



SPI Podcast Session #134 - Crucial and Common WordPress Mistakes and How to Avoid Them – with Dan from WP-Curve

Show notes: www.smartpassiveincome.com/session134

This is the Smart Passive Income podcast with Pat Flynn, session #134.

Announcer: Welcome to the Smart Passive Income podcast, where it's all about working hard now, so you can sit back and reap the benefits later.

And now your host, he was Darth Vader for Halloween, Pat Flynn.

Pat Flynn: Halloween was awesome! I hope you enjoyed it as much as I did. If you'd like to see pictures of myself in a Darth Vader outfit, you can head on over to my Instagram page, [Instagram.com/PatFlynn](https://www.instagram.com/PatFlynn). You'll also see pictures of my family members, all who were characters from Star Wars. I think you'll enjoy my two year old in an R2D2 outfit. Again, that's [Instagram.com/PatFlynn](https://www.instagram.com/PatFlynn).

Thank you all so much for joining me today. This is episode 134 of the Smart Passive Income podcast.

I'm really excited because I've invited Dan Norris to come on the show with us Dan Norris is a co-founder of a company called WP Curve and I'll tell you what that company does in a second, it's a really awesome solution that a lot of people are using. I hadn't heard of them until about 2 months ago and now I can't stop hearing about them, which is a great sign of how much they're growing and how well they're doing.

What's really cool about what they do is they post everything about their business on their site, how it's doing, how much money they're making, how many customers they have, marketing tactics they're using. They're very honest and authentic about what they do and I love that, obviously. That's sort of what I do on my site.

I wanted to invite Dan on here, not just to talk about and plug his company, which I think is actually a perfect solution for a lot of you out there. His company, WP Curve, you pay a small monthly fee and with that monthly fee you get access to Dan and his



team, who are able to help you with any of these WordPress problems that might occur on your site.

If you're trying to tweak something and something breaks or perhaps you're trying to improve something, they will be there to help you and for that small monthly fee, it's so much more convenient and much more economical for a lot of people who are serious about their WordPress websites because they can be fairly expensive to have a developer come on full time or even part time.

Often, when people hire developers to work with them on their WordPress sites, it can be hard to keep them busy. That's one thing I struggled with when I had a VA that was specific just for development stuff on my WordPress site. It was hard to keep him busy for 40 hours per week. I think this is the perfect solution, an on-demand WordPress service for a small monthly fee.

They have a lot of loyal customers for a reason, because they're completely honest and authentic and they're just an awesome company, it's a great solution and a fantastic idea. It's no wonder that their company is doing very well.

I didn't want to bring Dan on here to just talk about his business and how it's been running, I wanted to bring him on here because he has access to all these people who are running WordPress and who come to him with problems and issues and needs for improvement.

I wanted him to come on the show today to talk about what the most common issues are that people are having on their WordPress site and also what we can all do from his perspective to improve and make our sites run better, not just for us and our back end and when we're in WordPress ourselves, but for our customers, for our readers and subscribers. What can we do to improve our website?

These are the crucial and common WordPress mistakes that a lot of us make and how we can avoid them. Again, this is Dan from wpcurve.com. By the way, if you'd like to go check out wpcurve.com and get hooked up with their service, I do have an affiliate link, I'm always honest about that, it's at smartpassiveincome.com/wpcurve. Either way, this is going to be an awesome, educational episode, bullet point checklist. Am I doing this? Yes. Am I doing this? No. Then what you can do to improve if you're not doing those things.



At the end, Dan offers something very generous. He's going to offer feedback to all of you out there who do something a little special and leave a comment on the blog.

So just listen to the end for that, he's doing it completely free out of the goodness of his heart. Love it. Thanks Dan for that. Why don't we just dive right into the interview. Again this is Dan Norris from wpcurve.com.

Hey what's up Smart Passive Income community? Thank you so much for joining me today, I am so happy to welcome Dan Norris, co-founder of WP Curve, a company that I've heard a lot about over the past few months. A lot of you have been using it, which is great. Dan, welcome to the show, thank you for coming on.

Dan Norris: Thanks Pat, I'm really looking forward to it, I hope I can provide some value to your audience.

Pat Flynn: I'm sure you will and for all of you listening, you can tell from Dan's accent that he's over in Australia and this is working out perfectly because a lot of you know that I work late at night. Is it morning right now for you, Dan?

Dan Norris: It's 2pm in the afternoon. But if you want to get any more Aussies on the show, let me know because there's some cool people down here.

Pat Flynn: Yeah, I know, I was just there for Pro-Blogger, Darren Rowse's event. I love Australia. I think if we had to move out of the US for whatever reason, we'd head over to the Gold Coast. Whereabouts in Australia are you?

Dan Norris: I'm on the Gold Coast, I'm a bit further south than where you were, hanging around surfers' area, but I'm in Burleigh Heads, which is about 10k south of there.

Pat Flynn: Dude, why didn't we hang out?

Dan Norris: I knew Chris was presenting at your event and I went down to Sydney to catch up with him, but if you come here again let me know.

Pat Flynn: WHEN we come there again, my family and I, we'll need to hook up.



Anyway, why don't you talk real quick about what it is you do and a little bit about your company and we'll get into providing value for the audience, like you said.

Dan Norris: Yeah, my business is wpcurve.com, we do unlimited small WordPress fixes, so 30 minute jobs and support. We run 24/7 and we've got a team all around the world, we're up to 21 people now. We charge \$69 a month for the small jobs service. I could talk about our background if you like, but essentially I've been building websites for a long time and that business didn't work out, I've tried a bunch of other things and this one, we've really hit on something about 14 months ago when we launched. We went from having nothing to now having 21 people and over 500 customers and up to \$39,000 a month revenue. It's been a bit of a crazy ride, the last year.

Pat Flynn: That's awesome Dan, congratulations first of all. I think the business solution is quite perfect out there for a lot of people, those especially who cannot hire a team like I've recently done, but who need to have somebody on board in case something goes wrong with WordPress.

For anybody who's worked with WordPress for a little bit, we all know that things go wrong every once in a while, or sometimes quite often. You might break something or you might be trying to add a plugin and then things don't work or you're trying to move things from one side to the other and this that and whatever.

It's a great solution. It's funny that you're no longer building complete websites, but you're helping everybody fine tune their own.

Dan Norris: I think it's sort of a reflection of what's happened within the industry. When we were building sites for people, when I started, you needed a developer to build your site. You even needed a developer to make simple text changes or add any content. Now that's completely reversed. Now, what I think is needed is a totally different service that you didn't need before and that's what we're trying to build.

Pat Flynn: I love that. Again, thank you for coming on, a lot to talk about. Before we go on, just for anybody out there interested, I am an affiliate for WP Curve, I know a lot of people that have used it and they're very happy with it. My affiliate link is smartpassiveincome.com/wpcurve. Don't go there now, listen to the rest of this episode because we're going to be talking about a lot of the things.

I wanted Dan to come on to talk about the most common requests or things that people do wrong with their WordPress site. For all of us out there, whether we're



beginner or advanced, Dan's getting a ton of information from his customers as far as what's breaking or what's not working or what needs to be improved so Dan, why don't you take the lead and take us through all of these things that you feel we can improve on so that we don't necessarily have to go and get headaches all the time.

What are the common things that people are dealing with, with their WordPress site that we can all focus on?

Dan Norris: On the point of sticking around, hopefully at the end if you'll let me, I have something that I'd like to offer to your audience if I can. In terms of WordPress, I guess what you pointed out, it's not perfect. WordPress is an incredibly powerful platform. I went to a Word camp on the weekend and there was a presentation from News Corp about why they're moving their blogs and a bunch of other sites over to WordPress. There's huge companies using this and it's pretty much infinitely extendible.

That means that it's not a really cut and dry solution like something like a Wix or a SquareSpace or something, but it's much more powerful and that means that problems come up from time to time.

It's a bit of a compromise but for us the main sorts of things we deal with are:

1. We do pro-active improvement type fixes.
2. We do bug fixes.

I was hoping to throw in the conversation today a bunch of pro-active type things that you can do to improve your site, assuming that you've already got a WordPress site and you want to make it better. Also, how to avoid a lot of the bugs that we see coming up that we deal with every day.

Pat Flynn: Love it, let's get right into it, perfect.

Dan Norris: So, the first one, in terms of pro-active WordPress suggestions has nothing to do with WordPress but I get a lot of people emailing me their sites and asking what they can improve with their site, what plugin they need or how do they get traffic.



Almost every time, the reason I think the site is not doing very well is because they don't have very good content on the site and that's probably a massive cliché.

Pat Flynn: It's true but it's a cliché for a reason. It's so funny, everybody wants the tool that's going to solve their problems, but it's funny that it's what you mentioned first, I think it's so appropriate.

Dan Norris: Yeah and it's not what people want to hear but installing [Yoast](#) or something that's going to help people share your content, it's really not going to help if your content is not any good. I'm really big on content marketing. Every second post I put up on my blog, I think I've put 600 up now and every second one is about content marketing.

Pat Flynn: Your blog posts are great, I recommend everybody to go to [wpcurve.com](#) and check out the blog, the blog content is great.

In terms of making content better, what are some of the key things we should be focusing on around that?

Dan Norris: In terms of mistakes people make, I think they try and focus on the quantity and they try to put out a lot of content. You're a good example of this. The stuff you do is of a really high quality. If you look at your podcasting stuff for example, the videos are really high quality, the content is really good.

If you're putting out a lot of stuff where you're just focusing on doing a lot of content, but it's not actually presenting itself really well and it's not really good content, then you're kind of wasting your time.

If you can do one really good post a week, then that's a million times better than doing 10 really standard posts a week. I think focus on quality.

Another thing that we do that people seem a little bit surprised about is, people assume that because we're a WordPress company, we will create a lot of WordPress content but that's not what we do, we create content that's interesting to entrepreneurs. A lot of our content is our monthly reports or entrepreneurship struggles or my start up book. It's all stuff that entrepreneurs are interested in and entrepreneurs are our best customers.



You don't have to just create content around your niche and that's sort of a thing people automatically think that they have to do and I don't think that they do have to do that.

The other thing I like to do is pay attention to the language that my audience uses. I noticed when I first started blogging, I'd go to these blogs that had a lot of traction and a lot of comments. I looked at the comments and it's just people saying "Great post!," "Awesome post," "I really like this post."

You'd read 20 comments and they'd all be saying the same thing. That doesn't necessarily indicate that it's a good post. I look at the language that people are using. I like it when people demonstrate that you've connected with them emotionally or you've done something extremely useful that they've been able to use.

If someone says to me "I can really relate to this story," which I'm sure you get all the time, that's when I know I've hit the mark because these people are deeply connected with the content, it's not just like "Here's 10 plugins you should use on your WordPress site" - either that or highly actionable.

If I see someone replies to my email and says "This is awesome, I'm actually going to use this in my business," then that's when I know I've hit the mark.

Pat Flynn: I love that, Dan. My favorite comments are the ones that say "Wow, I felt like you wrote this just for me."

Dan Norris: Perfect.

Pat Flynn: Or the ones like - and I get this every once in a while and it's how I know I hit the mark when they say "Wow, are you in my head right now?", "You were just reading my mind." I love what you said there. There's a great quote by Jay Abraham, he said "If you can define the problem better than your target customer, they will automatically assume that you have the solution," so using and paying attention to that language is so critical.

One thing I know that the guys from [Internet Business Mastery](#) do, Jason and Jeremy, they run surveys for their audience and they pay close attention to the exact words that their audience uses, actually making spreadsheets and that sort of thing of the words that their audience uses, because those are the words that eventually end up on the sales pages.



Dan Norris: That makes sense. I think the language thing is something that people miss because they - you really get caught up, especially when you start building an email list and people email you and thank you for stuff and say "I really liked it," but the stuff you pointed out where you're saying "Did you write this for me", that's like the essence of marketing, you're really creating something that someone feels deeply connected with.

For us, that leads to business and depending on a lot of other factors, assuming that people listening have a good site and a good final and a good business that makes sense, then I think it will do the same thing.

Do you want me to share more along the same lines?

Pat Flynn: Maybe a couple more things with content, I think we all know how important that is, these are great tips. Maybe one or two more really important tips for content and then we can move on.

Dan Norris: Cool, another thing I get all the time is "Did you get customers out of this?" and for example, I just launched my free book this week and people are already saying "How many customers did you get out of this?" but almost every time we do any kind of content marketing, there's never a measurable increase in customers.

I think, at least for us, content marketing is not an immediate lead generation form of marketing, it's more of a brand building exercise. I know that the hardcore marketers are not going to like that, but it's very hard to measure and for us, I don't worry too much about direct ROI for things like podcast interviews or book launches or whatever, I just know that if my content is connecting with people and I'm building that community and audience then eventually they are going to be aware of the WP Curve brand and when they have a WordPress problem, it's going to be us they think of as opposed to someone else.

Pat Flynn: Love that.

Dan Norris: The other stuff is probably general things that you will hear from most content marketers, creating long and detailed posts is something that works really well for us. I like to include really specific things in our content like, if I read a piece of content that's been written for our site and it doesn't have at least 10 links off to other



companies or at least 10 statistics or examples from other companies or screenshots from their website, then I know it's not a post that's suitable for our site.

A really fine level of detail and actionable stuff works. Obviously, build an email list - I don't think I need to talk to your audience about that because you've obviously covered that a lot.

Probably the last thing I'd like to do is talk about design because another really big differentiator between a really nice blog and just every other blog is these blogs now days are coming out and the designers are working on an integral part of the content. If you look at something like [Groove HQ](#) is a good example, or Help Scout, look at their two blogs and the design is amazing and you can see that every single post, not just the theme but every single post has custom design, illustrations and layout. The Help Scout one is really good. The posts are really nice. When you go and look at it, it's a huge credibility builder.

You start with the WordPress theme and make sure the theme's good but if you have an eye for design or if you can really pay attention to what these great blogs are doing, then it's an opportunity for you to really stand out above and beyond everyone else that's grabbing people's attention.

Pat Flynn: I'm actually on helpscout.net/blog right now and you're right, it looks super clean, very shareable. These are the things that help you get links and improve your rankings. All around, design does play a major role in the success of your blog, I 100% agree with that.

Dan Norris: Yeah, and I know you had a big re-design and I think it's a credibility thing too, not everyone can get that really nice looking design. Some people have a really good sense for it or some people can afford it of whatever, but it's a way to separate you from everyone else.

A really easy way to hack that is just to get a really nice looking theme and make sure it's a really simple one.

I've got a couple of other businesses we've used them for and we've used some Theme Forest themes, they are really nice, responsive, simple, lots of white space. All we've had to do is change the logo at the top and they look a lot nicer than most of the blogs you see.



The other thing is just taking anything out that you absolutely don't need. So if you look at the [Groove HQ](#) blog, they don't even have a sidebar. Other blogs, if they do have a sidebar, there's only a couple of things in it and that's like our blog - we've only got one thing in our sidebar. We don't have anything, we don't have any sharing buttons, just taking stuff out so it's really clean and simple.

Pat Flynn: And that site you just mentioned to pick up nice, clean themes, which I've done myself before specifically for landing pages and sales pages for other sites, [themeforest.net](#) I believe.

Dan Norris: The interesting thing about Theme Forest, it's an Australian company in Vado and according to Alexa, they're the most popular Australian owned website in the world, which is absolutely crazy. It gives you an idea of how big WordPress is the most popular website in the world, owned by an Australian is that in Vado.

Pat Flynn: That's funny, that's cool.

Alright, so let's move on from content. What other things can we do on our WordPress sites specifically, to make it better, improve it and have better results?

Dan Norris: The second thing is [Yoast SEO](#), you've probably heard about it everywhere but [Yoast SEO](#) is good for general SEO stuff, it's good for handling submission to webmaster tools and things like that. It's also really good for optimizing individual posts. As an example, if I'm going to create a post on WordPress Speed, I will go in, create the post, Yoast is all in there and all I have to do is put in the keyword WordPress Speed, it will check everything, all the major key things.

We don't do much with SEO at all, other than what Yoast tells us and that's a really simple way to start. It's probably better than anything else out there. There's a lot of resources that help you to use it as well. That's the second one that we generally would install on pretty much every WordPress site.

Pat Flynn: OK, so for everybody out there who doesn't know what this Yoast thing is, Yoast is - is that the guy's name? Yoast?

Dan Norris: I think his name is Joost "Vander" or something.



Pat Flynn: I don't remember his name, but he's an awesome guy, super helpful, he's created a lot of plug-ins. One of the most popular plug-ins for WordPress that he's created is called Yoast SEO. I think his website is yoast.com.

Dan Norris: Joost de Valk is the guy's name. But Yoast SEO has become the standard SEO plug-in and we use the Yoast Analytics plug-in as well. They've got lots of really good content up on their site as well.

Pat Flynn: So before, it used to be the all in one SEO plug-in.

Dan Norris: I think one of the things that Yoast does, which is really cool is - generally I don't do any keyword research anymore, and I know that's borderline slack but I would rather focus on great content and Yoast has something that's pretty limited but it's quite useful inside the post, so when I go into the post I'll start putting in WordPress Speed or something and it will suggest the keywords and it will automatically check the address, the page, the title, the H1 tag, the heading and the URL and the description and make sure all that's alright, all within the post, so you don't have to leave WordPress and I think that is a bit of game changing thing, especially if you don't really understand SEO and want to go deep with it.

Pat Flynn: Perfect for all the basic stuff. It even has a preview editor. It also shows you what the search result will eventually look like in Google so that you can make sure that it's the way it should be. You get a preview of what it looks like and you can see if it's actually worth clicking on.

Dan Norris: My understanding of - and hopefully I won't butcher this because no doubt there's people in the audience that know more about SEO than me, but my understanding of the description and stuff like that in Google is that it's not based on character count, it's based on pixel width. Yoast will show you a demo of what it looks like and if it's cutting it off then you know that you can sort of end it so that it looks nice and clean, rather than it cutting off the words.

Pat Flynn: Yeah. A quick question about Yoast SEO plug-in before we move on, for those of us who have all-in-one SEO plug-ins., would you recommend uninstalling that and then installing Yoast?

Dan Norris: I wouldn't, no. I think it's too much work. It probably depends on the site but I think the main benefit of Yoast is just the simplicity of managing each post, so I think I wouldn't be making drastic changes to SEO for any reason, let alone just to



use a slightly better plug-in. I would probably just recommend making sure you know how to use all-in-one SEO and I think there is a bunch of stuff in all-in-one to make it easier to do bulk editing and things, which I don't think Yoast has quite a good handle on. So I think moving it across is not necessarily the best idea if you have a huge site that's already optimized.

Pat Flynn: Yoast has though become the standard. If you're starting a new site or have just started a site, you can look up Yoast. Cool.

Dan Norris: In terms of pro-active stuff, the other one I have in here is one called [Floating Social Bar](#) and it's put out by the guys at WP Beginner. I've experimented with about 6 or 7 different sharing widgets. Mostly free ones because our audience either has one already and they kind of want to know if it's the best one. We recommended Digg Digg for a while, but it doesn't work very well at all on mobile and we're getting customers that are getting 70% of their traffic on mobiles, so it's just not an option.

[The Floating Social Bar](#) does a couple of cool things. One is that it locks to the top when you scroll down on a computer, but when it's on mobile it just behaves like a normal sharing bar, so it doesn't lock, which is good because you've only got a small amount of space and it doesn't play up like Digg Digg does.

Pat Flynn: That's cool. So WP Beginner created [Floating Social Bar](#), I think that's one you can also get in the WordPress plug-ins. repository. Floating Social Bar is what it's called. We're going to place all these links and all the names of these things in the resource page and the show notes, which I'll give you after we finish the call with Dan here, so don't worry if you're not writing all this down right now.

I do know Sayed from WP Beginners, he's a great guy doing a lot of great stuff for WordPress people. If you are on [WPBeginner.com](#), even just for the content, it's fantastic. Cool, great resource.

Dan Norris: Yeah, WP Beginner is awesome and that's also part of the reason why we don't get too carried away with doing How-To WordPress posts because part of content is creating something that the industry needs and How-To WordPress stuff is so well done by guys like WP Beginner that it doesn't really make sense for us to do it.

Anyway, that's not a consideration if your listeners are wanting to create content, is looking at what else is out there and what the gaps are. I know Noah Kagan, that's his approach and that's worked really well for him on his blog.



Pat Flynn: Noah is great, his blog is at OKDork.com.

Dan Norris: And his [episode](#) on your show was probably the best one that I've heard, he's a machine.

Pat Flynn: Yeah, people still talk about that. People are still doing the Starbucks experiment and still talk to me about that. If you haven't heard that, we'll put the link to that in the show notes as well.

Dan Norris: The other one I have here is [Disqus](#) Comments. Maybe this will be controversial because I know a lot of people tell me they don't like Disqus but I can't figure out why. I think the in-built WordPress comments aren't very good, you'll get a lot of spam, Disqus gives you a couple of things:

The first thing it gives you is it generally increases the quality of your comments because there's a bit of a barrier, there's a bit of friction there for people to make a comment, they have to register and I think that's a good thing because I only want good comments on my blog.

It gives you the ability to moderate by email, which is really handy if you're not at your computer. It pretty much cuts out all spam. You use Disqus don't you, do you get a lot of spam?

Pat Flynn: I recently switched from the WordPress default with the nice styling just to make it look nice, I switched from that to Disqus. It works really well and since switching, the quality of the comments has definitely gone way up and at the same time the quantity has gone down. However, I feel like if people have a legit comment that they want to leave, they'll take an extra second to log in through one of the social networks. You can leave a comment as a guest. That little extra work does cut out a huge amount of the spam.

It has been a lot easier for me to moderate and of course back when I just had the WordPress, there were spam control tools like Akismet but for some reason Akismet hated me, it would block every legit comment and even my own so I got super frustrated.

Disqus has definitely been a great solution. There's a lot of other ones out there, I think there's one called Live Fire and ones that will do the same thing. I really like the



conversations that are happening on the blog now, they're all legit and there's less of the "Hey, great post," there's actually legit comments and no spam and threaded comments so that people can have conversations. You can up-vote different comments as well to create more of a community aspect. You can sort comments while reading them through newest or oldest or best.

It's just been great. I second that recommendation.

Dan Norris: There's a couple of other things it does too. When you reply, you see the emails when they come in from other people replying, so it creates a mini forum, which is cool. I totally agree about the quality vs quantity, it's exactly the same with the content. If I have people posting on my site, then I would much prefer less quantity and more quality. The spam thing is huge. I can't imagine how you used to deal with spam on your site, but even just on my site, it's something you should definitely not be spending your time on.

Pat Flynn: I was getting at some point over 6 figures, 100,000 spam comments a month.

Dan Norris: Wow.

The other thing I was going to mention is a cool thing with [Disqus](#) is you can import the comments from WordPress. That's something that people sometimes don't realize. If you move over to Disqus, you can import all of the existing comments so that it's not like you're starting again from scratch.

Pat Flynn: That was the one big thing for me and one thing I was afraid of, but we pulled all the other comments from our database and put them right into [Disqus](#) and it was seamless.

Dan Norris: The other thing I want to talk about is making your site fast. When I make exceptions to write WordPress content, I generally make it about important things. One of the posts I wrote was about how to get your WordPress site to load in under 1 second.

Speed effects so many aspects of having a website that it's almost the main thing we work on, because it effects SEO, usability, band width usage, if you've got loads of inefficient images. It effects pretty much absolutely everything, bounce rate, everything.



In terms of making your site fast, and I'm not sure where you're at in terms of recommending hosts but we generally recommend [WP Engine](#), we've had good experiences with them. Our site is very fast, their support is good. We generally recommend having less than 20 plug-ins. Zero plug-ins would be great if you can do that, but it's always a compromise. Less than 20 is pretty good. We've seen sites with 50 or 60 ad they barely even load.

Pat Flynn: I hired somebody to help me speed up my site and the first thing he said was "You have way too many plugins."

Dan Norris: Yeah, I think some plug-ins are worse than others too so it's not quite as simple as having a lot of plug-ins and therefore you have a slow site. It's generally an easy win because you can simply go and turn off plug-ins that either provide functions that you can get done elsewhere like analytics or related post plug-ins. Some of them are really slow and demanding of the server.

The other thing on here is CDN caching and one of the reasons I like WP Engine is because they have that built in. If you don't, something like [CloudFlare](#) can be good or [MaxCDN](#). If you need a cache plug-in there's [W3 Total Cache](#), which we've used before. Again, ideally there's a bunch of stuff you're better off doing on the server and not doing in WordPress and caching is one of them. If you are just getting started and you don't want to pay a lot of money that WP Engine charges then some kind of caching plugin is an option for that.

Optimizing images is a really big one. Just about every single site we look at, the images are too big because people don't understand how to optimize them for the web. I like to go to the Pingdom site test tool and it will tell you exactly how big the size is and if it's over 1mb then you can probably do some work to get it smaller.

Pat Flynn: There are some web based tools out there that you could use to re-size your pictures, I think there's one called [picresize.com](#).

Dan Norris: Yep, you can definitely do that. There's also one called WP Smush.it I think is the name of the plug-in that can optimize existing images.

Pat Flynn: I've used that a long time ago, [Smush.it](#). You can reduce the image size on your WordPress dashboard, right?



Dan Norris: Yep. There's also speed test tools. I've got a post up on my site if you want to link to it, it's about [WordPress Speed](#), there's about 5 or 6 different tools that I link to on there. Some of them will actually optimize the images for you, which is a really cool thing. It won't just tell you that your images are too big, it will also optimize them for you.

Overall page size as well, it might not be images, it could be something else. It could be just too much stuff on the page, too many plug-ins. or big external Java scripts or whatever. External scripts is a really big one for speed because it's all the external server. I've seen blogs that have their Klout score over on the right hand side, their 'Follow us on Facebook', 'Follow us on Twitter', 'Add me on Google+', every external thing you can possibly think of, and they take about 20 seconds to load because they go off to so many external sites. That's an easy fix if you're prepared to compromise. Something like Klout score and things can literally be taken off because they're not doing a lot.

I think people get into the habit of seeing something they want and they add it to the site without realizing the implications of it.

Speed-wise, a couple of other things:

Keeping plugins. up to date because the developers are constantly improving the efficiency of plug-ins. and the WordPress core and keeping it up to date.

Some plugins. are particularly problematic and a good source for that is WP Engine list the ones that they don't allow on their platform. It's things like related post plug-ins. and ones that are particularly draining on the database.

Disqus actually does that. We use the Disqus related post feature. Do you use that on your site?

Pat Flynn: I do, yeah. At the bottom of the comments, you'll see 'Other Posts' related to that post that other people have commented on.

Dan Norris: If you try to do that on your site, some of the plug-ins. that do that are really smashing your database, so that's a good thing to get rid of if it's causing a problem.



Another good way to reduce the amount of plug-ins. is to use an external system where possible. For something like analytics, you can use Google Analytics, you don't have to use the back end of WordPress for that, for CRM type=stuff, you can use an external thing.

Back up is another good example. Back up plug-ins. can slow WordPress down. It's all about compromise. If you want to make a simple back up and your host doesn't let you do that then you need it. If not, then that's another way you can reduce it.

Another thing I like to do is speed up high traffic pages. It's something that people don't think of that often, but when you think about it, there's probably only 2 or 3 pages on your site that get 80% of your traffic, it's the 80/20 thing. It will be your home page, your blog home page, your about page and probably your sign up page. In our case our sign up page gets a huge amount of traffic as well.

You can optimize those pages very easily. You just go into Google Analytics, sort by landing page or top content and spend an extra amount of effort on those pages. In our case, our home page, we've done stuff on our home pages that we wouldn't do on every other pages, because it's a whole lot of effort and it's a couple of days work to get that stuff really optimized, but it's worth it because we're getting thousands of visitors on that page. If they have a good experience on that page then they're probably going to stick around. So that's an easy win.

One final tip for speed, if you're really keen or you're a developer, one thing you can do is load resources after the page loads. Depending on if it's needed on the page, if you can save it and use code so it loads after the person sees the site. It's basically like the person thinks it's loading quicker than it is. That's one thing you can do if you're super keen.

Pat Flynn: That's cool. Nice.

Dan Norris: In terms of the pro-active suggestions, the other stuff I've got is get mobile responsive. What we normally do for that is simply check their Google Analytics and look at what the percentage is of people coming through a mobile. If it's reasonable and you've got a proper business where you care if people have a good experience on mobile and you're losing business if they don't, then it's a no brainer to make it mobile responsive.



Pat Flynn: Yes, please do that. So many people are visiting on mobile now. Greg Hickman from Mobile Mix has a lot of incredible very eye opening stats about mobile marketing and people coming on your website. You've got to have a mobile responsive site. That's different than mobile friendly.

You don't want to have to have people pinch and zoom. Yes, you can see the website and it looks just like yours on a phone, but in order to get things done and have people do what you want them to do when they get there, whether it's send them to an email list, read a blog post or even purchase a product, you have to make it responsive. You have to make that user experience there for them. Something that Greg says is "We can't control how people are viewing our websites, we have to cater to them and wherever they want to view our websites".

Dan Norris: This is a really interesting one. I've had people who have got mobile responsive sites and then tell us they don't like their site on mobile, they like the way another site looks and they'll show us a site that isn't mobile responsive and they like the way you can see the whole thing. I'm like "Just take a deep breath and look at that site and think if that's really a good experience." You have to zoom in and click stuff and miss.

The mobile site should look different to the main site, it should have more space, bigger text, generally a lot of stuff can be taken out. I normally take the side bar out or put it underneath the content. I'm sure just go to your site for an example. That's really important.

We've had companies that are local, for example fitness companies, any kind of local business, gyms and yoga studios and stuff, some of them are getting 60-70% mobile traffic and almost always they're going to the one page. That's the other thing you can do is get in Analytics and work out what the mobile customers are doing.

One way you can do that is use custom segments, which is kind of a little bit advanced and I don't need to talk through the details of that, but sometimes it's just logical. If you're a gym, you know that your customers are getting on there to look at the timetable, so even if you just make that page mobile responsive and just put a big button at the top, 90% of them are going to have a better experience than what they've been having.

Pat Flynn: Also, if you want to see what people are clicking on, including on mobile, something that's been very eye opening for me is using the tool [Crazy Egg](#), which will



allow you to do confetti maps or heat maps for what people are looking at and what people are doing when they get to your site, both on desktop and mobile.

Dan Norris: Sounds good. People have been talking about the mobile stuff for years. I was a little bit skeptical at first but the last couple of years has literally got to the point where people use their phones more than their computers so it's a must have.

Most of the themes that get made now are mobile responsive, which is cool. If you've got a new site, obviously check for that but you almost don't have to now. The high quality theme companies, all of them are mobile responsive, which is really nice. For existing sites, it's generally quite a bit of work to make something fully mobile responsive.

The other thing I've got in here, which I like is an app called [Swifttype Search](#). The WordPress search is not very good. [Swifttype](#) have a few little features in there that make it much better. The main one is it has that instant predictive search thing. If you type in "Income report" on your blog, you'll get a drop down of the best results, so you don't even have to go to that ugly search page, you can just type it in, automatically click that and it will take you off there.

It's a more accurate search and it's also that instant search functionality. If you pay for an account, you can do some really interesting stuff around sending people to certain pages when they search for certain keywords, which is pretty cool.

Pat Flynn: Wow, no way. I never knew about this and so many people complain about my search results on my site, this is definitely a tool that we're going to be looking to install or at least research a little bit further. This is great. I think a lot of people come to the site looking for specific items, it might not be the easiest thing to look through the archives. People want the most direct way to get there. I'll explore this, I haven't heard of this before but it seems like a lot of big names are using it already.

Dan Norris: Cool. I haven't really looked at who else is using it. The WordPress search has always been one of those things where you put the exact word for something and you know you've got a post on that and you put it in and the results don't reflect that. You're thinking "What's going on?"

Pat Flynn: So that's [Swifttype](#)?



Dan Norris: And it's free. Sometimes they make it hard to get to the free plan but if you look closely enough, you'll find it.

There is a paid version but maybe if you can find the direct link to the free version and link people to that.

Pat Flynn: No, it's quite easy. Swiftype. Go to Plans and you'll see the Swiftype plans for individuals, free.

Dan Norris: Cool. When I first started using it, they had a tiny little link underneath the other plans and it was sort of hard to find, but that's cool that they've stopped doing that because that's a bit annoying.

Pat Flynn: Awesome, thank you for that.

Dan Norris: Landing pages is the other thing. [LeadPages](#) or [Unbounce](#) or [OptimizePress](#) or whatever you want to use for that. Especially for off site content. If we do a slide show presentation and at the end have a call-to-action back to the site, then send that to a landing page for email opt-in - you've talked about this on your show. It's a no brainer, it's a huge conversion win.

SEO is the other thing. As I mentioned, I don't fuss over SEO and we rank for some really good keywords all through putting out good content, but 4 things I definitely do all the time - that's turn on Permalinks. That makes sure that when you write a post on WordPress speed, the address is wpcurve.com/wordpress-speed. Most of you should already have that covered.

Make sure the theme uses H1 and title tags with the content from the page title. That might be something you need to get a developer to look at for a few seconds, but it's really easy to make sure it does that.

Make sure the theme is coded well and loads quickly. This can be a big problem. Even some of the top themes on Theme Forest are really big and bloated and that can actually hurt SEO. Clean, modern coding is really important with SEO. Make sure you target specific keywords with your blog posts, like I mentioned with the Yoast thing before.

They are the four things that I make sure our clients are doing. There's a bunch more stuff you can do but that's like the minimum that people should really be doing.



Pat Flynn: Absolutely.

Dan Norris: The other thing I have on here is getting to know your customers. We use live chat software on our site for that. Ever since we launched our business, we've had our live chat on there. It's a really good way to do it. There's other apps like [Qualaroo](#). I think that's pretty expensive, but if you've seen it, it's where they ask a specific question when you're on the site and you go through a little survey.

Pat Flynn: Tell us more about the live chat, so somebody visits your site and all of a sudden somebody will pop up and be like "Hey, person!"

Dan Norris: Yeah, you can do it that way. It's sort of a little bit more of an aggressive way to do it, but having that live chat button on every page. If you're a new start up or you're just putting out your blog and you're wanting to know the stuff that people are thinking, you want to talk to some of your customers, it's a super easy way to do it.

One thing that was interesting when we launched our business was I thought we would use live chat for support because it's effectively like live WordPress support, but we use it way more for sales and customer development. If people come to the site and they talk to us, they tell us what they want. In the early days that was really cool. For sales as well, people come on there and I think they use it as a proofing, is this actually a real company? When you talk to them and have a chat to them, they can see you're reasonable, you can convert them a lot easier. I'm a huge fan of live chat.

Pat Flynn: That's cool. What's the name of the tool that you use?

Dan Norris: Well, I've actually got a live chat app I'm working on myself called [helloify.com](#) but we've used [Olark](#) in the past, which is a really well known one. The main difference with Helloify is that the whole team can be on there so it's like live chat meets team chat. Olark is the one we used when we launched WP Curve. They're really good. It's all quite simple to install, it's quite cheap for one user, it's like \$15 a month, so it's well worth it.

Pat Flynn: Awesome, thank you for that.

Dan Norris: This is another thing that I don't hear people talk about a lot but look at what happens when you Google your brand. This happens a lot for people who aren't really established. With your brand, it's a given that everything is going to look good



when you go into Google. Google is smart enough to follow all the links and work out what's important. But with new sites, we get asked all the time "How do I get the site links into Google results?" "How come the description is the way it is?" "How come the title is the way it is?"

A couple of things you can do with webmaster tools is you can submit your site maps, you can remove site links. You can't tell Google what to put in those site links, which are the little links that come up under your name. If you go into Google and put your company name in there, ideally you'll get a couple of links underneath as well as your main URL.

If there's something in there that you want in there, which often there is, you can remove them with webmaster tools. You can also check keywords and you can disavow links from sites that are sending you dodgy links. You can use Yoast for the description and title. If Google is cutting off your title or if it's just not saying the right thing, not representing your site well then you can use a combination of webmaster tools and Yoast to make sure that it all looks really good.

A lot of people will go into Google and put your name in and you'll never know because Analytics don't tell you the keywords anymore. It's worth just doing yourself to see how it looks.

They are my top 10 pro-active stuff.

Did you have other stuff to add to that?

Pat Flynn: No, I was curious to see what you were going to say and you covered a lot of what I had already known or wished I knew when I first started. These are definitely great things to be pro-active about. What about the things that we could do to be aware of?

Dan Norris: I should be able to rattle these things through pretty quick because these come up all the time.

The top 10:

Not updating WordPress or plug-ins., which I'm sure people know already. If you log into WordPress in the back end and you have numbers everywhere, you're doing something wrong. Part of our thing is not having any numbers. You'll get a little



number that says you need to update WordPress or upgrade plug-ins. or you have a bunch of comments outstanding or certain plugins have a little numbering system that needs your attention. I'm a minimalist so I like to log into WordPress and not see any numbers. It's good for security, it's good for speed, it's good for everything.

Pat Flynn: A question about that, WordPress often come out with new updates, especially if it's like the new major ones like 3.8, 3.9, 4.0 and I know some people, including myself are sometimes wary of updating when it's a brand new version because there might be bugs. Where do you stand on that? Do we upgrade the moment WordPress tells us to or do we sort of wait a couple of days to see if other people's sites break first? What are your thoughts on that?

Dan Norris: I don't like waiting. I think it's become really predictable now and WordPress is doing a really good job of making sure. If it's set to it, WordPress will now upgrade automatically and it's interesting because they did a survey recently about the new version and they asked people "Do you like the auto-update feature?", "Do you think it would be good if we auto-updated plug-ins.?", so I think it's definitely going in that direction.

Pat Flynn: That's kind of what Apple's done with their iPhone apps, just auto-updating everything.

Dan Norris: I haven't come across too many examples where we've upgraded WordPress and had major issues. I know in older versions it used to happen but I think it's pretty stable these days and I would much rather be secure, especially for our customers if they have a problem we're right there. If something breaks, we always backup before we do it.

Depending on your host, if you're on something like WP Engine you can just click one button to back it up and they even prompt you to make sure you do that before you upgrade it so it's kind of hard to screw up. I'm definitely a fan of keeping it up to date.

Pro-active stuff, having a dodgy host is definitely a common reason why sites are slow, they get hacked, they crash, the server goes down. We've had customers on dodgy hosts that have unlimited accounts, and for whatever reason they're on a bad server or something and the sites are running so slow that they barely even load. They're really prone to hacking because they haven't really worked out a lot of that manage WordPress stuff that hardens the server.



I know when you start, you have to go with the cheapest host you can find, which is cool, but as soon as you can afford to upgrade hosting, I think it's always a good investment to do that.

Out of date WordPress installation we talked about.

Plugins are probably the main thing. The plug-ins could be out of date or they could be inactive. The developer has kind of forgotten about them. They could have security problems in there as well. It's always good to get plugins from a reliable source. Again, less plug-ins is better because there's less chance of having a dodgy plug-in that's no longer supported.

We have a lot of clients with customized themes. Three or four years ago it used to be standard that every site you build, you'd get a standard custom theme just for you. These days it's less and less the case. People now go to Theme Forest or Elegant Themes or WooThemes, chooses a theme and makes a few tweaks to it, but we get a lot of customers with a heavily customized theme and when the new version comes out, because it hasn't been done properly, they haven't used child themes and they've just kind of hacked it, it's almost impossible to upgrade the theme without a lot of work.

I would suggest avoiding hacking the hell out of the theme, get a good developer who knows how to code and do child themes and you'll avoid a lot of problems if you do that.

Pat Flynn: Nice.

Dan Norris: Child themes is another thing. If you've got a frame work that supports Child themes, just ask your developer. If you make changes to the theme, use child themes and that way you can upgrade the main theme and things aren't going to crash. If you're listening to this and you have no idea what I'm talking about when I say 'child theme' then just ask your developer and if you do know then you probably know what to do anyway.

Too many plugins, we've talked about. That could be a security issue or it could be just plug-ins clashing because they're calling the same script and other plugins calling or something like that. There's a whole bunch of coding standards for building WordPress plugins. A lot of people don't follow them because they've just built one plug-in and they don't know about the standard. So get a plugin from a reputable source, one that's been updated recently, one that gets good reviews. The plugin directory is a



good place to get them, the WordPress Plugin Directory, because they're all really careful about what they let in there. There's a review system and everything else.

I'd be hesitant to just go into Google and search for plugins. and grab something.

Old and unsupported plug-ins. is another one I've talked about.

Hard coding in the theme is another one where people have just hard coded in titles or images. Sometimes you'll get a whole homepage that you can't edit at all in WordPress and it's just the developer has built the whole thing in the theme and that means that you can't change it, you need a developer to change it. That's the sort of stuff we work on all the time.

Pat Flynn: Yeah, I've tried hacking my themes back in the day and it always ruined everything, so definitely hire somebody.

Dan Norris: Images is another one. We've seen some crazy stuff with images, images that are 4000 pixels wide and they're just showing on the site at 200 pixels. I've seen sidebar images that look like their 200 pixels but when you open the image they're 4000 pixels. If you're uploading images to your site and you don't understand what I mean when I talk about the size of the image, it's just something you need learn. You can't upload massive images to the web without optimizing them. If you don't understand it, you need to spend some time learning about image optimization and making sure the images you put up are small in file size.

If you want a really general rule, don't put anything up that's over about 100kb.

Pat Flynn: 100kb? That's it?

Dan Norris: Yeah. It's a rough rule but if people want a rule then that's what I would say. That's for a pretty big image. Even big featured graphics can generally be optimized to under 100kb, unless they are a huge background image or something.

Pat Flynn: What if it's like an infographic, where it's all graphic? I can't imagine one being under 100kb. Would you recommend for example having a thumbnail of it and then when you click on it, it goes to the bigger one?



Dan Norris: No, I think there's probably a few things you can do with infographics. With infographics it's kind of expected. If it's just on a blog post page then it's expected to take while to load.

We would optimize the graphic based on the style of the graphic. This is something I don't see done often. You'll see a really flat style infographic and they would have exported it as a JPEG. They could have just done it as a GIF or a low quality PNG, which still would have been perfect quality because it's just a flat graphic and it would be a quarter of the size.

You can still optimize those images. Even though they're big in size, it doesn't mean the file size has to be big.

The other thing we normally do is put it in at 640 pixels wide if that's what your blog is and then when you click on it, it will just open up a bigger, high res version in a new window.

Pat Flynn: That's cool. I'm over at theoatmeal.com right now. They do comic strips and most of their posts are all images. I went to download the first one I saw just to see if it was big, and it's 94kb.

Dan Norris: There you go! They're listening! Is this live?!

Sometimes it's a real skill, optimizing images. It becomes a bigger issue depending on the page. Obviously you wouldn't put a gigantic infographic on your home page anyway, you'd probably put it on a post page, which is going to get a fraction of the traffic. Definitely worth learning about image optimization.

The last thing I've got here is plugins not supported with the new WordPress version, which we talked about. I don't think it's a problem with the WordPress version, I think it's a problem with the plug-in choice. I think if you're careful about the plug-ins. you choose then you're not going to have that problem. We do still get customers having that problem because they don't really understand that every time you install a dodgy plugin, you're kind of putting your site at risk.

Pat Flynn: A question about that, let's say WordPress comes out with a new version tomorrow, I upgrade and then all of a sudden I have plug-ins. that are out of date, does that mean I get rid of them? Is there a typical turnaround time for plug-ins. to be up to date when new WordPress versions come out?



Dan Norris: Most of the Developers know when the versions are coming out because they get pre-released access to them so the good plug-ins. will generally work very well with the new versions of WordPress anyway. It only really becomes a problem if you've got all sorts of weird and wonderful plug-ins. on there that aren't really part of the WordPress eco system, so they don't really understand when the new versions are coming out.

It's a problem that you can very easily avoid if you have a good host that lets you do easy backups. Back it up, upgrade it, give the site a quick test and if everything is working OK then that's fine. I would generally err on the side of upgrading it and keeping it secure and up to date than I would leaving it on the off chance that something might go wrong.

Pat Flynn: Nice. Nice Dan, anything else?

Dan Norris: That's all I've got. They're the main things. I don't know how many jobs we're doing now, probably 150 to 200 a day. It's all sorts of stuff, but they are definitely the bigger ones that are security or speed related, plug-ins. clashing or things breaking are generally caused by those 10 things.

Pat Flynn: If I had this episode to listen to when I first started, it would have saved me a lot of time. Hopefully this is very useful for everybody out there, especially for those of you who are just starting out, just a really quick education on what should be happening behind the scenes on your WordPress site to make it optimized and give it the best chance to deliver the kind of value that you know you want to deliver to your audience.

Dan, at the beginning you said you had a special offer, I didn't know that you were doing this, but I'm really curious, what do you have for us?

Dan Norris: One thing that I like doing, and it's not really that exciting, I'm not going to give anything away or anything but one thing I really like doing is reviewing people's sites so what I was thinking is if your audience want to reply in the comments on the episode and post the link to their site, are they able to do that in Disqus? You don't mind if they post the URL to their site?

Pat Flynn: No, I let them post one link before it goes into pending - OK, so post a link to their site and then...



Dan Norris: If you want feedback on your site, and generally my feedback will be something to do with design or conversions, so if you just want someone who's built 100's of websites before and deals with this stuff every day to give you feedback on how your sites looks, how it's looking for conversions, then post in the comments and I'll reply and give you three tips on how to improve your site and if I can't think of three things, I'll ask some of my start up friends to have a look and think up some tips.

Pat Flynn: I love that, thank you so much. It will be out mid-month for everybody out there, and you'll have until the end of October 2014 to add your URL to your site. This will be cool because we'll all get to see what everybody's doing as well and get a professional's point of view on that.

Again, Dan Norris from WP Curve, his co-founder Alex wasn't able to join us today but what's up Alex, if you're listening to this, thank you for all your help.

WP Curve for those of you who want to pay a flat monthly fee to get help on your WordPress site whenever things come up. It's just making sure that things are optimized on your site. My affiliate link for that is smartpassiveincome.com/wpcurve. Dan, any final words of wisdom before I let you go?

Dan Norris: No, I think I've been through a lot of stuff. If people have any questions, if you want to do the site thing, I'm really looking forward to the comments, if you want to email me, I'm dan@wpcurve.com and I'm really looking forward to helping your audience out a bit more.

Pat Flynn: Love it Dan, thanks so much, we appreciate it.

Dan Norris: Thanks man.

Pat Flynn: Awesome, I hope you enjoyed that interview with Dan Norris from wpcurve.com. Again, if you'd like to get hooked up with the service, you can go through my affiliate link, which is smartpassiveincome.com/wpcurve.

If you'd like to get to the show notes and also go to the blog, you can leave a comment and get direct feedback from Dan. You can go to smartpassiveincome.com/session134.

Awesome, thank you all so much for listening today. I hope that has somehow, in some way, shape or form improved what you have going on online.



I'd also like to thank today's awesome sponsor, one of my favorite companies lately, this is [Lynda.com](https://www.lynda.com). For those of you who have never heard of Lynda, this is an awesome platform for learning anything. They have a lot of stuff that's extremely relevant to us, topics ranging from business skills to communication, leadership, management, online marketing, productivity, and even skills specific to a lot of software that you might be using like Photoshop or Adobe InDesign, how to use your DSLR camera, which I'm currently taking right now.

This is one of the best companies out there. The videos in these courses are not little YouTube videos, they're not put together in someone's home, these are studio quality courses that are broken into bite sized pieces so that you can learn at your own pace and with tools to go along with them, like transcripts and things like that. It's seriously an amazing experience to go through, Lynda.com.

A ton of videos, over 100,000 different things you can look at. What's really cool is I've worked out a deal with them. You can try Lynda.com for free for 7 days. If you go to [Lynda.com/spi](https://www.lynda.com/spi), you can try it out for free for 7 days, full access to all their courses.

Thank you again so much for listening in, you can leave a comment at [smartpassiveincome.com/session134](https://www.smartpassiveincome.com/session134).

Cheers, take care and I'll see you in the next episode of the Smart Passive Income podcast. Peace.

Announcer: Thanks for listening to the Smart Passive Income podcast at www.smartpassiveincome.com

Links and Resources Mentioned in This Episode:

- [WP Curve](#)
- [Yoast](#)
- [Help Scout](#)
- [Theme Forest](#)
- [GrooveHQ](#)
- [Floating Social Bar](#)



- [OKDork.com](#)
- [SPI Episode #71 with Noah Kagan](#)
- [Disqus](#)
- [WP Engine](#)
- [CloudFlare](#)
- [MaxCDN](#)
- [W3 Total Cache](#)
- [Picresize.com](#)
- [Wp Smush.it](#)
- [WordPress speed – How to reduce your load time to under 1 second](#)
- [Crazy Egg](#)
- [Swifttype Search](#)
- [LeadPages](#)
- [Unbounce](#)
- [OptimizePress](#)
- [Qualaroo](#)
- [Helloify.com](#)
- [Olark](#)
- [Lynda.com/spi](#) (Today's sponsor)