

digital checklist 2019 edition



Start Digital's guide to
the digital space in 2019

2019

Welcome to 2019!

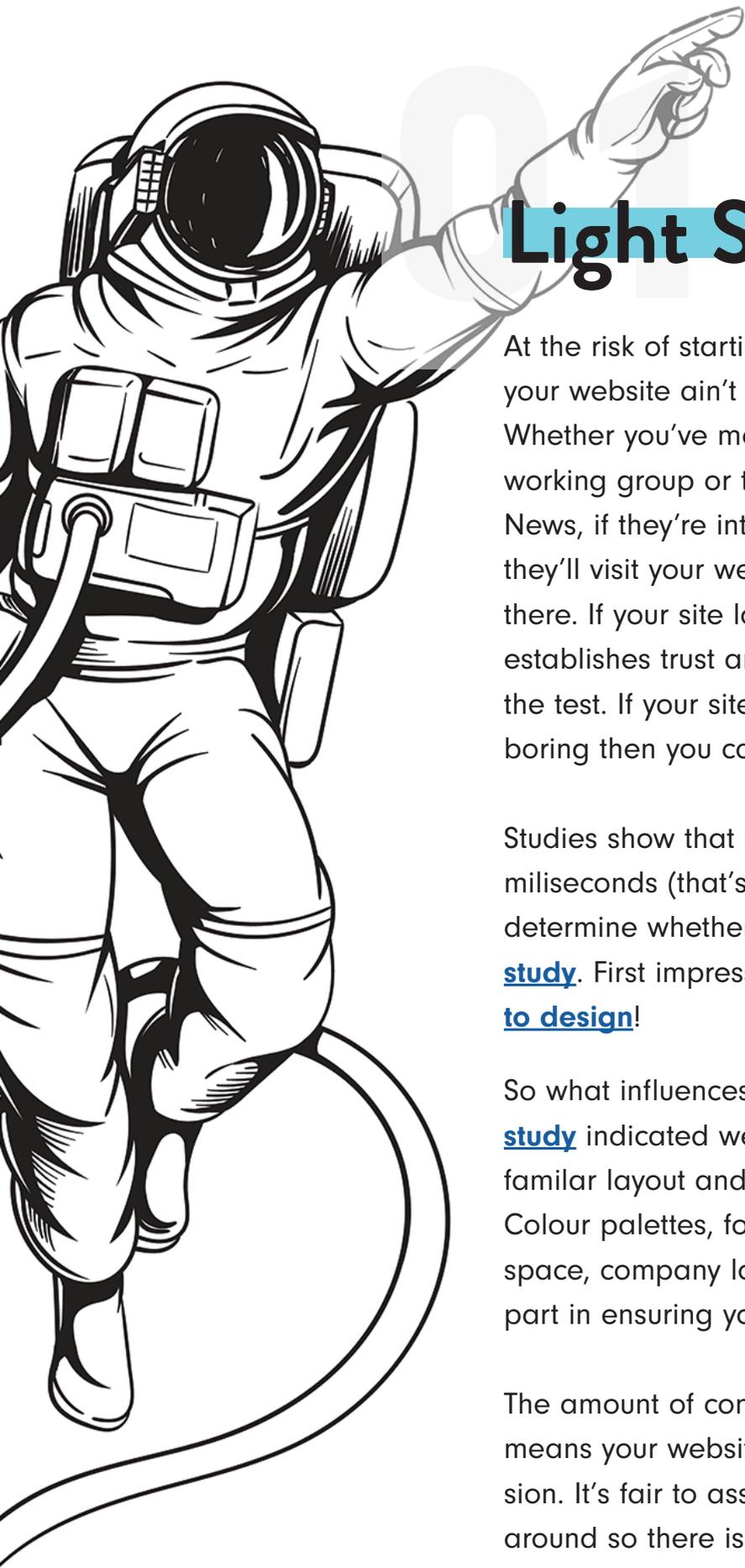
How did that happen?

The year where Virtual Reality will make or break the future of well, everything (see Oculus Quest / Hololens). The year where 3D printing goes mainstream. The year where Elon Musk reveals he's an alien and we're all living in his simulated reality.....

Who knows? What we do know is we're living in the future. So what does this mean for businesses and how can we keep up with the ever accelerating digital world?

This ebook will arm your business with the information you need to stay ahead of the curve and future proof your digital strategy. We've researched cutting edge trends and pulled together statistics from a wide range of sources to help support our findings.

Dig in.



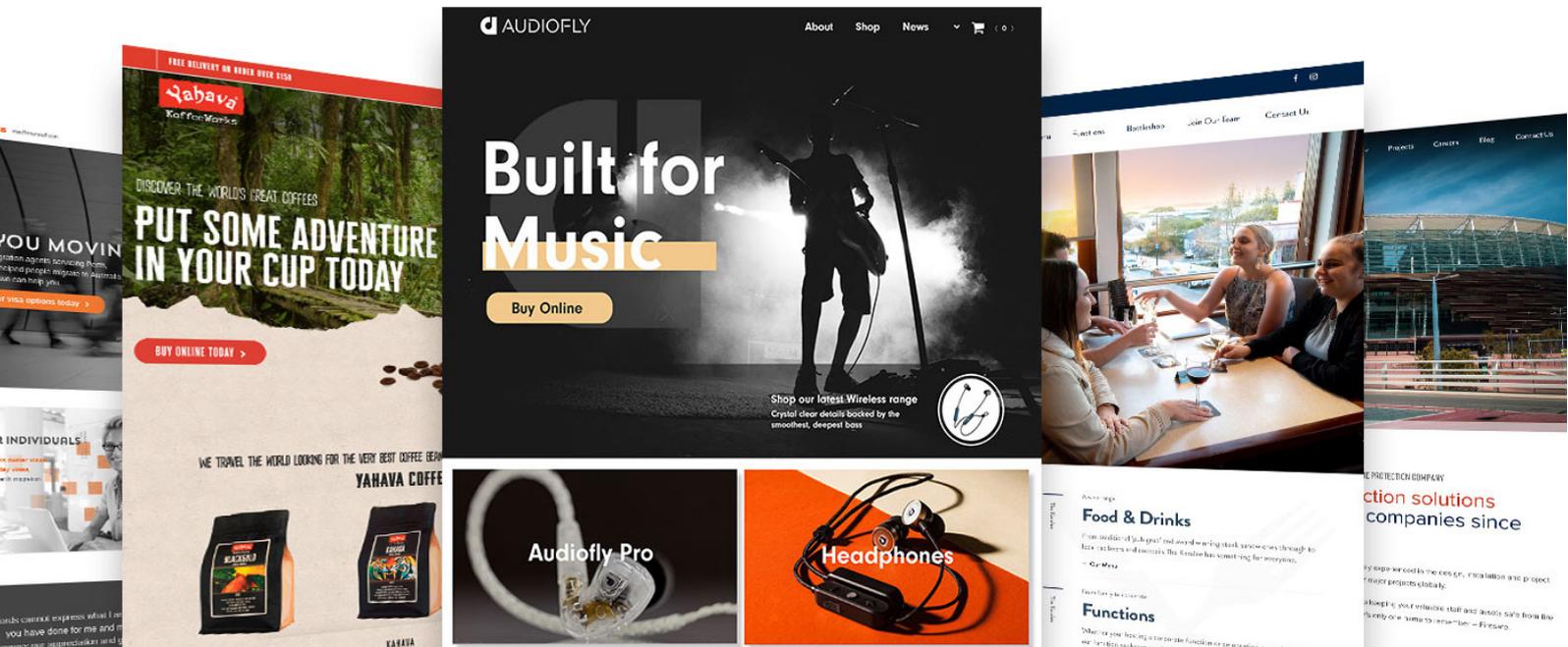
Light Speed Pixels

At the risk of starting the checklist with the obvious, if your website ain't rocking then clients ain't knocking* Whether you've met your potential client through a networking group or they've read about you in Business News, if they're interested in furthering the relationship they'll visit your website and make a decision from there. If your site looks good, loads quickly and establishes trust and engagement then you've passed the test. If your site looks cheap, unprofessional and boring then you can kiss the lead goodbye.

Studies show that it takes approximately 50 milliseconds (that's 0.05 seconds) for site visitors to determine whether they'll stay or leave. Yes, [it's a real study](#). First impressions count and they're [94% related to design!](#)

So what influences first impressions online? A [Google study](#) indicated websites that present a clear, intuitive, familiar layout and structure were more appealing. Colour palettes, font choices, authentic images, white space, company logo and page layout all play a big part in ensuring you make the right impression.

The amount of consumer choice available online means your website needs to make a quick impression. It's fair to assume your potential clients will shop around so there is little point in blending in - you need to be memorable.



Whether your website is a brochure-style intended to educate customers, a global eCommerce website built to sell thousands of products per week or a marketing website designed to increase sales leads it needs to be up to date, on trend, work on all devices and load quickly.

Need more stats?

- **Almost 50% of web users expect a website to load within 2 seconds.**

For every second over 2 (yes, just 2) that it takes your website to load, your business is losing customers and sales ([Forbes](#)). Based on that, it's safe to say ensuring your website is zippy and optimised in readiness for 2019 is essential!

- **88% of customers are less likely to return to a website if their previous experience was poor. ([Econsultancy](#))**

If your website is hard to use, takes too long to load, a hot mess when it comes to mobile access or doesn't provide relevant information to its audience, then there is little point in having a website. The Internet is ruthless. It rarely gives second chances so you've got to make sure, one is all you need!

Needless to say, our big tip for 2019 is to make sure your website is designed to stand head and shoulders above your competitors.

*the use of the word 'ain't' was for street credibility purposes only



“Investing in a website is one of the most important decisions a business will make. Knowing what options are available is critical to getting the best result!”

Help! I don't have a website yet!

When it comes to web design and development, you've got two options: Do It Yourself or Don't Do It Yourself.

1. Do It Yourself

Do-It-Yourself (DIY) website builders such as Squarespace and Wix present budget website solutions. If you've got a lot of time to learn how to get the most out of your selected platform and aren't interested or able to open your purse/wallet too wide, this option could be particularly enticing.

Worth warning though that, unless you invest time and money, DIY websites can cheapen your brand/business offering and are unlikely to promote your services well on Google.

2. Get Someone Else

A quick Google search will show that you're spoiled for choice when it comes to web design and digital agencies within Perth (no joke, there's 3 different agencies on our street alone), Australia and beyond.

Regardless of whether you're building a website yourself or partnering up with a digital agency, make sure you do a lot of research. Before contacting a web designer be diligent and research online reviews - you can discover a lot if you spend time digging :)

Digital Wellness

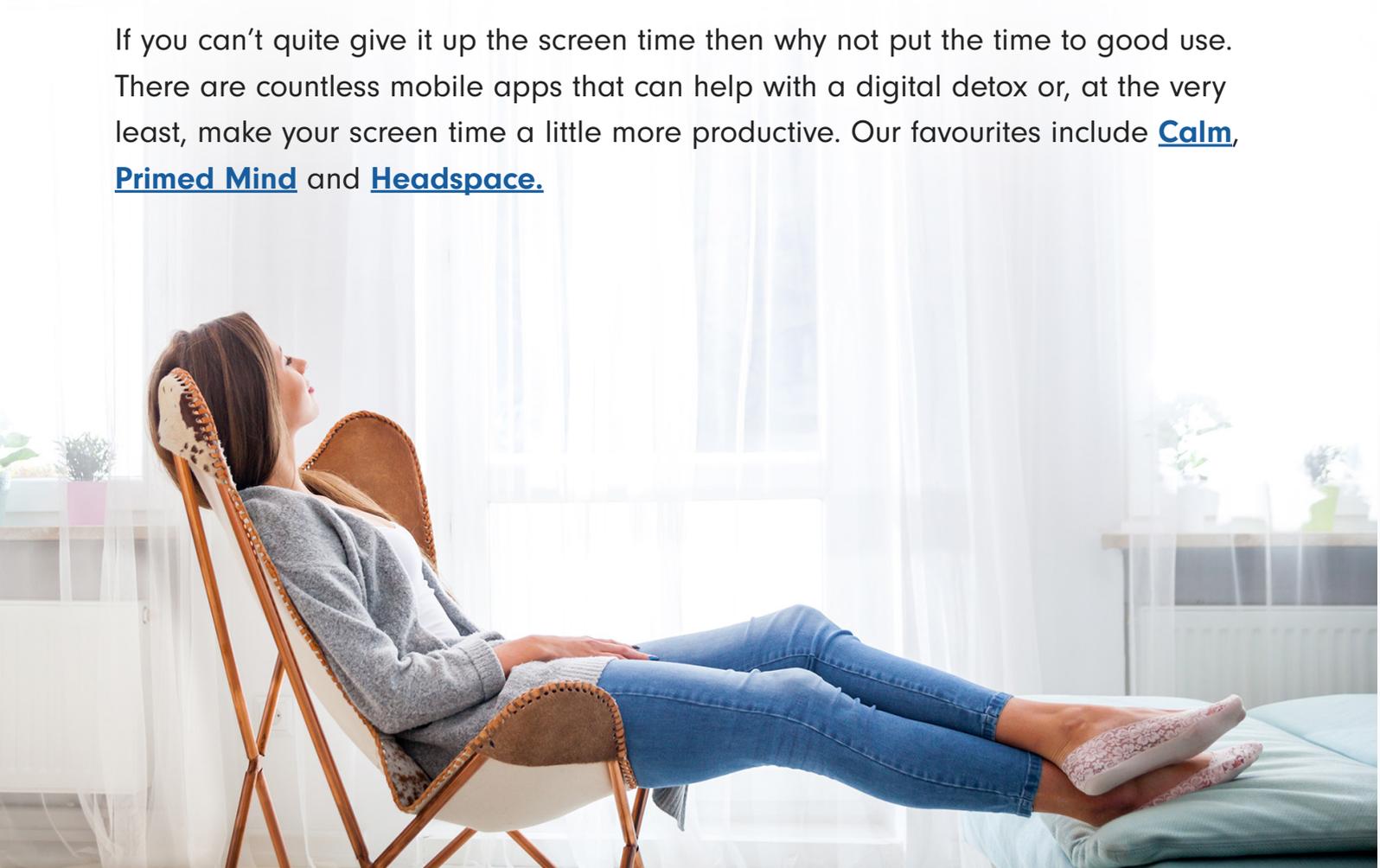
We live in an always connected digital world and whilst this can be beneficial for business it's never been more important to take care of your own health and the wellbeing of your team. If you find yourself replying to emails at 10pm or mindlessly scrolling through Facebook during **any** down time then digital fatigue is inevitable.

In the latest iPhone update, iOS 12, Apple have included features designed to help users manage the amount of time they spend on their phone. And earlier in 2018 Mark Zuckerberg stated his goal for 2018 was to make sure Facebook is good "for people's well-being and for society".

Yep, the creators might be turning on their creations.

If you're an iPhone user we recommend updating to iOS 12 and [setting Screen Time](#). It might just open your eyes to where your time is going. Set yourself some realistic downtime (10pm to 6am is a good place to start). If you have some 'go to' social apps then you'll also benefit from setting time limits for them. We dare you to set your social network limits to 1 hour a day!

If you can't quite give it up the screen time then why not put the time to good use. There are countless mobile apps that can help with a digital detox or, at the very least, make your screen time a little more productive. Our favourites include [Calm](#), [Primed Mind](#) and [Headspace](#).



Make Way For The Robots

Terminator predicted it. Robots are going to take over the world. In this case we're not talking about Arnie-esque humanoids. We're talking about chatbots.

It's predicted that chatbots will power [85% of customer service interactions by 2020](#). Amongst many others, notable businesses such as the Australian Open, Dominos, Mastercard, Spotify and The Wall Street Journal are already using chatbots to foster better customer experiences.

How can chatbots help your business in 2019.

- 1. Automated Customer Responses** - For each and every business, customers have a set of common queries such as what time is your store open, where are you located and what's your phone number. These are questions your business doesn't need to answer directly. A pre-programmed chatbot will take these specific queries off your hands and **respond with specific, automated responses**.
- 2. Save Your Workers** - Offloading some of the more mundane customer service tasks to your chatbot, enables your workers to spend their time on more productive tasks
- 3. Chatbots Stay Online, All Day and Night** - A chatbot makes it possible for **constant access and communication**. 24/7 accessibility is essential in today's society. A chatbot ensures that regardless of the time, your business is taking care of your customers.

For more information check out [Intercom](#), [Drift](#) or [Facebook Messenger](#).



04

Google Goals

Google will continue to evolve and grow throughout 2019. No surprises there. From fine tuning its search algorithm through to improving its AI technology, Google will define the ways in which we work and play online for years to come.

As a digital company Google is central to everything we do and many of the services we provide. We design and build websites that can be easily seen and we provide SEO services that strategically improve a websites ranking.

For those unaware, SEO (Search Engine Optimisation) refers to the activities completed to maximise a website's page ranking and visibility. In 2014 the Huff Post said '[the best place to hide a body is page 2 of Google](#)' and it's as relevant in 2019 as ever before.

Google has a long history of making changes to its search algorithm. It's why tactics such as hiding text, keyword stuffing and buying backlinks are now penalised. According to [Moz](#) there were 13 major algorithm changes in 2017 and , as of October there have been 12 changes made in 2018. As a service that relies on results it's important that Google continuously look at how it can deliver better outcomes from searches. This means the goal posts are always moving. There are however some clear sign posts that indicate the way Google search is going.





Voice Search

Voice technology will be louder than ever in 2019

In May 2018 Google unveiled an incredible video that showcases just how far voice technology has come and the importance it places on the human voice for future developments. If you've not seen the demo for Google Duplex then we recommend you watch [this video](#).

Whether you're using a smart speaker, desktop browser or smart phone, it's predicted that 50% of all online searches will be driven by the human voice ([Campaign](#)). Given that the way we search using typed text is very different from the way we search using voice, which uses more natural phrasing, it's important that your SEO strategy considers how best to align with both search types.

Why the importance? Well, if you're using a voice powered speaker you're only going to get one search result delivered. There's no 2nd, 3rd or 4th place. You must be the **best** result for the specific search term.

Mobile First

The desktop vs mobile war is over.

We've known about the importance of having a mobile friendly website for a while now. The transition between moving from a desktop site to one that works well on all screen sizes has, to date, been relatively smooth. All evidence suggests this could change in 2019 as 'mobile first indexing' becomes the norm and we expect future algorithm updates to emphasise this importance.

The roll out of mobile first indexing (MFI) was announced in March 2018. MFI means that Google will look at, and base ranking, on the mobile version of your website before the desktop version. This places a greater importance on fast loading, informative sites together with implementing AMP (Accelerated Mobile Pages) wherever possible.

2019 will be a big year for mobile search!



Data is Power

Pre Google businesses relied on gut instinct and 'a finger in the wind' when making decisions. Whilst there is still a place for a feeling in your gut, there are ways to make smarter, more informed decisions that provide a better understanding of your business and allow you to clearly manage your marketing activities.

Data is being generated by thousands of devices every day. From watches, fitbits and phones through to lightbulbs, speakers and doorbells, every interaction is being captured. If you have a website, Facebook page or LinkedIn account thousands upon thousands of data points are being generated by every person that interacts with you. From location, device used and age through to estimated salary, online interests and the pages they visit on your site, data is key to businesses making good decisions about products, services, employees, strategies and so much more - and your digital profile is central to this.

Data gives businesses the power to make smart decisions that drive growth.

Where data collection used to rely on a team of skilled analysts to be made into something useful, tools such as Google Analytics make big data available to everyone with a website. Even better, Google have created a platform that makes understanding this data super simple.

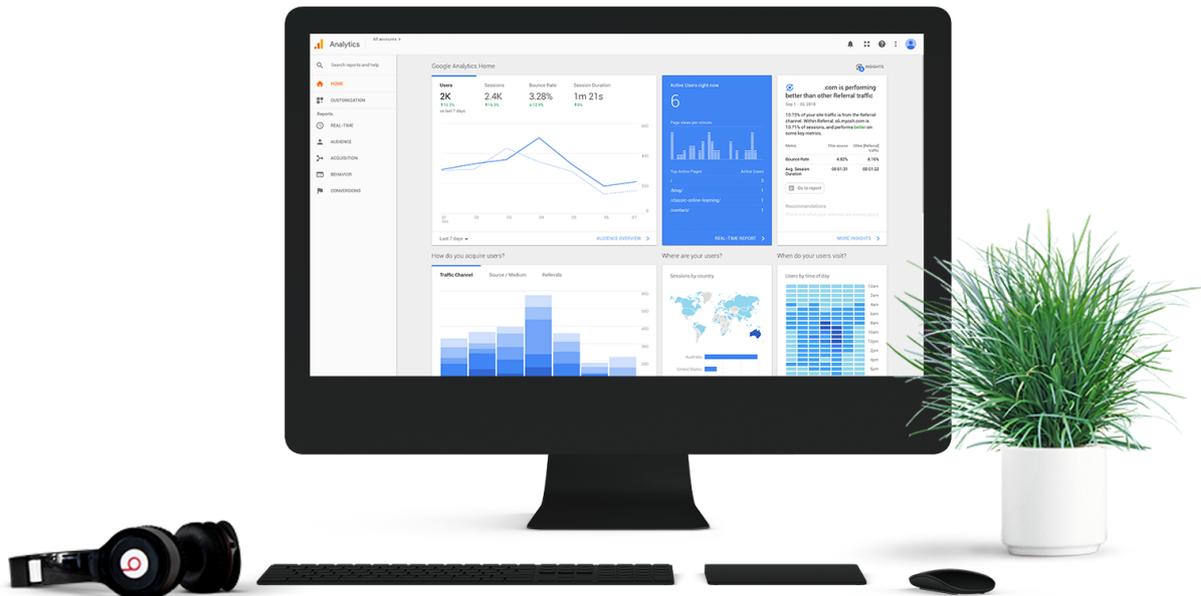
The basic view of Google Analytics breaks data down into 3 core ABC's:

Acquisition: How many people visit your site and where do they come from?

Behavior: What are people doing when they visit your site?

Conversion: Do site visitors do what you want them to do?

These 3 questions are the framework of every digital marketing initiative and if GA answered these questions alone it would still be a valuable tool.



Get the most from Google Analytics

The standard dashboard view of Google Analytics has been created to showcase the most valuable data. The dashboard is a collection of 12 widgets that can be tailored to suit any business requirement. Go to the '**Customisation**' tab in the left hand menu to set yours up.

CUSTOMIZATION

- Dashboards
- Custom Reports
- Saved Reports
- Custom Alerts

 REAL-TIME  AUDIENCE  ACQUISITION  BEHAVIOR  CONVERSIONS

Real Time

This is finger on the pulse data. See everything that is happening on your site right now.

Audience

Everything you need to know about the people visiting your site. Where are they located, how old are they, what devices are they using, what are their interests?

Acquisition

How are people finding your business online? Are they searching for a service or for your business name? Are they clicking through from one of your social media pages or from another website (backlink)?

Behaviour

What is a site visitor doing once they land on your website? It's important to know the journey your potential clients are taking so you can better understand the information they're looking for. A business that knows what their clients want can tailor content and information to suit, encouraging deeper engagement and building trust.

Conversions

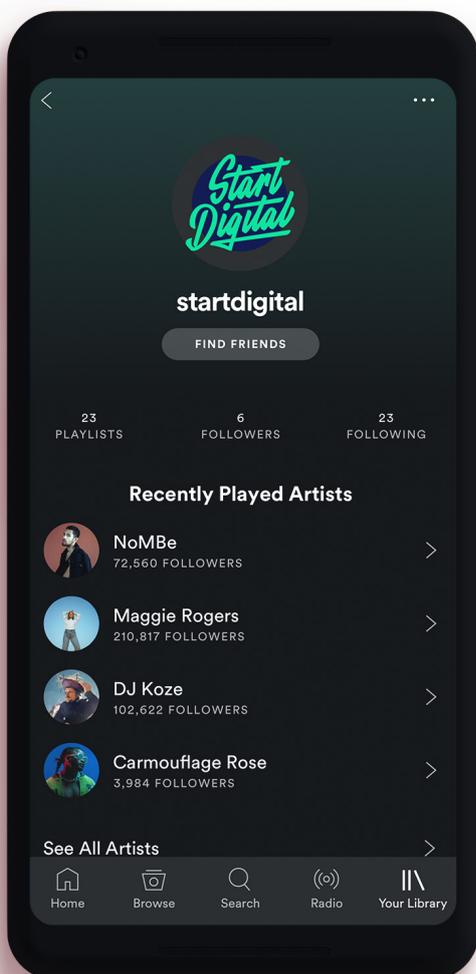
Whether a user signs up for a newsletter, purchases a product or uses the contact form, it's important to set goals and track on site conversions so you can better understand where the most effective results are being delivered from.

Productive Playlists

Since the 1950's a tremendous amount of evidence has confirmed music not only influences one's emotions but certain music can impact an individual's creativity and happiness and consequently, productivity. What's more, [recent studies](#) indicate music helps reduce stress and anxiety, which alone makes an office playlist a worthwhile addition.

It's been shown that listening to music with lyrics can be distracting, so it might be best to avoid the radio. However research indicates that instrumental music can work wonders, especially in an office environment.

Both Spotify and Apple Music have ready made playlists that cater to a wide range of tastes. The 'Focus' genre on Spotify alone has 33 playlists designed specifically to improve your erm, focus. Then there's Chill, Electronic and Workout playlists - depending on what you're in the mood for.



Of course not every office or business is set up to play music. Large, open plan spaces are particularly difficult (that hasn't stopped [Spacecubed](#) in Perth City).

A simple Sonos speaker is a small investment that could yield big results in team morale, productivity and workplace culture. Picking the right playlist is a matter of taste but we guarantee a workplace with music makes for a happier place to be - and who doesn't want that.

Our go to playlists include Brain Food, Desk Chillers, Creativity Boost and Classic Reggae Jams - for Friday afternoon jam downs :)

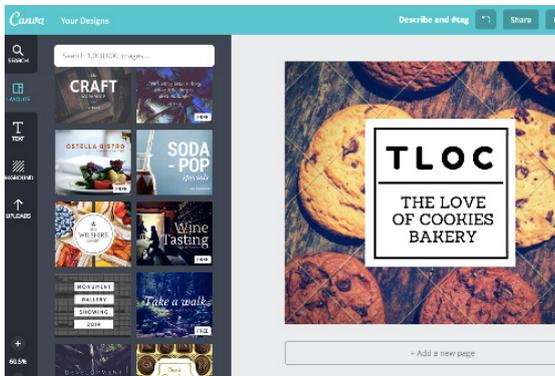
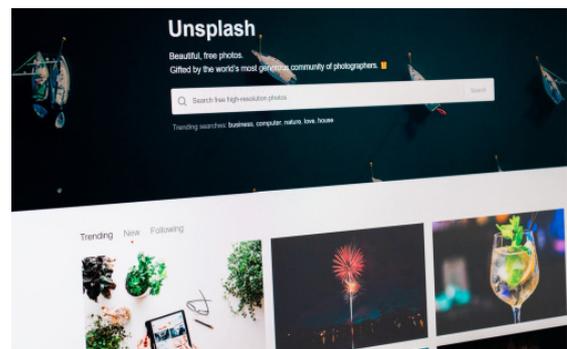
Creative Resources

As a web design and graphic design agency we rely heavily on a range of digital tools that help us express ourselves creatively. In the past there were a handful of heavy hitters such as Adobe Illustrator and Photoshop - in 2019 your creative options are limitless, so much so that even the most uncreative among us can create something that looks cool and professional.

Unsplash

Unsplash has become one of the best stocks sites for free digital photos. All photos are free under their own Unsplash license. Users have the freedom to modify, copy, distribute and use all photos without attribution or permission.

<https://unsplash.com/>



Canva

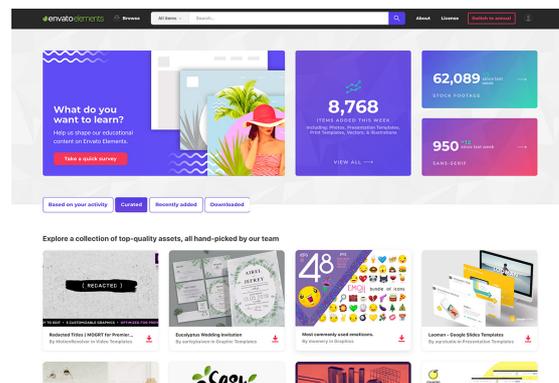
With free templates for business cards, letterheads, Instagram posts and everything in between Canva is the perfect place to get your design on. Whilst we don't want to put ourselves out of a job Canva started in Perth, so it's almost family ;)

https://www.canva.com/en_au/

Envato Elements

This one isn't free but at \$30 a month, it's a subscription service that we simply can't live without! Taking the very best from the huge Envato library, Elements includes stock images, web templates, fonts, graphic design templates, Wordpress themes, Photoshop Addons and more. Essential.

<https://elements.envato.com/>





Sort Your Social

With the average Aussie spending anywhere from 6 to 12 hours a week on social media and countries like the US and China blowing us out of the water with their numbers, it's safe to say society is obsessed. Whether that's a good thing or not is for another day. Social media has never played a bigger part in influencing society. 2019 is the year to hone your strategy and, perhaps, dare to be different.

Social media is the new TV.

New research indicates that in 2019 global use of the internet will catch up with TV in terms of hours spent screen staring. Whether we're live streaming video, scrolling through Instagram or discovering professional content on LinkedIn, we spend a huge amount of time on our devices. From a business marketing perspective this presents an incredible opportunity and one that is far more accessible than TV advertising!

4 Social Media tips for 2019

Know Your Platform

Not every social media platform is right for every business. An accountants or legal firm will benefit from a good LinkedIn strategy but may not be suited to Instagram - or Snapchat for that matter. What ever your industry there will be a social audience 'out there' but it's important to know where your demographic are spending their digital hours.

#nofilter

You know the saying: 'Be Yourself. Everyone else is taken'. It's never been more relevant than today. Consider your brand or personality and create content that aligns with your vision. If you're going to take the time to post content it's important that it stands out from the crowd, connects with your audience and, importantly, is authentic

Get Creative

With an abundance of free mobile and desktop creative tools available and an infinite encyclopedia online now is the time to create fresh, exciting, creative content. Use sites such as Unsplash and Canva or mobile apps such as Glitche or Afterlight to create unique images and use smart keyword searches to research new blog topics. In 2019 there is no excuse for generic, boring content!

Track Your Data

There is no hiding from it. Your data is everywhere and, whether you know it or not, it's being used to market products and services to you on a daily/hourly basis. As a business, understanding your social insights and data helps you make better, more informed decisions about how to connect. Tracking data may be questionable but it's here to stay!

Back to the Future

As with everything technology related there is a lot of talk about the 'next big thing'. In 2016 the next big thing was 3D Printing (still waiting). In 2017 the next big thing was Virtual Reality (still waiting). In 2018 the next big thing was Virtual Reality (erm, still waiting). Whats next? Well VR is, of course, the hot topic and the jury is out on the Oculus Quest which launches in first quarter 2019. The chances of this first release having a big impact on the way we live is minimal but all eyes will be on its potential. We can't even begin to imagine or visualise what impact VR has on everyday businesses.

What of 3D printing? It continues to evolve and, apart from the quite scary printed handgun that media used to scaremonger the public, 3D printing continues to innovate. It's quietly revolutionising industry and studies indicate that 93% of businesses using 3D printing in 2018 gain advantages over their competitors that include reducing time-to-market through accelerated production and shorter, more flexible production runs.

Closer to more traditional businesses we expect to see the continued reliance on the cloud and greater discussion around how to connect and/or integrate the multiple cloud services all businesses are subscribing to (Dropbox, G-Suite, Office 365, Xero, Salesforce, Hubspot - and thousands of others).

We go into the future with our eyes wide open, understanding that anything can, and likely will, happen. We wouldn't have it any other way!





Hi, we're Start Digital

As the internet becomes more competitive it's increasingly important for web design agencies and digital marketers to help their clients stand out from the crowd. At Start Digital we focus on delivering beautiful web designs that showcase our clients businesses and convert visitors to paying customers. In a world where attention spans keep getting shorter, we make sure your business stands out online.

Contact us today

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or visit startdigital.com.au

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