

Curing Website Bloat - May 15th, 2015

Spammy Content

Spammy Content, as described by Google, is a type of hacking activity. Spammy Content fills up our databases with unnecessary data that contribute to the bloating of our websites. Adding security plugins and making adjustments to the settings can reduce the possibility for this type of hacking to occur. Using the most current version of WordPress also assists in this effort.

Repositioning Web Content

Another way to cure website bloat is to reposition website content that is not typical WordPress web content, from web content that would be considered to be “file downloads.”

Typical WordPress web content is content that is uploaded to your website through the Admin panel after logging on to your website. WordPress places these uploaded files into a special folder called “uploads,” where they are stored by year and month.

“File Downloads” would be web content that was not uploaded to your website through the Admin panel and that is stored in folders that were not part of the original WordPress installation.

We have setup a separate server to store and serve “file download” content. We call it the eBooks server for large file content. As a rule of thumb, if the website content you want to publish exceeds 450 KB, it needs to be published on this eBooks server and not on your WordPress website.

This includes every image file used in a web page or HTML newsletter that exceeds 450 KB. It also includes “linked content” such as PDFs, PowerPoint Presentations, Word Documents, Excel Spreadsheets, Videos, FLASH Animations and Zipped (packaged) Files.

Images

Images for use on the web require optimization before they are uploaded to either a WordPress site or the eBooks server. Since computer monitors only display about 72 dots per inch (dpi), each image needs to have a resolution of 72 dpi. This can be accomplished in Adobe Photoshop.

The maximum file size for any image used on the web, regardless of its dimensions, should be 450 KB. This can be accomplished in Adobe Photoshop and then in Adobe Fireworks using the Export Wizard.

JPEG, GIF and PNG can all be optimized using these two tools from Adobe.

Videos

This is an easy one. Please do not publish videos on our web servers. Our web servers are not optimized to stream video content. All video content should be uploaded to our company YouTube account. Please ask me if you need to be added to that YouTube account.

You will want to publish your videos as “unlisted” and then use the “Embed Code” under Sharing, which is shown under the video on each YouTube video page. Also, you will want to turn off “recommended content” so that when the video is done playing it does not display additional videos to view (because it is unlikely they will be Travel Leaders produced videos).

PDFs

Unfortunately, many PDFs were built using “print quality” images with resolutions of 150 dpi, 300 dpi or greater. They look great when printed on a quality color laser printer, but extensively add to the bloating of a website.

Adobe Acrobat has an export option to create a web version of a PDF. However, this export option does not work very well. It usually returns some message saying it was unable to optimize certain images; therefore the file size of the PDF was not reduced by much.

If the PDF you are building is for use on the web, it is important to build it using images that were optimized as if they were going to be used in a web page. In other words, use images that are less than 450 KB.

This can be accomplished in Adobe Photoshop and then in Adobe Fireworks using the Export Wizard.

User tests show that users who download PDFs from the web rarely print them. These PDFs are being viewed on a computer monitor that will only display about 72 dpi; so using images with a dpi greater than that to build your PDF contributes to website bloat.

PowerPoint Presentations

PowerPoint Presentations contribute to website bloat, especially when video content has been embedded in the PowerPoint. Videos prepared for PowerPoint should use a frame rate of 25 fps instead of 30 fps. The audio should be set to 16 bit mono and 44.1 KHz or less. The easy way to do this is to “wash” the video through YouTube first.

YouTube is an expert at optimizing video files. If you upload your video file to YouTube first and then download it from YouTube, you will have a well optimized file for your PowerPoint Presentation.

Training at www.lynda.com includes some PowerPoint Essential Training, which will also help with preparing your PowerPoint Presentations for the web.

Word Documents and Excel Spreadsheets

Unfortunately, many Word Documents and Excel Spreadsheets were built using “print quality” images with resolutions of 150 dpi, 300 dpi or greater. They look great when printed on a quality color laser printer, but extensively add to the bloating of a website.

If the Word Document or Excel Spreadsheet you are building is for use on the web, it is important to build it using images that were optimized as if they were going to be used in a web page. In other words, use images that are less than 450 KB.

This can be accomplished in Adobe Photoshop and then in Adobe Fireworks using the Export Wizard.

User tests show that users who download Word Documents and Excel Spreadsheets from the web rarely print them. These Word Documents and Excel Spreadsheets are being viewed on a computer monitor that will only display about 72 dpi; so using images with a dpi greater than that to build your Word Documents and Excel Spreadsheets contributes to website bloat.

FLASH Animations

FLASH Animations are generally handled well and do not contribute to website bloat because most of the stage characters were created using postscript language. The exception would be FLASH Animations that include audio. If audio is used, it should be set to 16 bit mono and 44.1 KHz or less.

This can be accomplished using a NCH Software Product called WavePad Sound Editor.

Audio Files

If audio files are embedded via a player in one of your web pages, the audio used should be set to 16 bit mono and 44.1 KHz or less.

This can be accomplished using a NCH Software Product called WavePad Sound Editor.