

How to Do a Website Upgrade - Action Plan.

By Paul Barrs

<http://www.paulbarrs.com>

Internet Business Training for your

Home Internet Business

A website upgrade should only be done for one of three different reasons...

(i) You feel that your site needs a new look.

(ii) By making a change in the type of the content you're going to deliver and by changing the design, you'll better highlight your new content, or

(iii) your goals for the site have changed and the new template will help achieve them.

Sometimes all three reasons.

Here are the keys -

Step One: Backup EVERYTHING!

For HTML / standard PHP websites, this means downloading EVERYTHING via FTP to your hard drive.

For Wordpress Websites this means exporting all Pages and Posts using the WordPress Tools / Export Tool.

Also be sure to backup the database. This can be done with the standard WordPress backup option (Admin panel / Tools / Backup). I have my database automatically backed up and mailed to my Gmail account each week.

You also need to back up via FTP everything in the "theme" WP Content Directory. Yes, EVERYTHING.

One done, BACK UP your backup (this is just good practice, but not necessary). I have my backup on my PC, but also a copy of that on an external hard drive.

Note: These things should be done on a regular basis anyway, at minimum on a monthly basis.

Step Two: Install Wordpress and / or your new Wordpress Theme.

Updating the theme is most easily done by utilising the free WordPress Unload and Install function in your dashboard. If you're doing a complete WordPress install then the free training videos at <http://www.paulbarrs.net> will help guide you.

If you are generating traffic through search engines (even small amounts), then DO NOT delete any current pages or posts. If you are not, then delete them all and start again.

It's also always a good idea to use the 'Maintenance Mode' plugin and create a custom display page so that your changes are not viewed in real time, and visitors are aware that you've got some scheduled maintenance going on.

Step Three: Review the changes to your pages and posts that the new template has made.

It's vitally important that you go and REVIEW how your old content looks in your new pages.

Check the pages first. Do you need to create custom "Widgets" for your home page to display properly? (Some premium themes require this)

I always recommend that if you're working with a brand new theme that you "play around with it" on either an old domain that you don't care about or a sub-domain on your new website. If you install it on a WordPress platform that has no content you can "import" your Pages and Posts Export File (from Step One) to see how it will look and what "custom" modifications will be required.

Next step is to check the posts. Use the <--more--> function to make sure that your posts appear with sufficient summaries to generate attention in the archives and categories or tags summary pages. It's important from an SEO perspective to use the <-- more --> tag within your posts and pages so that displayed content in WordPress' auto-generated summary pages so that content is very different to actual blog posts and pages.

Next, go back through and check that all posts and pages have at least one "Tag" (no more than three each) and one "Category" each (just one). Make sure that your new tags and categories reflect the sites new goals and objectives.

Step Four: TEST any subscription forms; RSS feed links, product order links or links to Fan Pages, Youtube etc.

Make sure also that your new CONTACT form works.

Step Five: Make sure that you have both a Site Map and an XML site map, also a robots.txt file

The following plugins can help with that:

- Dagon Design Sitemap Generator (Can do both site maps)
- KB Robots.txt

Step Six: Ensure that you are registered / listed in Google Webmaster Tools and have either Google Analytics or some other tracking data embedded within your site.

Open your site up again and have fun 😊

How often Should You Update Your Website?

By Paul Barrs

Simple answer... each 18 – 24 months.

But of course there's a lot more to it than that, and the time between one website upgrade and the next is more determined by consumer expectations and trends than by dates.

The next simplest answer is... when it starts to look old.

I mean, yours isn't the **only** website you ever look at is it? Do you ever visit your competition and take a look at what they're up to? If you don't, it's a good idea.

The primary considerations are actually even easier to ascertain... you update your website when it stops working as well as it could to achieve its goals. Simple.

And that's why I made the decision to change mine recently. I was tired of my site "looking like all the others" (and I mean in terms of content rather than design). I was tired of delivering the same old same old and not being "different". As much as I hate to admit it, over the last 12 months Paulbarrs.com has been selling the same online marketing story that most other Blogs have been selling – meaning – you could get the same stuff anywhere!

Ouch. That hurts. But in honesty, there is awesomeness.

Let me explain...

I watch the forums where my target audience gather religiously. I watch to see what they are talking about. I watch to see what they are asking about. I have Google Alerts set up and I get notifications of new websites sent to me to see what people **want** and what they **get**. Here's what I've noticed –

In this "IM" Internet Business world... we're all selling THE SAME THING!

But is that so bad? If that's what people want then it should be OK to give it to them, yes? Sure, but that's not the problem...

The problem is we're not only "selling" the same thing, we're also GIVING IT TO THEM IN THE SAME WAY!

Which means neither you nor I nor Tom, Dick or Harriet down the road is any different than the other. And "our customers" just go wherever they want, from one to another or to any one of

literally THOUSANDS OF OTHER websites all delivering the same content the same old way. It makes no difference whether it's via online delivery, video delivery or email delivery. It's the same.

Yawn!

And so it became time for me to make a change.

Doing this however is not a one click "install-new-WordPress-theme" process as some would have you believe. Which brings me back to my original question (and my best answer right up front).... If YOU ever have the need to upgrade your website as I have done (for example if you decide that being the "same" is no longer what you want to do) then here's an ACTION PLAN that I created for you (based on the one that I crated for myself) to help guide you through the process so that nothing is left to chance.

It's yours free. Download it, print it and USE it. Setting the right plan in motion for your website could literally be worth thousands and thousands of dollars to you.

Want more help to build your business?



The Home of Internet Business Training – <http://www.paulbarrs.com>