

Sixteen Questions to ask a Website Developer.



Most people do not know what **questions to ask a website designer** before they commit to an expensive purchase. This article will help you.

Here at Sydney Business Web, even though we have our own technology supplier, we get inundated with offers for website building, SEO and so much more.

We like to keep our eyes open for new developments and trends, so occasionally we ask to

see samples of work - and that is where the fun begins. We can see clearly why so many small businesses and individuals end up with unusable websites.

Slow websites Kill Business

Recently, we were contacted by a company who claimed great things in the field of website building and who sent us examples. They shall remain nameless! We quickly ran one of their websites through GTMetrix to get a speed measurement for desktop. The result over two tests was 10s to load - which is dreadful.

Most people will simply move on after waiting more than 4s. Then we thought, maybe that was a bad example, and we tested another of their sites. This time it took 20s to load on desktop.

Bad website designers blame the customer

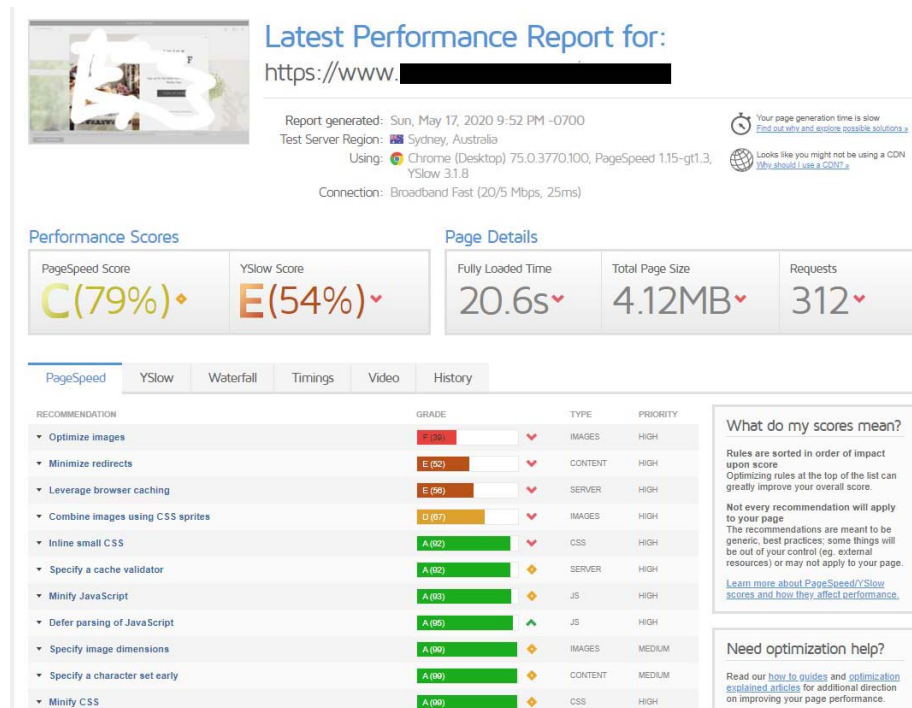
We told this company about our results, and this is what they said:

"...just so you know, there are many factors affecting web speed like server, scripts, site features. We always try to optimize the speed, but clients who don't have enough knowledge about web speed will upload images/videos that are not optimized before on the site. So, it can make the site slower ... and some of our clients even didn't require us to optimize the speed so that they can save some money..."

So, there you have it. They build websites that do not perform and blame the customer. If you think the point about customer uploads is valid, it is not. A properly built website will optimize images when they are uploaded. Videos are almost never hosted on a website - they are hosted somewhere like YouTube and played on the site through a special technique. And as for paying more money to speed up your website - that is a truly appalling statement.

When you choose a website supplier, make sure you know what you are getting. Make sure you know which **questions to ask a website designer** before you buy.

Questions to ask a website designer



Latest Performance Report for:
https://www. [REDACTED]

Report generated: Sun, May 17, 2020 9:52 PM -0700
Test Server Region: Sydney, Australia
Using: Chrome (Desktop) 75.0.3770.100, PageSpeed 1.15-gt1.3, YSlow 3.1.8
Connection: Broadband Fast (20/5 Mbps, 25ms)

Performance Scores

PageSpeed Score C (79%) ♦	YSlow Score E (54%) ▼
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Page Details

Fully Loaded Time 20.6s ▼	Total Page Size 4.12MB ▼	Requests 312 ▼
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RECOMMENDATION	GRADE	TYPE	PRIORITY
Optimize images	F (35)	IMAGES	HIGH
Minimize redirects	E (62)	CONTENT	HIGH
Leverage browser caching	E (66)	SERVER	HIGH
Combine images using CSS sprites	D (67)	IMAGES	HIGH
Inline small CSS	A (82)	CSS	HIGH
Specify a cache validator	A (82)	SERVER	HIGH
Minify JavaScript	A (83)	JS	HIGH
Defer parsing of JavaScript	A (85)	JS	HIGH
Specify image dimensions	A (90)	IMAGES	MEDIUM
Specify a character set early	A (90)	CONTENT	MEDIUM
Minify CSS	A (90)	CSS	HIGH

What do my scores mean?
Rules are sorted in order of impact upon score. Optimizing rules at the top of the list can greatly improve your overall score.
Not every recommendation will apply to your page. The recommendations are meant to be generic, best practices; some things will be out of your control (eg. external resources) or may not apply to your page.
[Learn more about PageSpeed/YSlow scores and how they affect performance.](#)

Need optimization help?
Read our [how-to guides](#) and [optimization guidelines articles](#) for additional direction on improving your page performance.

Question 1: How fast will the website load on desktop with a broadband network?

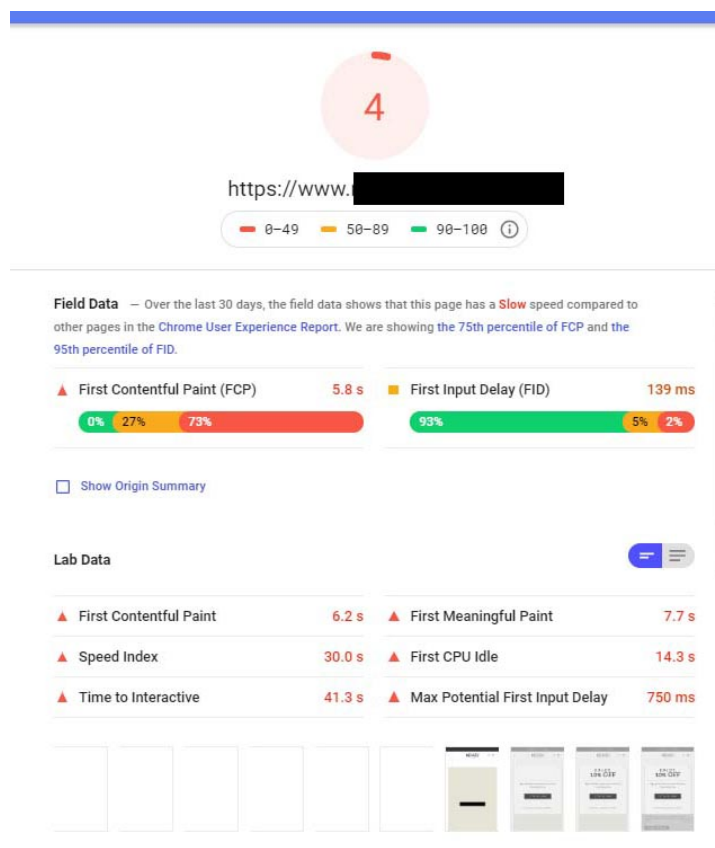
Although around half of website queries are now on mobile, the desktop is still hugely important. The speed measurement is much less demanding than it is on a mobile, so if it is slow on a desktop, it is going to be unusable on a mobile. We specify a broadband network to be fair – website speed is after all limited by

network speed and broadband is widely available.

How fast should a website load on a desktop computer? To be fair, we do not specify the completely loaded figure but the time it takes for a visitor to get a full picture of the page.

Desktop Computer Website Speed: We usually aim for the **‘OnLoad’ time** – which means that the processing of the page is complete and all the resources on the page (images, CSS, etc.) have finished downloading. Our experience shows that around 3s is acceptable for this performance figure. You can make your own measurements at GTMetrix [here](#)

Note on Website Speed Measurement: The measurements will vary a little and you should make three measurements to have confidence.



Question 2: How fast will the website load on a mobile?

Our experience shows around 2.5s to be acceptable to reach the **‘First meaningful paint’** – the primary page content is visible, hooking the visitor but not fully loaded ‘behind the scenes’. You can make mobile measurements on Google’s PageSpeed tool [here](#).

Question 3: Will images be optimized on the site?

We recently encountered a website brought to us by a customer who had gone the ‘cheap route’ before he came to us. The landing page was 15Mbyte and took 60s to load (minimum). The long load time

was due to a combination of factors, but image size was a significant factor. We optimized the images and reduced the page size from 15Mbyte to 1.8Mbyte!!!

Unfortunately, the website was still not salvageable despite our best efforts and we had to refer the person concerned to another designer because we were overloaded at the time.

Question 4: Will the website be SEO optimized? If so, around which keywords and do you show Name, Address and Phone number where they will show up on mobile at the top of display?

Before your website can be found on the web, it requires at least on-site SEO. For instance, if you are a website designer in Port Hacking Sydney, your website must make that clear in a way that is seen prominently on mobile and desktop. Some businesses such as electricians and other service providers need their NAP to appear right at the top of their landing page with clickable phone links.

In addition., if you are an expert, your website needs to identify you as such and any articles and posts you have must be optimized around keywords that will bring in business. Your website designer should be a part of this effort right at the start!



Question 5: Are phone numbers and email links clickable?

Your visitors can become very irritated when they decide to contact you only to find that there are no clickable links on the phone numbers and emails. This can lose you business.

Question 6: Are you installing cache software? (for speed)

Asking this question will show the designer that you have done your research and know what's – what! A cache is *essential* to optimizing website speed and should always be a standard installation at no extra charge.

Question 7: Are you enabling browser cache? (for speed)

Browser cache is enabled with a server tool called 'GZIP and is also essential for optimizing website speed. It must be a standard installation at no extra charge.

Question 8: Are you installing SSL (Secure Socket Layer)

An eCommerce website will not work without this, but even without eCommerce, it is essential – *(without an SSL certificate, Google will flag your website as unsafe)*

Question 9) When I upload images, will they be optimized on the site automatically?

All websites require updating from time to time with new articles and images. A properly built website will process new images as they are installed so that your website speed is not degraded.

Question 10: Do you give a warranty for technical defect after acceptance of the website?

Some faults may only show up under specific circumstances and a warranty is essential. A warranty should be for at least 30 days and we prefer 90 – at no extra charge. Do not be caught with charges for extra work because a website was not built properly. Be fair to the designer though and bear in mind that a warranty is for remedy of defect and not for design changes.

Question 11: Do you provide maintenance plans after the warranty has expired? –

All websites need maintenance. With WordPress it is easy and with a little training you can do it yourself. If a company does it for you, then for a fee of no more than \$20-40 /

month for a small, or modestly sized website, you should have a useful support package. For small websites we include this service free when you host your website with us.

Question 12: Do you provide training on website maintenance (if you want to do it yourself)

Maintaining a WordPress website is easy, and you can be trained in the basics in an hour or two. However, if/when things go wrong e.g. your website crashes or performance drops badly, then you will usually need support. Also, you may not even wish to upload new content yourself, so make sure your developer can help you as needed at a reasonable price.



Question 13: Do you transfer ownership of the domain to me? (If you buy a domain from your supplier)

One of our recent customers experienced great difficulty because she could no longer contact the developer of her website. That developer had purchased the domain for her but had not transferred ownership to her. Retrieving a

domain under these circumstances is time-consuming and exceedingly difficult. Make sure that you at least have access to the domain you have paid for at the registrar.

Question 14: Will I get full access to the WordPress back-end?

This is Essential for website maintenance and for adding new facilities and moving the website to a new host if you so wish. Make sure you have access as an administrator.

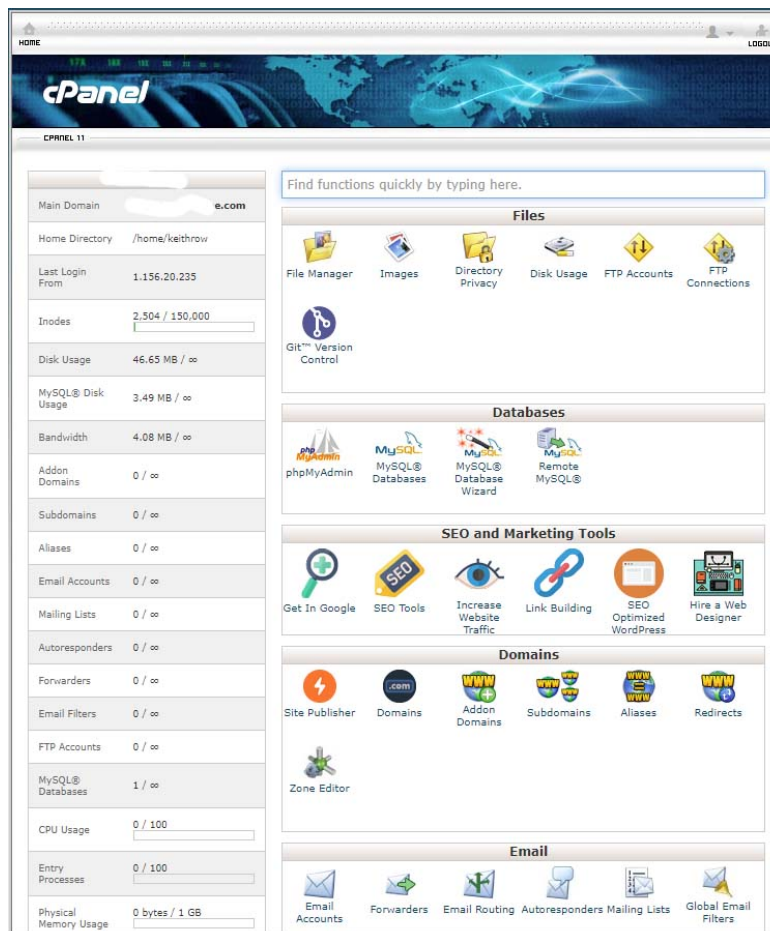
Question 15: Will I get full access to cPanel?

This is the back end of the website at the host and gives you access to every file on the website, server settings and so on. If you need to change your website support company at some time in the future, you will need this. This is where you go when your website hangs up, but some competence is needed. Often, you will end up conversing with very technical people at the hosting company and for that, a support contract is advisable.

Question 16: Will you install security software?

This software should protect your website against hackers.

Installation and configuration should be standard – i.e. no extra charge.



Note on website Speed

With question 1 and 2, it's possible an incompetent or careless designer will blame the hosting company for slow website speed, so make sure that you cannot be bamboozled - choose a good hosting company - we'll write another article on choosing a host as soon as we can.

I hope this helps you to choose a website supplier for your business. It is critical for your business.