

NearSource

Web & Mobile Solutions



The Complete Website Management Handbook

Website Content, SEO, Best Practices, Security and Everything
Else you need to have a successful website

If you manage a website then you need to have this handbook!

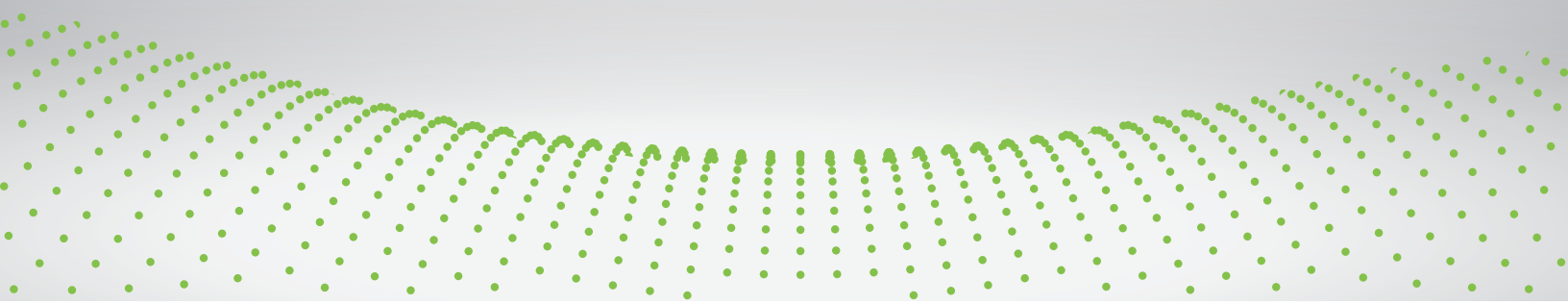
This handbook covers many important aspects of your website, from content strategy, SEO basics to usability, traffic monitoring, security and compliance. It is very easy to forget some of these items, so we have grouped all of these tasks to make it easy to use. You can also share it with your web team based on their role.

This is not meant to show you how to do everything, more importantly it tells you what you need to be aware of and what to expect from your web team. If some of these items are not being managed properly you may run into problems later on. You can avoid potential problems by familiarizing yourself with each of these topics and making sure they are addressed.

If you need help with any of these topics, contact us today!

Web Design, Content & Navigation

These are tips and guidelines on how to write and structure the content in your website. It also covers the basics for contact forms, contact information and more.



Home Page

- ☐ Home page states what you do and your value proposition.
- ☐ Most important content is readable in less than 2 seconds.
- ☐ Include call to action or content to encourage visitors to keep reading.

General Content

- ☐ All content is easy to read and guides the user to the next step.
- ☐ Content is useful and adds value to your site or to your visitor.
- ☐ Limit each page to one topic only.
- ☐ Group the content pages into easy to understand sections of your site. For example, don't add a product page inside of a contact section.

Contact Information

- ☐ Contact information is visible on every page.
- ☐ Phone number is visible on the top of your page. Make it clickable for mobile devices.
- ☐ Address is visible if you have an office or storefront. A link to Google Maps is useful.

Navigation

- ☐ Site navigation makes sense and is user friendly.
- ☐ Links to main services are accessible from your navigation. Avoid unnecessary extra clicks.

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Grammar and Spelling

- ☐ All content is proofread. Correct all typos and fix your grammar.

Content formatting

- ☐ Pages look consistent, clean and organized. Avoid confusing visitors with too many different types of layout and hard to read content.

Search Function

- ☐ It is usually useful to have a search function on your site. If you have one, make sure the search result page works, looks good and has links to both pages and posts if applicable.
- ☐ If it doesn't work as expected, you may want to consider removing it.

Fonts

- ☐ When using special fonts, double check to see it works on all browsers.
- ☐ Avoid using too many fonts on your site. Keep it clean and simple.

Forms

- ☐ Required fields should be labeled, easy to identify.
- ☐ Avoid too many fields otherwise users may not fill it out.
- ☐ Use validation messages.
- ☐ Test your form, confirm it does what it is supposed to do.
- ☐ When applicable, confirm it sends an email to your visitor.
- ☐ Forms should go to a thank you/confirmation page on submission.
- ☐ Setup an automatic weekly test to make sure it works. Forms tend to break.

Call to actions

- ☐ Each important page needs a visible call to action. It can be a sign up form, a contact form or, a phone number. Encourage your visitors to contact you or engage with you

404 Error Pages

- ☐ Websites may have broken links, bad URLs from an older version of the site, or a person enters a wrong URL. These need to show a user friendly 404 "page not found" page with a link back to the home page or other page.

Links

- ☐ Scan your site and correct any broken links. There are tools you can use to do this.
- ☐ Confirm the links to your important content are placed in easy to see/click areas like your main navigation menu.
- ☐ Confirm logo links back to home page.

Favicon

- ☐ This is the icon/graphic that shows up in the browser tab. Create one for your site.

Copyright

- ☐ Add a copyright statement on your site along with the year.

Search Engine Optimization (SEO)

SEO requires a lot of work and an entire guide can be created just for this. The following are the SEO basics that your website needs to have to get the best ranking possible. The most important thing is adding good content to your website.

Content

- ☐ Each page is written for a unique focus keyword phrase. This focus keyword is what the page is about or what you are trying to sell or teach your visitors.
- ☐ Content is easy to read and useful to the user.
- ☐ Add links to your pages so that it links to a product or service page. Internal site linking is important and helps search engine understand which are your more important pages.
- ☐ Identify your "cornerstone" pages which have the most value or highlight your services/products. Add internal linking to these pages and try to get backlinks from other sites to these pages.

Semantic Structure

- ☐ HTML/Content needs to follow the correct HTML semantic markup One H1 per page. This has the title of the page.
- ☐ Subtitles have H2, H3, H4 tags.
- ☐ Text are inside <p> tags.
- ☐ Lists use HTML ordered lists and unordered lists
- ☐ Use HTML element to show important words. This usually makes the text bold or italic, depending on how your site is setup.

Page URL

- ☐ Page URL contains your focus keyword first and then your company information if applicable.
- ☐ Use hyphens and not underscores to separate words

Meta tags

- ☐ Each page needs to have a page title meta tag and should be similar or the same as the H1 tag. It should have the page focus keyword. This will tell search engines what the page is about.
- ☐ Each page needs to have a description meta tag that summarizes the page. It also should contain the page focus keyword. This helps search engines understand more about your page and this text shows up in search results.

Images

- ☐ Use ALT/Title HTML tags in your images which describe the image. It's best to have the page focus keyword when applicable
- ☐ Image file names have a description of the image and not "image01.jpg".
- ☐ Use hyphens and not underscores to separate words in filename.

Sitemap

- ☐ Confirm there is an XML sitemap file in the root of the site and submitted to search engines. This allows your sites to be indexed better by search engines.

Robots.txt file

- ☐ There needs to be a robots.txt file that shows which page should and should not be indexed by search engines.

Blog

- ☐ Content is king and a good way of adding content to your site is having a blog section.
- ☐ Blog posts need to be relevant and have useful content.
- ☐ Mark your blog posts with the relevant categories and tags.
- ☐ Update your older blog posts with new information when applicable.

Local SEO

- ☐ Where possible and relevant, add geographic data to your page content. For example, if you did a service in a city, talk about it. This can help boost search results in your area.
- ☐ Website is listed in online directories and business name, address and contact information is correct.
- ☐ Website shows what geographic areas you serve

Google Business Page

- ☐ Claim your Google business page.
- ☐ Update it with your correct information.
- ☐ Add images to your Google business page.
- ☐ Get customer ratings on your business page.

Social Media Pages

- ☐ Create your social media profile pages where you think it makes most sense (Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Google+, Youtube, Instagram, Snapchat, etc).
- ☐ Add links to your social media profiles on your site.
- ☐ Add social media share buttons to your pages where relevant.
- ☐ All social media profile pages are verified where possible.

Open Graph Settings

- ☐ Website content needs to have Open Graph meta tags which configure how your page shows up in social media when shared. It also shows what image is shown when shared.

301 Redirects

- ☐ If you change URLs on your site, or created a new version of your site, confirm that your old URL/Link still works by adding 301 redirects which tells search engines that a page has been permanently moved to a new URL. This helps avoid losing ranking on a previously ranked page.

SERP (Search Engine Result Pages)

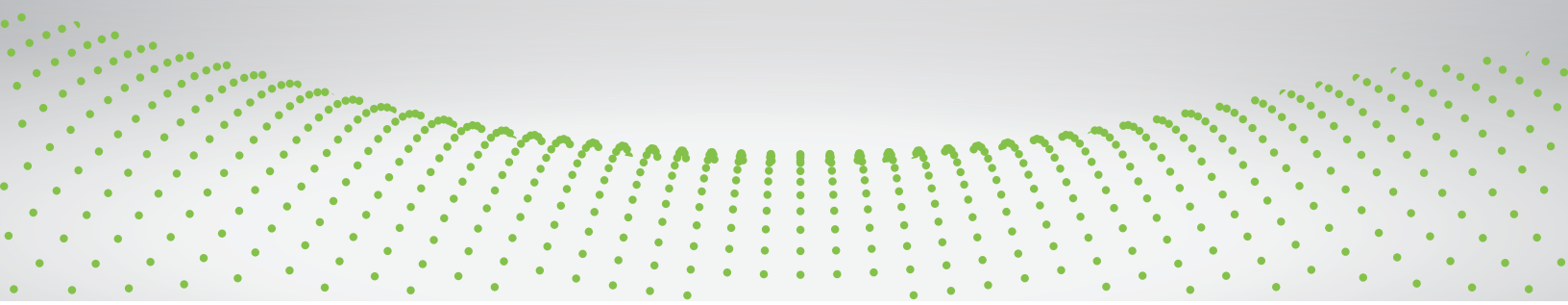
- ☐ Test your pages in search results and see the content that shows up under each link. Configure your meta tags to tweak this content to boost clicks/conversion rates.

Audit your SEO

- ☐ Periodically scan your site with available online tools and identify what needs to be updated or corrected.

Mobile Friendliness

Websites need to work on mobile devices and different screen sizes. More and more searched and web browsing are done on mobile devices.



Test on mobile devices

- ☐ Use web available mobile testing tools.
- ☐ Test for both tablet and smartphones.
- ☐ Confirm navigation works.
- ☐ Images resize to how you want them to show up on different screen sizes.

Page Speed

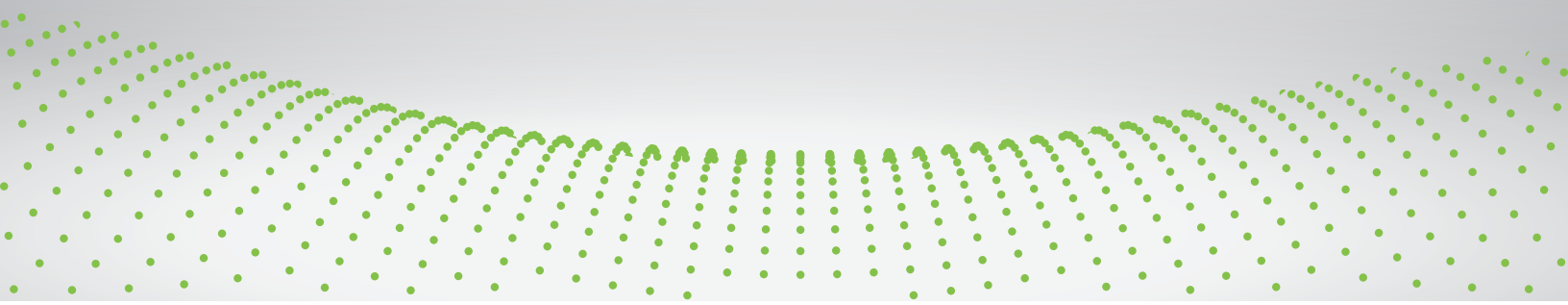
- ☐ Page needs to load fast, test using available online tools. Google penalizes slow loading pages.
- ☐ Remove items that are not needed to improve speed

Test Functionalities

- ☐ Test all JavaScript functions on mobile devices.
- ☐ Test all forms on mobile devices.

Cross Browser Compatibility

There is no one browser that rules them all. Don't miss out on missed opportunities because your visitor uses a browser that is not supported.



Major Browser Support

- ☐ Test in all major browsers (Chrome, Firefox, Microsoft Edge, Safari).
- ☐ Test in IE 11 for older computers.
- ☐ Test in different screen sizes (phone, tablet, desktop small and large displays).

Secure Certificate

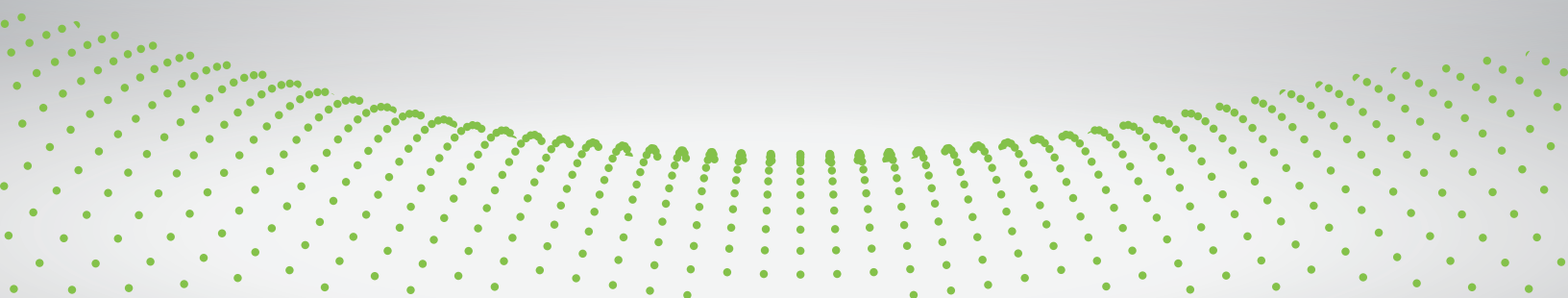
SSL certificates are not only for online shops. This shows search engines that your business is real and that data is protected. Google penalizes sites without an SSL certificate.

Validate your SSL Certificate

- ☐ Test SSL certificate and confirm it is valid and trustworthy, use online SSL certificate checkers.
- ☐ Redirect HTTP requests to HTTPS pages.
- ☐ Check SSL Certificate expiration date.
- ☐ Confirm you have access to renew SSL Certificate.

Page Speed

Page speed is a ranking factor for search engines. Below are some items you can look out for and try to do to speed up your website.



Test Page Load Speed

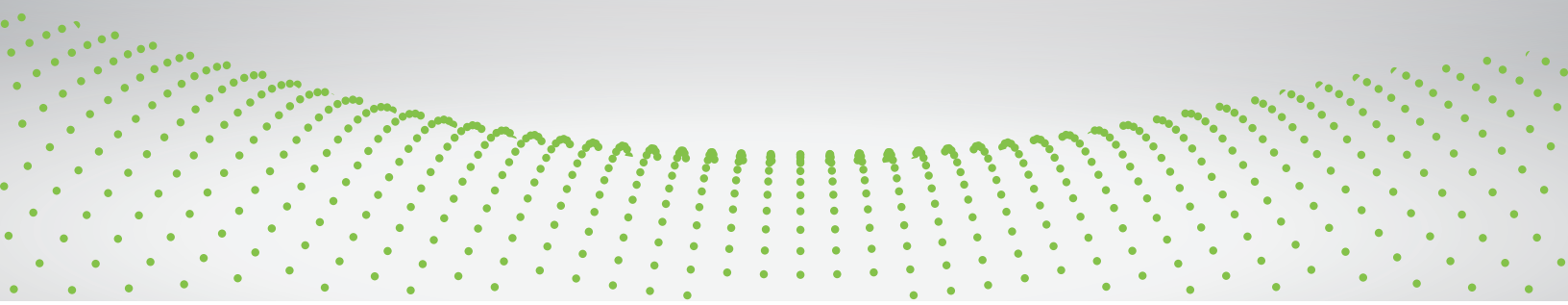
- ☐ Use online speed checks for both desktop and mobile version.
- ☐ Identify and correct errors.

Optimize for faster page loads

- ☐ Optimize images by compressing and resizing them.
- ☐ Minify CSS.
- ☐ Minify JavaScript files.
- ☐ Use caching tools.
- ☐ Use CDN when possible to load images and other resources.

Traffic Monitoring

A website is never complete. It is important to know how much traffic you get each month, where it is coming from and identify what to focus on to make it better.



Setup Google Traffic Monitoring Tools

- ☐ Setup Google Analytics.
- ☐ Setup Google Search Console.
- ☐ Make sure you own the Google account that is linked to Google Analytics and Search Console.

Monitor Your Traffic

- ☐ Identify your entry and exit pages. Which pages people come in and which pages are the last page people visit on your site?
- ☐ Identify your referral sources, where your traffic is coming from.
- ☐ Establish goals and monitor if traffic goes to your goal pages (usually check-out, thank you and form submission pages).
- ☐ Identify which search terms go to your website.
- ☐ Identify if your social media, PPC and email marketing drives traffic to your site.
- ☐ Identify how much traffic is direct or from referral sources.
- ☐ Monitor to see if traffic goes up or down.
- ☐ See how many unique and returning visitors you receive.
- ☐ Update your site based on your findings.

Compliance

It is important to protect your site, follow best practices and clearly explain what you do with captured information.

Privacy Policy

- ☐ All sites need a privacy policy, and if you collect information from users via forms or other methods, it should explain what you do with that information.
- ☐ Don't use an exact copy from another site, it should be tailored for your site

Terms of Use

- ☐ Add a terms of use page which outlines the rules and terms to use your site. This limits your liability.

Cookies

- ☐ If you collect cookies you may want to add a notice stating this as some countries now legally require it.

Email Marketing

- ☐ If you do email marketing, make sure you use your own email list and have authorization to send emails to these email addresses.
- ☐ All emails sent out via email marketing need to show your contact information and instructions on how to unsubscribe.

Images and content source

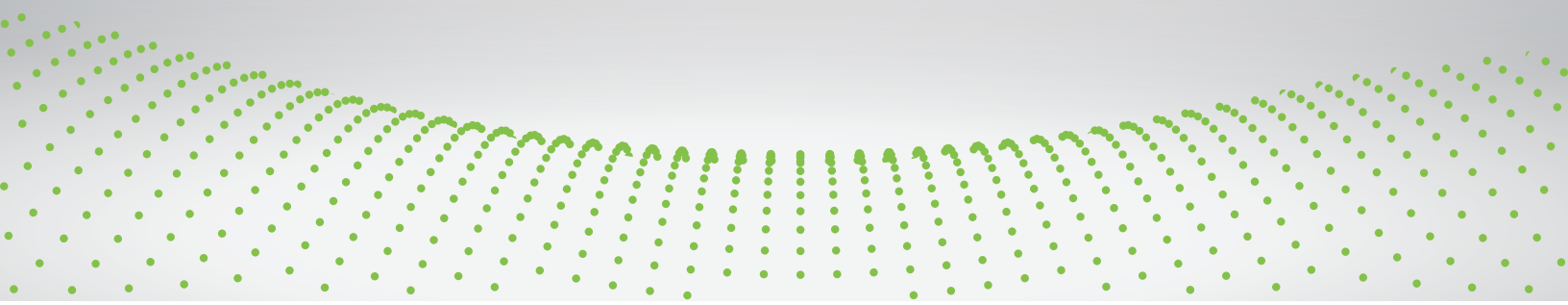
- ☐ When using images from a 3rd party, verify that you have permission to use them.
- ☐ Only use images that are royalty free so you don't have to pay additional fees per use after acquiring them.
- ☐ All content should be yours or used with permission by the author. Do not copy content from other websites without permission.

PCI Compliance

- ☐ When selling products and services or receive payment online, the website needs to be PCI compliant with customer's personal and payment information.

Web Hosting

Not all web hosting providers are the same, and each site has different needs. You want to use a good hosting provider that you can trust and is dependable.



Who manages it

- ☐ Always have someone trustworthy and easy to reach manages your web hosting.
- ☐ Write down your user and password to access your web hosting provider in a safe place.
- ☐ Know who/what company hosts your website and have their contact information
- ☐ It is easier if you own the hosting agreement directly with the web hosting provider.

Backups

- ☐ Verify that your website is being backed up either by the web hosting company, via a 3rd party solution or being done manually on a regular basis
- ☐ Check to see that you always have a recent backup of your site available.

Monitoring

- ☐ All websites should be monitored with a notification system for when a site goes down.
- ☐ Identify who is responsible for monitoring your website, your hosting provider, a 3rd party service or yourself.

Recovery plan

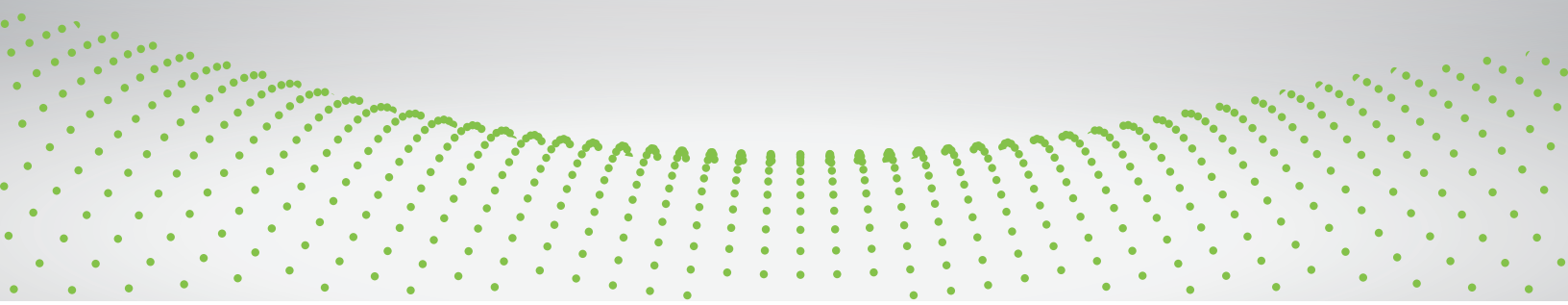
- ☐ All websites need a recovery plan in case there is a server failure, hosting provider failure, data failure or any other type of failure.
- ☐ The recovery plan is designed to bring the site back up as soon as possible.

Tech Support

- ☐ Understand who is responsible to provide technical support for your website. Is it provided by your web hosting company, a 3rd party service, yourself or your web team?
- ☐ Understand what is covered under the support agreement?
- ☐ Have your tech support team contact information readily available.

Security

Websites can be hacked but there are steps that you can take to prevent this.



Website & Server Access

- ☐ Identify who has access to your website and your web hosting provider.
- ☐ Require them to use strong passwords.
- ☐ Remove access from people who shouldn't have access anymore.
- ☐ It is better if passwords are updated regularly.

Firewall

- ☐ It is recommended to have a firewall for your website which prevents some
- ☐ methods of hacking via port numbers and other ways.
- ☐ Close all ports that are not needed.
- ☐ Restrict Server access to specific IP addresses when possible.

WordPress Security

- ☐ Check your WordPress website version number and confirm that it is updated to the latest stable version.
- ☐ Review all of your plugins and update them to the latest version
- ☐ If possible, change the default URL to access the control panel to manage your website.
- ☐ Delete all default users and create new users

Database Access

- ☐ Access to database should be restricted and not open to the internet.
- ☐ Restrict access to specific IPs if possible.
- ☐ Change default port numbers if possible.

Your Domain

Your website is found by the domain name. If this expires and you don't know where to renew it your website will be down.

Domain Ownership

- ☐ It is recommended that you own the domain and it is registered under your name.
- ☐ If you use a 3rd party to manage your domain you can still be listed as the owner.

Domain Hosting

- ☐ Know where your domain is registered.
- ☐ Have your user and password to access your domain control panel.
- ☐ Set your domain to auto-renewal so that it renews using your credit card on file when it expires.

Domain Expiration

- ☐ Check for when your domain expires.
- ☐ It is better for SEO if you have multiple years left before expiration.

If you find that you are missing a lot of the above information or tasks in your website, you may want to share this with your team or think about hiring a team that will guide you on how to address these items.

NearSource has been helping businesses like yours for more than 10 years so don't hesitate to reach out to use for help.

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<http://www.nearsource.net>