



Letter from the Editor

Web Site Hosting - Design - Marketing - Management

News and helpful information from your friends at AmeriWeb Hosting January 2025



[WEB NEWS](#)

Turmoil with WordPress Sites

Several months ago, there was an uproar over WordPress, and their preferred hosting vendor. I won't go into the specifics, as it isn't pertinent to this article.

As you may know, WordPress is a free script available for anyone to use at no cost, and it is estimated that over 40% of all websites are running on WordPress. Last number I saw was approx 260 million WordPress sites are in operation today. A tempting target for hackers, as if you successfully gain access to one, it is easy to replicate your efforts and access many.

You pay for your hosting and domain name, using the WordPress CMS is available free. AmeriWeb has an entire server dedicated to WordPress sites, we've streamlined it to run faster and cleaner, while keeping out hack attempts.

Many scripts are written to add features to the WordPress CMS. Because of the turmoil, some authors are no longer participating. One expert has predicted the demise of WordPress as the leading CMS. My own take is this may occur, but over many years, and not immediately. If you are running a WordPress site with us, here are the services we include (and will continue to include in the future):

- We keep WordPress and its components up to date, making regular updates as they are released by the authors
- We keep templates up to date, making regular updates as they are released by the authors
- We keep plugins up to date, making regular updates as they are released by the authors
- We maintain a strong cache program
- We maintain a firewall and scanner to help keep out hackers and trojans
- We install an automated junk filter to screen out spam or harmful comments
- We maintain a SSL certificate, and insert code so your entire site uses it by default, as an anti-hacking measure
- We monitor plugins and replace older ones with newer, better ones as they are introduced
- We run modern versions of PHP which helps with speed and security, among other benefits

Here are some things you can do yourself to keep your WordPress site secure:

- Remove all plugins that are not being used
- Disable all plugins that are not currently being used, but you may need in the future
- Remove any unused templates (we recommend keeping the template in use, plus one more)

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- Disable comments, unless this is useful to your site and business model
- Keep the number of admin accounts to a minimum
- If you allow visitors to sign up for an account, ensure they are automatically granted subscriber status only



HOW TO

What Is Robots.txt?

The robots.txt is a simple text file that sits in the root directory of your site, and tells crawlers what should be crawled.

The table below provides a quick reference to the key robots.txt directives.

User-agent = Specifies which crawler the rules apply to. See user agent tokens. Using * targets all crawlers.

Disallow - Prevents specified URLs from being crawled.

Allow - Allows specific URLs to be crawled, even if a parent directory is disallowed.

Sitemap - Indicates the location of your XML Sitemap by helping search engines to discover it.

*User-agent: **

Disallow: /downloads/

Allow: /downloads/free/

Disallow: /.pdf\$*

Sitemap: https://www.example.com/sitemap

1. By using /*, the rule matches any path on the website. As a result, any URL ending with .pdf will be blocked from crawling.
2. Note that you must always specify relative paths and never absolute URLs, like "https://www.example.com/form/" for Disallow and Allow directives.
3. Except: The Sitemap directive requires a full, absolute URL to indicate the location of the sitemap.
4. Be cautious to avoid malformed rules. For example, using /form without a trailing slash will also match a page /form-design-examples/, which may be a page on your blog that you want to index.

Let's dive into examples of how you can use robots.txt for each case.

- User-agent: *
Used to specify which search engine these rules apply to. * translates to "all".
Disallow: /downloads/
Do not crawl the downloads directory
- Allow: /downloads/free/
EXCEPTION: you can crawl the downloads/free/ directory, in spite of the above rule
- Disallow: /*.pdf\$
Do not crawl any pdf file
- Sitemap: https://www.example.com/sitemap
Gives the location of your sitemap. This must be a full URL.
You can offer multiple sitemaps, each must have its own line.

We hope this helps! As always, if you have any questions, feel free to contact us.



MARKETING

Website Marketing Ideas

Here are some effective website marketing ideas to boost your online presence, and drive traffic. NOTE: Very few websites can use all of these ideas, but by incorporating some of them into your website marketing, you will increase your site's results.

1. **SEO Optimization:** Improve your site's visibility in search engines by using relevant keywords, optimizing meta tags, and creating high-quality content.
2. Use a sitemap to help search engines find all of your pages quickly
3. Fix all coding errors
4. Ensure you use H1 tags, alt tags and og tags.
5. **Content Marketing:** Start a blog with valuable articles, guides, and resources related to your industry to establish authority and attract visitors.
6. **Email Marketing:** Build an email list and send regular newsletters, promotions, and personalized content to engage your audience.
7. **Social Media Integration:** Share your website content on social media platforms to drive traffic. Use engaging visuals and hashtags to increase reach.
8. **Influencer Partnerships:** Collaborate with influencers in your niche to promote your products or services to their audience.
9. **Webinars and Online Events:** Host webinars to share expertise, showcase products, or engage with your audience live.
10. **Paid Advertising:** Utilize Google Ads or social media ads to target specific demographics and drive traffic to your website.
11. **User-Generated Content:** Encourage customers to share their experiences or reviews, which can be featured on your site to build trust.
12. **Referral Programs:** Create a referral program that incentivizes customers to refer others to your site.
13. **Video Marketing:** Produce engaging video content that explains your products, shares customer testimonials, or provides tutorials.
14. **Landing Pages:** Design specific landing pages for promotions or products to increase conversion rates.
15. **Online Communities:** Engage in forums or social media groups related to your niche to establish connections, and promote your website.
16. **A/B Testing:** Regularly test different elements of your site (like CTAs and layouts) to determine what resonates best with your audience.
17. **Mobile Optimization:** Ensure your website is mobile-friendly to provide a seamless experience for users on smartphones and tablets.
18. **Analytics and Tracking:** Use tools like Google Analytics to monitor traffic and user behavior, adjusting your strategies based on insights.
19. Use a properly structured signature on all of your outgoing email
20. Tie in your off-line marketing, alerting people to your web site

By implementing a combination of these strategies, you can effectively market your website and drive more traffic and conversion.



ASK A TECH

Q: Google lists some pages from my website that no longer exist. How do I delete them?

A: Google will automatically drop these non-existent pages from its search results for you. It just takes a little time, and there is nothing you can do to make it happen immediately.

AmeriNews is published approximately 10 times a year by AmeriWeb Hosting for our customers, friends and those curious about our business. If you have a question for our ASK A TECH section, email it to support@ameriwebhosting.com

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