

Task List for Building a US History WordPress Website with a Detailed User Journey

Phase 1: Initial Setup and Planning

1. **Decide Between WordPress.org and WordPress.com**
 - Discuss the differences, pros, and cons. Ask ChatGPT.
 - Decide on the best option for your project. Assume you have no money.
2. **Choose a Domain Name**
 - Brainstorm and select a domain name that reflects the website’s focus on US History. Ask ChatGPT: “What websites help us to come up with good and creative domain names?”
 - Check domain availability. (GoDaddy, Namecheap, Bluehost all do this)
3. **Select Web Hosting (if using WordPress.org)**
 - Research hosting providers. Ask YouTube for “Best Web Hosting for WordPress 2024”. Then watch one or two shorter videos – around 10-20 minutes maximum.
 - Discuss costs, features, and reliability. After you have some choices made, ask ChatGPT to create a “Website Budget Plan”. Edit and save this in Microsoft Word.
 - Purchase the chosen hosting plan. MARS will purchase this hosting plan if its budget plan is approved.
4. **Set Up Domain and Hosting**
 - Register the domain. MARS will purchase your domain name for the year if it’s not free with your hosting.
 - Connect the domain to the hosting account.
 - Install WordPress on the hosting server (if using WordPress.org).
5. **Explore wpbeginner.com**
 - Familiarize with wpbeginner.com as a resource for learning WordPress.
 - Identify useful guides and tutorials for beginners.
6. **Understand Website Costs**
 - Discuss the various costs involved in creating and maintaining a WordPress website. Schedule a Teams meeting with your cohort and discuss. Did you make good choices? Are you ready to start moving past the basics of website set up and getting into content? Why? Why not?

Phase 2: User Journey Conceptualization

7. **Identify Target Audience**

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- Define the primary audience (e.g., students, history enthusiasts, educators).
- Understand their needs, preferences, and what they are seeking on a US History website.

8. **Develop User Personas**

- Create detailed user personas to represent different segments of your audience.
- Consider their goals, challenges, and how they might interact with the website.

9. **Outline Key User Actions**

- Identify the key actions users should take on the website.
- Map out the steps users will follow from arriving at the site to achieving their goals.

10. **Create a Site Map**

- Design a site map that logically guides users through the content.
- Organize pages and content to ensure easy navigation and a seamless experience.

Phase 3: Design and Layout

11. **Select and Install a Theme**

- Browse and choose a WordPress theme that suits the project's needs.
- Install and activate the chosen theme.

12. **Customize the Theme**

- Modify the theme's appearance (colors, fonts, layout).
- Set up the homepage, header, and footer.
- Explore options for mobile responsiveness.

13. **Design the Homepage Experience**

- Plan the homepage layout to capture attention immediately.
- Include key elements like a compelling headline, featured content, and clear calls to action.

Phase 4: Content Creation and User Journey Development

14. **Understand Pages vs. Posts**

- Discuss the difference between pages and posts.
- Plan the site structure based on the user journey.

15. **Craft the Content Flow**

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- Design content paths that tell the US History story in a chronological or thematic order.
- Ensure that each piece of content leads naturally to the next step in the journey.

16. Create Essential Pages

- Set up key pages like Home, About, Contact, and Resources.
- Discuss what content to include on each page.

17. Add Content to Pages

- Write and add text content related to US History.
- Add images, videos, and other media.

18. Create Blog Posts

- Plan and write the first blog post on a specific US History topic.
- Discuss the importance of categories and tags.

19. Design Calls to Action (CTAs)

- Strategically place CTAs to guide users toward desired actions.

20. Incorporate User Feedback Opportunities

- Plan for feedback forms, comment sections, or surveys to gather user insights.

Phase 5: Functionality and Optimization

21. Install Essential Plugins

- Discuss the purpose of plugins.
- Install key plugins for SEO, security, and performance.

22. Set Up Navigation Menus

- Create and organize navigation menus.
- Link pages and posts appropriately.

23. Optimize for Search Engines (SEO)

- Install an SEO plugin.
- Learn basic SEO practices and apply them to pages and posts.

24. Set Up Contact Forms

- Install and configure a contact form plugin.
- Ensure its user-friendly and accessible.

25. Plan for Interactive Elements

- Decide where to include interactive elements to enhance engagement.
- Ensure these elements fit seamlessly into the user journey.

26. Optimize for Accessibility

- Ensure that the website is accessible to all users, including those with disabilities.

Phase 6: Testing and Launch

27. Test User Flows

- Conduct usability testing to observe how real users navigate the site.
- Identify pain points and areas for improvement.

28. Iterate Based on Feedback

- Make improvements to the user journey based on testing and feedback.

29. Review and Test the Website

- Test the website on different devices and browsers.
- Ensure all links and forms work properly.

30. Create a User Onboarding Process

- Develop an onboarding process for new visitors.

31. Launch the Website

- Make the website live.
- Announce the launch to your audience.

Phase 7: Post-Launch Activities

32. Monitor User Behavior

- Set up analytics tools to track user behavior and engagement.
- Use this data to make continuous improvements.

33. Plan for Ongoing User Engagement

- Design strategies to keep users coming back, such as regular blog updates, newsletters, or new interactive content.

34. Plan for Future Content

- Create a content calendar for future blog posts and updates.
- Continuously refine the user journey to enhance the overall experience.