

WordPress Optimization

A Beginners Guide On How To Speed Up Your Site



martin.

Making Your Website Fast

WordPress is a fantastic and flexible content management system for organizations of all sizes and users of all skillsets. Its ease of use and flexibility opens the door for a poor user experience if a website has been set up or maintained incorrectly.

Misconfigurations, off-the-shelf themes and poor best-practices can lead to a slow website that pushes your target audience away. Luckily, there are some easy first-steps you can take to help improve your website's performance for little to no cost.

The following guide walks you through using recommended tools for **Image Optimization** and **Delivery Optimization** to increase the speed of your website. While this guide isn't exhaustive it will provide a good introduction on some of the options you have to improve your user experience.

Who this is for: WordPress Admins and Power Users
Skill Level: Medium
Time To Complete: 45 Minutes

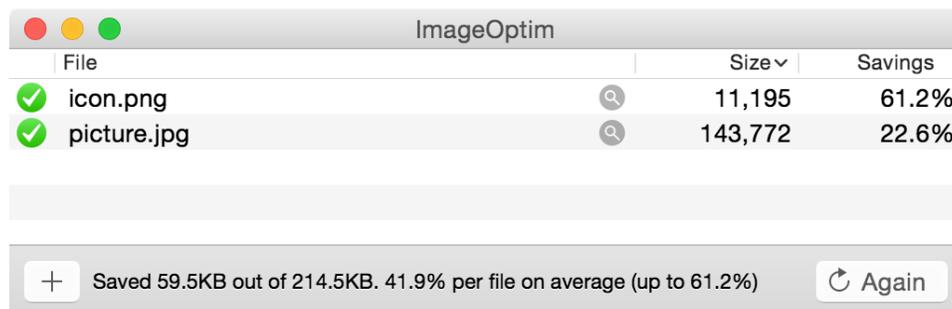
Image Optimization

All of the images you upload to your website may be loaded by one of your website visitors, and the larger these images are, the longer your web pages will take to load. While WordPress performs some image resizing and compression, it's often not enough to provide a speedy browsing experience.

To optimize the images on your site, you need to compress them – shrinking their overall size by reducing the visual quality of the image. There are ways to manually and automatically optimize these images.

Manual Image Compression

Before uploading an image to your site, you can compress the full-size image – allowing WordPress to work with the smaller file to create thumbnails/other sizes.

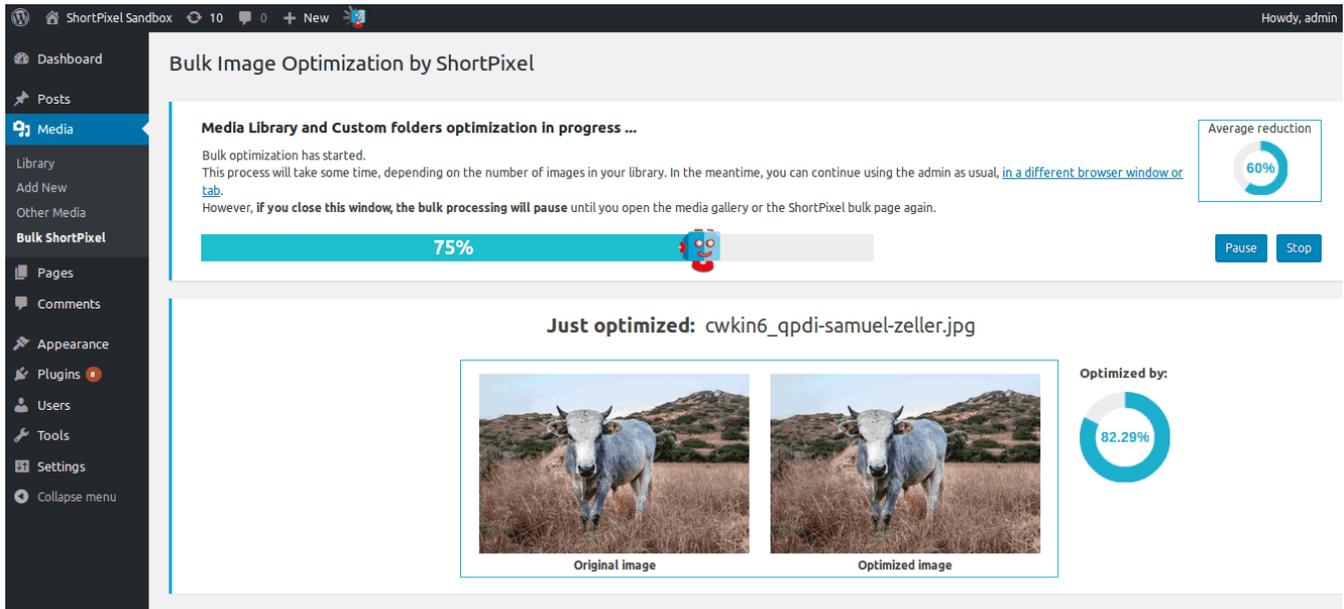


One of our favorite tools is [ImageOptim](#), a free Mac tool that allows you to drag and drop multiple images and compress them on the fly. In the **ImageOptim > Preferences** menu, you can adjust how much you want to compress your image. Be warned – the more you compress an image, the lower quality it will appear visually!

Are you a Windows/Linux user? The ImageOptim website also provides some [recommended alternatives](#) that will offer similar features.

Automatic Image Compression

If you have a larger team working on your website or simply can't be bothered to optimize every image before you upload it, plugin for automatic compression is your best option.



There are several WordPress Plugins that provide automatic image compression, but one we've had a positive experience with is ShortPixel. It provides a wide range of flexibility on how you want to handle your compression. By default, it provides a nice balance between compression and visual quality.

Most of the high-quality image compression plugins require some form of monthly payment. Unlike many options, ShortPixel offers a "trial" tier which includes compression for 100 free images, and if you [sign up through any of the links in this guide](#), you'll receive a bonus 100 free images per month, which is quite generous and should meet the needs of most small websites.

Installing ShortPixel

If you're familiar with adding plugins to your WordPress website, installation/setup is pretty straightforward:

1. [Download the ShortPixel plugin](#)
2. Sign up using your email at [this link](#)
3. You will receive your personal API key in a confirmation email to the address you provided
4. Upload the ShortPixel plugin to the /wp-content/plugins/ directory
5. Use your unique API key to activate ShortPixel plugin in the "Plugins" menu in WordPress
6. Uploaded images can be automatically optimized in the Media Library

The basic settings provided by ShortPixel should be good for most websites, but if needed, its deeper settings allow you to customize how you want to handle your image compression.

Is installing plugins out of your comfort zone? If so, we can help.
Feel free to email us at digital@martingroupmarketing.com

Delivery Optimization

When someone visits your website, they can be visiting from anywhere in the world. The time it takes for a visitor to *request* to view your website and *receive* everything needed to view it can be impacted by a number of factors, including:

- Their personal internet connection's speed
- Their geographic location in respect to your webserver
- The memory, storage and configuration of your webserver
- The internet speed of your webserver

While you can select a webhost that provides various speed benefits, it's unlikely you'd be serving a standard website from multiple locations around the world. While possible, the level of investment required would be unnecessary for a traditional marketing/sales website.

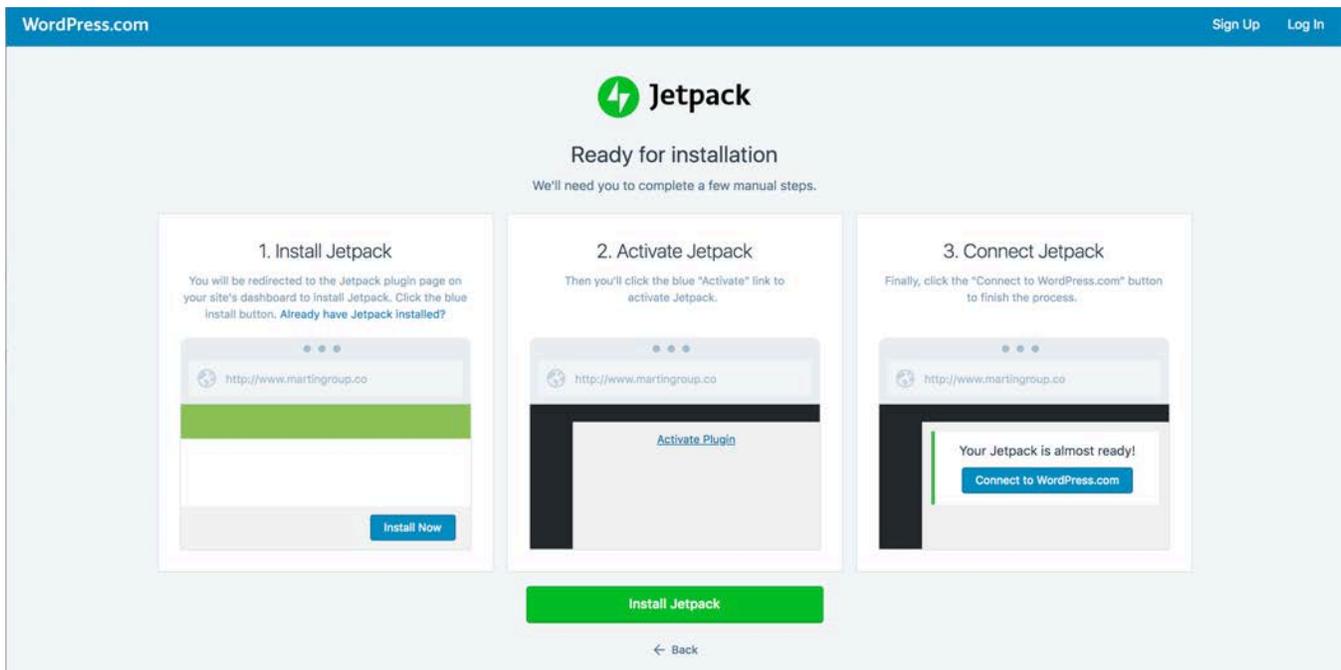
Content Delivery Networks

One area you can improve performance in is how you deliver your static files (such as images) to your visitors. Leveraging a **Content Delivery Network** allows you to host images and files on a server that provides a number of benefits:

- Optimized to serve files quickly
- Networked to deliver files from the nearest geographic location
- Leverages caching to reduce repeat loads

There are a wide range of providers that offer WordPress CDN options, such as MaxCDN, Cloudflare and Sucuri, which offer multiple tiers to their products and a wide range of supplemental services.

To help you get started, we're going to guide you through the steps to install/setup **Jetpack** by Automattic, which provides a free image-focused CDN.



Installing Jetpack (Guided)

1. Before making any website changes, please backup your website
2. Create an account on [Wordpress.com](https://wordpress.com)
 - a. *Note: This Site / Blog will not be used, it is simply part of the account creation process*
3. Visit the [Jetpack website](https://jetpack.com)
4. Choose the "Start With Free" option at the bottom of the page
5. Enter your website's URL
6. Follow The On-Screen Instructions

Installing Jetpack (Manual)

1. Before making any website changes, please backup your website
2. Create an account on [Wordpress.com](https://wordpress.com)
3. Note: This Site / Blog will not be used, it is simply part of the account creation process
4. Log in to your site's Dashboard (e.g. <http://www.yourgroovydomain.com/wp-admin>)
5. In the left panel, click "Plugins" then click "Add New"
6. Search for "Jetpack" - the latest version will appear at the top of the list of results
7. Click the "Install Now" button

8. Wait for the installation to finish, then click the "Activate" button
9. Click the "Connect to Wordpress.com" button. Login with your Wordpress.com account or create an account.
10. Login with your Wordpress.com account and click "Authorize Jetpack"
11. Click the "Approve" button and wait for the connection process to finish
12. Select your plan (Free). You will be returned to your site's Dashboard and see the message "Your Jetpack site is ready to go!"

Configuring Jetpack/Photon CDN

1. Complete the Guided or Manual installation steps above
2. In the left bar of the WordPress Admin section, navigate to Jetpack > Settings
3. Click on the "Appearances" tab
4. Click the toggle to the right of the "Photon" option, making the dark blue
5. You should see a green prompt in the upper right letting you know Photon has been activated

Need any help optimizing your website?
Feel free to email us at digital@martingroupmarketing.com