

Optimize Your WordPress Website with Plugins

Transcript and 10 Point Checklist David Vogelpohl

Want to gain as much knowledge as possible out of Marketing Speak? Read on below for a full transcript of this episode, as well as a **10 point checklist** that gives the next, real steps you can take to take your marketing to the next level.

MARKETING SPEAK 

HOSTED BY **STEPHAN SPENCER**

“If you think about it from an email perspective, if you’re going for sales, ask for the sale. The number one thing that I’ve seen missing from a lot of nurture emails is that there’s no call to action and there’s no special offer.”

DAVID VOGELPOHL

10 STEPS YOU CAN TAKE TODAY

Want to step up your marketing game? Here are 10 steps that can move you closer to your goals – today.

- A/B test new ideas. If you think something will work better, that doesn't mean that is what your customers want. Get the numbers before making the change.
- When considering CDN's, the best option is going to be different based on the location and volume of your client base. Research your options before choosing.
- To get WP Engine, use the special coupon code SS20, which gives you 20% off your first payment. If you get an annual plan, it's 12 months for the price of 8.
- If you have ads on your site, testing them to see what is bringing in the most income should be a priority. Rotate & track them yourself, or use a plugin that does it for you.
- Check with your hosting service to see if they offer automatic backups and full website restore points opposed to just rolling back one page at a time.
- Consider your needs before choosing a host. If you are using WordPress, it's important to think about if you want and need the benefits of a dedicated WordPress host.
- If you are used to using heat maps to track user interest on your site, consider a more interactive option like Fullstory.
- When choose a company for backing up your information, always make sure it's on an outside server, so if something happens to yours, it won't affect your data.
- If you have questions, reach out to David on Twitter @davidvmc. He also offers training on how to use their tools to make your life a little easier.
- While creating your email campaigns, always add valuable information. If your ultimate goal is the sale, you can add tips or facts about the product that your leads may not know.

Transcript

S: I'm Stephan Spencer and you're listening to Marketing Speak! Welcome to another exciting episode and today, I have with us, David Vogelpohl. David is the VP of Web Strategy at WP Engine. WP Engine is a premium-managed WordPress host that are designed for speed and reliability. I've heard great things about

“he is an expert in hosting, online marketing, and WordPress. In fact, he's been working in the hosting space-the online marketing space for 20 years”

their technology, service levels, and everything but what really appeals to me about sharing David with you, guys, is that he is an expert in hosting, online marketing, and WordPress. In fact, he's been working in the hosting space-the online marketing space for 20 years and in WordPress development for over six years. He was the founder and owner of a WordPress agency that specialized in online marketing for five years. He's worked with hundreds of

sites, with every monetization model imaginable pretty much including Adbase, social networking, membership sites—you name it. As a WordPress expert, we need to learn a lot more about how to optimize our WordPress sites not just for speed, reliability, and security but also for monetization, for better marketing, better SEO, and so forth. Welcome, David! It's great to have you on the show!



D: Thanks, Stephan! I'm glad to be here! Thanks for inviting me. I'm really looking forward to diving in and talking about some WordPress goodies!

S: Yeah, we're going to geek out a bit so just a word of warning for our listeners that this is going to be a little bit geekier than usual but you're going to really enjoy it. Hopefully, we'll save your bacon because if you are at all vulnerable for like a security vulnerability or for a performance issue, let's see, end up getting a lot more traffic, you're more successful with your online marketing and you haven't tuned your server or you haven't used the right plugins, or you've used maybe the wrong plugins, you're going to thank us later. So,

let's dive in-David, can you just give us a bit more background because you told me before we started the recording that you've been in WordPress development for a while now and you've been working with WP Engine in a consulting capacity for you, joined on as their VP of Web Strategy and has worked with all these different types of sites and all these different types of monetization models, what are some of the learnings that you got from this wide variety of different sites and models?

D: Yeah, it's a great question. I'll just give a little context—I'm not a developer, I classify myself as a technical marketer so I'm a marketer, much like a lot of the folks who are listening to this podcast. I'm very technical so I like to try to bridge the gap between what you might address from a development perspective and then what you might be doing as an online marketer. It's a little bit more DIY-focused so I'm definitely going to geek out today but generally, I'm going to keep it connected to a train of thought that only marketers can follow. Generally speaking, so what did I learn during all that? I worked in-house for most of my career until I started the WordPress agency and I remember when I started the WordPress

agency thinking, "Geez! I know a lot about online marketing-how web site strategy works and how ad channels work"-and I felt like I was in a great place of knowledge. I felt I was really smart, I knew a lot of stuff, and I had a high degree of confidence. That confidence was eroded within about the first three weeks of handling more agency of a broader scope of customers and tackling the problems that they had. What I realized was that, hey, look, I really didn't know nearly as much as I thought I did! I would have scored myself maybe 8 or 9 on the knowledge scale and in some cases, 10. I was probably, actually, from the broader scope closer to a 2 or 3. As I, again, have been in the industry for 20 years now, I looked at different stages of my career-the things I learned-and that, for me, was a really important stage because when you work in an agency environment and work with different types of clients with different types of problems, it really helps illustrate the holes of your own personal knowledge base so that time working within the agency environment, I really got a much broader scope of the types of problems that businesses were facing and the ways to go about solving them from the website or the online advertising perspective and so, for me, what I learned was pretty much everything in that time frame. How membership sites worked, how certain types of e-commerce sites worked, LeadGen-a lot of these areas I had experience in before but seeing the wide variety really helped open my eyes to how nuance the solutions have to be for the industry, for the niche, and even for the particular brand. It was a really

“I really got a much broader scope of the types of problems that businesses were facing and the ways to go about solving them from the website or the online advertising perspective and so, for me, what I learned was pretty much everything in that time frame. How membership sites worked, how certain types of e-commerce sites worked, LeadGen-a lot of these areas”

humbling experience for me to come from a place of strength in terms of my confidence and my knowledge and realize how much of the gaps are there. Over the next five years of working in the agency mode, again and again and repeatedly testing our kinds of different business models really helps get a much better understanding. Now after that time, it's been six years since I started that path, I still kind of come from a spot of, hey, look, I really don't know everything there is to know, of course, and really, the lesson that taught me was humility and the sense of like, you really don't know and you have to kind of go in and test what your experience has shown you, what you've read, and what may be a best practices but the reality is, you have to kind of find what works for you in a particular situation.

S: Right, so there are many types of monetization models and business models for an online business. We just mentioned a few of them over the last few minutes like, ad-based, social networking—although I'm not sure what the monetization model of that would be, maybe it's ad-based or maybe it is a monthly fee or something like that—membership sites, monthly fee, e-commerce sites selling product, affiliate



sites, and LeadGen. Address the spectrum. What are all the different monetization models that you have come across? I know you mentioned that Bitcoin is one that you haven't dived into yet but and neither have I, frankly, but can we just kind of go over the spectrum?

D: Yeah, and I know we're kind of chatting as part of the podcast here and we've kind of talked about Bitcoin as a kind of a monetization model but in a sense, it's just kind of a payment method, right? It's no different than a credit card or PayPal. I haven't actually tried to collect money with Bitcoin yet. That's just might be the one hole in my experience so far but I guess maybe there's an open debate about whether that's a future strategy. Anyway, the types of monetization models on a high level that I work with certainly are ad-based, right? If you're an online marketer, you pretty much know that kind of falls for the most part, probably, for primary camps, right? You have CPM, where you're charging per thousand impressions; you have CPC, where you're charging per click; you have a flat rate, where you just charge a price in this banner ad in a certain position for a period of time; and then, you have a performance-based, which is, primarily, affiliates. That would be the ad channel. The next monetization model, of course, would be transactional. This is, obviously, things like e-commerce and certainly here at WP Engine and other

brands I have worked with in the past have been more subscription-based. The final most common model would be lead-based so, you're B2B, or an accountant, or a lawyer, or something and you're collecting leads and then you're going to have some sort of sales person who will follow up on that lead. For the most part, in my experience, the list has covered pretty much the three main types of ways people monetize so this is some sort of ad whether it's performance-based or, you know, just money-based. They try to have a transaction or they try to generate the leads but for me, those are the three primary monetization models. Everything, for the most part, falls under those three umbrellas.

S: Okay, right. So, let's take, LeadGen, as an example here for a second. LeadGen, generally, is to generate leads for yourself and then give those to your sales people but for some businesses, they exist solely so that they can create leads to sell to others outside like, for example, an education LeadGen content site, or they might be in the business of buying leads and there might be some arbitrage sort of situation going on there, or there are more creative ways to do LeadGen-based businesses online than just simply generating leads for your consulting company, or for your accountancy, or law firm, or whatever, right?

“When you think about a company like that and so what is their purpose in life-and not to call out their particular strategies for everyone to share that, but in general, what a LeadGen company might do is they might go out and buy, essentially, arbitrage traffic, right? They might buy search traffic for a particular search term, collect the lead of the person who might be interested in that particular type of product”

D: Yeah, totally! I mean, that's certainly a big space. I mean, for those of you that have had the opportunity to go to LeadsCon, where there's an entire conference with thousands of people who go just around LeadGen and a big part of that is certainly, of course, creating your own leads form on your website for the lawyers, accountants, and whatnot but then there's also the side where people are collecting leads, which they then, basically, sell to other people. There's actually a company here in Austin a few blocks away called Home Improvement Leads and they specialize- they are, I believe, a sister company of All Web Leads but they specialize in home improvement leads and a large part of that are things like

window replacements. When you think about a company like that and so what is their purpose in life-and not to call out their particular strategies for everyone to share that, but in general, what LeadGen company might do is they might go out and buy, essentially, arbitrage traffic, right? They might buy search traffic for a particular search term, collect the lead of the person who might be interested in that particular type of product and their offers can sometimes be, “Hey, get ten quotes and fill out this lead, or get ten quotes for a new poll, or ten quotes for replacement windows for your house!” and then, they've given you some sort of bait, a lead magnet or some reason that you want to enter information. You then,

enter the information and generally what they'll do and you, as an online marketer, you can make these sites and sell leads or you can buy leads from these sites. What these companies will then do is, they'll then, essentially, sell that leads to other people. Now, the way that you charge for that as the publisher, or the way that you pay for that is, in kind of a sense the advertiser or the person buying the leads, it really depends. One way they'll do it is, they'll sell exclusively so, "I'm just going to sell this lead to you and nobody else." The other thing that they'll do is, they'll sell it in groups—"So, hey, look, I'm selling this lead but I'm giving it to ten people," and then, essentially, if you're the person buying the lead, it becomes a race to call the customer because the first person to get them on the phone is going to have a much better chance. You'll pay different rates, of course—if it's exclusive, it's going to be a higher price than if it's distributed to multiple people. They also do hybrids of that where they'll send it to somebody and charge them more money if it goes to them first and then they'll wait ten minutes or twenty minutes and then they'll get it to the second batch so from that sense, part of the LeadGen community, it's about collecting the leads and selling them and distributing to other people and, really, the trick with that and in any type of LeadGen is, getting in contact with the customers as quickly as possible after that lead is generated—so, again, if you're selling or buying those leads, you're going to pay more or charge more based on if it's exclusive, or if you're the kind of first person in the chain of people that get those leads but they'll certainly resell those leads over and over again. I guess that the other half of that would be, of course, the LeadGen effort from individual company's perspective—the lawyers, the accountants, and whatnot. Obviously, that's about distribution but certainly the elements of calling quickly and following up with leads is as super important. The other aspect to this, really, is email marketing and nurture campaigns like, once you capture that lead, what can you do to continue to get it going for that customer space, continue to make them engage, exposed to your brand, and do so in a way that ultimately leads them to make a purchase? A buddy of mine, a gentleman named Brian Massey, is a conversion scientist. You've probably seen him in a PubCon or Affiliate Summit or a bunch of other places, but he has a little slogan about nurture campaigns in the sense that, basically, you're nurturing the customer to death, right? You just you're sending them emails that aren't working and I think that's one of the big challenges with LeadGen. In advertising, one of the basic principles is reaching frequency—how many people can I talk to? How frequently can I talk to them? If you increase both of those, ultimately, you'll have more success and the kind of the principle behind the nurture campaign is frequency, right? You're frequently getting further with the customer but one of the biggest challenges I found with nurture campaigns is doing it in a way that has measurable results so you know you're getting a return out of that and that you can test new approaches and measure the results of those approaches to make sure they're more effective but when you dial it in, it super powerful.

S: So, what would be some examples? Like a really killer lead nurture campaign that doesn't nurture them to death and that just crushes it for, maybe, your company, maybe for a client company, or just company—heard or case study at a conference or whatever?

D: Well, the best nurture campaigns in terms of performance that I've had exposure to and seen actually come from the niche of online marketing. This is going to confuse the heck out of you, old school online marketers, but it's called INternet Marketing, with a capital I and a capital N, and is also referred to as Info Marketing. These are people who tend to run membership sites where you, basically, create a membership or buy a membership and what you get with that membership is, a video course. Now, the video course may be multiple videos or whatever. It can be on any topic. If you get a ClickBank, there's a lot of these membership-type sites that are in that affiliate network, they were kind of specialized in that in

“they ask for the sale. Every email, every part of their nurture is about building up to getting more revenue out of those customers”

the sense but those sites and the people in that niche have the best nurture campaigns in terms of performance I've ever seen. The entire niche is built around email-marketing and these nurture campaigns. So, what is it about them that makes them successful? Why do they see more conversion rates? From my, again, personal experience, this isn't some sort of like global surveyor or anything but why, in my experience, have I seen better success there than what a lot of traditional online marketers might think about their nurture campaign? Well, the reason is that, they ask for the sale. Every email, every part of their nurture is about building up to getting more revenue out of those customers. The entire focus of their nurture campaigns is around the sale. Now, the challenge here for a traditional business, one that's not a video course website and is more tied to a bigger brand or a more traditional company, the problem though is that, of course, with nurture campaigns, you also want to pay attention to unsubscribe rates and how the customers view your brand so if you go deploy your nurture campaign for big brands and you do it in a very sales-y way, it can have a negative reflection on you as a company. It could affect your unsubscribe rates, which could also really affect your ability to have frequency when you continue emailing these clients. You have to strike this balance between having sales in your nurture campaigns and having nurture campaigns that are fun to be part of. The ultimate goal of a nurture campaign, of course, is to get the sale and to keep the person subscribed so your goal with these nurture e-mails are really to make them look forward to getting that email and then, if they look forward to getting that then you're not as concerned about the months subscribed, of course, looking forward to it and buying kind of different things and so, again, as a marketer, you might want to say, “Okay, look, conversions are the most important thing to me and I'm going to make them more sales-oriented,” or you might say, “Look, brand awareness is more important to me so I'm not even to worry about the conversions, I just want people reading the email, seeing my brand, being exposed to it, and that's what's important to me,” so as a marketer, you kind of have to make those calls but I've seen, at least in terms of conversions, asking for the sale, making that the focus and making the newsletter build up to it with incremental

“You have to strike this balance between having sales in your nurture campaigns and having nurture campaigns that are fun to be part of. ”

offers is what I've seen to be the most successful. Now, personally, the nurture emails I like and, of course, this is a slippery slope if you're an online marketer, you know that your own opinion is the worst because you're not the buyer but, personally, I love things that keep me informed about a certain industry. Now, you can do that from an educational perspective like the best way to do your email marketing campaign is

“this is a slippery slope if you're an online marketer, you know that your own opinion is the worst because you're not the buyer but, personally, I love things that keep me informed about a certain industry. Now, you can do that from an educational perspective like the best way to do your email marketing campaign is this and that's the subject of your email, or you could do it like as a news item.”

this and that's the subject of your email, or you could do it like as a news item. One of my favorite newsletters to get is from this WordPress-oriented company and then there are plugins stuff, and they do a bunch of other stuff but they give a daily email and it's great and it runs through industry news in the WordPress community and I love it. I live and breathe every morning to get that email. I read it, I click the links on it, and every morning, that brand is reinforced. Now, it's not an email that says, “Hey, buy this plugin or buy this service or do that,” so, yeah, I'm probably not, in the long run, going to buy a lot of things as being triggered by that but the brand reinforcement every morning is really valuable so it depends on what you're going for and trying to get out of it but in terms of conversions, ask for the sale.

S: Yeah, so, let's say, that you are an accountant or a lawyer and you want to apply some of these internet marketing principles that all these membership sites and video-based training-type businesses do, what would be a really good first strategy for them to apply? I promise we'll get to the WordPress geeking out in the next question.

D: Yeah, you're right exactly but what is the first step? Well, for me, I've actually built a lot of membership sites and it probably helps people a lot of people in that niche so I do have direct interest in that niche so of course, we have a lot of them as customers over here at WP Engine, but even if you don't have connections in that niche, what I love about the niche is that you can find different lengths to go on throughout the country—there are meet-ups and things like that. There's a big conference that has been in San Diego last couple years called Traffic & Conversion Summit and it's a large conference with thousands of people and is a great place to go if you want to pick-up tips. There are regional events here in Austin—there's one called Internet Marketing Party, where a couple hundred of these folks get together every month and they give presentations and, of course, a lot of these folks will have presentations online

but really just absorbing what they teach. The reason why I love it is because they move so fast—their launches and the amount of traffic that they do, the amount of emails that they do, and the frequency they change things—and they can change things much faster than a traditional business. So, the first place I would go would be to try to get connected to some of the courses and some of the videos that people have released. If you can attend an event and really just start learning from that community because, again, the iteration speed and volume that they do is, in a sense, unparalleled in other any other parts. The lessons that they can pull out of that, you'll find it difficult than more traditional businesses. The other important thing there is to remember that, they do run fast and they don't necessarily have to support a big brand long term so you need to take what you learn with the grain of salt and don't go to the extreme. For example, one of the tips I've picked up—and this was for blogging, email, and whatnot, was, well, be controversial. Start an argument in a sense and then the argument within the community will attract attention and you'll have a viewpoint. Having a viewpoint is certainly a good important thing but starting an argument might not be the best idea for certain brands so you have to take those things with a grain of salt.

S: Yeah!

D: But the main thing is, if you think about it from an email perspective, if you're going for sales, ask for the sale. The number one thing that I've seen missing from a lot of nurture emails is that, there's no call



to action and there's no special offer. It doesn't have to be every email, maybe it should only be a few here or there, or maybe it should be just a certain part of an email but ask for the sale. I mean, that's the number one thing actually missing.

S: Yeah. Urgency and scarcity-it's another great thing. If you incorporate that into your emails, you're not

only asking for the order but you're saying, "Hey, we'll give you some extra bonuses if you're one of the first 5 or 50 people to respond to this offer," or, "If you respond by midnight tomorrow night, you'll get these bonuses. If you don't, then you're going to miss out," so get people off their butts to make a decision very quickly because otherwise, if they just put it in a I'll-think-about-it-later bucket, that's going to become the I'll-never-do-it bucket.

D: Oh yes, scarcity is huge. I mean, certainly test, test, and test some more, but I always love to bubble things down into simple bullets and, literally, just ask for the sale and try a bunch of stuff. That's kind of a lesson for every avenue of online marketing.

S: Yup. So, you mentioned Traffic & Conversion Summit. I'll reiterate that it is a great conference. I've been to it the last several years and even if you hadn't attended it, you can buy the notes from the conference from Tim Castleman. They're very extensive notes. Every session is covered even when there are multiple concurrent tracks going on. He's got a team of people who are taking copious notes throughout and then they have a really nice and really formatted PDF that they just recently came out with. It took a few weeks for them to get it all finished but yeah, it's a great conference. You definitely want to sign up for that well in advance because it sells out and I think, it's every February. You mentioned LeadsCon and we are getting to WordPress in just a second but I have not been to LeadsCon, is that a worthwhile conference to attend, exhibit, or speak at?

D: I'm not a LeadsCon-er, I've only been around it so I've been at conferences that were held in the same city and at the same time and hung out with folks over there. I know a lot of folks who go to it and get a lot of value out of it. If you're in the LeadGen space and, again, if I'm not mistaken that's primarily focused around aggregator of leads, people who create a bunch of leads and sell them, I don't know if it's actually true, maybe broader than that but I'm unfortunately just not the guy to answer that question.

S: Got it!

D: But people whom I really, really respect consider that as the kind of leading conference from the LeadGen perspective.

S: Got it! Okay—WordPress. Let's start with plugins. What are your favorite plugins for SEO? Your favorite plugins for pretty much everything and what are the must-haves?

D: Okay, cool, yeah! So, plugins. Let me see if I can get some good answers here for SEO. I mean, I personally only go with Yoast. Now, there's All-in-One and a few others and Yoast has been my favorite over the years. Some of the reasons it's my favorite-I mean, the number one reason people use as SEO plugins is because meta title in description data aren't available by default inside of WordPress so in another words, when you install WordPress in the very beginning, the core of WordPress doesn't include meta title and description fields. Now, I don't mean to go all SEO 101 right now but if you don't know what that is, it's the title and the short description within search results. The fact that it's not part of the core, typically that's the first reason people will install things like Yoast. Another couple of things that make it easy on is creating, for example, things like Site Maps. You can also integrate Google Analytics through there. Another feature I love in Yoast is the ability to edit page, title, and descriptions on one page so lot of you, if you have ever edited titles and descriptions on WordPress using Yoast or even All-in-One, you might have done it on a page-by-page level where you pull up the page, edit it, and click save. They actually have a feature where you can all your pages in one foul swoop and you can work through that a lot faster.

S: Yup. In fact, I actually created a plugin to do exactly that back in 2008 or something like that. SEO Title Tag was the name of the plugin. It's still out there and that feature was not originally part of Yoast plugin and then he contacted me several years ago to say, "Hey, can I take over your plugin? It looks like you're not updating it that much," and I'm like, "No, you can't take over my plugin!" and so, he just kind of helped himself to replicating all my functionality in his plugin, which I guess, it's a free world and it's open source so you can do that but—

D: Yeah, it's always a fun thing when you have an idea and innovation and you see it replicated somewhere else.

S: Yeah, but SEO Title Tag is still out there. You can still use it. It's got a few other features that Yoast doesn't have in terms of the mass edit capability where you can mass edit not only the titles and meta descriptions but also the posts' logs, which is pretty handy, so you can modify the URL portion of a bunch of pages simultaneously on one screen, just go through, and reduce kind of the footprint of really long posts' log, reduce like, take out a bunch of the and's and does' and filler words like in, on, of, etc. You can change some keywords in there and then WordPress handles the 301 redirects by default automatically so when you change a post log, the old URL all still works at 301 redirects to the new one so you don't have to worry about any of that back-end plumbing, which is really cool.

D: Yeah, that's actually kind of interesting that you bring that up because if I think about it, I haven't seen your plugin but to hear you describe it, it feels, and I don't mean to make it sound less, but it feels like it's covering the basics and this is important because Yoast has a bunch of stuff. It has all these modules you

can add that has a Google Analytics integration, which basically just injects your Google Analytics code into the head file. There's a lot of stuff in it and the reason why I started describing Yoast and saying most people use it for that is to really illustrate, look, sometimes, especially if you have access to a developer, it may be better to use a plugin or to make the functionality yourself, have someone code to plugin for you, or if you know a little bit of PHP and HTML and maybe do it yourself to accomplish your goal, right? If your goal is, "Look, I just need titles and descriptions on this bar. I don't need all that other stuff. I already got an open graph and figured that out. I already got this, I already got that." You don't have to install a plugin with 500 features to accomplish one thing.

S: Right.

“So the interesting thing to think through is, am I installing a plugin that’s doing a lot of things and I only need one thing? Is that the best decision to install a plugin on the site?”

D: So, you know, this is important because each plugin you had adds to a point of failure, right? That plugin could have an error in the future. Yes, it's a fantastic plugin but in one of their recent releases, they had a bunch of JavaScript conflicts that kicked up with other plugins so having that plugin, not to pick on Yoast, this happens a lot, but having plugins can kind of open up these points of failure, and the more things it does is potentially more points of failure. So the interesting thing to think through is, am I installing a plugin that's doing a lot of things and I only need one thing? Is that the best decision

to install a plugin on the site? I talk about plugins a bit like software on your computer. You know, you have that old five-year-old computer and it seems like it runs half as slow as it did the day you bought it and a lot of that, of course, is caused by this software that you installed over time and all these little things that get added to your computer that run inefficiently and get out of date or represents security concerns. You need to think about plugins the same way, we need to be really guarded in adding a plugin and think about: Who made it? When did they make it? When was the last time they updated it? What else is in it? Is it too much? Is it just enough? I mean, these are important decisions to make. Since you don't want to be Willy Nilly with the plugins you add, they're certainly very, very powerful. I use them all the time but you need to ask yourself, Am I using a missile? Am I using a tool? It's too powerful for what I'm actually trying to accomplish here? But, that being said, I still use Yoast all the time.

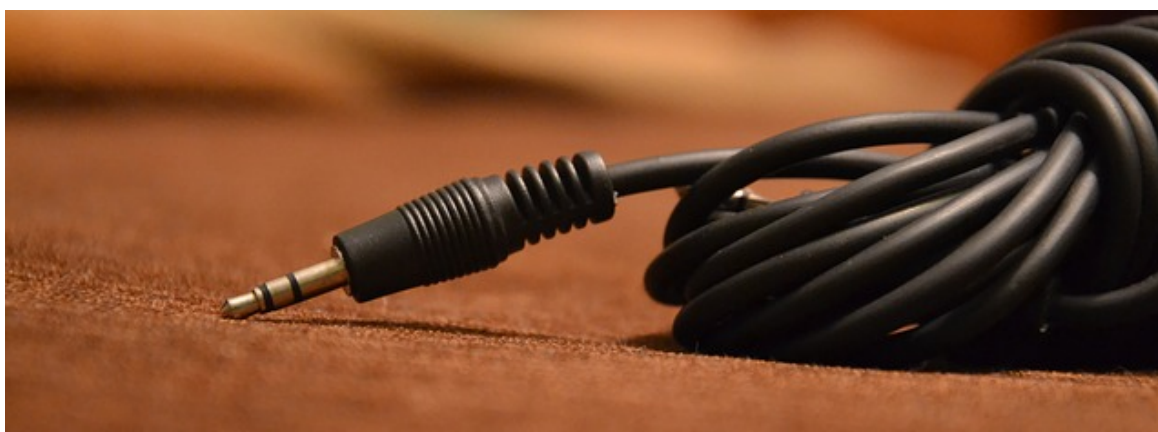
S: Yeah, I recommend it pretty much across the board. It's just-if you look at your WordPress installation like you do your phone where you say, oh, I just love every app out there. I want to have 100 or 200 apps installed on my phone and you think of your WordPress site in the same sort of way and install pretty much

“you definitely want to be a little cautious with what you add to your site, not add technical data or potential liabilities to your site.”

every shiny object WordPress plugin that you see, you're going to have a very poor performing site that's probably going to get hacked a lot because each of these plugins is a potential security hole as well as a performance hit so, yeah, that's something to think about.

D: Yeah, absolutely! I mean, you definitely want to be a little cautious with what you add to your site, not add technical data or potential liabilities to your site. It actually kind of, maybe, brings up another plugin I kind of like. It's more of a plugin and service and it really just depends so, you

mentioned security and plugins that might misbehave over time—one of the things, of course, that plugin developers do to combat that is, they do updates. If somebody discovers a security vulnerability in Yoast or another plugin then that developer is going to create a patch for it to patch the vulnerability and release it. There's this kind of, I don't know, old license—it's not even really a misconception, it's actually kind of true that if I update my plugin, it's going to break my site. Now, on a personal level, I'd say one time out of ten when I'm updating a plugin will it actually break the functionality of what it's doing on my site, but I mean, one out of ten is still pretty bad odds, right? You don't want to take one in ten actions that might actually harm your site so a lot of people have paralysis where they go like, “I don't want to update my plugins, I don't know what's going to happen,” so they have these out-of-date plugins and it can be a big



deal. I mean, I've been involved with some big brands that didn't do that, big sites where it introduced security vulnerabilities and this wasn't WordPress related but I remember we were working on a forum and the client had hired us to update the forum software because it was woefully out of date, they knew they had security vulnerabilities, and they hired us to update it but they could not update it because it was going to break the site or whatever because they'd already tried it. We kind of got the order on a Monday and by that Friday, they had been hacked. It was just like, they knew it was coming and we were there to

help prevent it but we haven't had the opportunity to even come in and do the update yet and so, that's a real risk not updating your plugins and so, to kind of circle back around here, the solution to this is to really stage your site and, really, if you're making any major changes to your site, you need to be staging it. If you don't know what that means, it basically means creating a copy of your site where you test the changes and then when you confirm that the changes are okay, you push it into the live site. Now, the reason why a lot of people don't do this is because if you're not a developer, it can be kind of tricky. You don't know how to do this, you might be able to make a copy of your site but you don't necessarily know how to push it wide and vice versa and how do you do it all the right way. Now, if you're a WP Engine customer, it's built into our service so in the back-end of WordPress, there's a button called One-Click Staging. You click the button and you'll make a copy of your site and then and there, in the copy, you can update the plugin, change your template, or make some other major install a new plugin, or anything you want to do but from the plugin perspective, when you update it then you can test to see if it broke anything. If it didn't break anything and, again, you're a WP Engine customer, there's a button there to push to make it live. It's actually very easy if you have a service host that does that. If you don't know there's a service that comes with a plugin called WP Stagecoach. WP Stagecoach essentially kind of gives you the same functionality. Now, there's a monthly fee for it so you have to pay for it but it basically also gives you the ability to stage your site and push it live to production so if you have a host that does it automatically, great, but if not, you can use the WP Stagecoach but the important lesson there is, don't let your plugins go out-of-date. When a plugin release is updated, they'll be releasing notes and you can find these at WordPress.org in the plugin directory. You can look up the plugin when they release a new version of it and in the release notes, they will say what it's for. If it says something like, "added support for the Italian language," you probably don't need to break your neck to update it if you're not worried about that but if it says a "security patch," you better update it and, again, to safely do that, you kind of want to do that a staging environment so, WP Stagecoach if you're host doesn't have it but if your host does have it, you can usually do it right there at WordPress.

S: Right, so a lot of folks, they just have their production server, they make all their updates on the production site, whether they're adding content or they're changing HTML templates, or they're adding plugins, or just kind of revising the way that the URL structure setup, or you know the terminal structure whatever, they're doing it all their own on production because that's what they know and in a more bulletproof sort of environment, you have a dev server or multiple dev servers, you have your staging environment, staging servers, and you have production. You push your development changes from the dev to the staging servers when it's ready for testing and then you test the heck out of it and make sure that it's bulletproof before you push it to production and then you have what's called Version Control so that if you have multiple developers working on stuff, they're not working on a kind of overwriting each other's edits and so, a tool like Subversion would help with version control to make sure that people are checking stuff out like pieces of code, which they're going to check that out, because they're going to work on it and check it back in. This is pretty complicated for somebody who's just used to production server, make some changes, it's live the moment that you put the change in place and through the WordPress

admin and you're done but this sounds like a more hybrid model that you're describing or certain things need to be tested before they're pushed live so just for a temporary moment time, you can say, "Well, let's have a staging clone, we're going to test the plugin update, see if it breaks anything, and then, we'll push it live and we'll kind of decommission that staging environment after these few minutes of testing."

D: Yeah, that's absolutely right. The two extremes, the first one you discussed is basically what I would call, what a lot of people would call, cowboy coding. I'm going to go make changes on the live site, I'm just going to go do it and hope it doesn't break anything, right? That's the most dangerous, but the ideal or best practice would be what you described, where you have a subversioning solution, we use Git, there is also some other subversioning tools, but that tends to be what developers use. They check in code changes, it's disintegrated into the staging and dev environments, there are all kinds of nuances that typically the DIY'er or online marketer just isn't going to be able to comprehend. Not that you couldn't comprehend it, but it would take you forever. The model I described what I just reviewed was in between, now you can still use these tools for a variety of reasons, but it's kind of in between, it's more for the DIY'er, or the online marketer. You can, within a click of a button, create a site, within a click of a button publish your changes live, and you're not using version control and all of these other environments that are not click of a button, it's much more complicated. Not to say that it's insanely complicated, but it's much more complicated than the click of a button. If you use WP Engine's built in staging tools, or a service like WP Stagecoach and you're not a developer, it gives you some of that Git or staging type functionality that you would normally need to have a developer help set up for create. You, as a DIY online marketer, you can actually take advantage of-not really versioning, but staging and being able to push things live. Another feature that we have, I am not sure if WP Stagecoach offers this or not, but there are other solutions who do offer this, is automated backups and on demand backups. For example, if I was staging a change to my site, I tested it out, it looks good and I pushed it live, and I still messed up or I missed something, we actually give you a button to roll it back to the way it was before you pushed it live. Between backups, rollbacks, and staging, it gives the DIY'er or the online marketer tools that you would normally need to rely on a developer in order to manage your site.

S: Right, and I believe in the Wordpress core, this rollback functionality in a per page and per post basis already exists, and has for a little while now, that you could rollback to another version, like two versions back on a particular webpage that you had created inside of WordPress, correct?

D: Yeah, this is more for the entire site, so if you added a new plugin, or if you updated a plugin. It's more site-wide, it's everything in the site. It gives you the ability to recover for much broader things, than just changes to a particular posts or something like that.

S: I think a lot of people don't even realize that even just built into their WordPress that they are already

using, is a rollback feature on a per post or per page basis, just like in a Wikipedia article, you can rollback to a previous version. Let's say someone defaced a Wikipedia article and added some spam in there, it's so easy to rollback to the previous version or several versions back on that Wikipedia article, and you can do the same thing inside of your WordPress installation without any special plugin or settings, it's just built right into the core.

D: That's a great point.

S: The main lesson here for anybody listening is that you need to have this stuff handled, and not just what is built into the WordPress core, but features that allow you to rollback the entire site, backup your entire database and WordPress files, hopefully offsite to another server, not just storing the backup on the same server that when you get hacked, they infect your backup with their backdoors as well, right? Also, to have this ability to have staging for testing when you add some new plugins or you update some plugins where there is a potential risk of breaking stuff.

D: A lot of site backups, that's an important point and actually brings up one of my favorite plugins, VaultPress. VaultPress is also a service, it's low cost-like \$5 per month or something like that, maybe \$10. It's owned by a company called Automatic, which is owned by Matt Mullenweg, who is the gentleman who invented WordPress, and WordPress the software is owned by a nonprofit called The WordPress Foundation, VaultPress and Automatic are for profit entities, but VaultPress is a service that essentially backs up your site, but as long as you are not on the same data center as them, it is an offsite backup. If you are a WP Engine customer, keep in mind that we also do offsite backups as a standard part of our service, so you may not necessarily need to use a service like VaultPress if you are one of our customers, but if you're not, and this is way more common especially on smaller sites, they're not backing up anything at all, your site is just not being backed up. If you sign up for a service like VaultPress, they will back it up to their data center, last time I checked it was in California somewhere, but like I said, as long as you are not in the same data center it will be offsite. As far as the infections go with backups, backups with still backup problems, right? If you get infected with some sort of malware or exploit, that malware is also backed up, so it's important to go with a service provider that, and we do this and I believe VaultPress does it, but you need multiple restore points. If you got infected, you know, two days ago, you don't want the backup from one day ago, you want the backup from three days ago. The other problem with a backup, and we'll get to another plugin or service here in a second that connects with all this, but if you go with another backup three days ago that didn't have the exploit or the malware, they still got that malware in the site somehow, through an outdated plug in or something like that. Even if you recover before the infection, you still have the vulnerability that caused the infection. The plugin or service, they have a plugin with their service, is Sucuri, and they actually do, it's like a malware scanner for WordPress. They will actually scan for common PHP vulnerabilities, other things that have been

identified as threats or exploits, they will identify them, help you remove them and recover from them. They have a service where they will help you go through and recover from that, eliminate those threats, but they also scan it for those issues, I think they do it on-demand and also recurring. They have another product that is like a firewall for your website, it's kind of like CloudFlare if you have ever used that, CloudFlare for example, and this isn't, I think it's more of a plugin but they also have a service, but basically they are the

“A service like CloudFlare will intercept that and identify when it's happening, you'll see spikes on types of requests, and it will basically be the traffic cop for your site. And Sucuri is more of a malware scanner, but again, you want to backup your site, it's preferable to back it up outside of the data center, you never know when the data center is going to have an issue or burn down”

firewall for your website. They intercept the traffic, they help you mitigate denial of small to midsize service attacks, i'm sure they probably do large ones I am just not super familiar with all of the stuff that CloudFlare does, but they will help you mitigate denial of service attacks, they will also help monitor for certain types of requests to your site, so a lot of the ways people will search your site is they will search for vulnerabilities, and some of those vulnerabilities are patterned or known. A service like CloudFlare will intercept that and identify when it's happening, you'll see spikes on types of requests, and it will basically be the traffic cop for your site. And Sucuri is more of a malware scanner, but again, you want to backup your site, it's preferable to back it up outside of the data center, you never know

when the data center is going to have an issue-burn down, or whatever. You want to use a service like Sucuri to scan for malware, and a service like CloudFlare to be the traffic cop for your site.

S: That's all good stuff, and then other plugins for security could include Wordfence, I use Wordfence, is that one that you recommend, or any others?

D: We have a, in my agency environment, we do use Wordfence for a few customers. When I started the agency, at this point six years ago, WP Engine was acquired pretty shortly after and we ended up hosting a lot of our customers on WP Engine and a lot of the security feature and the popular plugins are actually bundled with the service. We didn't overly use Wordfence, but when we did use a plugin like that, Wordfence was one of the ones that we used. I do have a high opinion of that plugin.

S: Yeah. The idea there is that it locks out repeated accesses trying to log in as, let's say, Admin, which is a really bad idea to keep using the default username of Admin for every one of your WordPress installations, there is half of the equation already solved, they know the username and they just need to figure out the

password. Use a different admin username, is a good tip, and then Wordfence is a great plugin for looking for repeated attempts at logging in from a particular IP, range or location like Russia or Poland or whatever, that just looks not legit, and then blocking that IP from doing further attempted log ins.

D: Those are great security tips, for sure, some key points there. On a sidenote, if you ever catch Carolyn Shelby talking about WordPress security, she's got a great little presentation that will scare you backwards and forwards on the things that you could be doing to protect your security on WordPress and beyond, but she has a great little laundry list, if you ever find an article, or video from her in the past, or if you ever catch her at Pubcon or anything like that, Carolyn Shelby is a good resource for those kinds of things. I've got another couple of plugins that are my favorite that are a little bit more revenue focused, want to shift gears for a little bit, Stephan?

S: Yeah, you bet, let's do it.

D: Awesome, so, one of my favorites these days is really around list building. It's a plugin called OptinMonster. It does a lot of things, it integrates with your email tool, ESP's, email service providers and so on and so forth, but one of the cooler features that it does and a little bit of where it's infamy came from, is in it's ability, it uses JavaScript to detect, and I'm sure you've all seen this, but it uses JavaScript to detect when you're closing a tab or a window, it senses the mouse movement and as you move up to close the tab, it pops up an opt-in box. Now, anecdotally, we all 'hate' pop up boxes, but it really works, people really fill it out and it does increase list subscription rates. OptinMonster is fantastic for that. The developer is a gentleman named Syed Balkhi, he is the guy behind WP Beginner and he also released a



form plugin that I am interested in checking out, I can't remember the name of it offhand. But, OptinMonster is great for adding to your list subscriptions. Another one of my favorites is on the ad side. I've been in affiliate marketing for a long time too and I've ran teams where our goal was to get ad placements on sites, and for me, the most shocking thing when dealing with publishers for all these years and helping them build sites, monetize, and get placements on them, is how little people actually test their advertising. It's like, you get an advertiser that kind of works or pays you some money, and you call

it a day and you move on. But the reality is that over time, you really need to be testing new offers, new billing models, and so on and so forth, and the reason people tend to not do it is because it's kind of hard, right? You have to go in and place the new ad, you have to remember to go back and run the numbers to see if it worked better than the other one, you have to consider all these factors. In WordPress, there is this plugin called AdRotate, it's a premium plugin but it's not a lot of money though, but it allows you to rotate really any kind of ad. You could rotate an affiliate ad with an ad with at you are charging CPC for, against an AdSense ad. You can schedule them, so you can say, I want this ad to run for two weeks, and this is the best part, right before it goes off schedule it will send you an email alert saying this ad is about to end, and so it makes it much easier to test your ads. You can set up a new ad to run, you can set it for a period of time, you'll get email alerts when it's ending so you can go run your stats and see how much money you made on the ads that you were running. Of course, it does a typical ad rotation, so you can do this 75% of the time or this 25%, and I think it even has an engine in there to charge but I am not sure as I haven't done that, but in terms of testing I love AdRotate. If you are monetizing through ads and you are not testing your ads, AdRotate is a great plugin that you can add to WordPress and you get a ton of professional functionality without a ton of price.

S: That's for testing the ads, so what if you want to test landing pages, different elements, hero images, headlines, price points, button colors, all that sort of stuff. Do you recommend something like Optimizely, or Visual Website Optimizer which will work with any particular site, or do you recommend maybe an A/B testing tool that is plugin based and WordPress specific?

D: I tend to not use plugins for that. I'm sure there are some good ones out there, I just don't have a lot of personal experience with them. What I do, and I've done this for years, I use Optimizely to sort of establish what the winner is, right? You are going to do your A/B test and at the end of it you are going to have a result to say okay, this was better than that. The B was better than the A. If the B was better than the A, the new thing is essentially better than the old thing, I will then have a developer or I will create that variant as a permanent fixture on the site. A lot of the ways that you can implement Optimizely is really around JavaScript, it dynamically changes the elements and it's not actually part of WordPress, so if you use Visual Website Optimizer and so on and so forth, you can use these tools which essentially give you a DIY interface in the design, CTA, and all of that stuff. But that's not actually part of WordPress, it's just JavaScript that changes the way it spits it out, right? If you do that, and you discover a winner, that's fantastic, but now is the time to go and code that as a WordPress template or a WordPress page. I will use Optimizely and those kind of DIY optimization tools to come up with a design that works and test into it, make a design that works and then make that a permanent part of WordPress. Some plugins, you make the pages independently, you make a template and a page in WordPress and you make a different template and page in WordPress, and then you use JavaScript to bounce back between A or B, but it can take a lot of time sometimes to create those new templates, and if you are paying or there is a lot of cost, I would go with the JavaScript ones to find the one that works, and then permanently make it a part of

WordPress. Some plugins, you make the pages independently, you make a template and a page in WordPress and you make a different template and page in WordPress, and then you use JavaScript to bounce back between A or B, but it can take a lot of time sometimes to create those new templates, and if you are paying or there is a lot of cost, I would go with the JavaScript ones to find the one that works, and then permanently make it a part of that site.

S: I tend to recommend Optimizely to my clients as well, although I do know there are tools that are WordPress specific, I have never used it and I don't have anything positive or negative to say about that, but Optimizely is a great platform and I have also heard great things about Visual Website Optimizer.

D: I've used both, but you've got to keep in mind in the agency environment, you folks who have worked in agencies before will know this, but there are tools that you like to use and there are the tools your clients use, and sometimes the tools you like to use are just tools that you are used to. Other tools might not be better, but because customers come to you with all kinds of different things, you get a lot of exposure. There are a lot of good tools out there, but I think the main thing is use something that is easy for the main part of your testing, and then if it works, then make it a permanent part of your site.

S: Yeah, for sure. And then there are some things that are just brain-dead obvious that you need to fix something, improve something, you don't need to test it, you just need to implement it, because it should have been done in the first place and it's just common sense.

D: That's an interesting topic, I was in a meeting earlier today where we were talking about that as it came to brand continuity, and for me, it's like, the new thing that you implement is the burden of proof of beating the old thing, even if you know the new thing is better, it follows every best practice. Unless it's just flat out inaccurate, the new thing has the burden of proof to beat the old thing. And not just beat it, but it has to beat it statistically speaking, significantly beat it, it can't even tie it, it has to actually beat it, and that's a weird discussion, right? If you're like, well, we don't use that type of imagery anymore, we found these landing pages and they use that type of imagery so therefore, we must remove that type of imagery. Yeah, okay, that's fine, I get that, but you also need to be respectful of the fact that whatever is there is working in some way, and even though you think something should be done a different way, you still have to prove it. Are you willing to accept a reduction in sales, or a reduction in leads, because of how you feel about something? For me, I always use that word over and over again, the new thing has the burden of proof of being that old thing. You can keep testing new things to get closer and closer to your vision of what you want to have out of it, but at the end of the day, again, are you willing to accept a reduction in sales or reduction in leads because of the way you feel about a certain element?

S: Yeah, good point. What about analyzing and tracking user visitor behavior? Like Crazy Egg's Heat Maps, or things like that, any WordPress plugins for analyzing user behavior? I know there was a tool you mentioned previously about capturing video of users interacting on a one by one basis on different forums or things on your site.

D: There is a service called Fullstory, and there are a bunch of them out there, that basically capture videos of people surfing the site, and it is fantastic for coming up with theories for conversion rate optimization. We use it a lot for UX, and we used it the other day to discover some form validation issues, I've used services like it over the years and it's just really, really insightful to see the visitors as they surf through the site. I actually prefer it a lot more to heat maps. The problem I have with most heat maps is that most systems don't do a great job of helping you understand the flow of visitors, and of course, a heat map by definition is how a lot of visitors behave, which is fine, but but the problem is, you don't know-did they scroll down to the bottom and read some paragraph and then scroll back to the top because you didn't actually answer their question properly, or did they go to a different page? What was their journey? That is what I don't like about heat maps, I like that I can see where the attention is on the page is and that's fine, but I don't have a good sense of a visitors journey from a heat map, especially when you compare it to the video. I love things like Fullstory where I can watch the visitor experience, interact with it, and as I watch these videos, most people use their mouse to read along so you can get a sense of what they read as they do it, and you get much more insight opposed to systems where you're just looking at pretty colors on a webpage. You just don't get any context of order, nor do you get any context of flow. The trick with these video services, if you use them, they're all about filtering. You want to be able to watch videos of people who came from Google Adwords that converted, videos of people coming from Google Adwords that didn't convert, people that use a certain keyword, people that behaved a certain way. It's in the filtering that you are going to get the most value out of it, because you are going to be like, why aren't people buying? But you're going to be able to kind of peer over their shoulder and see why, at least as far as their behavior goes, why they are not converting. Now, the one caveat to this is that you aren't going to be able to watch enough videos nor be able to log the data in a way that will be statistically significant, and what I mean by that is, be careful with what you infer. Just because you watch 20 videos, doesn't mean that it's universally true. I use those videos to get ideas to test, rather than some sort of absolute truth.

S: Yep. Another great episode recently published on the Marketing Speak podcast was Jared Spool. I interviewed him, he's one of the top usability experts in the world, and we talked about user frustration, user delight, metrics, user testing, ways to really get at what the user is experiencing, and using a tool such as Fullstory really gives you a sense for that opposed to just looking at aggregate data in Google Analytics or Crazy Egg, but to really take it to a whole other level and do user testing. He walks through this approach that he uses where he puts a piece of masking tape on the table and has the test subject sitting in front of the computer, and he's got a coin, like a quarter, with five markings on the masking tape. One on end, a smiley face, a frowny face on the other end of the masking tape, and the coin is in the

middle. He's constantly asking the test subject, the user, is the coin in the right place? Then the user moves it, they put it way over to the frowny face if they are getting really frustrated, and that just gives you a lot of insight as to where people are getting stuck on your site, where you are losing money, losing opportunity. So, definitely check out that episode, but let's jump to another plugin or tool capability, and that's for server tuning or server performance, like W3 EDGE has a great plugin for performance and caching. What are your favorite plugins for server performance and server tuning?

D: That's kind of interesting, so W3 Total Cache is the plugin that W3 EDGE makes, and it's a great plugin. I ran it on pretty much every site that I had that wasn't on WP Engine. The reason that you don't run it on WP Engine is because a lot of the functionality within it is actually covered by our service, but there is another plugin called WP Rocket though, we have some plugin advocates here that work with plugins and basically, they sliced out the parts of WP Rocket that conflict with what we already do, so if you are looking to augment, I think they do some JavaScript modification and image compression stuff automatically, on top of what we already do, so if you are a WP Engine customer, WP Rocket would be a better fit for what you are going for. But if you're not, W3 Total Cache is awesome, it introduces essentially a caching layer, so your pages aren't loading by being completely built every time you load it up, so it makes the servers run faster because they aren't having to run as hard to generate the pages. In a sense, it's server optimization but in a sense maybe not exactly optimization. You can enable it to do caching, it also ties in with a CDN, like a content distribution network, which is like thousands of servers all around the world, you can store pieces of your website to ultimately have them load faster, it also relieves the load from your server so your server doesn't have to work as hard to make sure your website is served up quickly for your visitors. W3 Total Cache does a bunch of stuff, but I love that. If you're not on a host that has a lot of caching built in, but if you are on WP Engine, WP Rocket is a good alternative to Total Cache, but yeah if you are on any other host, W3 Total Cache is fantastic. And they have a good support group, and good product support in general.

S: In fact, W3 EDGE is available to hire to tune your WordPress server if you are just hosting yourself and you haven't set up all the right settings, they will come in and do all sorts of server tuning that will make this thing really scream. And you mentioned CDN's, what are your favorites, or what is your favorite, I know there are a bunch of them out there, Akamai and so forth.

D: Yeah, MaxCDN is kind of an easy, self-service type CDN. We use them. They have a self-service product that is easy to set up, and it integrates in well with W3 Total Cache, at least it did the last time I used it for that. Akamai is good, really, if you want to get all technical about it, the CDN that best serves your customers and their geographic and internet work location is the right answer for you. There has been some fairly sophisticated testing, but the easy answer would be like MaxCDN or, I don't know if Akamai has a self-service option or not, I'm guessing they do, they are more of what you could consider a Tier 1 CDN, if that's a real thing. Akamai probably has the biggest network, or at least they did the last time that I

compared networks, but MaxCDN is also good. There is another CDN network called Highwinds, but again, a little more Tier 1-ey, I'm not sure if they have a self-service option. The ultimate answer is the network that gets the data the fastest to your customers and that could be different, they could have different servers in different locations, but again, a nice self-service option is MaxCDN.

S: Yeah, so last question. Can you just kind of juxtapose the difference between managed hosting and regular hosting? We've been talking a lot about when you go with WP Engine, this is built in, this is already in the capability and so forth. So just generally, managed hosting vs. regular hosting, because there are many options out there that are managed hosting options, and in fact many of the bigger hosts have that as an option. If you go with Hostgator, you can choose to go with their WordPress managed hosting option. You pay more per month, but you get certain benefits. Could you compare and contrast the two?

D: Sure, yeah, and I think there are kind of three flavors. I want to kind of avoid talking about individual providers, but generally the three flavors would be like just a generic host, they host any type of website on every single one of their servers. The second flavor would be kind of in between, they kind of only host WordPress, it's got some managed features bundled in but it's not necessarily a provider like WP Engine, or there is another one out there called Paisley. Paisley and WP Engine were some of the first true managed WordPress hosts, and after our growth, and the other growth of people in the space, some of the other hosts started coming out with managed WordPress offerings. But the biggest difference, and I guess I will talk about it more like generic host vs. managed host, is really WordPress. For example, our support staff only knows how to support WordPress sites. So if you call in and you ask about a Drupal site, they might know something about it just in the sense from people who have converted their websites to WordPress, but it's not like they know all of the ins and outs and intricacies of Drupal, they know WordPress inside and out. So when you get someone who is helping you out with support, they know WordPress backwards and forwards. This is maybe one of the differences between a true managed WordPress host like WP Engine or someone who has it as an additional offering. Our entire staff, our entire company, all of our technology, everything is optimized for WordPress, and that's actually super important. Even simple things, like there is that kind of traffic cop technology and it decides how things are moved around, and we optimize our nginx rules for WordPress. WP Content is a folder where your content is stored, and so on and so forth. All of these paths, all of these traffic paths through the server, the caching, the memory, the hard drive usage, everything is optimized for WordPress. If you are hosting on a server that hosts all types of websites, they don't have the flexibility to do those rules. They can't give priority to WordPress content folders, they can't do this, they can't do that, they can't say the caching layers, storage layers, and all that can't be optimized for WordPress because they have to accommodate for all of these different things. So, one of the big differences between a managed and a general host is that while everything in our stack is optimized for WordPress, it allows our servers to run more efficiently, and in combination with the low number of customers per server, but with that and the optimizations, we're able to deliver sites much faster because everything is optimized specifically for WordPress. I would say those

would be the big differences, but the other would be WordPress tools. Again, I think this is where it delays between a general host who manages a WordPress offering and a true, dedicated WordPress host is we tend to have more tools. We are only investing in WordPress, the way that we support Wordpress and the technology behind it, again a more generalized to a managed host who maybe has a Drupal offering and a Joomla offering and a WordPress offering, isn't necessarily dedicating as much of their resources as much overall into the tools to support that. So, we tend to have more tools, we tend to be more focused, more optimized, but again, without getting into a particular host, I think that kind of 30,000 foot view sums it up.

S: That's awesome. That's going to conclude our episode but I want to give a special offer to all of our listeners, because WP Engine does have a special coupon code for you guys, It's SS20 and it's specific for listeners of this episode. So again, it's SS20, which gives you 20% off your first payment, and if that's an annual plan that you sign up for, it's essentially 12 months for the price of 8. It's 20% off with SS20, wpengine.com. Point of disclosure on this is that I am also going to get an affiliate commission on that, so please use that code so i'll get some extra cash. So, any last, parting words, and/or, how would somebody reach you, David, specifically if they wanted to ask a follow up question or whatever, are you on Twitter etc.

D: Yeah totally. My Twitter handle is @davidvmc and I go to a lot of conferences, so if you're at Pubcon or Affiliate Summit try to catch me there. If you follow me on Twitter, shout out at me and if you want to chat further, I'm happy to do that. If you do run an agency or are looking for ways to improve your WordPress practice, make WordPress easier for you, as an agency easier to deploy to your clients, cut down on the amount of time you use to build sites, shout out to me on Twitter, I'll connect you to somebody over here who will talk to you about a program, we have some free accounts we can give to certain types of agencies to help you with your staging and some training on how to use our tools to make your life a little easier. But other than that, I really appreciate you having me on the show Stephan, and I appreciate everyone for listening in.

S: It's been a pleasure and thank you for this great information. We have the shownotes on Marketingspeak.com with all these links to these great plugins and tools services, and also the transcript with a nice checklist. So definitely download the PDF Checklist and transcript file while you are on marketingspeak.com. Listeners, we'll catch you on the next episode. This has been your host, Stephan Spencer. Catch you next time!

TAKE THE NEXT STEP by signing up for our FREE SEO Online Masterclass

Stop Making These Expensive Mistakes!

There's a lot of information out there on SEO, but how do you know what actually works?

This 100% free and no strings attached webinar will teach you the most common SEO mistakes that could be costing you huge amounts of lost revenue. I'm going to show you how to fix these mistakes and start driving more traffic to your site today. Benefit from my decades of experience optimizing and testing hundreds of sites to determine what really works and where you'll get your best ROI.

SIGN UP NOW:

visit www.stephenspencer.com/freewebinar



STEPHAN SPENCER BIO:

[Stephan Spencer](#) is an internationally recognized SEO expert and bestselling author. He is the co-author of [The Art of SEO](#) (3rd edition - August 2015), author of [Google Power Search](#) and co-author of [Social eCommerce](#), all published by O'Reilly. Stephan founded Netconcepts, an SEO and interactive agency in the 1990's, and sold it to Covario in 2010. He invented a pay-for-performance SEO technology called GravityStream that was also acquired and is now part of Rio SEO. Stephan's recent SEO clients have included such retail giants as Zappos, Sony Store, Quiksilver, Best Buy Canada, Bed Bath & Beyond, and Chanel. Stephan has spoken at countless hundreds of Internet marketing events, including all the major search & e-commerce conferences (SES, SMX, PubCon, Internet Retailer, Shop.org, eTail, etc.). He's been a contributor to the Huffington Post, Multichannel Merchant, Practical Ecommerce, Search Engine Land, DM News and MarketingProfs, to name a few.

CONTACT:

Email: stephan@stephenspencer.com

Address: 6516 Monona Drive # 114,

Madison, WI, 53716

Follow me on Twitter @sspencer

TAKE THE NEXT STEP by signing up for our FREE SEO Online Masterclass

THE 12 BIGGEST SEO MISTAKES THAT ARE COSTING WEBSITE OWNERS A FORTUNE

Details:

- Some of the most common problems with how your site is built. Issues with how your information architecture is organized, search engine unfriendly code, the ability of the search engines to crawl your website.
- I'll show you where problems commonly occur which can create massive duplicate content issues. These can confuse the search engines, and in many cases cause the wrong pages to show up in the search engines.
- I will discuss some of the most common problems with today's e-commerce sites.
- More than ever links from other sites impact your search rankings. Google is getting more and more strict with what links can help you and what links can hurt you.
- Do you know how seriously your page speed can affect your conversion rates in search engine rankings? Do you understand the full impact of Google's latest changes to its mobile algorithm?
- How about conversion optimization? A proper conversion optimization strategy can massively impact your bottom line.
- We'll talk about the right metrics to track that show not only the results in driving online traffic but how those impact bottom-line results.
- Not only will I tell you the 12 biggest mistakes that are costing you money right now but I'll show you how to start driving more high quality traffic to your site, and increasing your revenue, right now!

SIGN UP NOW:

visit www.stephanspencer.com/freewebinar