

Top Ways Your Web Host Affects Your Site's SEO in 2021

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In brief

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A website without an SEO strategy is as good as a billboard placed in a deserted ghost town. Unfortunately, this is the state of over 90.6% of web pages that get absolutely no organic traffic. The most common reasons for this high failure rate are a design-driven approach and the neglect of technical SEO. Of course, a website's technical SEO elements, such as web hosting, domain name, web architecture, etc., must be planned much ahead of the design, but that is seldom the case. Most website owners are so intrigued by the design part that they don't care about its technical SEO part. Unfortunately, for most businesses, this happens only when an SEO specialist is engaged, which may not be possible for small and mid-sized businesses. Well, it does not have to be that way because Google and other search engines are constantly educating and informing webmasters about what can propel their website's rankings. From these educational pieces, we bring you some new techniques to improve your website's SEO.

The Choice of Web Hosting Plans and SEO

The choice of a web hosting technology is the starting point for any website development project and doing this the right way can give you an SEO advantage. When it comes to implementing a web hosting technology, businesses can either opt to host the site on their server or hire a web hosting service provider. For the sake of operational convenience, most businesses choose the latter and hire the services of a reliable third party such as GoDaddy, Bluehost, etc. These service providers list web hosting plans such as shared hosting, VPS hosting, dedicated server, and cloud hosting plans. Unless you have a technical background, this may seem complex, and like thousands of others, you may choose a shared hosting plan which is the most basic plan. In doing so, you would be ruining your prospects of ranking on the search engines because you share the resources of a common server with hundreds or thousands of other websites. If any one of them is blacklisted by the search engines, your website is bound to get affected. A safer alternative would be cloud hosting, VPS hosting, or the dedicated server plan.

Speed Matters

Back in 2017, Google began rolling out its mobile-first indexing update, which was essential to keep pace with the needs and requirements of mobile device users. As this segment of users was rapidly increasing, a lot of importance was being attached to the page load time. This is because people use mobile devices to access information on the go and need websites that load faster. Therefore, in January 2018, Google rolled out yet another update known as the 'speed update', making the website speed a ranking signal. Your choice of web hosting has a great deal of impact on the speed because it defines the quality and quantity of resources that powers-up your website. Unfortunately, it is always a gamble in shared hosting because there is no transparency about how the server's resources are allocated.

SSL Certificates

Another common mistake that most website owners end up making is to pick a web hosting plan that comes with a free SSL. Unfortunately, this freebie is usually a domain validated SSL certificate that only encrypts the primary domains and not the entire website. So, your subdomains remain unencrypted, which poses security threats and is bad for the website's SEO. In 2014, Google began its HTTPS Everywhere initiative to make the internet safer, making HTTPS a ranking signal. You can find many places online where you can buy cheap wildcard SSL or SAN SSL certificates that provide advanced encryption. Pick one issued by a reliable Certifying Authority and keep track of its validity to get the most out of it.

Server Location

Google and other search engines do not show the same search results worldwide, and the results one sees are pegged to the user's location. You can test this by running the search 'Restaurants near me' from different cities, and you will see varying results. One way of using this to your advantage is by opting for a web hosting plan that lets you choose the server's location. You can use the location which is closest to where your target audience is located. For instance, if you are an Attorney based in New York, you must opt for a server located in New York or as close as possible.

Uptime and SEO

You may have come across web hosts that offer uptimes with interesting figures like 99%, 99.9%, and sometimes 99.999%. These figures look similar but are different when interpreted carefully, and unless you take this into account, it can have a serious impact on your SEO. After all, the 99.99% translates to 52 minutes and 36 seconds of annual downtime, and the 99.999% indicates 5 minutes and 25 seconds of annual downtime. Since the goal is to hire a web host that offers the lowest downtime, find one with the highest number of 9s after the decimal.

Security

When you've done all of the above and start seeing success, it is more than likely to grab the attention of some sneaky hacker eager to inject malware into it. As a website owner, you need to watch out for security incidents to increase your site's uptime and lower its rankings. So, make it a point to implement security essentials such as active HTTPS encryption and real-time threat detection.

Final Takeaway

As we have already discussed, it is clear that Google has rolled out regular updates to enable website owners to deliver a superior user experience. This is precisely what SEO is all about , understanding what Google considers to be a superior user experience and leveraging from it. Therefore, make it a point to keep yourself updated about the latest algorithmic and technological changes that are taking place because these bring along a plethora of opportunities.

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