CHECKLIST

Website launch checklist

The checks we run before a WordPress or TYPO3 site goes live, in the order we run them. The first two sections prevent most of the damage we are called in to repair.

> For the person responsible for the launch. Tick a line only once you have seen it working, not when someone says it is done. For the technical ones, ask your developer or agency to show you.

Want us to run it for you? Start a project brief →

PROJECT _____ WEBSITE _____ CHECKED BY _____ DATE _____

Before launch day 01

- [ ] One person owns the launch and signs off on this list
- [ ] Domain registrar, DNS, hosting and email access written down, with who holds each
  If nobody can log in to the DNS, nobody can launch.
- [ ] Content freeze date agreed, so the old site stops changing
- [ ] Launch window chosen, outside your busiest hours
- [ ] Rollback plan written: how to switch back, and who decides

URLs and redirects 02

- [ ] Old site crawled, every URL exported, documents and PDFs included
  PDFs rank and attract links on their own.
- [ ] Each old URL mapped to exactly one new address
- [ ] Permanent (301) redirects, one hop each, no chains
- [ ] Every old URL requested and confirmed to land on a live page
  A spreadsheet that says the map is complete is not a test.
- [ ] Internal links point to new URLs, not to redirects
- [ ] One canonical hostname: https, with www and non-www resolving to it

Search engines 03

- [ ] “Discourage search engines” unticked (Settings, Reading)
  The most expensive launch mistake in WordPress.
- [ ] robots.txt read: blocks nothing you need, points to the sitemap
- [ ] No stray noindex tag on any template
- [ ] One H1 per page, headings in order without skipped levels
- [ ] A unique title and meta description on every page
- [ ] English and French pages linked as translations (hreflang)
  Bilingual sites only.
- [ ] XML sitemap lists only real pages: no drafts, staging URLs or attachments
- [ ] Structured data tested and valid

Content 04

- [ ] Every page proofread aloud, and by someone who did not write it
- [ ] The hidden text checked: form labels, errors, confirmations, buttons, emails, page titles
- [ ] Every French page fully French, including error messages and dates
- [ ] French typography: spaces before ? ! : ; and « » quotes
- [ ] No placeholder text or images left
- [ ] Links checked: none broken, none pointing to staging
- [ ] Downloads open, and are the current version
- [ ] Privacy policy, cookie notice and legal pages linked, not only published

Forms and email 05

- [ ] Each form submitted for real, and the notification received
  A thank-you message only proves the front end works.
- [ ] Right recipient, all field values intact, a reply-to you can answer
- [ ] Confirmation to the sender arrives, if there is one
- [ ] Spam folder checked on several mail providers
- [ ] SPF, DKIM and DMARC records verified for the sending domain
- [ ] Error paths tested: empty required fields give clear errors, announced to screen readers
- [ ] Spam protection stops bots without blocking real people

Accessibility 06

- [ ] Automated scan run on each template
  Tools catch about a third of the issues.
- [ ] Every template used with the keyboard alone, focus always visible, nothing traps you
- [ ] Contrast: 4.5:1 for text, 3:1 for large text and controls
- [ ] Meaningful alt text; decorative images have empty alt
- [ ] Usable at 200% zoom and at 320 px wide
- [ ] Main templates checked with a screen reader
- [ ] Result recorded per criterion against your standard (WCAG 2.2 AA, AODA, SGQRI 008)

Speed 07

- [ ] Core Web Vitals on the home page, a content page, a listing and a form, on a mid-range phone
- [ ] Largest Contentful Paint under 2.5 s, Interaction to Next Paint under 200 ms, Layout Shift under 0.1
- [ ] Images in modern formats, sized to how they display, with width and height set
- [ ] Lazy loading below the fold, never on the largest image at the top
- [ ] Caching and compression on; tested on a slow connection

Browsers and devices 08

- [ ] Current Chrome, Safari, Firefox and Edge
- [ ] Safari on a real iPhone, Chrome on a real Android phone
- [ ] Dark mode, if your visitors use it
- [ ] Print preview of a long page and a table
- [ ] Favicon and home screen icon; the logo links to the home page
- [ ] Share preview checked where links will be shared

Analytics and privacy 09

- [ ] Analytics installed before launch, firing on every template
- [ ] Consent banner behaves as the privacy policy says, and does not silently block analytics
- [ ] What counts as a conversion defined, and one seen in the reports
- [ ] Search Console verified; change of address used if the domain changed

Security and backups 10

- [ ] HTTPS everywhere, no mixed content warnings
- [ ] No administrator named “admin”; test users deleted
- [ ] Two-factor authentication for administrators; login attempts limited
- [ ] Core, theme and plugins up to date; unused ones removed
- [ ] Full backup of files and database, stored off the server
- [ ] Backup restored somewhere else, and the site comes up
  Until you have restored one, you only assume it works.
- [ ] Uptime monitoring alerts a real person

Launch day 11

- [ ] DNS TTL lowered a day ahead
- [ ] Certificate valid on every hostname
- [ ] Staging addresses replaced everywhere in the database
- [ ] Caches cleared; key pages and every form tested on the live domain
- [ ] XML sitemap submitted in Search Console

The first week 12

- [ ] Search Console checked for crawl errors and coverage changes
- [ ] 404s from real visitors reviewed, and redirects added
- [ ] Indexing progressing; a dip that does not recover traced back to redirects or noindex
- [ ] Forms still delivering
- [ ] Backups running on schedule