

looking for a **pain-free**  
Website experience?



We hear about website pain points every day. We are here to take the pain away and transform your digital presence. Our team of experts can transition you to a faster, reliable, fully functional and better-looking website delivering the customer experience your clients are looking for.

In this whitepaper, we explore the Top-5 pain points expressed by the clients we have transitioned over the years and offer tips and solutions to make your life easier.

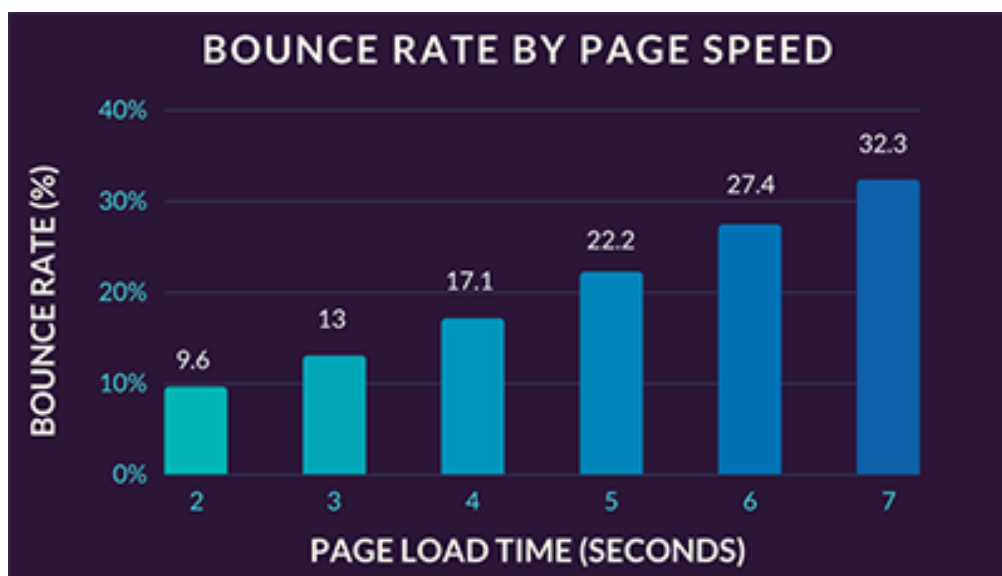
## Kentico Website Performance

***"Winning isn't everything, but it beats anything that comes in second"***

Performance is critical to the success of any online venture. High-performing sites engage and retain users better, giving them confidence that they are in the right place. Visitors are impatient and will not tolerate a slow page load; they will move on to another website where they trust they will be serviced quicker.

### What is good performance?

- Loading time: Less than 3 seconds
- Page size: Less than 1MB
- Objects: Less than 100 objects per page



## Foundations of Good Performance

- It might come as a surprise, but we have lost count of how many times we heard from clients that the performance of their website came as an afterthought. To achieve excellent performance, you have to build the foundations for it. A couple of things to add to your Discovery phase:

### Architecture

- What is your audience, and what level of traffic are you expecting? The site architecture should account for the volumes of visitors you expect at various points in time. Are you planning to run promotions, competitions or other campaigns? Is your traffic seasonal with spikes at Christmas or summertime?
- Where is your audience? A multi-regional website needs to be architected in a way to protect the performance and serve international visitors with the appropriate content
- Location of the audience will also inform your architecture in terms of the various devices and browsers that are used internationally. For example, the version of the browsers that are used in Asia is very different from what is used in Europe and browser compatibility can impact your website performance
- Are you presenting data and content via integration of external systems, i.e. from your CRM? Fetching data from third-party systems although it comes with a lot of benefits in terms of elimination of duplication of data can have an impact on performance
- At which point in time, do you need to hit specific performance goals? You don't need the Rolls-Royce solution for Day 1, but it might be a requirement in a year's time, and you can plan your performance scaling up for that phase of your project

### Hosting

- Where your website is hosted, the specification and configuration have a direct impact on performance as it has a noticeable effect on your page loading times.
- There are various hosting configurations from a single on-premise server to more complicated & robust hosting architectures including content delivery networks, blobs and failovers with geo-replication.
- Your real and pragmatic requirements need to be identified at Discovery to ensure your foundations are solid

## Develop Design and Optimize for Good Performance

## Content

The most important thing on your website is your content; hence the phrase "Content is King". Although the live text is usually referred to as content, there is a lot more to it. Images, animations, videos, resources (e.g. pdfs) are all part of your website content. Making sure that your content is optimized will aid your website's performance.

Images need to be checked for format and size and make sure they are optimized. HTML compression is the way to go. Finally, what can make an impact on your performance is what is called **minification**. Minification is the process of removing all unnecessary characters from the source code of interpreted programming languages or mark-up languages without changing their functionality.

## Volume of requests

The volume of requests your website receives and responds to has a direct impact on performance.

Think about it like party invitations to all of your friends, and you don't know how many people are attending your party until you get your last RSVP. Sometimes invitations get stuck, and the RSVP takes a long time to come back. A couple of things to consider:

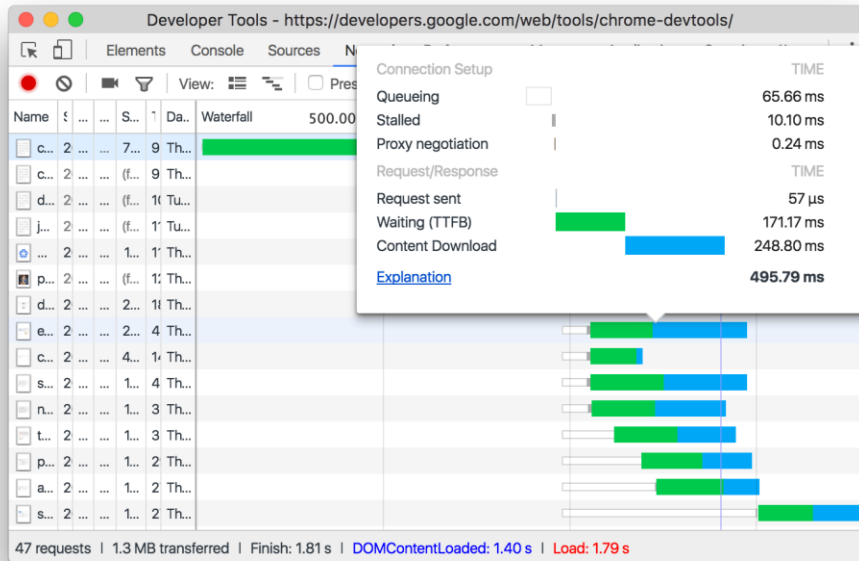
- Optimize the volume of requests. Your architecture should work on the lowest feasible volume of requests to achieve your result
- Caching can be very powerful when it comes to performance. Make sure it's configured correctly and doesn't become a hinder
- If you are fetching and presenting information from third party systems, check that you only update the data has been changed rather than make a call to the third party for every single request

## Measure Your Good Performance

After your site is developed the proof in the pudding is to measure your (good or otherwise) performance. Here are a couple of items to consider when you want to measure and report on your website's performance:

## Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

The first thing to define is what your key performance indicators are. These are the metrics that you need to report against.



## Performance Tools

Here are some performance tools you can use to gather metrics:

- Google PageSpeed Insights is an online tool which helps in identifying performance best practices on any given website, provides suggestions on a webpage's optimizations, and suggests overall ideas of how to make a website faster
- Kentico KInspector is an application for analyzing health, performance, and security of your Kentico solution
- Pingdom Page Speed is a tool designed to help make your site faster by identifying what about a webpage is fast, slow, too big, and so on

If you want to discuss more the performance of your website, We Are Here to Help.

## Functionality

### *"Works first time, Works all-the-time."*

A common complaint from partners transitioning to our agency is about functionality that was agreed but it "never got implemented", "never really worked", "never went live" or "has been broken for a long time". A website that is not functioning correctly regardless of how visually appealing, fast loading and easily found by the search engines is, will suffer. There are a few points to look out when you want to get your functionality working the first time and continue to work all the time.

#### **Discover**

There is still a lot of resistance when it comes to the Discovery Phase of a project. Surely Discovery adds to the project cost, but it might be the best project investment you will make when building your website. A well thought and executed Discovery is the first step to ensure that your functionality requirements are being documented, analyzed, understood and translated to solutions. The majority of the instances we see where functionality "does not work" and "didn't go live" is about a feature that was never really understood or documented. It was anecdotal and something that was mentioned at some point in time. Discover, Document and Understand what the solution is before even thinking about getting your agency to start writing code.

#### **Be part of the problem, be part of solving the problem**

Do not wait for the final article until you take a look at it. For every significant piece of functionality, ask for a demo. Your agency might work in a pure and full Agile method, or they may have adopted methodologies to fit their model. Whichever the case might be a demo of critical points of functionality is always possible. Although documentation is essential, seeing the functionality in real life and having the ability to test and ask questions is the evidence that what you have asked for is what has been developed. Participate and be part of the problem to help and push your agency to solve it for you.

#### **Test, Test and then Test some more**

Another common thread is about functionality that was not tested, and clients and the users of their website felt like they were doing the testing on behalf of their agency.

Receiving functionality that is not tested is a red flag and one that has to be addressed straight away. The implementation delivered to you should be fully working and ready for you to accept.

At the same time, it's vital that you, as the client, have the resources and the time to run a full user acceptance testing (UAT) phase. Your agency should be supporting you every step of the way during acceptance, and this should be built in your project plan and the services provided. You can ask for a set of test cases to aid you during UAT, or you can develop your own if you have the resources or do both. The more UAT you perform, the less the probability of your visitors and clients to discover issues with your implementation. Test, Test and then Test some more.

## SEO

### *"The best place to hide a dead body is page two of Google"*

#### **Be found. Be recognized. Be heard.**

There is no silver bullet for fixing poor website Search Engine Optimization (SEO). Increasing how your website is indexed and ranked requires a holistic approach, usually resulting in a series of lots of small improvements.

Below is a checklist of what you should be doing:

- SEO Basics
  - Setup The Google Search Console
  - Setup Google Analytics
- Keyword Research
- On-Page SEO
  - Include Your Keyword In Your URL
  - Use Short URLs
  - Front-Load Your Keyword In Your Title Tag
  - Embed Title Tag Modifiers
  - Use Your Keyword Once In The First 150 Words
  - Use Your Keyword in H1, H2 or H3 Tags
  - Optimize Images
- Technical SEO
  - Identify Crawl Errors
  - Find Out How Google Views Your Page
  - Make Sure Your Site is Mobile-Friendly
  - Fix Broken Links
  - Secure Your Site With HTTPS
  - Check Your Site's Loading Speed
- Content
  - Create Amazing Content
  - Chunk Your Content to Maximize Readability
  - Cover Your Page's Topic In-Depth
  - Use Schema Markup
- Link Building
  - Build Powerful Backlinks With Guest Posting
  - Reverse Your Competitor's Backlinks



## Expertise

***"An expert is a person who is very knowledgeable about or skilful in a particular area"***

There is a lot of demand for digital solutions these days, and there is equally a lot of supply of services in this space—some key questions to ask.

### **Are you in safe hands?**

Ask your agency to show you similar pieces of work they have performed in the past for clients with similar requirements to yours. This will give your confidence but also a flavour of the work the agency can deliver for you.

Ask your agency for references from existing / past clients. There is a lot of value in talking to others that have been through a similar experience. You don't only get feedback for the agency, but also you get an insight into how the client has managed the project. References and feedback are a great guide to your agency's expertise.

### **Certifications do matter**

Ask your agency about their certifications. Most technologies are accompanied by certifications and accreditations that are an indication that the team that will look after you and your implementation are experts in their field. Although certification is not always a guarantee that you are talking with experts is an excellent sign.

### **Has your agency been around for long?**

The digital world is relatively new and changes very rapidly. A website that is five years old is considered ancient in digital talk. At the same time, there are a lot of new agencies springing up every day. A few points to consider:

- Ask your agency for how long they have been around. Although digital technologies change and advance all the time an agency that has been operating for some time has a lot more experience and exposure to the issues that clients face currently
- Ask your agency how stable they are. An agency that has been successfully around for some time not only is experienced but more likely to exist and be around in the future

Our **Microsoft** and **Kentico** Certified development team have integrated Kentico with over 50 systems and have developed over the years an excess of 100 websites. When you come to us, you are in safe hands!

## Support

*"Anything is possible when you have the right people there to support you."*

Your project has eventually finished, and it's live! This is excellent news, but what happens next? A lot of agencies operate the "deliver and forget" model, which leaves your website unsupported and that in turns leads to disappointment and resentment when issues occur. Your implementation must be insured and protected. A pain point we hear about repeatedly is that clients are left unsupported, forgotten, or tied up in agreements that are not fit for purpose and are not delivering to their requirements. Here some tips to get the support your website needs.

### Prepare

Discussions about the support model and how your business might need to change need to take place at the beginning of your website project. You can start by looking at what support packages your agency has to offer and if these meet your needs. If your business has operational expertise, and you are looking to support your website internally, a plan of Hypercare should be prepared with clear outputs for your team to take over.

### Transition

The transition to operations phase is perhaps the most crucial phase of your website project. Typically, after the User Acceptance Testing has completed and the last few bugs have been ironed out, there is a false impression that all work is done.

Elements that take a back seat and become afterthoughts are activities like training, the transition to the teams who will operate the site, **Hypercare** and documentation handovers.

We at Discover IT recognize the Transition Phase as a separate and independent Phase in its own right with clear deliverables.

### Support & Maintain

After you transition and your website is live, your staff have adapted to the change, and all is running smoothly. It's like buying a nice brand-new car with your hard-earned money, and it's time to enjoy it. Having a robust Support & Maintenance agreement ensures your website's future and gives you the gift of peace of mind. A few items to look out on a support contract:

**Options.** Ask your agency what alternatives they provide for Support & Maintenance. One size doesn't fit all. Check about flexibility on their standard packages and how you can customize them to your specific needs.

**SLAs.** Support & Maintenance agreements should come with Service Level Agreements. You want your insurance policy to guarantee that your service will be restored in set amounts of time.

**Reporting.** Is your support contract performing? What are the metrics? Do you need more support? Regular reporting of your support contract performance needs to take place to ensure that both you and your agency are getting the most out of the agreement. At the end of the day, we are all in this together!

Discover IT has a range of Support and Maintenance Packages to cover your operational needs. Talk to us today to find out more.