4 BASIC STEPS TO GET STARTED WITH SITE SPEED

1.

Hosting

Quality, solid hosting can help speed. Look for these 3 factors when selecting:
- Caching option
- Let's Encrypt option
- PHP 7 option

Some hosting companies mentioned:
- WPEngine - https://wpengine.com/
- SiteGround - http://www.siteground.com/
- A2 - https://www.a2hosting.com/
- Cloudways - https://www.cloudways.com/en/

Useful hosting company review site:
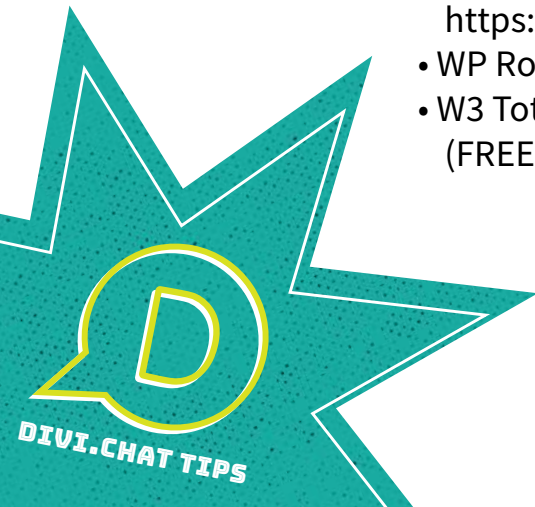- Review Signal - http://reviewsignal.com/webhosting

2.

Caching

There are 3 levels of caching you should be doing whenever possible:
- Server level - ex: Varnish
- WordPress level - A caching plugin ex: WP Rocket
- CDN level - ex: Cloudflare, MaxCDN

WordPress level caching plugins mentioned:
- Combo of Cache Enabler for caching + Autoptimize for minification (BOTH FREE)
  https://wordpress.org/plugins/cache-enabler/
  https://wordpress.org/plugins/autoptimize/
- WP Rocket- https://wp-rocket.me/ (PREMIUM)
- W3 Total Cache - https://wordpress.org/plugins/w3-total-cache/ (FREE)

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3.

Image Optimization

This is probably the most common issue slowing down sites. Here are some methods to help optimize and reduce load time overall:

- Online compression tools
- Optimization & compression plugins
- Lossy vs lossless compression, see what is best for your images

Compression tools and software mentioned:

- TinyPNG - https://tinypng.com/
- Photoshop - http://www.adobe.com/products/photoshopfamily.html

WP Plugins mentioned:

- Imagify - https://wordpress.org/plugins/imagify/
- WP Smush Pro - https://premium.wpmudev.org/project/wp-smush-pro

4.

Plugin Quality

It's important to only install highly-rated and reliable plugins on your WordPress site. Some things to keep in mind when choosing:

- What is the star rating?
- How many active installs does it have?
- When was it last updated?
- Is it compatible with the current WP version?
- How long has it been out in the wild?
- Check the reviews and support tabs, do a little digging.
- Ask a developer friend for their opinion if you're unsure.
- While it's true there is probably not a need for 100+ plugins on most sites think **quality over quantity**.
- Perform a plugin audit on your site every month or so, ask yourself if you really still need all that are installed.
- New plugins are always being released and current plugins are always being updated. Make sure you are keeping up with the "gold standard" of the types of plugins you are using.
- **DO NOT** leave deactivated plugins installed.

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