

CHURCH WEBSITE

TOP 10



Ten Things You Need To Know About Your Church Website



THROW IT WIDE

Printable Summary for Church Leaders on the Last Page

1. IMPORTANCE

ATTRACTIVE

a

EASY TO NAVIGATE

b

CLEAR INFORMATION

c

Most visitors will look at your website before they ever step foot in the door.

So, your website is making the first impression for your church before you even know it!

Make sure your website is creating the best possible impression by being attractive, easy to navigate, and containing all the information any prospective visitor will need.



“Getting a quality website is not an expense but rather an investment.” -Dr. Christopher Dayagdag

46% of church attenders say that a church’s website is important in picking a church to visit. -CRCNA.org

“Most of the church guests went to the church website before they attended a worship service. Even if they attended the service after visiting a bad website, they attended with a prejudicial perspective. The two indispensable items guests want on a website are address and times of service. It’s just that basic.” -Thomas Rainer



2. SECURITY



Starting in 2017, Google made it mandatory for all websites to have SSL (secure sockets layer) encryption.



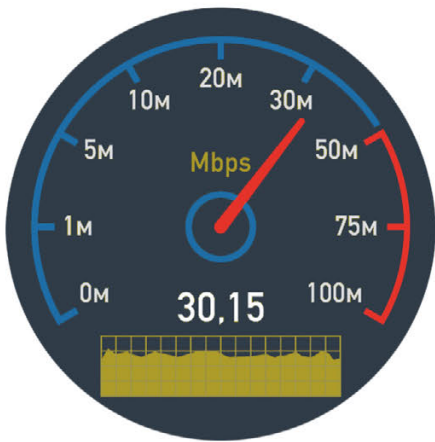
This is the little green padlock on the top left of your web browser that shows your connection is completely secure. Websites that do not have this in place are already being penalized by Google in search engine rankings. Moving forward, internet browsers will make it difficult to access websites that don't have this encryption properly installed. Your website needs to have this in place now to remain visible and effective.



3. HOSTING



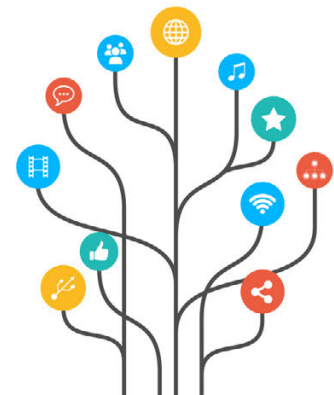
Every website is made up of files that are hosted on a computer server. Not all hosting is created equal.



Inexpensive hosting plans look good at first, but will provide lower performance and reliability. This means more downtime and slower loading speed. The slower your website loads, the more people will grow impatient, and navigate away from your website.

Businesses understand the importance of this because it translates directly into lost sales. Churches need to know this means lost visitors, as they move on to the next site on their search. Consider how long you are willing to wait for a website to load. How do you feel when it won't pull up in 10 seconds? It is frustrating.

Google also pays attention to how long it takes for your website to load, and will penalize you in their search rankings if your site does not load quickly. Make it a priority to obtain a high quality host.



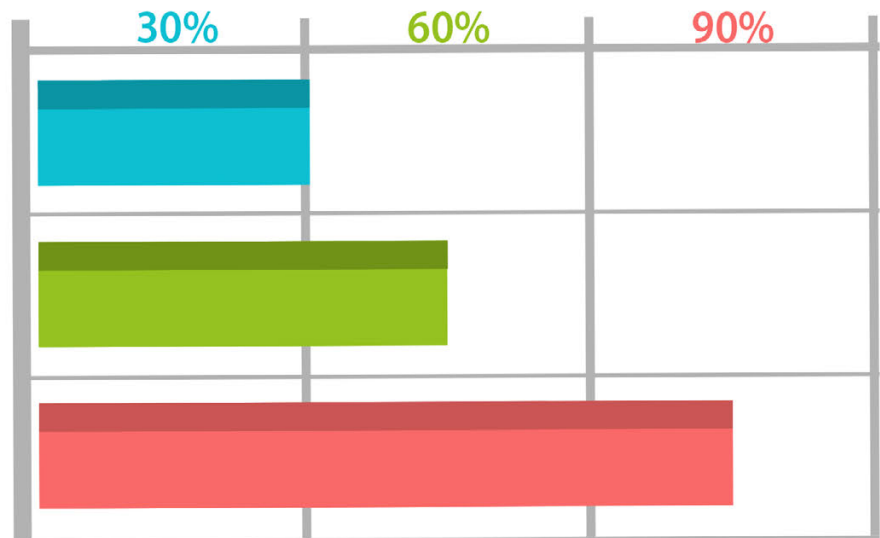
4. MAINTENANCE

According to Forbes contributor James Lyne, an estimated 30,000 sites are compromised every day.

40% abandon a website that takes more than three seconds to load

Google says 61% of users are unlikely to return to a mobile site they had trouble accessing

According to Computer World Magazine, 90% of computers are breached at least once by hackers every year



Just as our vehicles need oil changes, tire rotation, and other regular maintenance, so modern websites require regular attention. Security issues are being identified regularly and security updates to the files that make up your website must be applied. Is your website up to date? If not, it is only a matter of time until it is hacked. Computer programs are written by dubious people to scour the internet 24/7 looking for websites that have not been updated. Just as your car will break down without proper maintenance, so will your website.



5. SUPPORT

SECURE

**USER
FRIENDLY**

**STRESS
FREE**

Many churches rely on a volunteer to take care of their website. Sometimes this works well, often it is less than ideal, and can become a disaster. Some churches suffer with a sub-par website for years out of fear that suggesting an update would offend their volunteer. Maybe your web expert moved away or had a life change that keeps them from being able to serve adequately. Most volunteers are not experienced, and learn as they go. This can leave church websites in sad shape and create a bad first impression to potential visitors.

Hiring someone to manage your website will provide a more secure, pleasing, and user-friendly website with minimal downtime.

Hiring a web designer will also make it easier for the church leadership to address any website issues without fear of offending a church member. You don't need the stress and distraction of managing and maintaining your website. Many churches happily trust us with creating and supporting their website, and are thrilled with our services.



6. AFFORDABILITY

For most churches, your website is making your first impression before visitors ever meet you.

Take a look at your current website and ask what you are communicating to your community. In some cases, a church's website is doing more harm than good because it is making a bad impression.



Church budgets are often tight and we are called to be good stewards of all God has placed in our care. Especially for smaller churches, the cost of a new website coupled with a \$100 monthly support package might seem to be out of the question. However, given the benefits of a thoughtfully designed and well maintained website, consider what even one new family would add to your church? How about two?

7. ONLINE GIVING



74% of Americans say that they write no more than one check per month

49% of all church transactions in America are made on a credit card

67% of all charitable giving happens Monday-Saturday

Many in the younger generation prefer to handle their finances electronically. Younger professionals no longer write checks, and prefer to set up electronic giving to their church in the same way they pay their bills.



It is surprisingly easy to offer online giving on your website and via an app that can be used on mobile devices. These services do charge a small percentage fee, however, it is normally made up by additional giving received because of the convenience of online giving. People can continue to support the ministry of the church, even if they are traveling for work, or are on vacation.

8. STAYING CURRENT



To be effective, your website needs to remain current or at least appear to be.

Maybe you decided to start a blog 7 years ago, and after a few fantastic posts it was set aside and sits on the internet unattended. If you aren't able to keep your website updated locally, you can have our support team take care of updates on your behalf. Your overall design needs to be updated periodically as well. Just as your computer needs updating about every 3-4 years, so does your website. Technology that was cutting edge 5 years ago is ancient today.

Does your website appear a bit dated? We would love to talk to you about a fresh design that will serve well for the next several years.

9. SOCIAL MEDIA

You can utilize social media networks such as Facebook and Twitter to further the ministry of your church online.

If done well, it can lead to visitors and new members.

However, as mentioned above in number 8, if you do create an account, it needs to be tended to regularly to be effective. If you are not able to post regularly to an official church account, it is likely better to not have one. We regularly consult with our clients about leveraging social media properly, including designing and creating social media graphics and content. We would love to consult with you about this further in conjunction with a new website design.



71% of consumers who have had a good social media service experience with a brand are likely to recommend it to others.

83% of Americans have a social media account.

10. RESOURCES

While your first concern should be reaching potential visitors and members, your website is a valuable resource to your church members.

You can post weekly sermons, bulletin information, a community calendar, as well as link to further resources mentioned in sermons and Sunday School classes.

Give some thought to how you can use your website as a resource for your church family.

**“Great web design without functionality is like a sports car with no engine.”
-Paul Cookson**



11.*BONUS*

What can we say, we're givers!

MOBILE FRIENDLY

All websites must be designed to be properly viewed on a computer, a smart phone, or a tablet. This is called

RESPONSIVE DESIGN

Google checks to see if your website is mobile friendly, and if it isn't, they will penalize you in search engine rankings.

About half of all global website traffic is now coming from mobile devices, so your website must look great on a phone as well as a computer. Consider the potential visitor looking up directions on Sunday morning from their phone, or trying to find out how to call or email you for more information. They need to be able to do this quickly and easily. If your website is not mobile friendly, you need to begin planning a major update to your design.



Google says 61% of users are unlikely to return to a mobile site they had trouble accessing

WHAT NOW?

Ready for the next step?

Let's Get Started!

Fill Out, Print Out, and Share!

1 Fill out a project application today:
ThrowItWide.com/application/

2 Print out the helpful overview for church leaders on the next page and share it with your elders and deacons.

3 Share this book with friends at other churches.



Visit us at ThrowItWide.com for more information!

Website Overview for Church Leaders

**You don't need to be an expert in websites.
That is what we are here for!**

Here are some things that are important for you to know about your church website.

1. **It is important.** Most people will be introduced to your church online before you ever meet them. You need to make a good first impression.
2. **It needs to be secure.** This includes SSL encryption.
3. **Hosting matters.** Websites that load slowly rank lower in search engines.
4. **Maintenance is vital.** Like your car, every website requires regular maintenance.
5. **You need reliable support.** As professionals, we provides service well beyond the local volunteer.
6. **Is it affordable?** Make your internet presence a priority in your budget. We work with churches of all sizes.
7. **Is it easy for people to give?** It is easy to implement online giving so that as people travel or desire to give after moving away, they can send an offering to the church through their phone or the website.
8. **Is your website dated?** It is important to keep your website current and pleasing to the eye.
9. **Social media is a tool.** You do not have to use social media, but it can be used effectively as part of your outreach to your community. We can help you with this.
10. **A valuable resource.** Your website can be a central place for valuable information and resources for your church.
11. **Website on the go!** Your website must be designed to be mobile friendly. At least half of all website traffic comes from cell phones. All of our designs are mobile friendly!

We take care of each of these important items as we care for all of our valued ministry clients. We look forward to helping you utilize modern tools to increase your outreach and support your ministry where God has planted you.

To get started, complete a project application: ThrowItWide.com/application/