

6 TRAPS THAT CAN RUIN YOUR WEBSITE IN 8 SECONDS—AND THE FIXES

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Eight seconds: that's the average human attention span today,¹ down from 12 seconds in 2000. Even goldfish are estimated to have a longer attention span (9 seconds). In fact, if you're like most people, you won't even make it through this article. But you should try—if you want your practice to grow.

Your website is often the first interaction potential patients have with your practice. As such, it needs to capture visitors' attention, engage them, and educate them—in 8 seconds or less. If your site falls into any one of the common traps listed here, you can kiss those leads goodbye:

1. Dated, overly technical content
2. No calls-to-action
3. Poor navigation
4. Stagnant design
5. Inaccessibility
6. No ongoing SEO efforts

DATED, OVERLY TECHNICAL CONTENT

Traps: Assuming the content you write once never needs changing and that clichés and technical or professional jargon will resonate with visitors.

Fix: Patients expect relevant, current, easy-to-understand information. If they can't find it on your website,

they will move to your competitor's. Write with the patient's mindset as your focus. Anticipate their questions and concerns (these may change over time) and address them on your site in layman's terms. Showcase how you're different to highlight why your practice is the patient's best option.

Create unique pages for each practice specialty. Include key-word-rich headlines, subheads, and bullet points. This will make your content easy to scan for people who don't like to read long blocks of text. Incorporate videos, infographics, and photographs to connect with visitors who are more visual.

Continually add new content (pages or blogs) to improve your search engine optimization (SEO). Update content as you add new services, update technologies, and change staff. Even if nothing new is happening, it's important to add content so the search engine crawlers will take notice.

Integrate your social platform links on your site so visitors have an easy way to interact with you socially.

NO CALLS-TO-ACTION

Traps: Your site is full of great information but there is no motivation for a visitor to take the next step. Your website has no lead collection forms.

Fix: Include a variety of ways visitors can engage with your practice. At least one call-to-action should be featured on each page of your website. Most visitors aren't ready to schedule an appointment, so you have to give them options for smaller steps:

- Downloadable free eBooks with in-depth information about your services not found on your website
- Free self-evaluation forms
- Easy online appointment scheduling
- Online 24/7 chat services for asking questions
- Free eNewsletter sign up

Create unique landing pages for appropriate calls-to-action that include strong headlines, brief descriptions, simple forms, and privacy messages to stress their information will not be shared or sold.

POOR NAVIGATION

Traps: Visitors have to invest too much time to find the information they want. There are either too many or not enough options. Your site has no search capability.

Fix: Place easy-to-understand, simple navigation near the top of the page, including a prominent search window and a "Contact Us" button. Include this navigation in the footer of each page for easy access.

- Keep your navigation simple: a maximum of three pages deep (meaning visitors will click no more than three times to access the information they want)
- Include hyperlinks within your subpages so visitors can easily toggle to a corresponding page with more detailed information
- Make reverting to prior pages easy

STAGNANT DESIGN

Traps: Assuming your website design is still fresh. It takes too long to load. The fonts and colors are difficult to read.

Fix: You want your site to look clean and up-to-date, but it needs to load within 4 seconds or your bounce rates will soar. Keep your bounce rate below 60% (the industry average) and your website feeling modern by

- Avoiding Flash and complicated JavaScript
- Keeping pop-ups and banners to a minimum
- Keeping a synchronous design by using consistent fonts, layout, and colors
- Using a maximum of two to three colors
- Incorporating white space
- Incorporating high-quality photos

INACCESSIBILITY

Trap: A beautiful, user-friendly website with great content and calls-to-action—that does not read well on smaller screens (such as smartphones).

Fix: Redesign your website so it is mobile-friendly (meaning the layout changes depending on what type of device is being used). This will give it higher search engine page rankings (search engines seek sites that make the online viewing experience as frustration-free as possible).

Note: 75% of internet use will be mobile in 2017.²

When designing for mobile users, consider a card grid layout. This in-

corporates a box design on a desktop computer that restacks the content as the screen size becomes smaller. Viewers are used to seeing this layout.

There are online resources to monitor how visitors are experiencing your website. Check your website against Google's mobile specifications at <https://www.google.com/webmasters/tools/mobile-friendly>. Check how your website appears across multiple browsers at <http://browsershots.org/>.

NO ONGOING SEO EFFORTS

Traps: No one can find your website because your SEO is outdated. Your site does not appear on page one of search results.

Fix: Fixing broken links, adding quality links, enhancing your keywords, adding new content, improving description tags, adding videos, and other actions will help improve your SEO.

SEO (search engine optimization) is the “free” way to drive visitors to your site through organic searches (unlike paid online advertising). Search is the #1 driver of website traffic, beating social media by more than 300%.³

You want your website to appear as close to the number-one spot as possible for your keyword phrases—because 75% of searchers never scroll past the first page of results.⁴

CONTINUALLY ANALYZE YOUR WEBSITE

Simply building a website isn't enough anymore. You need to continually analyze and update it to ensure that it's generating the leads you want.

Tapping into website analytics will allow you to monitor the effectiveness of your site, identify under-performing pages, see how visitors are interacting with your site, and more. Don't be reluctant to change your strategy if you're not getting the results you want. **AE**

NOTES

¹ Stevens, J. (2016, June 7). Decreasing attention spans and your website, social media strategy. Retrieved from <http://www.adweek.com/digital/john-stevens-guest-post-decreasing-attention-spans/>

² McEvoy, M. (2016, Nov. 29). 25 SEO statistics to know in 2017. Retrieved from <http://www.webpresencelutions.net/seo-statistics-2017-seo-stats/>

³ Barrett, J. (2016, Nov. 29). 3 SEO strategies for driving traffic to your website. Retrieved from <http://www.hatchback.com/blog/seo-strategies-for-driving-traffic-to-your-website/>

⁴ Kemick, D. (2015, March 6). SEO statistics that should motivate your business. Retrieved from <https://www.protocol80.com/blog/2015/03/06/seo-statistics-that-should-motivate-your-business/>



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IN A BLINK

- Websites have 8 seconds to capture, engage, and educate.
- Continually analyze and update your site to ensure it's generating the leads you want.
- Don't be reluctant to change your strategy.



If your site falls into any one of the common traps listed here, you can kiss website leads goodbye.