

5 Common Website Mistakes

(and how to fix them)

By Craig Burgess

Introduction

Whether you've paid a lot of money to an agency for a custom website or you've made your own with Squarespace or Wix, websites are surprisingly easy to get wrong.

To help you out, I've put together a list of the most common website mistakes I come across, and the easiest way to fix them.

These include unclear messaging, slow load times, AI overuse, self-centred content, and poor design.

1. Your website doesn't tell people what you do

Transparency Starts Here

↑ An example of a headline at the top of a website. What does it even mean?

1.1 The Problem

When somebody lands on your website, you have **less than 5 seconds** to convince them to stay. If your website is confusing and it isn't immediately clear to a prospective visitor what you do or why the website is useful to them, they will leave and find another resource.

Remember: people scan websites, they don't read them. Most people are researching for a product or service, not looking to read a novel.

Why does this matter?

- » Customers will leave before they discover what you do
- » You have 5 seconds before somebody will leave your website
- » You'll lose sales because you weren't clear about what you offer

1.2 How To Fix

It's so simple to fix this one that it's embarrassing to say it: **just tell people what you do in plain English**. If you think you're overcomplicating it, you probably are.

At Genius Division, we use a simple statement at the top of our website.

It says: 'Sick of wasting your ad spend? Our websites fix that.'

It's clear, and uses no jargon. It's obvious we sell websites. It also talks to our potential customers, but we'll get into that one later on.

2. Your website is too slow

2.1 The Problem

There are hundreds of ranking factors that dictate what position your website

appears in Google's search rankings, but there's one we all know for a fact: Google cares about how quickly your website loads in a web browser.

They care so much in fact, they built their own tool called Google PageSpeed Insights to assess how quickly websites load.

More importantly though, a slow website will stop your users from using your website. The 5 second rule applies here again: if your website takes longer than 5 seconds to load, a user will just leave and find another website.

A slow-loading website is one of the most annoying parts of using a website, especially if you're trying to view it on a mobile device.

Why does this matter?

- » If your website takes longer than 5 seconds to load, users will leave
- » Your website will be down-ranked in Google's search engine
- » You'll get less traffic coming to your website and less sales

2.2 How To Fix

Go to pagespeed.web.dev, and punch in your website URL.

If your score comes back and it's lower than 90/100, your website is too slow in the eyes of Google and it'll be causing problems with your search engine rankings.

- » If your website is built on WordPress, install a cache plugin. WP Rocket is the one we use on all of our client's websites.
- » If your images on your website are large (over 300kb each), you need to resize them and make them smaller. Don't upload photos directly from your camera. Use a tool like tinypng.com to shrink your files.
- » If you're using video on your website, upload it to YouTube and embed it in your web page.
- » If you're using a web developer, ask them to fix these issues and review your PageSpeed Insights scores.

3. Your website is bursting at the seams with AI-generated content

3.1 The Problem

I'm finding more and more people relying far too much on ChatGPT to write website content. I can understand why, but it has the potential to become an issue over the next couple of years.

Putting aside the fact that using AI to write your content makes it overly generic and boring to read, Google are also starting to clamp down on websites that are over-using AI. If they consider your website is using AI to manipulate search engine results, you may find yourself in [breach of their spam policies](#).

And if you're using AI to generate images for your website, you'll more than likely be breaking copyright law. Most AI generated images are using other people's intellectual property.

Why does this matter?

- » Overuse of AI may make Google down-rank you in their search engines
- » Your website content will be boring and overly generic
- » If you're using AI generated images you may find yourself in breach of copyright

3.2 How To Fix

If you must use AI, use it as a helper. Write your content first, plan out what

you'd like to say (even if it's just detailed bullet points), and then ask AI to turn your bullet points into complete sentences.

Remember that the words on your website are designed to keep people interested long enough to decide to get in touch with you. With AI, you'll produce extremely bland and generic content.

4. Your website is all about you, you, you

UNRIVALLED MARKETING PROWESS

Award-winning marketing expertise from the rolling hills of Yorkshire

↑ This headline boasts but says nothing to a customer. Why should I care about Yorkshire?

4.1 The Problem

I'll say this once and clearly: not a single person cares how many awards you've won, how many pets you have in your office, or how many marathons you've run.

Your potential customers just care about what you can do for them.

If you aren't talking to your customers, you're losing them. Your content should be written from the point of view of potential customers.. What is bugging them? What are they struggling with? How can you help them?

Why does this matter?

- » Customers are busy and they only care what you can do for them
- » If you don't spell it out to them, they may just leave your website

4.2 How To Fix

An easy trick is to put 'you' in your content a lot. Talk directly to your customer with 'you' and 'your'. Speak directly to their problems. Talk less about yourself.

Most customers are looking to save time, make more money, or improve their health. Speak to these qualities.

Imagine you're talking to your potential customer at a bar. Talk in an easy to understand and informal manner.

Example:

- » 'Save time, energy and money by switching to our People First Accountancy tool'.
- » 'You're short on time. Your clients are calling you all the time. Allow them to keep themselves updated, with our project management tool Basecamp.'

Go back through your website and read all of your content. How many times do you talk about yourself, instead of talking directly to your customer?

5. Your website doesn't look professional

5.1 The Problem

First impressions count. If your website is tatty, difficult to read, use photos that make you look terrible, your first impression won't amount to much.

People aren't studying your website, they're scanning the information. If the layout of your website makes it difficult to scan (either through colour choice,

font choice, lack of subheadings etc), people won't tend to stick around.

Ask yourself these questions about your website:

- Is it easy to understand: do the words and images make sense?
- Is it easy to read: did you have to work hard to read the content or was it easy? Was the content on a bright green background or used a weird font?
- Is it easy to find what I need: are pages clearly labelled, and are they where you would expect to find them? Is the About page called About, and not 'herein lies the interesting stuff'?

5.2 How To Fix

If you are using a professional design agency to do the job for you: just let them do their job.

If you are making your own website: *keep it simple.*

You don't need to be an artist here. Your goal is to make the information on the website as easy to read and consume as possible. Where possible, use pre-existing templates that make your life easier.

Use simple colours and familiar fonts.

If you are provided with a template from Wix or Squarespace, don't edit it.

6. Need any more help?

If you'd like an honest assessment of your site or need hands-on help fixing these issues, I'd love to hear from you.

Email me at: craig@geniusdivision.com

About Genius Division

We're a digital agency that helps organisations build world-class websites and digital experiences. We've been doing it for over 15 years, with organisations from all over the globe.

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