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What is a Technical Audit?

And Do I Need One?

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Have you ever wondered what goes on behind the scenes when you click on a website? Well, in the world of web development and SEO, there are entire teams dedicated to ensuring that your online experience is nothing short of magical. And one integral part of this process is the technical audit – the unsung hero of website optimization. In this three-part series, we'll dive into the nitty-gritty of technical audits, uncover the mysteries of what makes a website go from good to great, and reveal how to keep your online presence at the top of its game. So, grab a coffee (or a stiff drink) and join us on this not-to-be-missed journey.

What is a Technical Audit?

Let's start by answering your first burning question: What is a technical audit? In some instances, a technical audit can be combined with an SEO audit, but at [Ironistic](#), we can



separate the two because of our behind-the-scenes specialists. For that reason, we're not going to go into the SEO portion yet. We wouldn't want to spoil our second blog, so for now, we'll solely focus on the technical audit portion.

So what is a technical audit? A technical audit is a comprehensive examination of the behind-the-scenes aspects of a website. It involves scrutinizing each element of a website's backend code to identify any issues preventing it from functioning efficiently or effectively on the front end. This could include auditing a website's platform/theme, checking for broken links, reviewing coding standards, analyzing page speed, assessing security protocols, and updating plugins/modules/widgets. Conducting a technical audit is vital to ensuring that your website is optimized to the highest standard. A thorough technical audit is a crucial tool for identifying issues proactively and fixing them before they escalate into more significant problems that could negatively impact a site's performance.



What does a Technical Audit Include?

Note: for this blog, we're focusing primarily on technical audits for WordPress websites;



however, many of the same principles can be applied to other platforms as well – open source or proprietary systems.

1. Update and Remove Unused Plugins/Enhance Security

One of the biggest things done during a technical audit is checking and updating all plugins and removing ones that are no longer used or needed. Were you aware that outdated plugins are the number one entry point for malicious website attacks? Outdated plugins create weak points in a website, making it much easier for hackers to get in and cause some trouble. If nothing else, it's vital to keep your plugins up-to-date. That's why these two items go hand-in-hand.

2. Updating Themes

A website's theme is another thing that we look at. Traditionally, when you think of a website's theme, you probably think of the color selections, fonts, and heading sizes. However, the theme regarding the backend of your site includes so much more. The theme is the essential foundation that serves as the backbone for the entire platform. It is the underlying structure that provides the necessary framework for all other components of a website to be built upon.

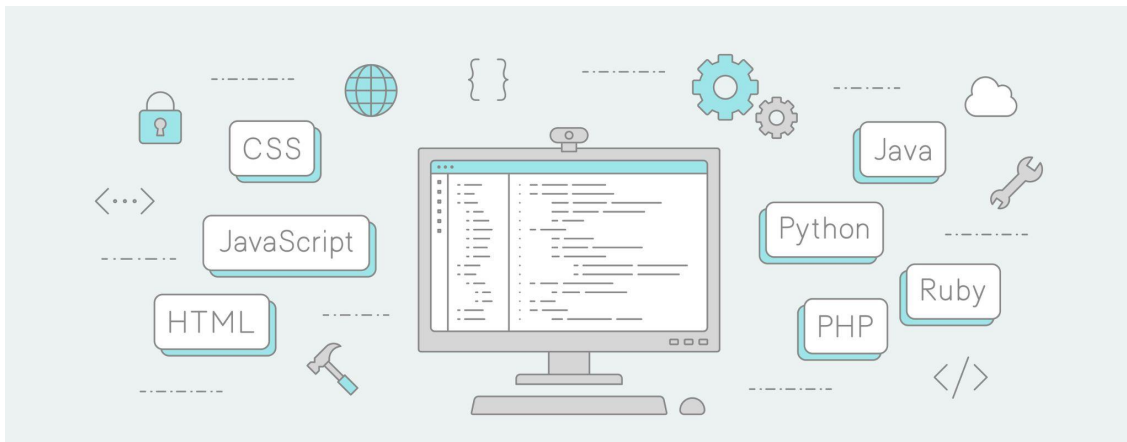
Essentially, the theme sets the tone and style for a website's design and appearance. Think of it as the steel structure of a building; it provides support and stability for the materials that make up the rest of the structure. A well-designed theme can significantly impact a website's performance, allowing for better speed, improved user experience, and even better search engine optimization (SEO) rankings. Without a strong theme as the foundation, a website can quickly become disjointed and difficult to navigate, driving visitors away and damaging the site's overall effectiveness.



3. Performance Optimizations

Optimizing the back end of a website involves making changes to the server-side elements of a website to enhance its performance, speed, and accessibility. This can include updating the website's programming language, organizing its contents better, compressing images to reduce their file size, and eliminating unnecessary third-party scripts that might be slowing down the site.

Running an image audit is also crucial to optimizing a website's backend since, let's face it, images are often the divas of the website content, hogging all the data and slowing down the site. By reducing image sizes, website owners can help speed up their website's load times, improving user experience and reducing website bounce rates. When visitors have to wait a long time for a website to load, there is a greater chance that they will leave the site and look for a faster alternative.



4. Checking for Errors

We know this seems like a broad topic, but that's because it can include so much. For this step, we look for anything that isn't working for the site anymore. This can include fixing the following:



- **Broken Links** - Broken links harm user experience and negatively impact a website's SEO ranking, leading to reduced traffic, increased bounce rates, and search engine penalties. By fixing or removing them, a website can improve its credibility with visitors and provide a seamless experience.
- **Hypertext Preprocessor** - PHP (Hypertext Preprocessor) is a server-side scripting language used to build dynamic websites. Checking a website's PHP code is crucial as it helps maintain the code's integrity and diagnose issues, and quickly identify security vulnerabilities.
- **Javascript** - Javascript is another programming language used to create interactive effects within web browsers. It is important to check it as it ensures that a website runs smoothly, responds quickly to user requests, and helps enhance the user experience by providing interactivity and visual appeal.

By checking through these errors, not only can we uncover 'quick fixes,' but sometimes, all these little things can add up to big problems if not addressed. Better to stop the big issues before they become more significant problems down the road.

Do I need a technical audit?

In short, yes. Every website should have regular technical audits. Suppose your website has never undergone a technical audit, or it's been a considerable amount of time since the last one. In that case, the first audit may be more rigorous as the primary focus would be rectifying and updating neglected areas that have been left unaddressed for a while. However, it's also more than just a one-and-done type of thing. It's like an oil change for your car. You wouldn't get just one and assume you're good to go for the life of your vehicle, right? It's something that should be done regularly, as technology is constantly changing and updating.



To sum it all up, taking care of your website can be a wild ride, with twists and turns challenging even the savviest online adventurer. But with the right tools at your disposal, like comprehensive technical audits and optimizing the backend, you can steer clear of those pesky security breaches and provide users with an unforgettable experience. Remember, addressing minor details today can significantly prevent potential complications from damaging your website's performance tomorrow.

Want more information? [Contact Ironistic](#) with any questions about technical audits, and stay tuned for our next blog in the series, where we'll be breaking down SEO audits. Now, let's saddle up and conquer the online wilderness together!

