carbonhouse Website Best Practices

Overview

It can be easy to forget common best practices for keeping your website looking its best and for ensuring your content stays clean, organized, and accessible. Sometimes, all it takes is a quick refresher to get your content back to its full potential. Take some time to review your site against the checklist items below and make any needed updates.

Additionally, if you notice there's something on your site that you're doing over and over (ex. copying and pasting the same FAQ for every single event), contact the help desk – we may be able to find a free or paid solution to streamline your workflow.

Images

☐ Ensure no images are larger than 1mb.
- *If an image is too large, a red warning will display in Showtime. Large images slow down your pages and can impact user experience.*

☐ Replace or resize any grainy or fuzzy images.
- *Consider refreshing or removing outdated images with newer ones or finding replacements on unsplash.com.*

☐ Check that you're using the correct image sizes for the proper content items and use the image editor within Showtime to update images as needed.
- *To view your site's specific image sizes, reference the "Image Sizes" section of the image editor.*

☐ Replace images that have text on them where possible.
- *Where unavoidable, be sure to use alt-text on the image or write out the text in close proximity to the image on the page.*

☐ Add alt-text to all images placed within text.

Media Folder

☐ Clean up your media folder by deleting old, outdated, or duplicated images.

☐ Organize your media folder by utilizing the tagging system.

Content

☐ Review your sitemap and make sure your site is still organized effectively.
- *Are your pages still ordered in a way that makes sense for visitors and for your organizational goals? Are you redirecting an unnecessary number of pages? Are there old or unused pages cluttering up Showtime?*

☐ Review your style guide as a reference for all available style options.
- *The style guide is not only a visual representation of how your content can be styled, but it is also an instruction guide on how to use each content item. Be sure to reference your style guide to ensure you're using all styles and tools at your disposal.*
- *Avoid overriding your approved design styles with added HTML/CSS. Custom added and third-party code cannot be supported and may go against our tested accessibility standard.*
- *For most sites, the style guide can be found under www.yourvenue.com**/style-guide***

☐ Break up long blocks of text by using a variety of styles (FAQs, link lists, spotlights, etc.) for visual appeal and organizational effectiveness.

☐ Ensure you're using slideshows for videos.
- *Where not possible, be sure you're using* Embed Responsively *to add videos in textboxes.*

☐ Remove any duplicated page titles/headers.

- *For most sites, your page titles will be auto-generated. Be sure not to repeat the same page title as the first header on your page. If your site does not auto-generate page titles, be sure to add one.*

☐ Check and update all contact information for your overall organization and individual departments.

- *If you have staff listings on your site, make sure the employees and their contact information are accurate and current as well.*

☐ Test all forms to ensure submissions are working.

☐ When creating events, avoid copying and pasting promotional texts directly into event descriptions.

- *Try breaking out important details into the FAQ and related links sections of the event and be sure you're reviewing the text to ensure irrelevant information is removed.*

☐ Review your News articles.

- *Nothing makes a website feel dated more than a "Recent News Update" from 2017. Consider cleaning up your news articles, posting a more recent article, or turning the page off if the most recent information isn't relevant.*

Accessible Content

Review our <u>Accessibility Best Practices page</u> for a complete rundown.

☐ Reword any unclear or overly complicated language.

- *Use easy-to-understand, shorter common words and phrases.*

☐ Update your content with consistent language.

- *Your content should be consistent across the entirety of your site. For example: Seating Charts vs Maps.*

☐ Ensure headers are used in order on the page.

- *Headers should always be used in order (H1 -> H2 -> H3 -> H4). Screen readers read webpages in order, so jumping from an H3 back to an H1 will be confusing to someone using an assistive device to visit your site.*

☐ Remove any color and/or positioning cues.

- *Users who are colorblind might not be able to understand content that is color coded to convey meaning, and directional cues may lose their meaning entirely to users visiting the site with an e-reader (or even on mobile).*

☐ Remove any "click here" CTAs and replace them with more precise CTAs.

- *"Click here" as a CTA poses similar issues as using directionals mentioned previously, because a user visiting the site with a screen reader may not be able to determine where "here" is on the page. Use more precise CTAs instead, such as "purchase tickets" or "view our Accessibility page."*

☐ Reformat any information using tables into a different style.

- *Tables are challenging for screen readers, so avoid using them when possible. When necessary, use headers for rows and columns.*

☐ Update all videos with captions or transcripts.

- *Auto-captioning is offered by YouTube and affordable transcription services are available for as low as $.84/minute (as of April 2023).*

☐ Review all PDFs to ensure they are accessible.

- *Standard PDF files can typically not be read by screen readers, we suggest testing your PDFs. <u>Adobe Acrobat</u> has a simple to follow process for updating your files.*

General

☐ Review consistency across all pages.

- *If multiple people are responsible for adding and updating content on your site, ensure a consistent tone and style across all pages. Consider creating content guidelines or standards for your organization to follow when uploading content. This is particularly helpful in training new employees who may take over some responsibility for managing the site.*

☐ Check every page on mobile.

☐ Add meta data to all pages and events to improve SEO.
- *This is optional but is a great tool to use to boost your SEO.*

☐ Delete any old or unneeded Friendly URLs.

☐ Review and update your Privacy Policy, Terms of Use, and Web Accessibility links and statements.
- *Are those links in the footer directing or redirecting to the proper pages? Are your statements and/or policies accurate and current?*

☐ Check all links on your site and update any that are broken.
- *Ensure that any external links include the full URL and are set to open in a new window so that visitors aren't taken away from your site and that any internal links are only using everything after the .com (ex. /plan-your-visit/restaurants).*

☐ Send carbonhouse any global tracking codes if you haven't (i.e., Google Tag Manager (GTM), Google Analytics 4 (GA4), etc.) and check that all tracking codes are up to date.
- *Did a promoter give you an analytics code and now you have multiple tag manager accounts set up on your site?*

☐ Review your analytics – determine which pages are frequented the most, and which are getting stale.
- *Consider turning off or refreshing unvisited pages to get the most mileage out of them.*