Professional Association of Self-Caterers UK

PASC UK Webinar Companion
'What's wrong with my website?'
Presented at 11am on Tuesday 16 August

We brought together a panel of experts who took us all through a series of things that we can check on and do to improve our website performance in plain English. There are presentations from experts with knowledge of what is needed to make sure you have the best possible website.
The experts cover a whole range of aspects to look at to make sure your website is performing, from making sure it will appeal to your target market, what SEO is and what benefits it brings, the user journey, how the guest navigates through the site to the book now button, website checkers and much, much more. Their Individual presentations are below along with extra helpful information and tools.

Panel:

- Linda Winstanley linda.winstanley@xlr8marketing.co.uk from http://www.xlr8online.co.uk/
- Mark Worden mark@mihidigital.co.uk from www.mihidigital.co.uk
- Mark Durbar mark.durber@clock-work.co.uk from www.clock-work.co.uk
- Amy Gibson kit@creatomatic.co.uk from www.creatomatic.co.uk
- Kelly Odor kelly@booksterhq.com from www.booksterhq.com

Hosted By Alistair Handyside chair@pascuk.co.uk PASC UK

Clockwork Marketing

The following information has been provided by Clockwork marketing and can be found on an exclusive page for the PASC UK at https://www.clock-work.co.uk/pasc-seo-tools

WHAT IS SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMISATION (SEO)?

Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) helps increase the quantity and quality of the traffic to your site. For hospitality businesses, this is the biggest driver of website traffic, and most importantly, revenue. This is a zero-sum game. If you are not improving your website to climb the rankings, then your competitors are.

We have compiled a selection of useful website checkers and online tools to help you test and improve your website for search engines like Google, Bing, Yahoo and many more.

Helpful Tools

- Google Search Console - to monitor and manage your basic index status and performance on Google Search.
- Bing Webmaster Tools - to monitor and manage your index status and performance on Bing Search.
- Google Page Speed Insights - to test your page speeds for mobile and desktop.
- GT Metrix - an alternative to test your web page speeds.
- Google Mobile Friendly Tester - to see if your web page is mobile friendly.
- Google Trends - to discover trending searches online, useful for creating compelling content.
- Ahrefs Webmaster Tools - to audit your website and improve your performance.
- Ahrefs Keyword Generator - to research keyword ideas.
- Ahrefs Domain Authority Checker - to check your website's domain authority score.
- Ubersuggest by Neil Patel - to research keyword search volumes.
- Shortpixel - to compress image file size before uploading to your website, to improve page speed.
- Tiny jpg/ Tiny png - to compress image file size before uploading to your website, to improve page speed.

XLR8 Presentation by Linda Winstanley

Attracting direct bookings – where to start?

Linda Winstanley - XLR8 Marketing

Understand your ideal guest

- Attract - who are you trying to appeal to?
- Inspire – you are not selling a cottage week, you are selling a holiday!
- Convert – your proposition needs to be:
  - clear
  - complete
  - easy to book

Start with some research

- Typical guest profiles
  - Friends groups
  - Families – multi generation, preschoolers
  - Empty nesters / couples
- Why do your current guests book?
  - Check online reviews
  - Do you have a "visitor book"?
  - TALK TO YOUR EXISTING GUESTS!

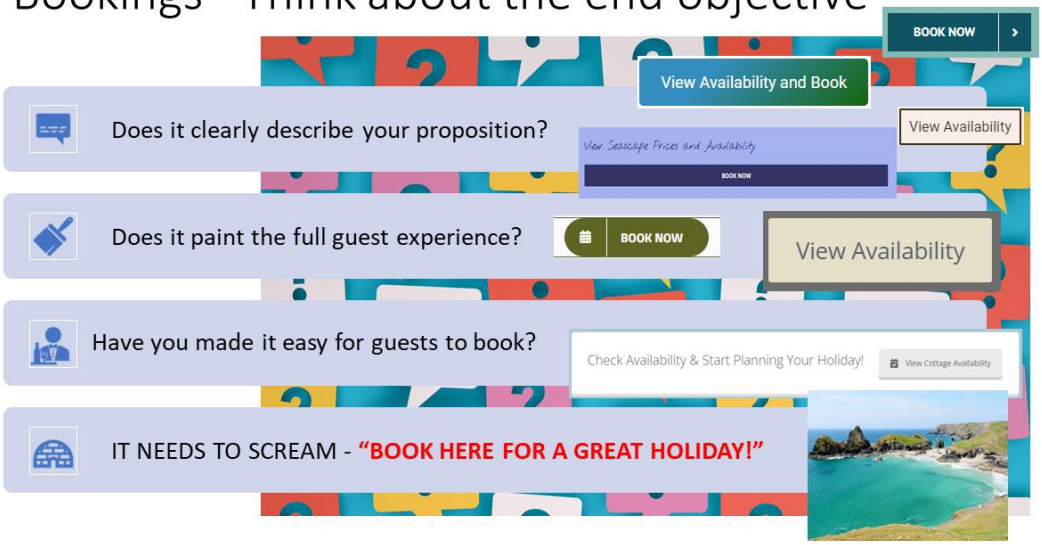
Unique Selling Points (USPs) – we all have them!

- What facilities do you have?
- What are you near?
- Service as a differentiator

Brand Identity - make yourself stand out

- Website styling
  - Colours, fonts, “tone of voice”
- Visual content
  - Images, videos, graphics
- Use of a logo
  - visual identity, relevant, distinctive

Bookings - Think about the end objective



Get in Touch!

Linda Winstanley - XLR8 Marketing

Email:
linda.winstanley@xlr8marketing.co.uk

Phone: 07976 372850

Clockwork Marketing Presentation by Mark Durber

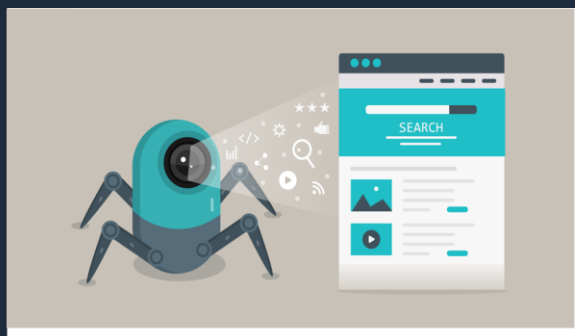
ACCESSIBILITY/ INDEXABILITY

Why?

- For Humans
- For Google Bots (Spiders)
- Google Algorithm

Important to check

- Configure your robots.txt
*www.yourdomain.co.uk/**robots.txt***
- Index & no-index tags



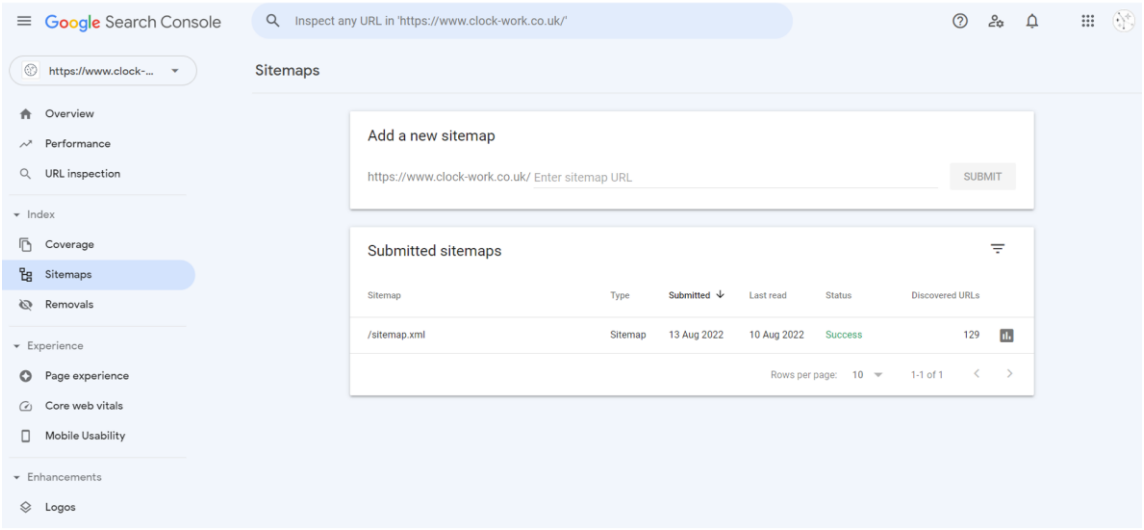
Example 1

```
# www.robotstxt.org/
# http://code.google.com/web/controlcrawlindex/

User-agent: *
Disallow: /
```

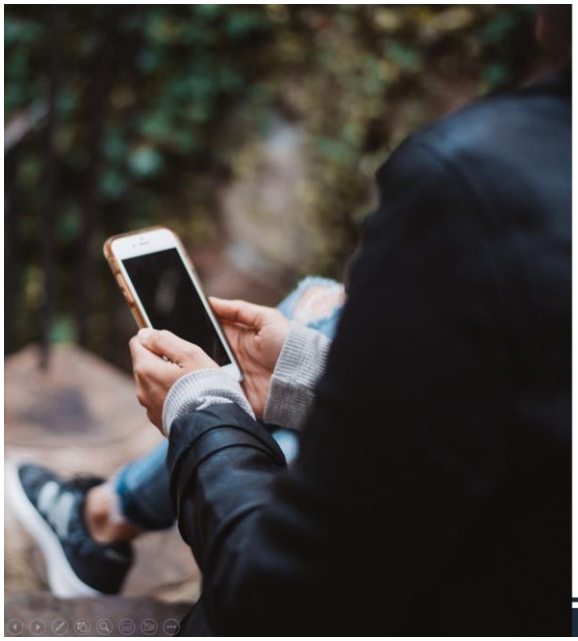
Example 2

```
User-agent: *
Disallow:

sitemap: https://www.clock-work.co.uk/sitemap.xml
```

PASC | Clockwork Marketing



https://search.google.com/search-console



CREATE COMPELLING CONTENT

- That answer's your website visitors search queries
- Informational, navigational, commercial and transactional
- Google E-A-T guidelines:
  - Expertise
  - Authoritative
  - Trustworthy

PASC | Clockwork Marketing

POWER UP YOUR RANKINGS WITH KEYWORDS

- Locations: Meta Title, Description, Heading, Body Text, URL, Image Alts.

- Meta title should be no more than 60 characters in length and Meta descriptions no longer than 160 characters.
- You can use "pipe" (|) to split up your keywords for display e.g. Holidays in [Region] | Luxury Accommodation | [Brand Name] or Short Breaks in [Town] | Things to do | [Brand Name]

TOP TIPS TO FIND THE BEST KEYWORDS

1. Research on Google itself
2. Using keyword research tools
3. Competitors
4. Industry reports
5. Google Trends
6. News/PR
7. Media

Website Checkers/Online Tools

- Google Search Console
- Google Page Speed Insights or GT Metrix
- Google Trends
- Ahrefs Webmaster Tools & Keyword Generator
- Neil Patel/Ubersuggest
- Shortpixel or Tiny jpg/ Tiny png
- Woorank/Moz/SEMRush/Ahrefs (paid tools)

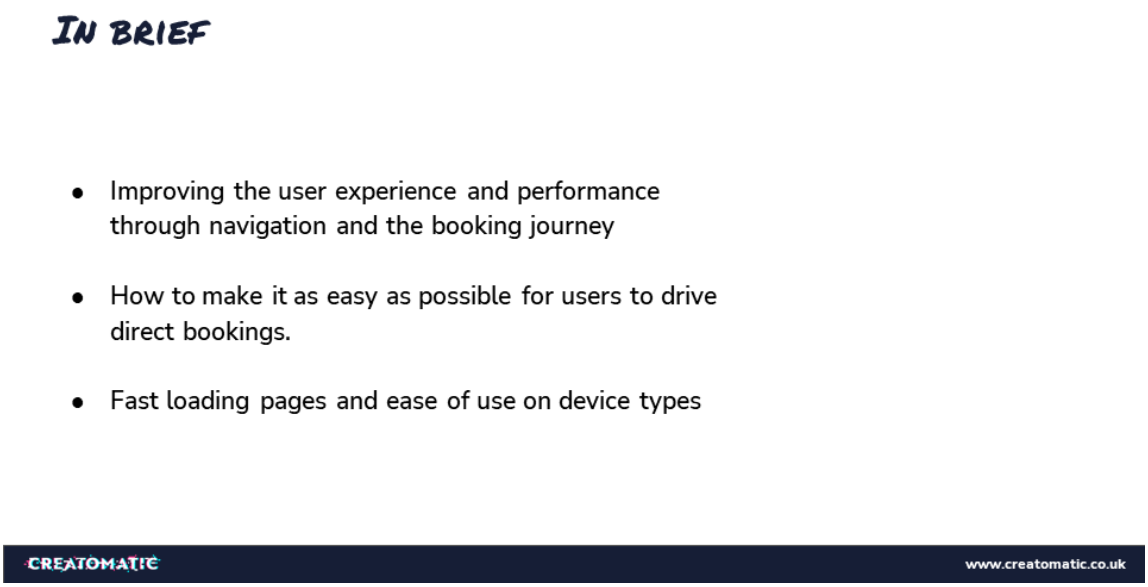
PASC | Clockwork Marketing

AMPLIFICATION

- Grow your domain authority
- Get your links featured on other websites
- Improve your page speed performance
- Improve your website for mobile users
- Share your website on social media

https://ahrefs.com/website-authority-checker

Creatomatic Presentation by Kit Allen



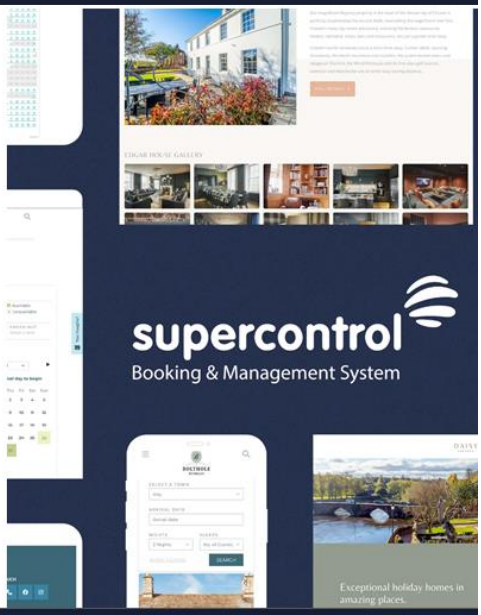
INTRODUCING CREATOMATIC

- Web design and development, brand development, digital marketing
- Established in 2012; team of 15 full-time staff based in Lockerbie, South Scotland
- Majority of our work is now in self-catering accommodation website design for agencies and owners
- Find out more at www.creatomatic.co.uk.

SELF CATERING WEBSITES

- We work extensively with SuperControl*, using their API and WordPress via our own Atom system
- Our clients generate £10m+ direct bookings per year, at a representative commission rate of < 1%
- It's worth chasing direct bookings.

*we do work with lots of other platforms too, by the way!

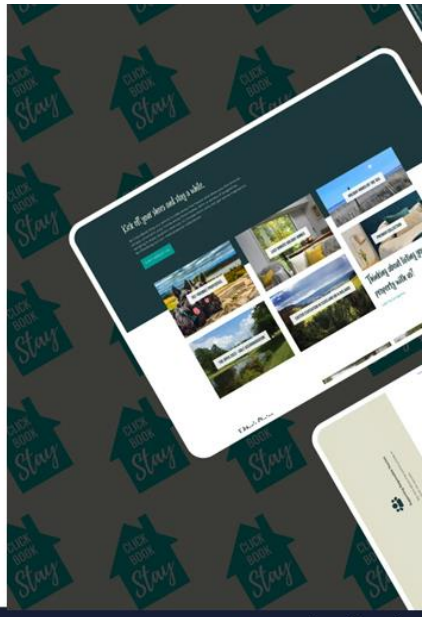


PART 1

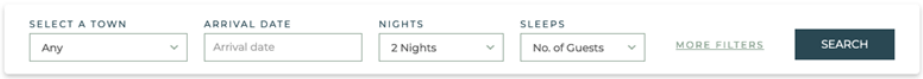
Improving the user experience and performance through navigation and the booking journey

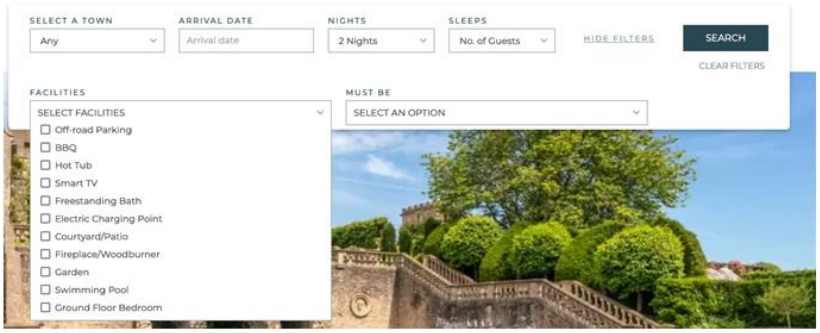
What does that even mean?

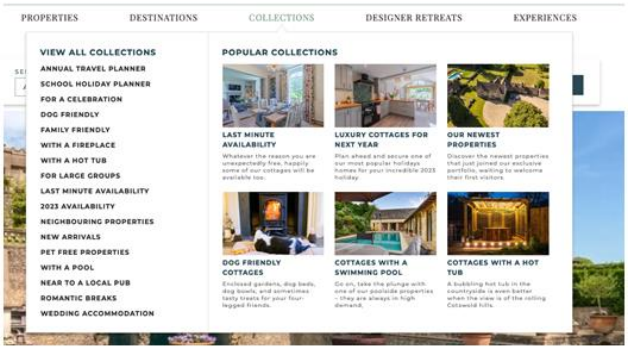
- Make it easy for your guests to make a booking
- Look at your site navigation, think about your users and what they're looking for
- Ensure that your search is easy to use and works for your user base
- Clear calls to action throughout, carefully considered user interface (UI) design



CREATOMATIC www.creatomatic.co.uk

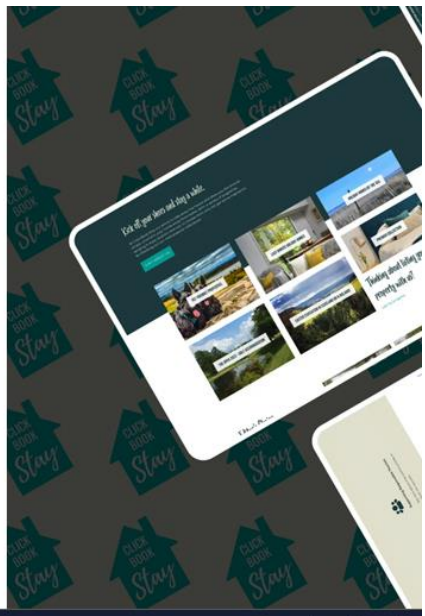






Top tips

- Consider your own requirements - number of people in your party, any pets, potential dates - and try to make a booking on your own website.
- How many steps does it take?
- Do you have to duplicate effort anywhere in the process?
- Are specific scenarios catered for? For instance: disabled access, pet friendly, etc
- Where do people drop off in the journey? Look at Google Analytics, HotJar or similar tracking software for this



CREATOMATIC www.creatomatic.co.uk

Part 2

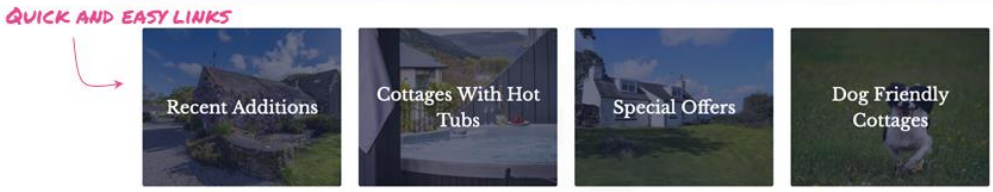
How to make it as easy as possible for users to drive direct bookings

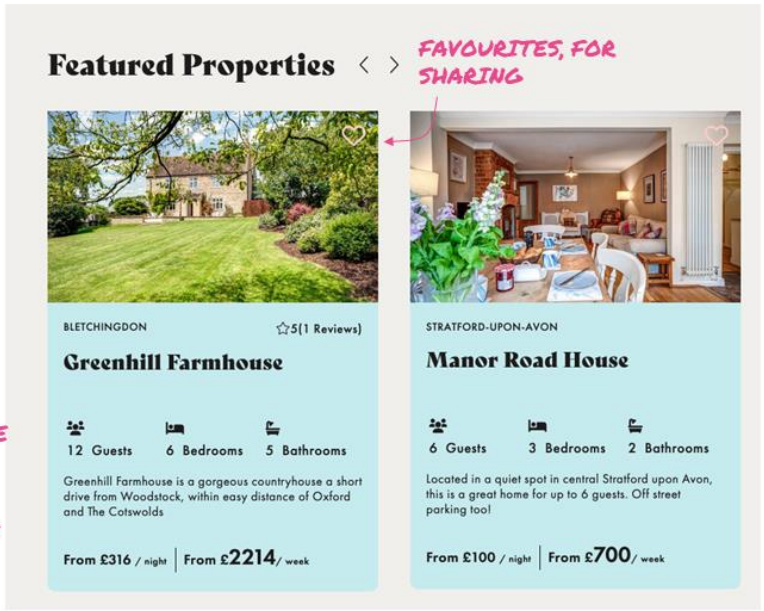
Break down the barriers

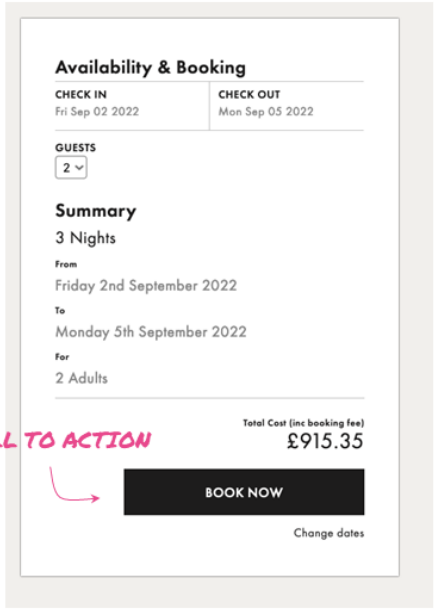
- The booking process should be distillable down to three stages for your potential guest:

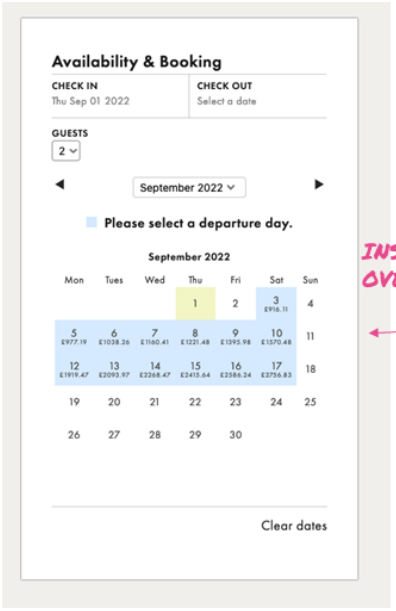
  - Search
  - View (with the option to share)
  - Book

CREATOMATIC www.creatomatic.co.uk



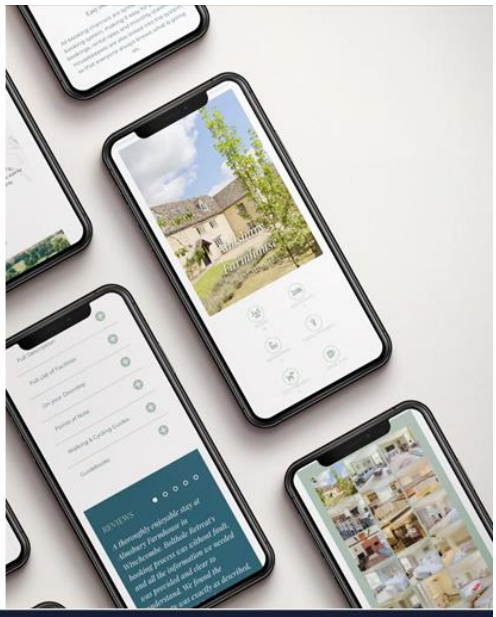






Top tips (part 1)

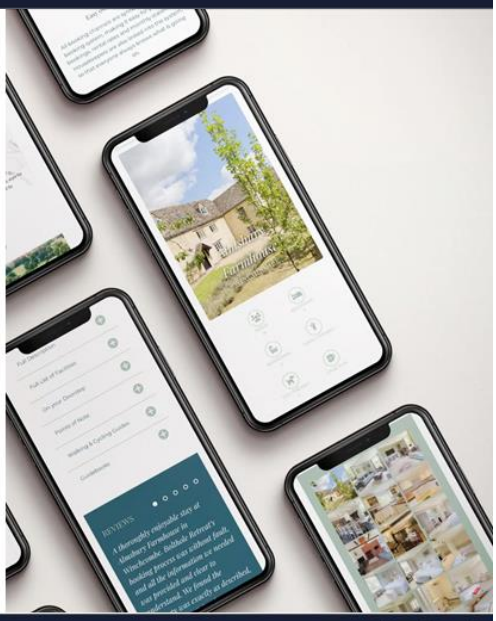
- Let your properties do the talking. Showcase brilliant images, video and facilities
- Make sure copy is well written and relevant with no typos
- Clear calls to action throughout



CREATOMATIC www.creatomatic.co.uk

Top tips (part 2)

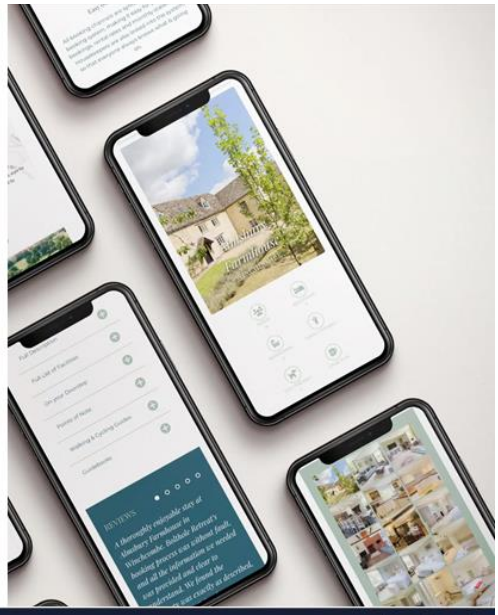
- Carry out speed tests on search results and single property pages.
- Use software like HotJar to watch how users interact with your website
- Set up Google eCommerce tracking to measure conversions and try out different routes



CREATOMATIC www.creatomatic.co.uk

Top tips (part 3)

- Make sure your booking integration, calendar or widget is prominent and easy to see
- Use language such as 'Book Now' or 'Enquire Now' in a recognisable button

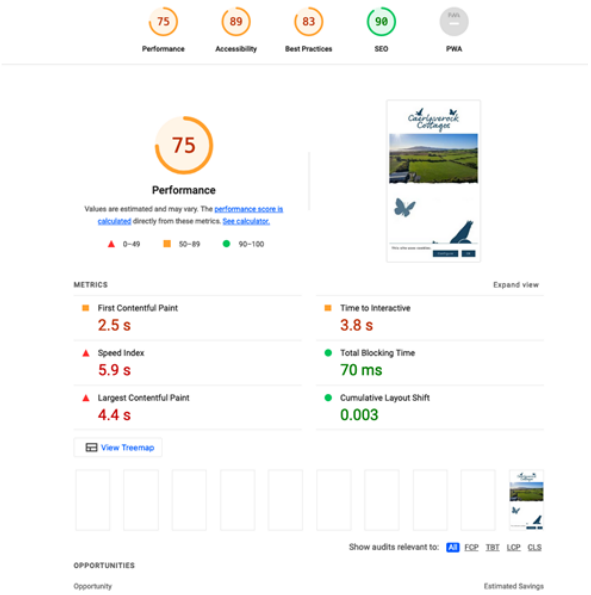


Part 3

Fast loading pages
and ease of use on device types

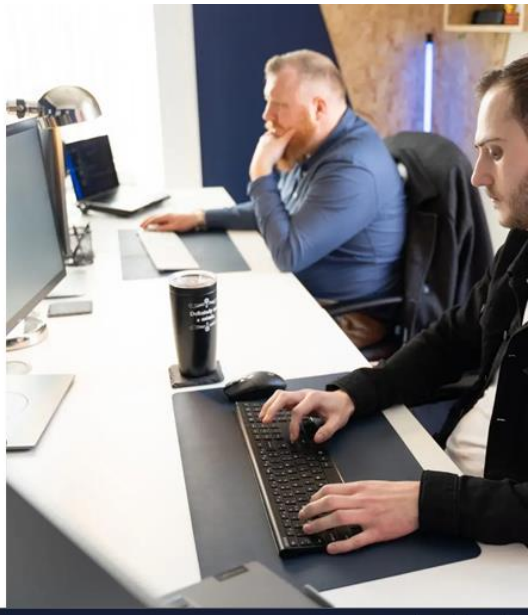
Is my site slow?

- Ask Google
- Pagespeed.web.dev is a free checker which will give you a basic overview
- Slower loading sites can lead to user drop-off as well as poor performance in search engine rankings



PARADOX ALERT

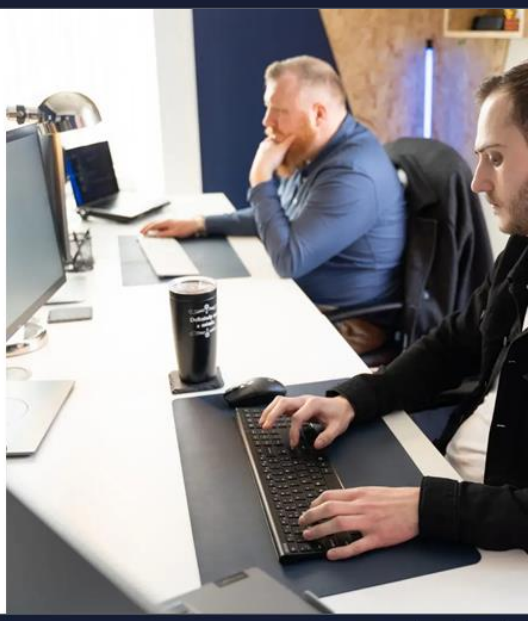
- Four pages ago, we advised to use lots of high resolution images and videos
- But this means your website might be slower to load
- But without lots of nice images, users might choose to book elsewhere
- Damn.



CREATOMATIC www.creatomatic.co.uk

THE SOLUTION

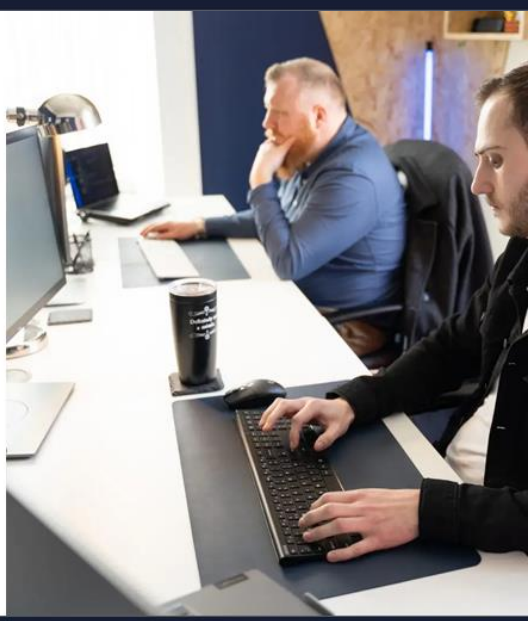
- Make sure images are optimised when uploading
- Embed video from a third-party, to load on request instead of preloading
- Use 'lazy loading' and caching to load images on demand
- Your web developer should be able to help with all of these



CREATOMATIC www.creatomatic.co.uk

MORE TIPS (FOR YOUR WEB DEVELOPERS)

- Make sure images are appropriately sized on all pages
- Use a content management system that allows local caching of data
- Ensure your website is hosting on a fast, low-contention website hosting package

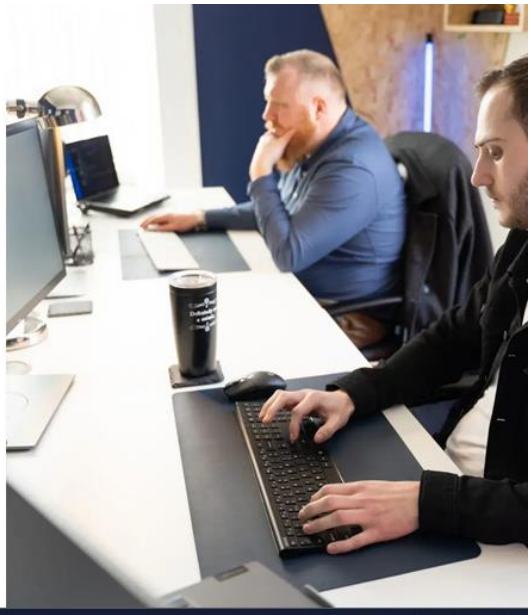


CREATOMATIC www.creatomatic.co.uk

DEVICE SUPPORT

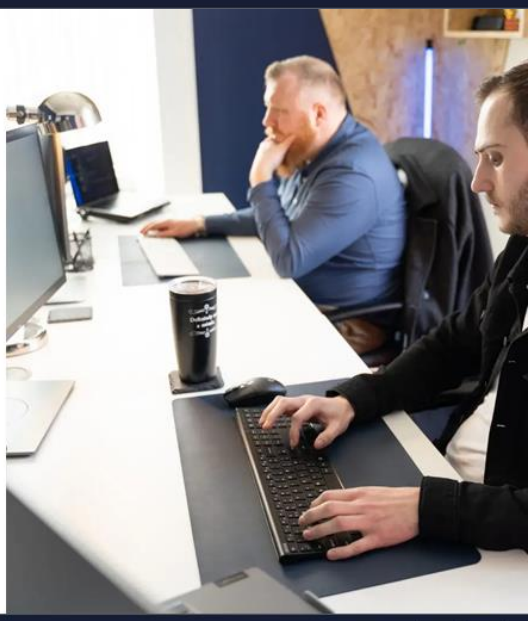
- 58% of browsing is on a mobile device as of 2022
- If your website doesn't work smoothly on mobile, you'll lose bookings
- Test your site regularly - on your mobile, iPad and Google's tester

Source: ContentSquare, April 2022



DEVICE SUPPORT

- It's not enough to make sure pages are legible - sorry.
- You need to be able to make a booking journey from start to finish on a desktop, laptop, tablet or mobile.



FURTHER READING (FOR THE REALLY KEEN)

Useful sites

- SuperControl sorry again, Bookster, we love you too
- Get Started with Google Analytics
- Monitoring drop-off with Analytics
- HotJar user tracking
- Google eCommerce Analytics
- Page Speed Insights
- Device Share
- Google Mobile Website Tester

Sites featured in this deck (and some others)

- Bolthole Retreats
- Click Book Stay
- Short Let Space
- Discover Scotland

- Rudge Farm Cottages
- Dod Mill
- Connells House and Barn

- Creatomatic

CREATOMATIC www.creatomatic.co.uk

THANKS FOR LISTENING!

Kit Allen, Creatomatic Ltd
kit@creatomatic.co.uk

Do you send your website guests to book on channels (eg Airbnb)?

bookster

My tip: Let visitors book on your site!

You spent time + money + effort getting these guests to your site.

- A channel charges you 10-15% for the booking,
- Your guest may find an alternative holiday home.

Keep visitors on your site, and get them booked.

bookster

Kelly Odor

www.booksterhq.com
booksterhq
booksterhq

bookster

Thank you!

We hope you have found this information useful to have to hand following the webinar. If you would like to watch the webinar again it is now available on the PASC UK website webinars page at www.pascuk.co.uk/webinars

Best regards

Alistair Handyside MBE
Executive Chair
The Professional Association of Self-Caterers UK
www.pascuk.co.uk
chair@pascuk.co.uk
07771 678028