

7 actions to keep your blog running smoothly

We spend lots of time thinking about what to include on our blog: what articles to write, what images to use, where to share our stuff. That's all important, but just as important is making sure our blogs are running well. Here are seven actions you can take to keep your blog running smoothly:

1. Install a spam detector and empty spam comments frequently:

I use Akismet, and it stops 99% of all spam. Spam is placed in a spam comments folder that should be emptied regularly, preferably daily (depending on how much spam is there). The more spam you have in that folder, the slower your site will load.

2. Update your themes and plugins: WordPress does a good job of telling that which plugins and themes need to be updated but it is up to you (or your site administrator) to do the actual updating. It only takes a few moments. But before you do anything, make sure you have a backup of your site (which leads to my third suggestion below).

3. Backup your site by installing an automatic backup plugin:

There are several out there. I have heard good reviews of Backup Buddy (not free) and I am using BackUp WordPress on here.



Mechanics working on race car at La Carrera Panamericana, Mexico, May 1954 for The Henry Ford on Flickr

4. Check your Google Analytics frequently (and if you don't have Analytics, install right away!): By checking your Analytics, you can learn a lot about what is working and what is not working on your blog. You should check the following:

- Bounce rate (are people staying on the blog or leaving immediately?)
- Page load speed (if it is taking too long for your pages to load, you are going to lose readers)
- Landing pages (where are readers going?)
- Keywords (useful to know how people are finding your blog)

5. Deal with comments: If a comment is legitimate and you use moderation (which I believe you should), approve it ASAP and respond if appropriate. People who comment on your blog are looking to engage with you. Don't leave them hanging!

6. Review your plugins, widgets and settings: Too many plugins

make your site slower. Are you using them all? Do you need them? Are your widgets still relevant? Are you using them? Do you need to add anything? And finally, check your settings. Is everything up to date and still relevant?

7. Optimize your SEO: There are several SEO plugins and they will help make your site more easily findable. I am not an expert, but making sure to include keywords and descriptions and filling out the fields will help make your site more visible.

What actions do you take regularly on your blog's back end? Please add to this list!