



**TENTMAKER
CREATIVE
A GUIDE
TO WEBSITE
OPTIMISATION**

CONTENTS

- 06 Speed Matters
- 08 Search Engine Optimisation
- 10 Technical Optimisation
- 12 Offline Optimisation - Meet the neighbours

HELLO

We are a creative consultancy based in the Highlands of Scotland, but working with clients throughout Scotland and sometimes further afield.

We work across a range of creative skills helping clients develop concepts and bringing those concepts to life, in both digital and print form.

This guide has been developed to give a brief overview of who we are, what we do and how we can help you.

You'll also find our contact information, along with links to our more detailed guides that we've written to help clients gain a better understanding of some of the projects that we work on.

We're here to help.

Roddy Mackay
Lead Creative
Tentmaker Creative

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WHO WE ARE

We are a creative consultancy based in the Highlands of Scotland, but working with clients throughout Scotland and sometimes further afield.

We work across a range of creative skills helping clients develop concepts and bringing those concepts to life, in both digital and print form.

Tentmaker is run by Roddy Mackay, a freelance creative, with 15 years of experience working in media and communications. As the lead creative at Tentmaker, Roddy is both the primary point of contact for clients, and the project manager when working with other external creatives.

Roddy is married to Fiona, who oversees written content, grammar and punctuation. Fiona is an English Literature & Language graduate of the University of Glasgow and loves all things word-related.

We also work with a range of freelance creatives where a project requires it, such as video editors, illustrators and programmers. We're here to help clients gain a better understanding of their project needs, and how to make more of their project potential.

OPTIMISING YOUR WEBSITE

Websites used to be a novelty - used by a few people and seen as an optional extra by some organisations who were looking to try something new. Now, a website is the central core of the communications of an organisation, and often a critical part in the commercial success of many businesses.

The centrality of a website isn't the only thing that's now changed - increasingly, the way in which people access information on your website or their expectations of what they should be able to do on your website have also changed. Website optimisation has become a critical part of ensuring that your website looks good, and works well.

Optimisation of your website isn't just about making your website better for your users. A critical part of your website is how it interacts with third-party websites and organisations such as Google. While Google may not own the internet, they have the ability to make a massive difference to how people find your website - which can be the difference between success and failure.

This short guide offers an insight into some of the key parts of website optimisation. We've also written a more detailed guide for each of these themes - get in touch if you'd like a copy.

SPEED MATTERS OPTIMISING FOR SPEED.

If you've ever tried to access a website while browsing on your phone via a poor signal, you'll know that the experience isn't much fun. Fast-loading websites are an essential part of the browsing experience - and if your website doesn't load quickly, it's likely that users will go somewhere else.

More than that, website site speed is now a serious ranking factor for website search engines. The faster your website loads, the more likely a search engine will be to show your website in the results page to users. Search engines are smart, and they don't just know what a user is searching for: they also know a range of other information, such as what kinds of device a user is searching on. Because of that, and the large number of users who are accessing your website via a mobile device, it's important to build your website with a 'mobile first' approach.

The art of optimising your website for speed includes undertaking a range of optimisations, such as re-ordering of script loading and image optimisation. Undertaking some of these changes should increase how quickly your website loads, and therefore improve the user experience of your website.

While website speed optimisation is important, it's also important to know that achieving a 100% score on site speed is not a realistic approach, so be careful not to get too caught up with the numbers side of optimisation. Focus instead on making immediate improvements. Make your optimisation decisions based on what traffic you are looking to try and attract.

MAKING YOUR WEBSITE BETTER TECHNICAL OPTIMISATION.

Just as your website should be optimised for speed and performance in external aspects such as search engines, it should also be optimised for at a technical level.

Optimising your website from a technical perspective is similar to regular maintenance of items such as a car or property - sometimes you are fixing something because it's broken - but ideally you'd be aware of issues before they become issues, and know how to take remedial action.

Technical updates to your website may include updates to elements such as your WordPress Core, plugins and themes. These are regular updates that should be applied regularly to help make sure that your website is working as expected, and to address any compatibility or security issues that may arise from updates to other elements of your website.

Updating the technical aspects of your website may include replacing elements of your website - perhaps for reasons of functionality or performance. As technology continually adapts, new options are always available for your website and it's worth taking time to assess what might be available to help improve your website.

**IS ANYBODY OUT
THERE? BE FOUND IN
SEARCH ENGINES.**

Having worked hard on developing the content for your website and having it built, it can be disappointing to then not have lots of visitors flooding into your website. While you may be able to benefit from a loyal audience of regular visitors, it is likely that you'll want people to find you via search engines that send visitors to your website.

Search engine optimisation (SEO) is the process (multiple) of optimising your website to make it a more attractive proposition for search engines to show in the user's search result pages. While search engines will likely know what's on your website, they also want to know that users are going to have a positive experience when they click on your link. Your website may have lots of great information - but if a user can't easily find or load that information, then they will likely go elsewhere. By association, they'll also feel that the search engine hasn't provided the best results the first time. Search engines want users to have a positive experience, in order to keep users coming back for more.

Optimising your website for search engines involves a lot of different factors. You can expect the processes to be ongoing work, as search engines adapt their algorithms along with constantly having to compete against other websites, who also want the top spot. Increasingly, search engines such as Google are pulling more detailed information onto the search engine results page (SERPS) so that users don't even need to go through to your website to get the information they may be looking for.

Traffic from search engines can come in different ways, and your website may be found via organic search or paid search. Paid search is as the name suggests - paying the search engine to promote your website in some of the advert sections that the search engines have on their own pages or the pages of other websites. Paid search can be a useful exercise that can offer a return; it can also be an incredibly expensive process. You'll bid against a set of keywords and phrases to have your advert appear, but clicks can quite easily cost a few pounds a time, depending on your keywords and phrases.

Organic search is where your website naturally shows up in the search results without you having to pay the search engine for the benefit, although there is likely to be an investment of money or time involved in getting your website to show in the first place. Being placed in the organic search results is what everyone is ideally looking for - and is, therefore, a competitive process. But the traffic that can come to your website by being found via the search engines is definitely worth the investment.

Search engines are run by algorithms that are made up of a huge range of ranking factors. It would be great to think that you could easily understand each of these and manipulate your site to match their requirements, but it just isn't possible. Instead, focus on giving your website visitors a good experience with useful information that is served easily - and quickly.

We've written more on the subject of SEO, and we'd love to show you some of the websites that we've worked on that rank well - after all, the proof is in the pudding!

OFF SITE OPTIMISATION - MEET THE NEIGHBOURS.

We often say that websites are like a tapestry: what you see on the front end is reflected on the back end as a series of threads, all perfectly placed and tied together - but the back end probably only makes sense to those that understand what they are looking for.

As the internet has developed and continues to develop, then the relationship between your website and other websites becomes more important to see how your visitors and customers can interact with your website. More often than not, visitors are likely to arrive onto your site via a search engine, and increasingly they may leave to head towards your social media channels.

Therefore, managing your profiles on these pages is an important part of improving the user experience of your visitors. You want users to understand how and where to find you - and how to easily interact with your most up-to-date information.

On a recent visit to London, I was looking for a coffee shop to work from for a couple of hours. Because of the Covid pandemic, I knew that some of the coffee shops I'd thought of visiting were likely to be closed. I checked the Google listings of a few along with their social media profiles - but after walking over two miles to get to them, I discovered that they were closed, despite their Google and Facebook listings telling me otherwise. I went elsewhere, after doing some more searching and walking - a first-world problem, perhaps, but the frustration of the experience lingers. By simply updating their social profiles, they would have saved me the exploring and made life easier for those looking for them.

A broad reach of profiles to manage can be a time-consuming process, but it also offers a business the opportunity to put their best foot forward and ensure that what may be the first interaction with a user is also a good one.

TENTMAKER GUIDES

We're committed to continually learning more about the areas that we work in, and in helping clients to have a deeper understanding of some of the opportunities and challenges that come with managing your web, content and marketing projects.

We've developed a range of guides which will help you develop a better understanding of some of the key projects that we work on, and we also have a range of short form content available on our blog and social media channels.

Our guides are available at www.tentmakercreative.com/guides
and our blog is available at www.tentmakercreative.com/tentmaker-blog/

HERE TO HELP

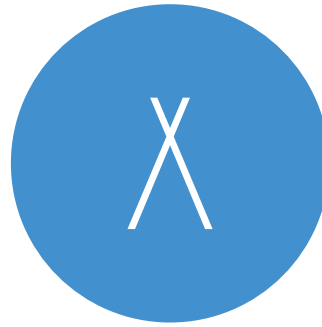
If you're looking for help with your website search engine optimisation we're here to help.

Tentmaker specialise in helping clients with their websites, creation of content and in supporting your ongoing marketing.

Along with this guide, you'll also find a range of other guides on our website, or a range of shorter form blog posts related to some of the subjects that we work in most frequently.

We're here to help clients develop ideas, and help to bring those ideas to life, in print and online.

However you think we can help, please get in touch with us - we'd be happy to hear from you.



TENTMAKERCREATIVE

PARTNERING WITH YOU FOR CONCEPT & CREATION, IN PRINT & ONLINE

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