

# WEBSITE DESIGN CHECKLIST

IS YOUR SITE IS SET UP FOR SUCCESS?



# WELCOME

Thank you for downloading this checklist!

Getting ready to launch your brand-new website or doing an audit of an exiting site? Use this checklist to ensure your website has all the necessary features to be successful.



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## HELLO, I'M JO

### JO TO THE WEB SOLUTIONS

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Hello! I'm Jo, Web Designer & Founder of Jo to the Web Solutions.

Based in Halifax, Nova Scotia and serving clients globally, I specialize in custom web design and e-commerce websites. Read more about me or see examples of my work.

If you have any questions or if you are interested in working together, please contact me anytime.

# WEBSITE DESIGN CHECKLIST

Read the full article with more information about each item in the list [here](#).

## WEBSITE CHECKLIST

Before we start on checking web design, it's important to ensure that your website has the most important basic features in place.

### 1. SECURITY

- You have a top-notch security plugin installed.
- Your email and password that is used to access your website is different from other emails and passwords.
- Your website is hosted separately from your emails and domain name registration.

### 2. RESPONSIVENESS

- You've checked how your website looks on all device sizes.
- You've looked at your website through different browsers (Chrome, Safari, etc.) and in incognito

### 3. SPEED & PERFORMANCE

- You've tested your site for speed and performance on [Google's PageSpeed Insights](#) and [Gtmatrix](#).
- You're using a good host. Here's an article on [why I highly recommend Cloudways](#).

### 4. GOOGLE ANALYTICS

- You are set up with a Google Analytics account
- You have Google Analytics installed on your website
- You have a Privacy Policy and Cookie Notice and updated them to let visitors know what information they are tracking.

### 5. DATA STUDIO

- You've set up a Data Studio Report capturing the information from Google Analytics
- You've set Data Studio to email you the report on an ongoing basis.

### 6. EMAIL

- You have integrated email with your website and have tested to make sure emails can be sent through your website.
- You've set up your contact forms so that responses are sent to the appropriate email addresses.
- If you are asking visitors to subscribe, you have an automation set up.

### 7. STAGING

- You've set up a staging site where you can pull your live content to your staging site, make edits and updates, test them out and push them back to your live site.

### 8. BACK-UPS

- You've set up regular, automatic back-ups of your website that are saved outside of your hosting company and outside of your computer (i.e. on Google Drive).
- You are able to take manual back-ups as well before making any changes to your website, especially plugin and platform updates.

### 9. UPDATES

- On your staging site first and only after a full back-up has been taken, you can now safely make updates and once everything is tested, push them to your live site.

# WEBSITE DESIGN CHECKLIST (CONT)

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## SEO CHECKLIST

*There's no point in a beautiful website if no one can find it. While Search Engine Optimization (SEO) is a massive topic, here are some essential items to check off your list.*

### 10. SITEMAP SUBMISSION

- You are set up with Google Search Console.
- Your sitemap has been submitted.
- You've checked to make sure your site is indexed.

### 11. LINKS

- You've set up your permalink structure.
- Your links are SEO friendly.
- You've checked to make sure there are no broken links. Don't forget about all social media icons!

### 12. HTTPS

- You've installed an SSL certificate (your site's address begins with https:// not http://).
- You've set up a redirect for any visitors going to http://yourdomain.com.
- You've also set up redirects for including or not including the "www" before your domain.

### 13. SEO META

- You've set up meta titles for each page (the title that appears on the browser tab).
- You've set up meta descriptions for each page (the snippet of information that may appear in search results).
- You've set up featured images and social share images.

### 14. HEADINGS

- Each page has one H1 title.
- You've used headings (H2, H3, H4 etc) strategically to best organize each page's content.

### 15. IMAGE OPTIMIZATION

- Images are named appropriately (using keywords not IMG\_002.jpeg).
- Images are compressed and re-sized to fit in the space they take up on the webpage.
- Images are served in next generation formats (such as WebP)

## ACCESSIBILITY

*And lastly before getting into the web design part of this checklist, you need to make sure your website is accessible for every visitor. This is a massive topic and more information can be found on [w3.org](http://w3.org).*

### 16. ACCESSIBILITY

- All images and tables have alternative text (also called alt text) describing what the image and table is depicting.
- Colours pass the minimum contrast ratio test. You can test your colours with this free contrast ratio test.
- Your font sizes are large enough to be read clearly, especially on mobile.
- Your website can be browsed by a keyboard, not a mouse or touch pad.
- Your content is available without a stylesheet.
- Images and videos do not have content that could cause seizures.

# WEBSITE DESIGN CHECKLIST (CONT)

Read the full article with more information about each item in the list [here](#).

## WEB DESIGN CHECKLIST

With all the basic set up checked off, we can now focus on web design.

### 17. FIRST IMPRESSION

- Your page loads quickly and there isn't a large shift in content as the content loads.
- The visitor can immediately see what your website is offering, even if they land on a page that is not your home page.
- There are no immediate full-screen popups.

### 18. WHO, WHAT, WHY AND HOW (& SOMETIMES WHERE)

- Every page should clearly and immediately demonstrate who you are, what you do/offer and why it should matter to the visitor (your potential customer).
- Your web design helps convey the benefit to the visitor of why they should contact/buy/etc. from your company.
- If you have a physical location, make it very clear how a visitor can find your business.

### 19. VISUALIZATION

- Your web design helps visitors visualize themselves using your product or purchasing your services.
- You have both product photos and lifestyle photos.
- All photos should be clear, bright, focused and professional.

### 20. TRUST & RELATABILITY

- Your website creates a level of trust and likability.
- Your website reflects your personality and brand.understand your website.

### 21. CALL TO ACTION

- Your website has a clear and consistent call to action in multiple key places (such as in the header, on the main section, in the footer).
- Your call to action stands out from the rest of the page.
- Your call to action has specific instructions on what to do.

### 22. REFERRALS

- Your website has social proof through testimonials, reviews or followers/subscribers.
- The social proof is relatable and generates trust.

### 23. FOOTER

- Your footer has a clear call to action.
- Your footer has information about your business and all of your contact information.
- Your footer has links to all your other main pages.

# WEBSITE DESIGN CHECKLIST (CONT)

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## WEB DESIGN CHECKLIST

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### 24. FONTS

- Your font selection accurately portrays your brand
- You've used the same font for all headings and the same font for all paragraphs
- You've used the same font, font weight and letter spacing for specific elements (all buttons are the same, all links are the same, etc.)

### 25. COLOURS

- You've selected colours to help you attract and connect with your ideal customer.
- You've used colours consistently throughout your website and limited the number of colours used.
- The colours on your website make key elements stand out and direct visitors to taking action.

### 26. SPACING

- Your website has plenty of breathing room and space between elements
- Your padding and margins are consistent throughout the page
- All elements are virtually and horizontally aligned (when appropriate)

### 27. ANIMATIONS

- If you're using animation, you've used it sparingly and only when it makes sense.
- If animating images, your delay can't be interpreted as a photo not loading - you don't want your visitors to see a large blank space until the image appears.

## RECOMMENDED ADDITIONS

### 28. CUSTOM 404 PAGE

- You have a 404 page set up that provides the "lost" user with a list of relevant links
- You have 303 redirects set up for old URLs

### 29. SEARCH BAR & PAGE

- You have a search bar or icon in your header or near the top
- You have a custom search results page set up

### 30. INSTAGRAM LANDING PAGE

- You have a page dedicated to visitors coming to your site from Instagram with key links (the URL for this page becomes your link in bio)

I hope this has helped ensure your website has all the essential elements needed to be successful.

If you'd like help with anything on this list, [let's connect!](#)