

Seems to me like most web users (me included) are always in a hurry when browsing. Statistics show that, without a compelling reason, the average user will not wait for much more than 10 seconds for a page to load. So does that explain why your visitors seem to spend less than 5 seconds in your site? Probably your site is taking too long to load thus putting off visitors.

As you design your site, loading time should always be a priority if your site is to be an effective business tool. Balancing usability and aesthetics is a delicate matter when creating a fast loading site. You can have a colourful website but takes ages to load while on the other hand you can design a simple site that loads faster than you can blink. Below are 10 tips and tricks that I have found very useful that you can use while designing your fast loading website.

1. Use images sparingly.

Images may enhance the appearance of a website but it greatly increases its loading time. While optimizing images will make the pages load faster, overuse will not have the desired effect. For example, if you use over 75% of your page content as images chances are that your pages will load very slow.

2. Use HTML to design your pages

HTML when used well can be very effective in creating fast loading pages. You can create simple and elegant sites using plain HTML, CSS and few images.

3. Minimize animated gifs and flash usage

Wherever possible use very few animated gifs and flash files. As much as they enhance web page appearance they usually bog down the loading times so use sparingly.

4. Use background images

Instead of using full images, use background images for headers and footers. In this way you get to use a strip of the image of uniform design instead of using an image 779px wide.

5. Avoid using Javascript and flash scripts

Most of these scripts contribute greatly to slow loading pages because they usually have to load some items first before they are rendered. For example, Javascript drop menus are very useful in creating seamless navigation but unfortunately increase page load times significantly. Consider using CSS with which you can have drop down menus.

6. Optimize your HTML

One of the reasons why pages may load slowly is huge page size as a result of useless or repeated HTML tags. Validating your site is one way of optimizing your HTML.

7. Avoid using multimedia files

Unless your site is an entertainment one don't use multimedia files especially as background music unless you absolutely have to. Providing a download link or an online player is better than using the files as background music.

8. Use Templates

Using templates will not only ensure uniformity throughout your site but will enable subsequent pages load faster because the structural images will have cached and thereby reducing the load times significantly.

9. Optimize images

Using an image editor like Photoshop, or Irfanview, images can be optimized to load fast depending on their intended use. Appropriately resized and cropped images will greatly reduce the loading times of a page and at the same time maintaining their integrity.

10. Check your loading times

Finally check your loading times using plugins such as Fasterfox in Firefox to see how long your pages are taking to load.