

12 Tips To Increase Your Web Page Speed

By Rich Vicar

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GRAPHICS

One word is the root of 90% of the reason for slow downloading web site pages...yes you guessed it..."graphics."

1. Limit the number of graphics you use per page.

2. Repeat graphics. One of the best ways to speed up your site is to use the same graphics on every page. Once a graphic has loaded, it doesn't have to load again as it is stored in a computer's cache.

3. Compressing your images is one of the best ways to get a faster-loading web page. You can usually reduce a GIF or JPEG image by 40% to 50% without losing any significant definition or sharpness. Try:

www.spinwave.com/crunchers.html

4. Use a thumbnail instead of 900lb gorilla of a graphic. If the visitor is interested she can click the thumbnail for a larger graphic.

5. Reduce the number of colours you use in graphics. Just using a handful of colours will still deliver great graphics at a fraction of the size. JPEG files, commonly used for photos, require thousands of colours. A GIF file, used for drawings and simpler graphics, can be compressed to include only a few colours.

6. Include height and width on images - This allows the browser to "pre-allocate" the space for the graphic on the display, and will speed up the page download. In addition, if ALT tags (this is text to describe the image) are included with the images, then something will display even if the image does not display. This is particularly relevant to those who switch off images on their browser.

HTML

7. Spaces and redundant tags in HTML add to the size of files. Try to eliminate as much of the superfluous coding as you can. Most pages can be reduced by 15% to 25% just by taking out redundant coding. If your HTML Coder has a "clean code" function use it. Alternatively, try the HTML Optimiser at:

www.pcbit.com/htmlopt

8. Design in HTML. Java and Javascript allow you to do those pretty rollover things, however, they slow the download of your page, as well as potentially confuse some search engine spiders. Make use of non-Java links instead.

9. No more than 6 links per page. Why do some webmasters put up 20 zillion links per page? Often visitors are so confused they leave. Keep it simple and guide the visitor logically through your site with a minimal number of links per page. Again, fewer links requires less memory.

META TAGS

10. Limit meta tags to 5 or 6 keywords. Why do some webmasters insist on hundreds of keywords? Apart from slowing the download of your page, search engine spiders will see your site as being very diluted and meaning "nothing to no-one."

HOSTING

11. The server speed of your web site host will influence the speed of your web site's download. Avoid "Free" hosting. Nothing is truly "free." Free hosts tend to be oversubscribed and lack the resources to provide fast and reliable servers.

GOLDEN RULE

12. The golden rule of golden rules...make sure each page of your web site is no bigger than 30kb in size. If you can do this you will be well on the way to a fast web site and a fast web site is of course a professional web site.

For outstanding examples of just how good plain old HTML can look, see www.the5k.org The site is no more than 5kb

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Rich Vicar has been providing search engine placement solutions since 1998. He is expert in submitting your web site in an ethical, efficient and effective manner.

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