



A Beginner's Guide to UX Optimization

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Introduction

User experience (UX) optimization is the process of enhancing your website's usability, responsiveness, and accessibility to maximize user satisfaction, SERP rankings, and conversions.

From page content and site navigation to loading speed and mobile-friendliness, every interaction affects how visitors perceive and engage with your brand.

Since UX is deeply interconnected with content quality, technical performance, and overall site health, developing an effective optimization strategy requires a comprehensive approach. With this in mind, we've created a complete guide to UX optimization fundamentals, offering proven strategies and actionable steps to help you create engaging experiences that boost traffic, conversions, and brand loyalty.

Steps to optimize UX

1. Discovery and goal-setting

Your first step towards optimizing UX is to understand your site's current UX performance. To do that, you'll need to look at your [Core Web Vitals](#) and your content performance.

Core Web Vitals measure your site's user experience from a [technical point of view](#), specifically around responsiveness, site speed, and visual stability. Core Web Vitals consist of:

- **Largest Contentful Paint (LCP):** Measures loading performance
- **Interaction To Next Paint (INP):** Measures responsiveness
- **Cumulative Layout Shift (CLS):** Measures visual stability

If each of these numbers attains a “good” score, that means that your UX, from a technical perspective, is fairly strong. Google then uses Core Web Vitals as a ranking factor in its algorithm. Together, Core Web Vitals give you a good idea of your site's UX performance, but it doesn't tell you everything.

Your content performance will also give you a clue into your UX but in a different way. By reviewing your content performance on a page level, you can compare current performance to your initial expectations. Specifically, take a look at your traffic and conversions per page.

For example, say you run a home improvement site and your bathroom tile product pages tend to have very strong conversions. But then, all at once, you notice that after pushing a design update, several of those pages are loading slowly, causing users to abandon the site before converting. From there, you'll need to set specific improvement goals for your conversions and site speed and create a plan to optimize and maintain both.

2. Research and issue prioritization

With your discovery and goals set, leverage your collected data points to create hypotheses and a plan to target the most impactful UX improvements. Mouse—and eye-tracking software are helpful tools for identifying UX issues on your pages.



Mouse-tracking software monitors user behavior on your website or within your platform, specifically around where they're clicking. This is a helpful window into what your users are looking for and what they value.

For example, many of the product pages on your home improvement site get a solid amount of traffic, but comparatively few people actually make a purchase. You can leverage mouse-tracking software to see where visitors are clicking and scrolling on your website and get to the bottom of where the conversion journey broke down.

Continuing the home improvement example, maybe the page is loading slowly, leading to fewer conversions. Mouse-tracking software will show you what that looks like from the user side so you can understand where the breakdown is occurring.



Eye-tracking software is similar to mouse-tracking, but it goes a level deeper. Instead of just tracking how a user moves their cursor on the page, eye-tracking software collects data based on where they are looking. This allows you to get an even deeper view of user behavior.

For example, say that tracking users' cursors didn't conclusively show why visitors weren't making a purchase. Maybe the user simply closed the page without warning. Eye-tracking software will show one layer deeper to help you understand more about the user's overall site experience. Also, since our eyes tend to scan all over the screen when we're on a webpage—even without us noticing—eye-tracking often shows more of the user's subconscious than mouse-tracking.

Each method has pros and cons. Eye-tracking software can usually be more accurate at predicting user behavior but is also more expensive. We've listed some mouse- and eye-tracking tools below to help you decide which is best suited to your needs.



Hotjar is one of the top names in

mouse-tracking, offering a suite of heatmaps, session recordings, and user feedback tools. Its user-friendly interface and reasonable pricing structure make it a popular option among start-ups and mid-sized companies.



Eyeware provides AI-driven eye-tracking

software that works with standard webcams and 3D sensors. While not quite as precise as dedicated hardware solutions, it's noted for being flexible to use and easy to learn, making it particularly appealing for developers and companies looking to integrate eye-tracking into existing applications.



Fullstory offers similar capabilities to Hotjar but tends to focus

more on the enterprise space. It's known for its sophisticated search capabilities and wide-ranging options for technical integrations.



Tobii tracks eye and head movements, making it accessible

through standard webcams or specialized devices. This typically makes it more expensive than mouse-tracking solutions. Tobii is mostly used by larger organizations and research institutions that need precise gaze analysis.



Microsoft Clarity is a tool that provides heatmaps, session

recordings, and basic analytics for free. While it may have fewer features than paid alternatives, it may be the best option for beginners.

Explore which tool or combination of tools works best for you, and leverage that data to get an unfiltered view of your site's actual user experience. This will help you prioritize which issues to resolve.

3. Test and implement improvements

Now that you know where your UX is lacking and what that actually looks like from the user side, you need to test and implement plans to improve. Your Core Web Vitals and content performance data will tell you what aspects of your site aren't working from a UX standpoint.

Say that you discover that the Largest Contentful Paint (LCP) on one of your product pages is poor. LCP can be affected by a number of different factors, so it's important that you A/B test a few different hypotheses to see which carries the most impact.

For example, you might try to optimize the [image SEO](#) on your pages by compressing and resizing large images. But on another page, you might focus on minimizing render-blocking JavaScript and CSS. Test out multiple theories, as well as regular content optimization, to create and implement a holistic plan for UX optimization.

4. Measure and report on the impact

As you test your hypotheses, you need to measure and analyze the results to ensure they're driving the desired impact. As we said before, UX optimization is never finished, and you may need to iterate on strategies you've put in place.

Keep a close eye on your Core Web Vitals and content performance. How are the tested pages performing? Have conversions rebounded, or are they staying stagnant?

Accurate measurements and data are key to creating a repeatable UX optimization strategy going forward.

Just as important as measurement is reporting. Reporting allows you to track the impact of your initiatives days, weeks, and months after implementation so you can ensure they're driving results. With [Conductor's Workspaces](#) feature, you can even send automated reports to key stakeholders customized to include your most important metrics to secure buy-in or iterate on your strategy.

5. Continued monitoring for issues

Monitoring your website's technical performance and health is essential for maintaining high conversion rates. **Conductor Website Monitoring** provides around-the-clock tracking for every page on your site and instantly notifies you when any changes or issues arise.

For example, say that your page load times start to slow, Conductor Website Monitoring automatically notifies you of the issue so you can resolve it before it starts impacting UX.

Try Conductor Website Monitoring Free!

Get around-the-clock monitoring for your most important pages with a Conductor Website Monitoring free trial.

Start your free trial

Best practices to optimize UX

When it comes to the actual nitty-gritty of UX optimization, the good news is there's a ton in your direct control that you can do to optimize UX. But it's not as simple as making sure your pages run fast and have some target keywords. You need to think about UX holistically and from the user's point of view.

Think about any website or platform you've ever used. What aspects of the site's infrastructure, navigation, content, or design left you unsatisfied or turning back to the SERP? Those are likely things that will annoy your site visitors, too, so think like a user when it comes to UX optimization.

Say, for example, that you're trying to sign up for an exercise class, but when you go to book the class, the page just refreshes over and over, and you're unable to complete the reservation. That's an extreme example of bad UX, but think about it, you'd probably leave that site and not come back.

Satisfying audience search intent

If your content answers users' questions and solves their pain points, that is a satisfying user experience. Leverage your keyword research to understand how your audience thinks about a topic holistically so you can anticipate their needs and create content that satisfies them.

Of course, you need to answer the user's questions about the installation in the guide, but just as important is how you convey that information. You need to make your content scannable and easy to read at a glance. Now isn't really the time to start proving how big your vocabulary is; you need to give users the information they need quickly and concisely.

That's why cultivating strong [on-page SEO](#) is critical for satisfying search intent. Your titles, meta descriptions, headers, images, body copy, and URLs all work together to give your audience the answers they need. If aspects of your on-page SEO are lacking, it will take users longer to get their questions answered, creating a frustrating user experience.

For example, say that your home improvement site has a series of DIY how-to guides for installing kitchen appliances. The guides are helpful and informative and answer users' questions, but say that your content isn't broken down with a clear heading structure. Your audience can't tell where the specific answers they need are, forcing them to scan the entire page to find what they need. This will make your content seem less helpful than it actually is and will likely cause users to leave your site and find content that meets their needs.

Improve site speed & responsiveness

At the risk of sounding like broken records about Core Web Vitals, they're critical, along with your overall website health, for cultivating strong UX. If your site is slow or unresponsive, people will find sites that aren't. Plain and simple. How your website performs is every bit as important to ratings and how users view your brand as your on-page content.

For example, you sell home improvement products on your site, and a user goes to buy a drill. Once they click, the page loads slowly, and some of the product images can't be fully rendered. Those issues will work together to make your site—and by extension, your products—seem less trustworthy, and users will likely make a purchase somewhere else.

You can stay on top of your Core Web Vitals, UX metrics, and overall technical health by leveraging real-time auditing solutions like [Conductor Website Monitoring](#) to ensure that your site is set up to maximize UX and conversions.

Enhance site navigation & search

Make it easy for visitors to get from one place to another on your site. This could mean something as simple as including internal links to other content on your site so that users can easily find new related topics. But it can also be more involved, like adding a universal search bar to your homepage. Again, think about this from the user's perspective. How would you like to navigate a site? What would make it an easier or more enjoyable experience for you?

Going back to our home improvement example, you have tons of content on DIY home improvement, but you don't have a search bar for visitors to find the exact flow they need. Or maybe the guides are hard to find because they aren't in a dedicated subfolder. Now, a user looking for articles on fixing their kitchen sink will have to scroll past article after article of irrelevant information. How would you feel in that situation? If it were me, I'd probably find an article on another site.

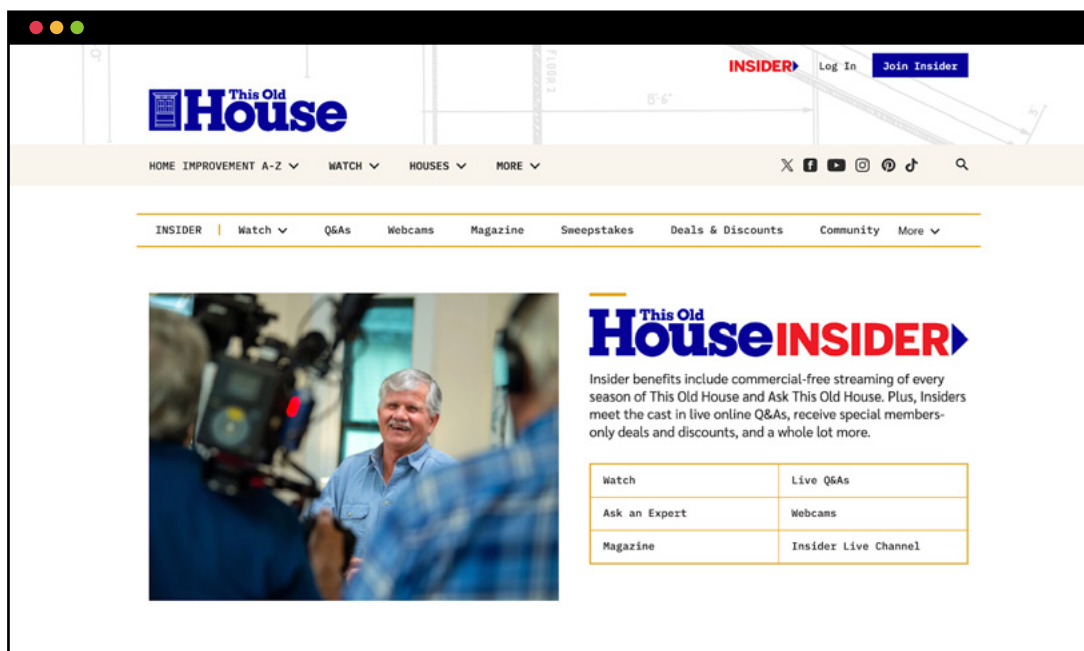
But what about a less extreme example? Maybe, in this case, you have a universal search function, and your content is clearly arranged by category, making it easy for users to find the articles they need. But you haven't been thoroughly linking to other resources and articles on your site, like if you have an article about kitchen sink repair that doesn't link to your hub page about plumbing. While a user may not have come to your site for the page about plumbing, it may still have information they need.

Satisfying user intent is about anticipating that need and providing the most helpful experience possible.

Cultivate engaging website experiences

Similar to satisfying search intent, it's important that you aim to create unique website experiences that set your site apart from the competition. When you're creating content for your site, you need to ask yourself: how will I differentiate this content from what is already out there? What perspective can we offer that the competition can't? Just like in the Information Gain section of our [Content Brief template](#).

For example, any home improvement website can have basic DIY how-to guides, but you might also leverage video content as well as written guides or even expert Q&A sessions to engage your audience in different ways. Check out the example below from the home improvement site [This Old House](#). The site gives users multiple ways to experience the content and get the answers they need. Or maybe you'll leverage gifs to make the content funnier, more engaging, or more compelling.



Dynamic content is also a great way to tailor your website experiences to your users. Dynamic content is digital content that changes based on user data, behavior, and preferences. For example, if a visitor previously bought kitchen cabinets, when they return, you might show complementary items like countertop materials.

Again, this is a way you can anticipate user needs and provide them with the answers, content, or products they need faster. In short, a unique brand voice keeps people engaged with your content and helps you stand out on crowded SERPs. Strive to build content experiences that not only satisfy search intent but also [spark joy within your audience](#).

Include social proof

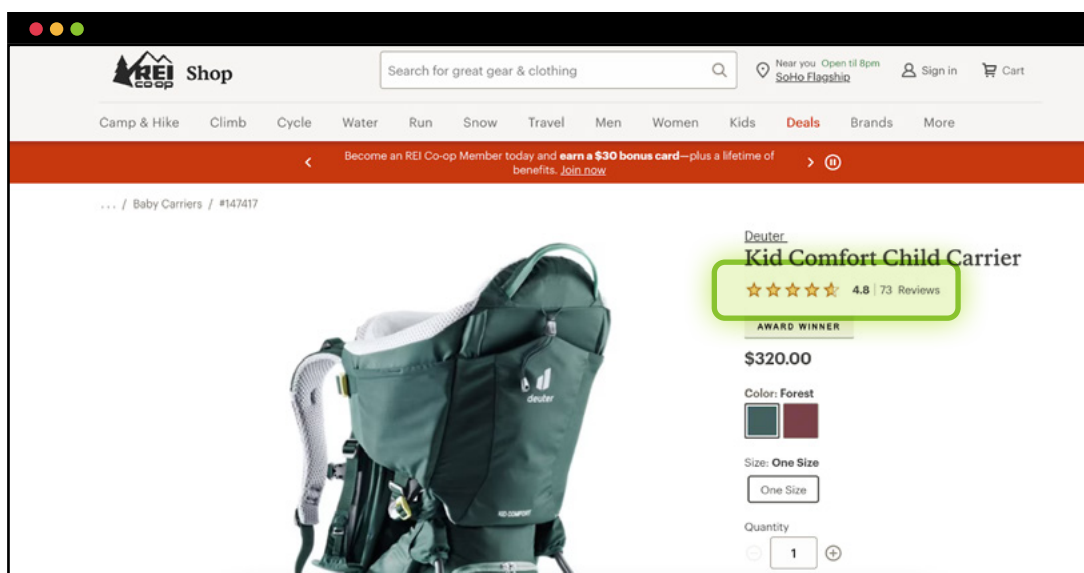
As we mentioned earlier, social proof is a great way to get unfiltered feedback on your website's UX. When it's poor, social media sites like Reddit can be great at identifying UX issues. Reddit can be an especially good place to look because subreddits dedicated to specific topics can help filter out some unhelpful opinions and really get a sense of how your site or product performs from the people who use it most.

For example, check out the home improvement subreddit and see if there is any discussion about your website or a competitor's. Maybe a user is trying to buy a drill from your website, but there's an issue on the site that is causing the page to refresh rather than progress the user forward in the buying journey. That user may have posted about the issue to see if others were experiencing it, too, helping you understand and identify the issue.

At the same time, positive social proof can help establish trust with your audience and help them feel more assured that your content will help them. People like to know what they're getting into before they make a purchase or give personal information. Providing them with tangible reviews and customer feedback helps set them at ease and build brand trust.

For example, say you display five-star [TrustRadius](#) and [G2](#) reviews on your website. That gives a quick and digestible view of how visitors and third parties see your brand and website. It means that your site likely loads well and operates consistently, and it also means that your content satisfies user intent.

Or take the following example from REI's website. They display user reviews and the product's distinction as Award-winning on the page to make it immediately clear to users that the product works as advertised and meets audience needs.

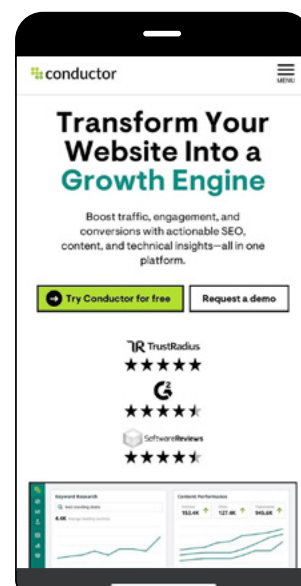
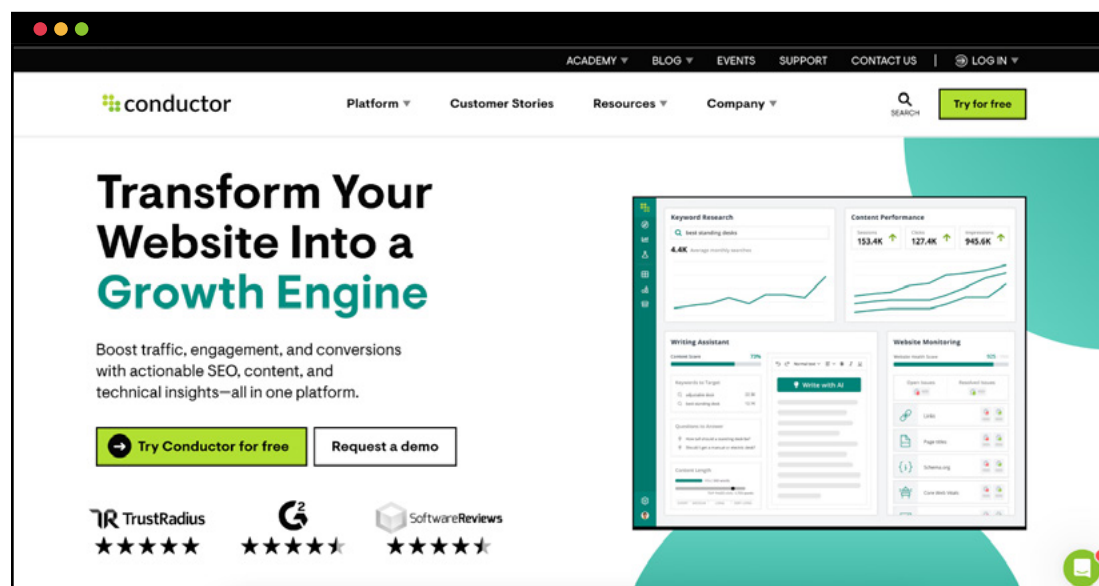


Prioritize mobile-friendly site structure

Mobile accounts for more than 50% of searches, so you need to ensure your pages are mobile-friendly or risk missing out on a huge portion of the search landscape. Mobile traffic is not created equal for every business, though. For instance, B2C companies will likely see a lot more mobile traffic than B2B brands, so keep this in mind when you're prioritizing optimization opportunities.

Say that one of your pages selling floor tiles is only optimized for desktop, and when someone visits the page on mobile, they need to zoom in and scroll around to find the buttons and information they need. That's adding a lot of time for the user to scroll, significantly harming UX and making it far less likely that the user will convert. Think about it. If it were you, you'd probably leave the page, right? Well, your users are no different, and you need to provide experiences that satisfy user intent regardless of how they're searching.

Take a look at the following screenshots. While the page structure of our website on mobile is a bit different than on desktop, both experiences are tailored to the specific device, making it easy for users to scroll and navigate each page.



Be transparent about user privacy

You should never overlook security and privacy. Users want to know what their data is being used for and they like to have a say in it if possible. Make your privacy policies clear upfront to ensure users know what they're getting into on your site.

For example, say that you have a cookie banner on your website that explains to users how their cookie data will be used. This transparency is good, users like to know where their data is stored. But imagine that the cookie banner has a wall of text explaining how the cookie data will be used. This can quickly get overwhelming for users who just want a quick rundown of how the cookie data impacts them.

Also, keep in mind privacy goes beyond the security and cookies settings that you may immediately think of. Even something like an app asking for permission to send push notifications deals impacts user privacy.

For example, think about Netflix's UX. When you're on your Netflix homepage, and you hover over a movie or show, the trailer for that content immediately starts playing, whether you want it to or not. While this isn't stealing user data, it is forcing a user to experience the platform a certain way, making them feel less in control.

Offer live chat support

If your product is complex or even just multi-layered, it could be helpful to offer live chat support on your website. While chatbots can often frustrate users and lead them in unhelpful directions, getting to speak to a real person over chat can be a much simpler and preferable way to get answers.

For example, say that you offer live chat support on your site where someone can ask real-time questions about completing one of the steps of a DIY guide. Having someone walk a user through the experience doesn't just help them complete that one task, it also establishes that they can come back to you with further questions.

These definitely aren't the only possible ways for you to enhance your user experience, but they're a great starting point.

UX optimization in review

User experience is a critical aspect of your overall website optimization strategy. After all, how many sites out there could exist without visitors and users?

Your user experience is how you interact with the people that make your business move. If you provide a strong user experience, your audience will reward you with traffic and conversions. But if your UX needs improvement, those users will likely start to find your competitors' websites pretty quickly.

With these strategies in your toolbelt, you're ready to start thinking like a user and creating the best possible user experience that drives traffic and conversions and solidifies brand loyalty.

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