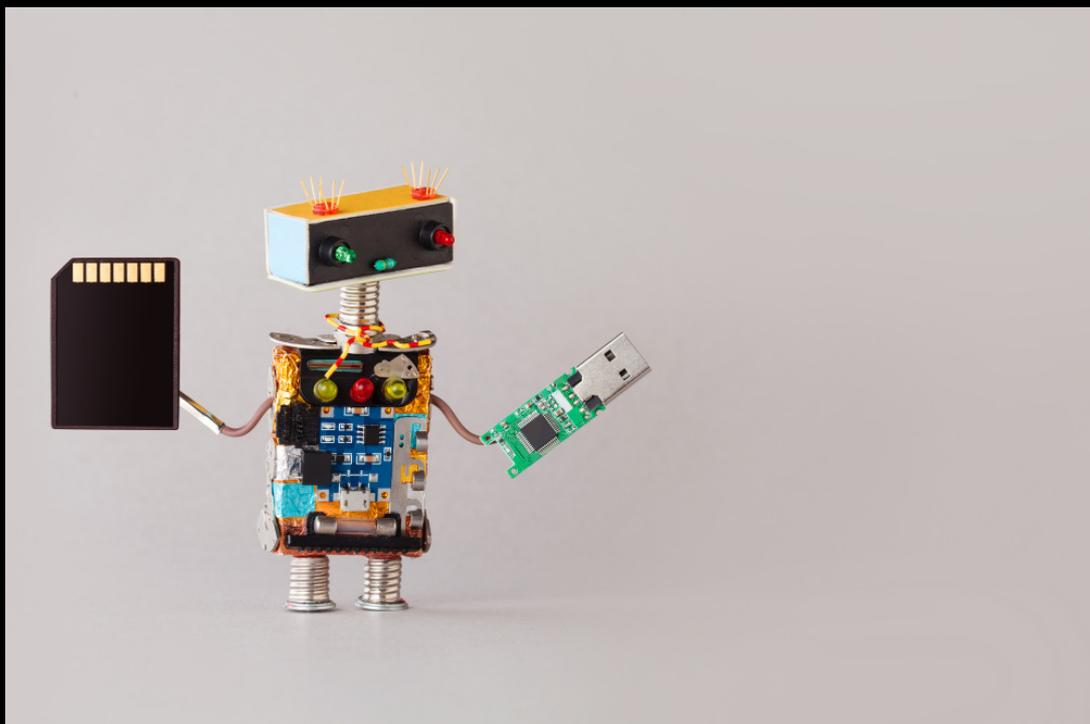


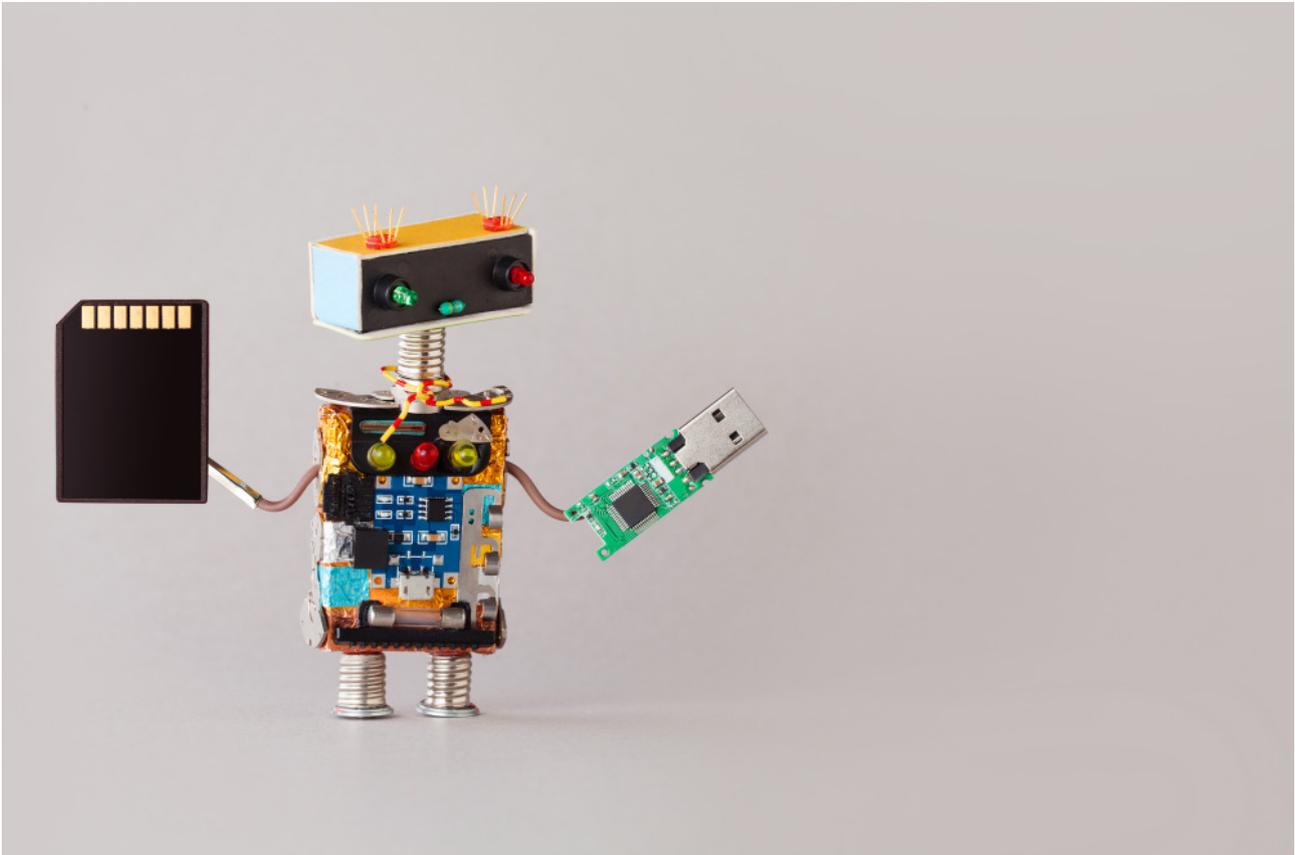


Boost activity – always include a download.



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Here's a simple way to boost activity on your web pages. Make sure your page has a free download attached to it.



The biggest challenge most people face when adding a download is deciding what to make downloadable.

You'll find a third-party document or image if you're lucky. This has the advantage of being ready-made but the disadvantage of being available elsewhere. It's not your content so it's not exclusive to you. You might also run into copyright issues if you're not careful.

The easiest way to produce exclusive content is to generate a PDF of that page. Don't just print the page to PDF – that's taking the drive for simplicity a step too far. Your customers won't be impressed.

Produce a PDF of the Word document you use to draft the web page's content. If you download the attachment on this page, you'll see what we mean.

When we first started doing this we used a very sparse Word template. It had our company details on it and nothing else. This evolved into a slightly more polished template over time. It even has a cover and a closing page. But it's still a very easy template to use. It only needs the text and images we use on the web page itself. There's nothing extra. There's no extra burden.

The alternative.

Here's what we found before we started making downloads available. We'd write a fantastic page. We could tell it was good because it attracted traffic.

Yet we'd also see that its bounce rate was nearly 94%. That didn't sound like a successful page to us. More importantly, it didn't look like a successful page to Google. The rankings dropped and so did the traffic.

The results.

Here's what happens when you make downloads available. One of [our top pages](#) has gathered 541 pageviews over the last three months. Those pageviews have generated 69 downloads. That's a 13% conversion rate just from the downloads that required nothing more than exporting the content into PDF format - content we'd already written.

The page's bounce rate has also come down to 85%, lower than the site average. An 85% bounce rate is still too high but that's another story.

Other tools.

This type of download is just one type of activity-generating tool you can add to your pages. It doesn't replace the importance of links to draw visitors from one part of your website to another.

It's also a great idea to use [image maps](#). They're not a standard feature on most websites but the capability is cheap to buy and it's easy to implement. They turn a static image into an interactive tool. People can get different information as they hover over different parts of the image. And when they click, they can watch videos, see pictures or be taken to other parts of the website. Most importantly, these interactions register as activity with Google.

A common piece of advice is to add videos to web pages. It's good advice. It's easy to add a video to a page. Once embedded, a video boosts both page activity (the visitor clicks to make the video play) and time-on-page.

The challenge with videos is making them. That takes time and a certain amount of equipment.

Other types of activity could be even more valuable to your sales process - conversions that get people to say who they are: gated content, subscription forms, webinar invitations, etc. But that's a subject for another day.

Why does activity matter?

Activity on a page matters because Google notices it.

You need three things for a page to rank highly in search results:

1. Good copy. If you're talking rubbish, no amount of optimisation will help you.
2. Reactions from visitors. Google assumes that human users are a better judge of page quality than its own bots. It's a rare moment of modesty. So if visitors interact with your page - if they click on the links and download the files - Google recognises that it's a good page. If you don't add links or downloads, you give Google nothing to notice.
3. Links from other websites (aka backlinks). Backlinks are good too but they're much harder to generate than actions. In fact, they're so hard and time-consuming we'd do a million tasks before we dedicated time to backlink generation. There are four truths about backlinks:
 - a. None of the techniques work anywhere near as well as their supporters suggest.
 - b. All techniques take far longer than you expect.
 - c. The best way to get backlinks is to drive traffic to your website, revealing your content to a wider audience.
 - d. If you have good copy, backlinks will grow organically over time.

Next steps

1. The DIY route. If you want to put downloads into action, you need:
 - a. A tool that adds downloads to your website. If you use WordPress you could use [one of these plugins](#). We don't use them ourselves because we have a custom download function.
 - b. A template for the Word versions of each page. We've included our template for this document. Feel free to use and abuse it as you like.
2. The Assisted route. If you don't have the time, people or system to do this yourself, well, that's what we're here for. Give us a call. We're surprisingly friendly.

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