14 essential WordPress plugins to improve SEO

SEO is often a long and convoluted process which takes time, dedication and expertise.

Therefore, anything that can simplify or speed up aspects of a campaign are welcome additions: cue plugins! If your website is hosted on a WordPress CMS, then you are fortunate enough to have access to a plethora of handy plugins.

But with over 54,000 plugins to choose from, selecting the most appropriate and effective plugins for your SEO needs can seem a bit overwhelming. Luckily for you, in this article we have picked out the 14 WordPress plugins which we believe are essential for improving SEO.

From general all-rounder SEO plugins to those engineered for more specific tasks, our recommendations will cover a range of SEO needs.

1. Yoast SEO

We'll start with the all-rounder SEO plugins and arguably the most well known of the lot. Yoast SEO is an exceedingly popular plugin for fulfilling SEO needs, and is suitable for total newbies and seasoned pros alike.

Yoast is easy to use and intuitive, making it possible for anyone to work with. Its traffic light system provides detailed guidelines, which is perfect for those who are new to SEO.

Its only main downside is that sometimes the plugin does not analyze the entire page – if, for example, part of the content for a particular page sits elsewhere within the CMS. Not an issue in itself but can cause clients to have a temporary meltdown when they see a sea of red alerts.

Nevertheless, with its powerful content analysis abilities, Yoast is my personal recommendation for an all-rounder SEO plugin.

2. All in One SEO Pack

A popular alternative to Yoast, the All in One SEO Pack plugin was actually created prior to Yoast, and therefore built up a dedicated fanbase in the initial years. It provides much the same tools and features as Yoast, but the general consensus is that All in One SEO Pack is slightly less user-friendly than its main rival.

Ultimately it comes down to personal preference. Many people are a fan of the traffic light system deployed by Yoast, as it provides a whole host of handy, actionable tips for you to implement.

Alternatively those red, orange and green lights may drive you up the wall, in which case you may want to consider the All in One SEO Pack, or even our third suggestion…

3. The SEO Framework

The SEO Framework is an alternative to Yoast and All in One SEO Pack. It provides an automated and fast SEO solution, plus it is unbranded, meaning a clean interface. Many users find it

less bloated than Yoast, therefore arguably more efficient for the user.

This particular plugin is not quite as accessible as Yoast, but it is by no means difficult to use. Accordingly, it may pay to have at least a basis of SEO knowledge for this plugin.

In short, stick to Yoast if you're a complete beginner, but if you're confident with the basics, The SEO Framework is a viable alternative.

4. Redirection

Setting up redirects for broken links or deleted pages is key in maintaining a solid user experience.

Redirection is a useful plugin that allows you to handle all kinds of redirects from one easily accessible place. Quickly create new redirects, manage your current redirects and tidy up any loose ends.

5. Smush Image Compression and Optimization

Page speed is probably one of the biggest headaches when optimizing a website and image size is the most common reason for slow loading times. However, if you have a website that is extremely image-heavy, then the thought of manually compressing each image is probably enough to make you want to quit your job.

Well, don't do that. Because a plugin called Smush exists and aside from being the best-named plugin on this list, it's also incredibly useful. Smush Image Compression and Optimization compresses all images on your site at the touch of a button.

You also have the option to resize them while you're at it.

It’s perfect for increasing that pesky page speed with minimal effort.

6. W3 Total Cache

Continuing the theme of page speed, W3 Total Cache reduces load time, increases download speed and improves conversion rates. As a result, it helps to improve the overall performance and speed of your site.

With the stamp of approval from numerous high profile websites and industry leaders, what more do you need to know? It’s a no-brainer.

7. WP-Optimize

Another tool for helping you with a website spring clean. WP-Optimize cleans up your WordPress database, making space and improving its overall efficiency. A more efficient database means a better performing and faster site.

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8. Google XML Sitemaps

An XML sitemap helps the search engines to crawl your site. Anything that makes life easier for the search engines is generally worth doing. The Google XML Sitemaps plugin allows you to create a sitemap quickly and easily, without the need for using a third-party tool.

Don’t forget to submit your XML sitemap to Google Search Console. We also recommend trying Google XML Sitemaps for

Video and Images.

9. Broken Link Checker

It’s in the name – the Broken Link Checker identifies any broken links on your website.

Broken links can undermine your overall link structure and provide a frustrating user experience. This plugin allows you to uncover any broken links and take the necessary steps to fix them.

10. All In One WP Security & Firewall

Search engines take site security very seriously. The worst kind of user experience would be one which ends in a virus or other form of malware. If your site gets hacked, then it could have a highly detrimental effect on your rankings.

The aim of the All In One WP Security & Firewall is to prevent this happening and keep your website as safe as Fort Knox. On a related note, make sure you invest in an SSL certificate while you’re at it.

11. Yet Another Related Posts Plugin (YARPP)

Search engines take into consideration how quickly users leave your website. It’s therefore worth spending time trying to lower your overall bounce rate. As part of this, you should ensure clear call-to-actions and provide somewhere for users to naturally go once they are finished with a particular page or post.

For blog content, related posts are perfect for retaining

users. Ideally, this functionality would be integrated into the design of your blog.

However, if not, then the Yet Another Related Posts Plugin (YARPP) is a handy alternative and uses an algorithm to determine the most effective related posts. Great for user retention and lowering that bounce rate.

12. All In One Schema.Org Rich Snippets

Schema markup can bring some serious SEO points your way. Although there is no evidence that the markup itself is a ranking factor, just the appeal of having a more enticing appearance in the SERPs through rich snippets should be enough.

It is normally best to implement schema manually, without the use of a plugin. However, the All in One Schema.Org Rich Snippets plugin can help bridge the gap in the meantime until you get around to it.

I know it’s one of those tasks that gets pushed to the bottom of the to-do list, but there’s no time like the present!

13. Akismet

Akismet is the most popular plugin to deal with spam comments and is useful in preventing those weird and wonderful comments. From an SEO perspective, it stops potentially harmful links appearing in the comments on your site.

Too many of these links could associate you with bad neighborhoods, as although the links are in the comments, they are still coming from your website. They are therefore best avoided at all costs.

14. AMP for WP

With the news of Google's mobile-first index and the knowledge that over half of website traffic is via mobile, you need to implement Accelerated Mobile Pages (AMP for short) if you haven't already. The AMP project is an open-source initiative that provides an easy way to generate web pages which will load quickly and smoothly on mobile.

The AMP for WP plugin automatically adds Accelerated Mobile Pages functionality to your site, therefore making it faster for mobile users. It'll save you a lot of hassle.

This is by no means a comprehensive list of plugins to improve SEO, but these are our personal recommendations. It's important to remember not to go overboard with plugins. Avoid cutting corners by choosing to use a plugin over achieving better results manually.

Nevertheless, installing and activating a selection of carefully chosen plugins can make the SEO process more accessible, fast and effective.

Jessie Moore is Marketing Manager at Yellowball, a London-based digital marketing agency.

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In the

digital marketing sector we frequently talk about content and technical SEO as

two distinct sections of marketing we can do on-site. But that’s not entirely tr

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engines and website visitors. Here’s a quick guide to why they’re so important

t, and these six kinds that you should prioritize for SEO.

It is likely that if you

are reading this, you've heard of 'local SEO' and have an understanding of the im

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Artificial intelligence (A

I) is a field of technology that is surrounded by both hyperand misconceptions. It is

predicted that $60 billion will be spent by brands on AI technology by 2025, so this

hype is having a direct impact on where companies allocate their budgets.

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