

Factor to survey	Score	Explanation
1 Is most of the homepage 'above the fold' (i.e. one screen in height at 1024 x 768 screen resolution, which the majority of people use)? Is it a jumping-off point to the rest of the site, rather than a page with too much information?	4	The homepage should be brief and an enticing pointer to other pages. It should not give too much information itself. (For instance, a long welcome letter from the pastor is not suitable.) Viewers will usually not read or notice extra information only visible by scrolling. Each page on a website should have a single subject and purpose.
2 Is the overall balance of color, graphics, white-space and text, harmonious to the eye? (Ask someone with an eye for graphic design for an honest answer.)	6	Research shows that people quickly judge a site based on its appearance, and will quickly click away if it doesn't hold their attention. Good graphic design and layout make text look readable and interesting; bad design and layout turns people off.
3 Are there less than 10 links in the main menu?	3	Research shows that too many choices confuse users. Not every page or category needs to be listed.
4 Does your website have an opening 'splash' page with a link to the real home page?	- 20	Intensely irritating to users; a percentage will not move to the second page. Equally annoying are websites that automatically play music.
5 Is your site quick to load, even on a dialup connection?	4	Not everyone has broadband or DSL. Graphic-heavy websites (especially with animated flash graphics) can be slow even on broadband. Readable text should be visible within three or four seconds, and most graphics should appear in 4 seconds.
6 Do you help visitors get a clear sense of where they're at, where they've been, where they can go next by placing 'you are here' clues (color highlighting or arrows) on the navigation menu to indicate what page they're viewing?	8	A function of usability. Visitors need to feel in control and need to know where they are within the architecture of the website. If they feel lost, they may leave, never to return.
7 Have you tested the website with different browsers, using different font-size settings and screen resolutions?	6	A site may look ideal with Internet Explorer, yet be unusable in Mozilla. Never add the line: "Site best viewed with browser X." Sites must look good with all browsers.
8 Have you tested your site with moderately experienced volunteers, then acted on weaknesses they identify?	8	A webmaster is too familiar with the site and cannot see problems an average user faces. Helpful parallel: the difference between a native of a city who knows every back street, and a visitor struggling to find his/her way around.
9 Have you asked people with no church background to visit the site and give their impressions?	20	Another function of usability; a test of how your website looks through the eyes of non-Christians. What impression are they getting of the message and use of language. What words do they not understand? Is there insider language? Use people of both genders. Male and female brains really are wired differently – they respond to different issues and notice different things! When new people join the church (especially those with non-church backgrounds), find out if the site played a part, and how they feel it could be improved.

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10 If you conduct a site test with non-Christians, which overall impression of the site do they report?	25	This question is at the heart of the church website's design and purpose. Thus it scores (or loses) maximum points. Of course, the congregation must live up to the welcome offered by the site!	
"This church is about people and I feel I am starting to know and like some of them. I feel they will welcome me in an un-pressured way, just as I am, any time I visit."	- 25		
"This church is too formal with program of weekly meetings. It does not tell me anything about the people there. I'm not sure I would be welcomed. This site is for members, not outsiders like me."	0		
Somewhere between these two or have not done the test.	11 Does the church site use recommended design principles for the visually impaired?	3	Make sure you understand how color-blind people see your pages. Can text be resized (tip: use CTRL + mouse wheel on PCs). Learn how a screen-reader application converts text into speech. If possible, download screen-reader software and experience your site the way a blind person does. At the very minimum add 'alt tags' (captions or descriptions) to graphics and photos.
12 Is the site user-friendly for non-Christians and non-members?	Yes 15 No - 15	While a church website will contain material primarily for members, it should be jargon-free and considerate to non-members.	
13 Does your website include a mission or doctrinal statement?	- 15	Mission statements put non-Christians off because they are usually about "bringing others to Christ." They give the impression that 'We are out to convert you' rather than 'We are a family of flawed people, please come share the journey with us.' Similarly, statements of doctrine are inappropriate. Use real-life stories about why people came and why they've stayed.	
14 Have you proofread the site for spelling, grammar, typos, consistency of style. Has the text been reviewed with an eye toward making it concise and to reduce word count?	5	Wordy language, poor spelling, bad grammar or punctuation reduces the credibility.	
15 Do you feature profiles (with photos) of a range of members to demonstrate that the church is a family of real people?	25	Rarely done, but the only way visitors can 'meet' members and feel a sense of community.	
16 Are there photos of real people on the pages?	20	A picture is worth a thousand words.	
17 Is the church building featured on the home page?	- 20	A church is about people not the building, no matter how spectacular it is! Photos of people inside the building, doing things, interacting are OK. Do not show an empty sanctuary!	
18 Does the writing style demonstrate informality and self-deprecating humor?	15	In many cultures, especially where there is low church attendance or hostile media, public perception of Christians is skewed. Informality and humor are disarming and endearing, and help correct this negative image. We are allowed to use humor! God gave us the ability to laugh.	

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19 Does the website offer a specific welcome to different categories of people: youth, married with families, ethnicities, retired people, etc.? Does it clearly reflect diversity of membership?	10	Be specific. Tell people about activities for each group. Photos should show a range of ages and ethnicity.
20 Does the site specifically invite people to activities – not just Sunday services?	5	Put yourself in an outsider's shoes. It can be intimidating to visit a church service for the first time. It can be less intimidating to attend a smaller mid-week activity: Bible study, mums' and toddlers' club, seniors' breakfast, book discussion, etc. Highlight alternate 'ways in', explaining exactly what happens, and who to contact for more information.
21 Does the site demonstrate an interest in the local community?	5	Commitment to the local area should be obvious within editorial content, photos and links. Some churches create a page which is a portal to a wide range of ethical secular links for the town or area: entertainment, sports, shopping etc. These can be effective in drawing people into the website and the church.
22 Is news about upcoming events easy to find?	10	Important activities should not be buried several pages deep. Put clear links to them on the home page.
23 Is there outdated news on the website?	- 10	Few things look worse than links to 'upcoming events' which took place weeks ago!
24 Do you offer a newsletter (distributed by email, RSS feed, blog, or pdf format) about church events?	5	Build relationships through the gentle reminder of a newsletter, distributed different ways. Keep news user friendly to outsiders.
25 Is your street address and phone number, shown in the footer of each page?	10	Search engines need this information for 'local search'. This information should also appear on a specific 'contact us' page.
26 Do you include a link to a privacy policy (probably in the page footer)?	5	A privacy policy explains how the church will securely keep information such as email addresses and other personal data. It is a legal requirement for non-profit websites in some countries.
27 Have you submitted the church URL to the main search engines (Google, Yahoo, MSN/Live), secular national and local lists, Christian find-a-church directories? Have you submitted the URL to your synod or district church listing?	5	Search engines may automatically find your church but a manual submission is necessary. Also check online paid newspaper ads and other community resources.
28 Is there a street map on your website?	5	Seems like an obvious thing to include, but many church sites don't. Use Map Quest, Google Maps, or draw one yourself. Keep it simple.
29 Do you give clear information about public transportation and road access?	5	Makes it clear for people who regularly use public transportation
30 Do you explain what facilities are available to people with a disability?	5	The disabled need to know what is available: wheelchair access, toilets, ramps, aids for the hearing impaired, etc.
31 Are 'contact us' options easy to find: phone, office hours, address and email?	7	Make it easy for people! Include a 'contact form' (rather than email addresses) to stop 'spam bots' from 'harvesting' your email addresses.

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32 Does someone check emails daily and reply to them?	10	Many churches fail in this area. Don't include email links if you don't answer quickly.
33 Is the church website integrated into your overall church outreach strategy?	10	A church site is the 'public face' or 'shop window' of the church to the community, not an optional add-on.
34 Do you involve your webmaster/design team in church outreach planning?	10	The website should not be a 'poor relative,' or a static unchanging brochure. It has enormous potential as a part of your evangelism strategy.
35 Is your website URL easy to remember?	10	Make it easy for people to remember where to find your site. If choosing a domain name for the first time, test alternatives on a wide range of people. Don't use special characters in the domain.
36 Is your website URL included on your roadside signboard, all printed material (letterheads, press ads, news releases, business cards, newsletters)? Is it included in official email footers?	5	Use every means possible to remind members and the public about the site.
37 Do you encourage members to use the website as an evangelism tool?	5	Few Christians routinely carry brochures with them. In many social situations they are not appropriate. But a simple business card with the website URL along with the church name acceptable.
38 Do you include self-answering quizzes, training courses, and other online learning opportunities on your site?	20	Attracts "seekers," "inquirers," or those who would like to learn about Christian beliefs. Increases visibility of a site.

TOTAL SCORE

Results: Less than 70: Don't be disappointed. Look for ways to improve your site.

70-150: A good foundation, but the site will benefit from a thorough reassessment of its style and purpose.

150-250: Doing well, but analyze areas that could be improved.

Over 250: Great, but keep going, constantly looking for ways to make your website more effective.