important paragraphs

☐ 3. Spelling and Grammar Consistency

- Capitalisation (especially of main headings)

- Tense/Style of writing

- Recurring/common phrases (e.g. 'More about X' links)

- Variations in words (e.g. Websites vs Web Sites, or UK vs US spelling)

- Treatment of bulleted lists (e.g. periods or commas at end of each item)

☐ 4. Check Context

When giving a critical eye to the pages within the site, ask:

- Why would I visit this page?

- Is the content ready for visitor?

- Does the page address the audience?

☐ 5. Ensure No Test Content on Site

It's not a great look when someone finds a post called "Hello World" or a paragraph saying "Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipisicing elit, sed do eiusmod tempor incididunt ut labore et dolore magna aliqua."

Find it. Trash it.

☐ 6. Check all 'Hidden Copy'

Check all 'Hidden Copy' (e.g. alt text, transcriptions, text in JavaScript functions)

☐ 7. Check Forms

Fill out the forms on the site and go through the following questions:

- Can the flow be improved?

- Do you get stuck?

- Are the instructions accurate?

- Does the completed form get sent to the right people or person?

☐ 8. Proof Read

Read everything. Even if you've already read it, read it again. Get someone else to read it. There's always something you'll pick up on and have to change. See if you can reduce the amount of text by keeping it specific. Break up large text blocks into shorter paragraphs. Add clear headings throughout, and use lists so that users can scan easily. Don't forget about dynamic text too, such as alert boxes.

[Writing for the web](#)

☐ 9. Legal Pages are in place

If your site jurisdiction mandates that you have a privacy policy, or a contact us page, ensure you have that in place.

Design

☐ 11. Favicon

The 'favicon' appears to the left of the page title in the web browser, and your users will notice if your website doesn't have one. They give your website credibility and help users navigate to your site when it's open amongst their other tabs and bookmarks.

Ensuring that your website has a favicon is probably the most basic of any task known to humanity, and yet it's so frequently overlooked.

How to Add a Favicon to your Site

☐ 12. Responsive Design

Responsive web design (**RWD**) is a web design approach aimed at crafting sites to provide an optimal viewing experience—easy reading and navigation with a minimum of resizing, panning, and scrolling—across a wide range of devices (from mobile phones to desktop computer monitors).

Make sure your website works on different screen resolution's and all devices.

Use these tools to check your site on different resolutions:

- Responsinator

- Studio Press

Designing your site using the Bootstrap framework should solve many of these problems.

☐ 13. Images

Check image pixelation on different displays, specifically high resolution displays like Apple's Retina Display

☐ 14. 404 Pages and Defensive Design

The most commonly overlooked defensive design element is the 404 page. If a user requests a page that doesn't exist, your **404 page** is displayed. This may happen for a variety of reasons, including another website linking to a page that doesn't exist. Get your users back on track by providing a useful 404 page that directs them to the home page or suggests other pages they may be interested in.

Another defensive design technique is **checking your forms for validation**. Try submitting unusual information in your form fields (e.g. lots of characters, letters in number fields, etc.) and make sure that if there is an error, the user is provided with enough feedback to be able to fix it.

- 404 error pages reloaded

☐ 16. User

Has a usability testing done via feedbackarmy.com and usertesting.com or do it yourself.

This is important as customers drop unusable websites to go to competitors. Even testing with 5 users can find 85% of the usability issues. These websites make usability testing simple and affordable.

☐ 17. Performance

Website performance is absolutely critical to overall user experience, especially given the prevalence of mobile and responsive websites.

This is another one of those things that you really should be doing as part of your development process (before and after launch), but it's never too late to put your website through it's paces. Performance can often be optimised by making high value, low effort updates and changes.

Here are some tools that you will find helpful:

- [Google PageSpeed Insights](#)

- [Pingdom Website Speed Test](#)

☐ 18. Responsive

Check all style types:

- Paragraph

- Headings

- Unordered Lists

- Ordered Lists

- Images

- Videos

- etc…

☐ 19. Cross Browser

Just when you think your design looks great, pixel perfect, you check it in IE and see that everything is broken. It's important that your website works across browsers. It doesn't have to be pixel perfect, but everything should work, and the user shouldn't see any problems.

☐ 20. Broken Links

It's one thing to proofread your content, but do yourself (and your users) a huge favour and check that the links in your website go somewhere meaningful (or somewhere at all).

Again, The W3C have come to the rescue with their [W3 Link Checker](#) or [Xenu](#) tool. This service crawls your website and looks for broken links. Pro-tip: enter your development URL and see what comes up (though the Link Checker may not work if your development site is locked down).

Now, it should be mentioned that while the Link Checker is super handy, nothing beats going through your site manually, and actually clicking on the links – especially if you've built some custom functionality.

☐ 21. Mobile Device

You can use the responsive testing tools mentioned above to do initial mobile testing, but they are not perfect. To really see how your site looks on various mobile devices, you gotta load it up manually.

So use your families, friends and aco-workers phones and tablets to see how your site looks. Take screenshots on their devices and email them to yourself if you see any errors.

How to Take a Screenshot on iOS or Android

☐ 22. Site Speed

Site speed SIGNIFICANTLY effects your Google rankings and conversion rate of your visitors. Make sure its snappy, no exceptions.

BONUS: Optimize your images.

Upto 80% of your page's bandwidth is used up by images. Optimizing it provides one of the best returns on your time.

Smushit, can automate this.

☐ 24. Set a Launch Date

Give yourself more time than you think unless you have done this before.

☐ 25. Lead Capture

Capturing leads is arguably the most important thing your website can do. Check you have lead capture in place, and all your forms are working.

BONUS: Check your emails are being delivered to all TLDs including Hotmail, Gmail, Yahoo and AOL. Plus test your emails look good on mobile devices.

☐ 26. SEO

Key Word Research

Have you used Google's Keyword Research Tool? Be sure to consider searcher intent and difficulty, pick 1 keyword per page, and you'll generally want to start with lower-volume keywords first.

Titles and Meta Data

Your page title is the most important element for SEO and is also important so that users know what's on the page. Make sure it changes on every page and relates to that page's content.

<title>10 Things To Consider When Choosing The Perfect CMS | How-To | Smashing Magazine</title>

Are all of your title tags ~65 characters or less? Title tags over this will be truncated in results.

Meta description and keyword tags aren't as important for SEO (at least for the major search engines anyway), but it's still a good idea to include them. Change the description on each page to make it relate to that page's content, because this is often what Google displays in its search result description.

<meta name="description" content="By Paul Boag Choosing a content management system can be tricky. Without a clearly defined set of requirements, you will be seduced by fancy functionality that you will never use. What then should you look" />

Are all of your meta description tags ~155 characters or less? Meta description tags over this will be truncated in results.

Internal Linking

Are you linking to your internal pages in an SEO-friendly way? Are you describing the page your linking to in the anchor text, so that both users and search engines understand what it's about? I recommend **not using anchor text in your global navigation** because it can look like over-optimization. Stick to in-content links instead.

Off Page Optimization

Have you started off-page optimization and began building links? This is the hardest, most important aspect of SEO! Check out the ClickMinded Link Building Strategy Guide to get started.

Have you looked at competitor link profiles?

This is the easiest way to get started with link building. This way, you can see what kind of anchor text they're using, as well as how and where they've been getting their links. Input competitor domains at [Link Diagnosis](#), [Open Site Explorer](#), [Ahrefs](#), [Majestic SEO](#) and [LipperHey](#)

More

SEO is a big topic, if you really want to get into the nitty gritty, check out these two guide:

- [Moz Beginners Guide to SEO](#)

- [Quicksprout Advanced Guide to SEO](#)

☐ 27. Start Blogging

Start blogging BEFORE you launch your website. This will get your site known by Google, and will give some content for readers to go over when they arrive during launch date.

You can take a look at our blog for some inspiration, or check out the below resources:

- [The Newbie Guide to Blogging](#)

- [The Ultimate Blogger Writing Guide](#)

- [The Complete Guide to Building your Blog Audience](#)

Make sure you continue blogging even after the site is launched, blogging is an ongoing process.

☐ 28. Social Media Properties

You should register all your social media properties and get them set up with profile images, cover pages, links back to your website and even a few posts.

If you want to bulk search or register social media sites check out:

[Know Em](#)

To speed up social media syndication, take a look at syndication automation below

☐ 29. Press Release

A press release can be useful when launching your website, but don't rely on it to get you picked up. Personal connections with journalists will get you much further.

If you are going to do a press release, good syndication is important to ensure you get some exposure. Below are a few services to help you get your name out:

- PR News Wire

- Marketing Signals

- PR Syndication

☐ 30. Syndication Automation

Using IFTTT you can easily syndicate your blog posts to your social media properties. See how in the below video:

https://youtube.com/watch?v=YzCAVriHwWU
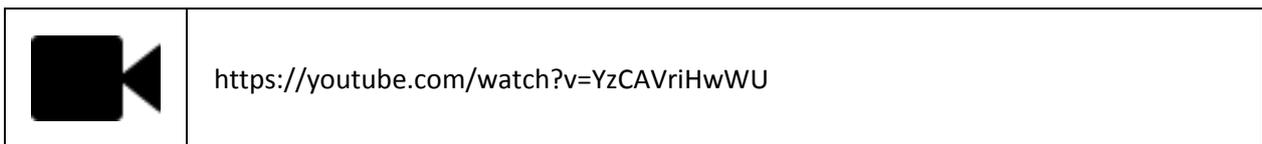
☐ 31. Social Bookmarks

Social bookmarking sites like Reddit can get you a huge wave of traffic if you get vote ups. Create an account with the below sites and become an active member of the community, then when you launch your site, ask for some feedback on the below sites.

- Reddit

- Ask Hacker News

- Digg

- StumbleUpon

☐ 32. Directories

Submit your website to business directories

- Yahoo Directory

- [DMOZ](#)

- [Business.com](#)

- [JoeAnt](#)

- [Best of the Web](#)

☐ 33. Add Website to Email Signature

Put your new website URL and launch announcement in your email signature.

If you use a browser for emails, check out [WiseStamp](#) for Chrome and Firefox.

These website launch tips are just what you need to make sure that the first impression your new website makes is the right one. We wish you the best of luck with your new site launch.

☐ 34. Sitemap

Adding a sitemap.xml file to your root directory allows the major search engines to easily index your website. The file points crawlers to all the pages on your website.[XML-Sitemaps](#) automatically creates a sitemap.xml file for you. After creating the file, upload it to your root directory so that its location is www.mydomain.com/sitemap.xml.

If you use WordPress, install the [Google XML Sitemaps plug-in](#), which automatically updates the sitemap when you write new posts. Also, add your website and sitemap to [Google Webmaster Tools](#). This tells Google that you have a sitemap, and the service provides useful statistics on how and when your website was last indexed.

Tracking

☐ 36. Analytics Tracking

Installing a web analytics tool (like [Google Analytics](#)) is critical for recording and measuring website performance and conversion rates.

If you're in the process of building a replacement for an existing website, be sure not to pollute your data by installing the tracking code on your new website while it's under development. Equally however, if you're clever enough to leave out the tracking code, then be clever enough to remember it when it's time to go live.

Here are a few analytics platforms that you might be interested in:

- Google Analytics

- Piwik

- KISSmetrics

- Statcounter

☐ 37. A/B Testing

If you're planning on doing a big launch and spending money on marketing, you should be A/B testing (also known as 'split testing').

A/B testing is a simple randomized experiment with two variants, A and B, which are the control and treatment in the controlled experiment. It is a form of statistical hypothesis testing.

Some things to consider testing first:

- Homepage Headline

- Homepage Video

- Price

you should also be testing elements in your site to make sure its working the way you want and its
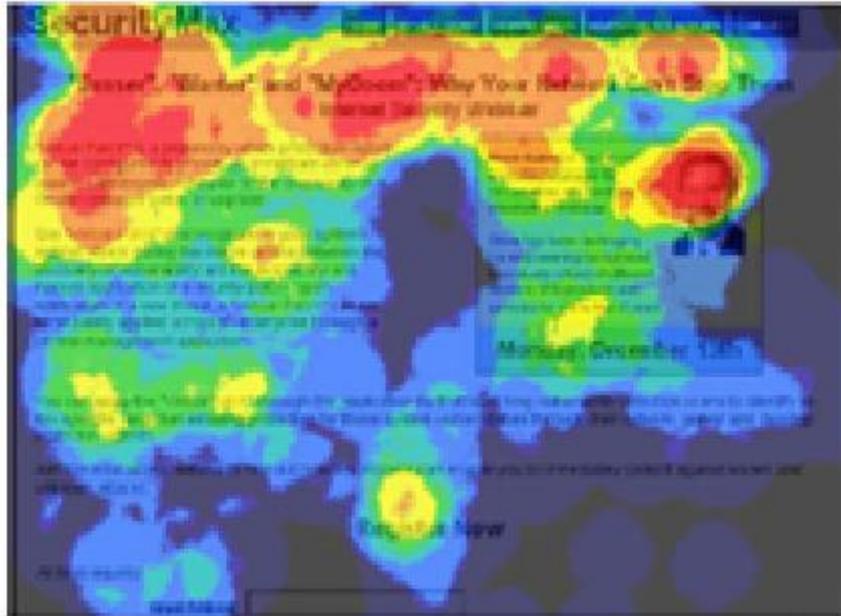
There are a number of tools out there to help you run an A/B test including:

- Google Experiments (part of Google Analytics)

- Optimizely

- Visual Website Optimizer

☐ 38. Heatmap Testing

This is one for the more traffic heavy sites, but if you want to really see what users are doing on your website, you can use a heatmap tracking tool like CrazyEgg.

☐ 39. Google Webmaster

If you add your site to Google webmaster, they will provide you data such as what are common search terms they display your website for.

[Google Webmaster](#)

You really should do this.

You can also install [Bing Webmaster Tools](#)

☐ 41. Code Validation

This is something that you would hope to have worked into your development process, but hey, if you subscribe to [Murphy's Law](#) then this is probably something you should check before launch, and after each update.

The [W3 Validator](#) is a free tool from The W3C that will help you make sure your code is up to scratch.

[Free Formatter](#) has a list of a few more validation tools for different technologies.

☐ 42. Page Redirection

If you're in the process of building a replacement website, it's likely that pages on the new website don't exist on the old website – and perhaps even the other way around. Sometimes however, it's just that the link structure is different. Whatever the case, it's important to be thorough.

http://example.com/about-us **is not the same as** *http://example.com/about_us*.

Step One: Indexing

Open up this handy Google Spreadsheet ("Page Redirection Sheet"). This will help you index and compare old and new pages.

On each row, give every page a name (for easy reference). Then, list out all of your old pages and try to group them by page category (as in the example). Once you're done, go through your new website and pair up the old pages with equivalent new pages.

If a page on the new website has a different URL to it's equivalent page on the old website, then highlight the row in yellow for easy reference.

Step Two: Redirecting

Once you've finished indexing your site in the spreadsheet, open up the .htaccess file in the root directory of your website.

Since you've already indexed your site using the spreadsheet, simply locate your highlighted rows and use one of the following redirection rules (one per line):

301 Redirects

Use 301 redirects when you want to *permanently* redirect the old page to the new page. Example: Redirect 301 http://www.example.com/about-us/ http://www.example.com/about_us/

302 Redirects

Use 302 redirects when you want to *temporarily* redirect the old page to the new page. Example: Redirect http://www.example.com/about-us/ http://www.example.com/about_us/

☐ 43. Transactional Email Delivery

Test your emails are coming through from your various contact and signup forms

If they are going to spam, you probably need a transactional email service provider.

Below are a few of the market leaders:

- [Mandrill](#)

- [Sendgrid](#)

- [Postmark](#)

☐ 44. Admins get email when site error happens

No matter how much you have tested, users are going to do unexpected things to your website, which can cause site errors. If you get a email informing about this, you can fix this proactively.

☐ 45. Monitoring Set up

Set up monitoring service with one of the below:

- [SiteUptime](#)

- [Pingdom](#)

No matter how good your infrastructure, sites crash. A site-monitoring service can inform you before your customers do.

☐ 46. Back Up

If your website runs off a database, you need a back-up strategy. Or else, the day will come when you regret not having one. If you use WordPress, install [WordPress Database Backup](#), which you can set up to automatically email you backups

BONUS: Backups are tested.

Doing backups is useless if you never test them. Too many people miss this obvious step when they setup their backups.

☐ 47. Graceful Degridation

Your website should work with JavaScript turned off.

Users often have JavaScript turned off for security, so you should be prepared for this. You can easily turn off JavaScript in Firefox.

Test your forms to make sure they still perform server-side validation checks, and test any cool AJAX stuff you have going on.

How to turn off javascript

☐ 48. RSS Link

If your website has a blog or newsreel, you should have an RSS feed that users can subscribe to. Users should be able to easily find your RSS feed: the common convention is to put a small RSS icon in the browser's address bar.

How to Set up RSS

Credits: ClickMinded, Agiliq, BoxUK, Smash Magazine, Heart Internet, Business Marketing Blog & The Pixel Lab