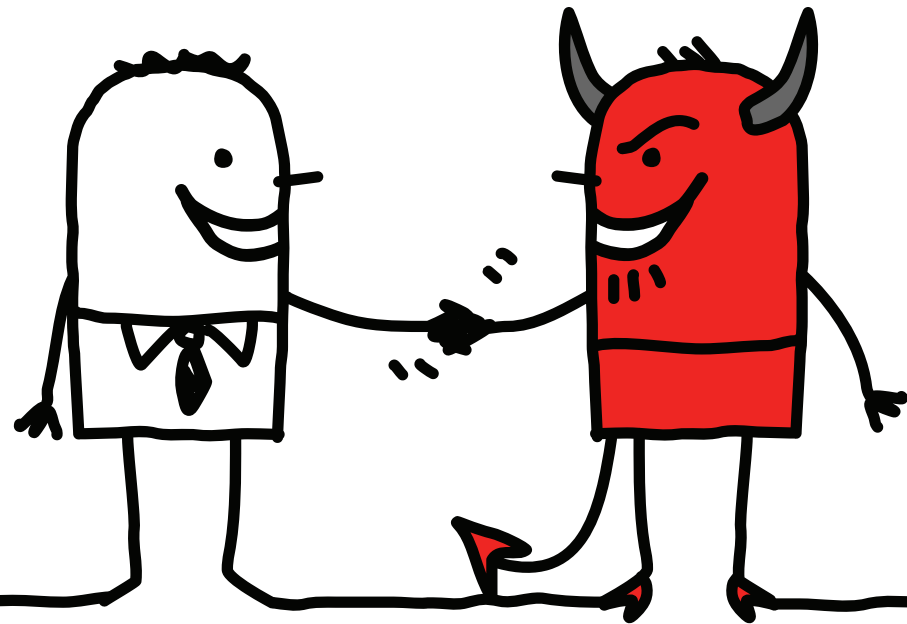


The **7** Deadly Sins of Websites that Fail



by George Ihring, Juice Interactive

Introduction

We're always being asked about our top tips on what to do – and what to avoid – when building a website. Not exactly sins! But hey, it makes a good headline. The fact is, our years of experience mean we've come across just about every major misstep you can make. By setting down

the main ones here, we're hoping to help you avoid losing out to easily preventable mistakes. The great news is that most of the tips presented here don't necessarily cost a lot to implement, but they do take some careful consideration. They're also in no particular

order; we think they all deserve attention. And remember, if you have any questions about building a profitable website, just give us a call or email us and we'll be happy to help you out:

talk@juuce.com / 02 (9976 5777)

So if you are thinking of building, or re-doing your own site, read on and save yourself a lot of pain and gold coins.



*The 7 Deadly Sins
of Websites that Fail*

1. Choosing the Cheapest Hosting.

You'd be forgiven for thinking all hosts are equal. That means the cheapest is champion, right?

Not so fast. Think of your favourite budget airline: how many helpful extras do they throw in? It pays to spend more.

Here's what you'll want to consider.

Reliability

Make sure your host is reputable. Make sure it has minimal downtime. In fact, check all downtime is scheduled – and communicated to you – so you can plan for outages.

Support

When something goes wrong (and it will) how easily can you get support? Waiting 48 hours for your ticket to make its way through a Byzantine support system will hit you in the pocket.

Features

The better hosting accounts will offer you personalised email – a must for any serious business – and plenty of tools to play with and full control of your account.



Speed

Remember this truth – if your site is slow, your customers will go elsewhere.

Many cheap hosting providers manage rock-bottom prices by using low performance machines with outdated hardware. Low performance machines which you'll be sharing with thousands of other websites. Think of it like this: ever had a shower while everyone else is using the hot water?

Location

Hosting abroad will always mean a slower user experience. This is because the distance data has to travel affects the speed customers can access it. And slow loading times, as we know, mean fast exits.

And there's more. Search engines base the location of your website on the location of your server. Aussie business? Then it makes sense to have your server here.

Remember, you can always get in touch with us if you'd like to improve your hosting performance.

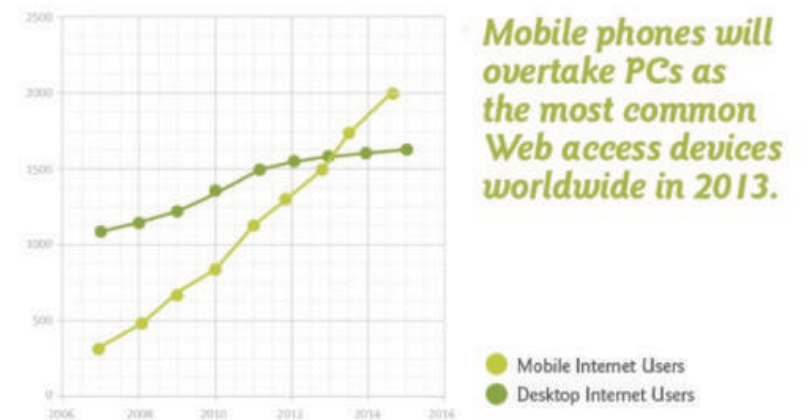


2. Not considering the mobile user.

You know that guy who walks into you because he's on his phone? Mobile internet. The commuter who forgets to get off the bus? Mobile internet. The driver who misses the green light? Yup, you guessed it, mobile internet.

How can we put this? Mobile. Is. Big.

It's impossible to overstate this one. Make sure your customers can easily find and browse your site on their device.



Want more info?

[Check out this article we wrote earlier.](#)



3. Not planning for post-launch promotion

You've spent massive amounts of time and consideration on creative layouts, functionality and user interface. Fine.

Now you need a plan and a budget for post-launch marketing. Yes, in-site SEO setup is important, but it's just a piece of the pie. And with so much competition you need a clear plan for getting traffic to the site. Launching and "waiting for them to come" is not a realistic plan!

Online and off-line marketing, social media, blogging, price comparison sites, PPC advertising, organic SEO; the list goes on – just make sure you're on top of it. Back in the day, being on the internet was enough. Not any more. With so many competitors in every category and Niche, you'll need to work many avenues to get that traffic flowing.



4. Making assumptions about keywords & search phrases

Our customers often tell us what the keywords for their market are. After all, they know their business better than we do, right?

The problem here is that professionals in any given field often use a closed vocabulary, which can be significantly different from that of their customers. And we know that even a small difference in search phrases can lead to a massive swing in search volume.

Take selling cars. The difference in monthly search volume between the phrases, 'used cars' and 'second-hand cars' is a whopping searches. 'Used cars' attracts four times as many. The lesson? Don't guess what your target market is looking for – find out for sure.

As always, it's best to stick to common phrases and word. What would your mother search for when she looks for your business?

Search volume isn't the only factor. In competitive sectors, as most are, you could find less competitive phrases with enough volume to fill your business with work.

Advertising in less competitive zones is cheaper too.



5. Not taking content seriously

Yes, we can all write. And yes, we know our own business better than anyone else.

Unfortunately, not all of us write well. Especially when it's about our own. Which is why there are all kinds of copywriters, proofreaders and word-smiths involved in every serious project.

Good copy doesn't cost the earth and it will make a massive difference in your professionalism.

Sure, do it yourself if you feel up to it, but give yourself enough time to do it properly. And always, always have someone else read it before you hit the big red publish button.

Think of this way.

Search engines mostly rank your site based on

your writing about targeted phrases. It's true it includes images, videos, and social media, but if your foundation copy isn't up to scratch, you're not going to be ranking highly.

Customers will read your site if they are researching your product, so it pays to make a good impression. Bad copy always looks sloppy and unprofessional – not encouraging for people looking to do business with you.

Copywriters will not only put together error-free, easily-read sentences – most will also structure the content for better SEO performance.



6. Being hazy on your goals

There's a reason you've gone to the trouble of setting up a website.

Most websites out there are structured around a typical model, or around what the competition is doing. This isn't a bad thing by any means but not exactly a strategic approach. This usually ends up in a random, unguided experience. Most of you have a website for a reason. What are those reasons exactly? What do you want the site to do for you? When a user goes onto your website, what specific actions would you like them to take? Call you on the phone, like you on Facebook, fill a form, send you some money?

If you define the main action aims, Layout, content structure and calls to action should all be set up around this main aim.

Now, whether the end goal is a call, a 'Like,' a completed form, an email address or an order, it's up to you to define the user journey clearly.

That means layout, content structure and calls to action should all act as a funnel towards your goal.



7. Being all things to all people

Avoid trying to cover too many bases. It's always more sensible to narrow things down on-line.

Web users search for specific services and specific products. So expect more searches for 'bicycle brakes' than 'sports store.' In fact, a real enthusiast will search specifically for a 'Shimano Saint M820 disc brake.'

And that's why specialist websites almost always outrank a 'bit-of-everything' website.

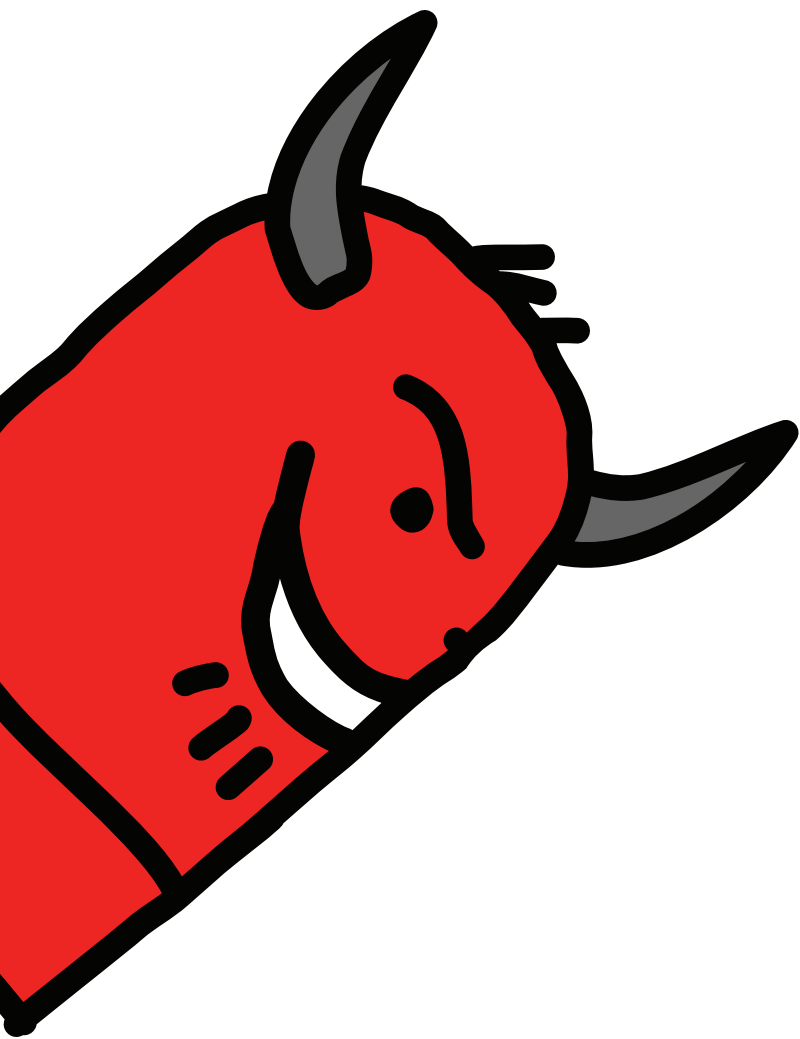
If a customer lands on your specialist site, the chances of them finding what they're looking for is much higher. Attention spans are short,

and their stay on your website will be too, if it isn't immediately relevant.

You'll be viewed as a specialist, which gives you even more credibility.

One final tip: if your business does actually cover a lot of categories and you're finding it difficult to get traffic or ranking, you might want to consider splitting your website into multiple sites that targeting individual categories.





Thanks for reading.

Hopefully found these tips helpful. Got some tips of your own? We'd love to hear. Let us know and we'll add them to a future post.

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