0:00:00 Andrea Warner: Hello everyone! This is Andrea Warner with seobraintrust.com and we want to thank you all so much for being here today for a pretty special webinar. We want to make sure that everybody knows where the question box is. So go ahead and open it up and say hello and maybe tell us where you are calling in from, we would love to have that information. It’s just fun to see where you are in the world and on the line today we have got the co-founders of SEO BrainTrust. So Dan Thies, can you say hello?

0:00:26 Dan Thies: Hello everyone!

0:00:28 Andrea Warner: Alright, fantastic. So we are here today for a webinar with Joost de Valk from yoast.com and it’s called WordPress SEO and it pretty much doesn’t get better than this. Joost we are so happy to have you here today.

0:00:42 Joost de Valk: Well, thank you. Thank you for having me. It’s a pleasure. At least I hope it will be.

0:00:47 Dan Thies: Joost has saved me countless hours over the years because instead of having to explain how to do SEO with WordPress, I just tell them to read your site.

0:00:57 Joost de Valk: [laughter] Yeah. Well, keep doing that.

[laughter]

0:01:00 Andrea Warner: Joost is also the author of several WordPress plugins that I’ll just bet a lot of you already use and you are saying you’ve already got 2 million downloads for your WordPress SEO plugin?

0:01:11 Joost de Valk: No, 2 million users actually. I’ve got about 7...

0:01:14 Andrea Warner: Two million users, wow!

0:01:15 Joost de Valk: I’ve got about 7 million downloads across my plugins. My Google Analytics plugin is probably still the most popular one at two-and-a-half million or so, but
my WordPress SEO plugin which is relatively new is closing in fast. It's almost at a million now.

0:01:31 Andrea Warner: That is incredible. That is a lot of people in the world that you have helped. [laughter]

0:01:36 Joost de Valk: Yeah, it’s sort of weird sometimes.

0:01:39 Andrea Warner: Yeah, seriously when you think about it. Alright, well let’s go ahead and get into your presentation and if you have questions, go ahead and type full questions into the box--not just partial ones--and we will get to them maybe during, and hopefully afterwards we will take some questions as well too. Alright? So take it your way, Joost.

0:01:56 Joost de Valk: Absolutely. Okay. Well. Hi everyone. I am going to go through one of my several slide decks about this topic. If there is anything specifically that I am not addressing that you have questions about, do feel free to ask somewhere during the next couple of hours. Or minutes. For those of you who don’t know me, this is pretty much me. I studied Theology and International Business and Management which makes me into a marketeer. And I do a lot of coding and geeking. I’m not a nerd because I can actually talk, but other than that I am pretty much the stereotype, I guess. That’s my site if you haven’t seen it, and if you haven’t I strongly urge you to go there after this. And this is what I do. I’ve always been told by several friends in the SEO industry that it’s quite dangerous to show your rankings to a group of other SEOs, because they will try to take it from you. Well, I dare you all. [laughter]

0:03:17 Andrea Warner: Good luck, right?

0:03:20 Joost de Valk: I’ve been there for 4 years strong. I wish you all good luck. But... Yes, so that’s what I do an awful lot of. Of course I do an awful lot of other things as well, but they are not really relevant to what we are talking about today. This is what I wanted to touch upon. Some of it will be basic, some of it will be fairly advanced. Don’t fall asleep, that’s the only thing I can say. One of the things I find when I am talking to people about WordPress and SEO is that everyone seems to think that they can just keep on throwing out posts and never ever run into issues. Usually they’ll have like two categories in which they have two hundred posts each or two hundred categories with one post in each category. And that’s not the way to do it. A proper site, whether it is on WordPress or on any other sort of CMS, should have a bit of structure to it. And what I always say is that it should be like a pyramid. Which means that your homepage is the top of the pyramid and you slowly trickle down with your more important pages towards the top and your least important pages towards the bottom, but you have a structure which links to each other and makes it into one really solid structure. You’ll hear me say that word an awful lot of times because I just think it’s the basis of SEO that a lot of people forget.
So the way to do structuring WordPress is taxonomies. These are either categories or tags or custom taxonomies and there is an awful lot of power in that that not a whole lot of people use. It's these tiny boxes on the right hand side when you are writing a post that are really, really actually very important. So if you have a category page and you are thinking about how to categorize your content, I always tell people to pick like between five and eight different categories for the blog posts and then try and make those a bit generic. So for my blog they are WordPress, SEO, analytics, stuff like that. As soon as you’ve got that covered, you can then do the fine-tuning with, for instance, tags. So I have specific tags for stuff like WordPress hosting or WordPress plugins, but those are specifically not categories, they are tags which I use to make a more granular sort of structure. I don’t care whether you do it that way or you find another system with categories and subcategories or whatever, as long as you think about it and do it all the way through across your site. It really doesn’t matter which strategy you pick here as long as you pick one and make sure you use it everywhere.

I can't stress the power of custom taxonomies enough. It really, really is a very cool tool to do very cool things. I work with a couple of pretty big newspapers that are in the process of switching to WordPress and when you add taxonomies, for instance people, the power you get... If you consider a blog that would write about... Or a news site that would write about politics, they normally have categories about it for all sorts of topics like economics or foreign policy, etcetera. And then add a taxonomy that says just people and that makes them link stuff to, for instance, all stuff about Obama or all stuff about whatever that weird Republican candidate is that thinks a whole lot of weird things about Holland.

Okay, now you have me wondering, which one is that?

That is... Come on, Santorum? The guys who thinks... He said all sorts of things about us basically killing people without asking their consent.

Well, yeah, we think he is weird too. Sorry to get you off track. Go ahead.

No, that is okay. Just wanted to tell everyone that that's not actually true what he said. Anyway, if you make taxonomies like that for people and for places and for other stuff, then you can create the most cool pages after that. It's very, very easy to suddenly make a people archive where you have all the news about a certain person, and enhance that a bit with other data you have in your WordPress database. If you do that well, you got a ridiculously easy system to create pages that will rank for person names and for all sorts of things that actually carry a lot of traffic. If you do that on a TMZ or any other gossip blog, you'd start ranking for stuff like Britney Spears, you'd suddenly notice that there's a certain difference in traffic between some keywords. I've seen one site rank number five for Britney Spears for a while and I thought I had seen traffic. But number five for Britney Spears was scary. So, if you think about stuff like that, then there is a whole lot of things you can do with custom taxonomies.
0:09:14 Joost de Valk: To show you, this is my front page where you see posts, but I also have several custom post types with their own custom taxonomies; plug-in reviews, WordPress best practices. And these actually also share some taxonomies. So I use tags across all of them. So, I have several post types, but I can tag them and using that I can share related WordPress best practices to post without any problem whatsoever. There's also a very, very cool plug-in if you are playing with this sort of stuff by Squidoo, it's called Posts 2 Posts, which makes it ridiculously easy to connect certain post types to each other without needing a taxonomy. So you can say, "Okay, I've got this company and these seven companies below it." And you can just relate them using that Posts 2 Posts interface. It is really, really cool. I might show that later on.

0:10:20 Leslie Rhodes: Actually that brings up a point. It would be really great to have a list of all these, a list of links.

0:10:29 Joost de Valk: I'll definitely. They're actually in my notes for this presentation. So, I'll send this presentation and the notes to that to Andrea.

0:10:38 Leslie Rhodes: Fantastic.

0:10:39 Joost de Valk: So, you'll get that. Yeah, there will be a lot of links. [chuckle] Especially as we will probably have more... Yeah, that one indeed that Dan has just posted into the proper link. So, to show you a bit of what you can do with these custom post types, because I don't think a lot of people are using those nicely. It is very easy to actually add custom fields and some custom taxonomies and make these have their own layout, which basically makes WordPress into a full-blown CMS. Before this, WordPress was a blogging system. Now it is a full-blown Content Management System that can basically do anything that Drupal can, but with a better user interface. You can hear I am a fan-boy, right?

0:11:36 Joost de Valk: One of the things people ask me about a lot is my WordPress SEO plugin has breadcrumbs in them. People will ask me, "Why is that? That is not related to SEO, is it?" And I am like, "Yeah, it is." It's probably more related than most people dare to think. It creates a structure that makes it really easy for Google to understand your website if used well. So if you... And you might...

0:12:03 Dan Thies: Looks nice on the search results.

0:12:05 Joost de Valk: Sorry?

0:12:06 Dan Thies: Sure looks nice on the search result pages.

0:12:09 Joost de Valk: To be honest, that's the only thing I have against it. Let me show you. I think you can all see my screen now, right? So if you see my result here, you see the articles here, right? If I didn't have breadcrumbs, I'd have an extra bullet there. And in most of my testing, that actually increased click-through more than this did.
0:12:42 Leslie Rohde: Now wait, say that over again. If you did not have breadcrumbs, what would you have instead?

0:12:47 Joost de Valk: It would show the full URL.

0:12:49 Leslie Rohde: Oh, yes, yes...

0:12:51 Joost de Valk: And it would bold...

0:12:52 Dan Thies: The keywords did it.

0:12:53 Joost de Valk: It would WordPress SEO in the URL.

0:12:57 Leslie Rohde: Yeah, now I'm following you. Yup, that's true.

0:12:59 Joost de Valk: And you're missing that now, by what has changed. The thing is that the value of that went away a bit when I got my author highlight; this thing here. But, to be honest, I don't think most people will get an author highlight.

0:13:16 Leslie Rohde: But it's not clear to me your breadcrumbs are what are creating the breadcrumbs there at Google, frankly. Because we see them on pages of search results, where there's no breadcrumb on the indexed page, but the breadcrumb's created at Google.

0:13:32 Joost de Valk: Yeah, they do all sorts of weird things at the moment to your results that makes me mad. That's one of them.

0:13:40 Leslie Rohde: Yeah, we're with you there. Changing title tags, that's my favorite. But anyway... [chuckle]

0:13:46 Joost de Valk: Exactly. Well, the funny thing is when you have an SEO plug-in like I do, and people write crappy titles, and Google starts changing these titles for them, because they're crappy. And then they start emailing me that, "My plug-in doesn't work," because their title tags aren't showing up.

0:14:08 Dan Thies: Yeah. Oh well...

0:14:10 Joost de Valk: Try explaining to someone who is not that proficient in SEO and hasn't read all the latest blog posts what is actually happening.

0:14:20 Leslie Rohde: Do we have any experience doing that, Dan? Yeah, okay, never mind. [chuckle]

0:14:27 Joost de Valk: Yeah, it's painful. That's the sort of thing that makes me mad and the funny thing is that these author highlights also come and go. It's like every other week, they
have a bug where they won't show for a couple days. And they actually do invite traffic quite a bit, so I notice immediately.

0:14:52 Leslie Rohde: So you are finding when your picture is there, your traffic does go up?

0:14:56 Joost de Valk: Yeah, absolutely. By about 20 to 30 percent.

0:14:59 Leslie Rohde: Okay, yeah that's about...

0:15:00 Dan Thies: Hey, while you're on Google, why don't you do a quick search for rel="author".

[pause]

0:15:11 Joost de Valk: You mean the one where I outrank Google? [chuckle]

0:15:14 Leslie Rohde: Out-ranking Google.

0:15:17 Dan Thies: Well, yeah, as you should of course, but you know...

0:15:20 Joost de Valk: Well, the thing is, I'll be totally honest. I know why I outrank them, because they link to me here.

0:15:29 Leslie Rohde: Well, also you're logged in. I'm not sure I'd get the same result.

0:15:33 Joost de Valk: You would.

0:15:36 Leslie Rohde: Could be. I mean, I'm not saying...

0:15:37 Dan Thies: Well, Google's FAQ actually links to Yoast. That's...

0:15:40 Joost de Valk: Yeah.

0:15:40 Dan Thies: Froogle launched, Google product search now, I outranked them now for about two months because they were linking to me from their press section. [chuckle] Eventually they removed that link.

0:15:55 Joost de Valk: The funny thing is that Google has been better at this sort of stuff. They reach out to me every once in a while to help them before they release stuff like this to see whether this could be implemented in WordPress Core. So for rel="author" I did some changes to WordPress Core in 3.2 where with the rel="author" is automatically added to author links. So if you have an author link on a blog that links to your post page on that blog, it will automatically have rel="author" now, if you do it in the correct way. And they actually do actively reach out to some people to get certain stuff like that fixed just in Core,
so they don't have to explain to everyone.

0:16:47 Leslie Rohde: That's good, that's good.

0:16:48 Joost de Valk: Which makes sense.

0:16:49 Leslie Rohde: So, now that's going to be... I mean, we just updated a 3.3.1, I guess is the current version. So that's going to be in Core for that release?

0:16:56 Joost de Valk: No, I think that was in Core 3.2, yeah.

0:16:59 Leslie Rohde: Okay, good.

0:17:01 Joost de Valk: So, that doesn’t mean that you immediately have these author highlights because that takes a bit more work. There's a few things, you need the rel="author" from your post pages to your author page on your blog. Then your author page on your blog should link to your Google Plus profile and vice versa. And to make it even harder, the link from your blog to your Google Plus page should have rel="me" on it.

0:17:33 Leslie Rohde: Yeah, we've been around this several times.

0:17:35 Dan Thies: We've covered that in a webinar just a couple months ago.

0:17:38 Joost de Valk: Yeah, it's painful. And then people say, "Yeah, I've done all that right," and you look at their Google Plus profile and their 1's aren't public. And if those aren't public, you won't get the author highlights, stupid stuff like that. And nobody can explain why it is that it works like that. Anyway, so I think breadcrumbs are very important, and in most cases I'll add them to any blog that I work on. And usually linking... It's very easy to set up in my blog and there's a couple of other plug-ins as well that do these. But usually linking not just to the homepage from your blog post, but also to the categories. So your category pages get strengthened. Because if you do well, and you have... You picture categories correctly, actually ranking with your category page is usually a very, very good strategy, if trying to rank for the harder keywords.

0:18:39 Joost de Valk: As soon as you do that though, you should make sure that you don't suffer from double-vision and use stuff in a double way. I do a lot of website reviews and almost always encounter people having a category... Well, for instance, a category analytics and the tag analytics, and every post would have both the category and the tag. Meaning that those archive pages for that category and the tag would be identical and of absolutely no use. So, make sure that you pick a correct strategy for that, and don’t do a double and you'd have a lot more fun that way.

0:19:24 Joost de Valk: This is a painful topic for a lot of people; permalink structure in WordPress, because up until 3.3 having post-name as a permalink structure wasn't recommended, because of performance. I always said "Bullshit, just get a better server and
still do it." But luckily they fixed it. And now in 3.3 it actually doesn’t have any performance penalties anymore. So everyone should just use post-name or category post-name. There’s really no reason to have a date URLs in 99% of the cases. I don’t know a lot of you guys have strong opinions on that, Leslie and Dan.

0:20:06 Dan Thies: We strongly agree.

0:20:07 Leslie Rohde: Yeah, we strongly... Yeah, I don’t think I’ve ever used anything except post-name. Yeah, screw the machine.

0:20:13 Joost de Valk: Yeah. It’s... But the thing is before 3.3 if you had a lot of pages, then this will become very painful because of how the Core was done internally but luckily they’ve fixed that. I have to say that performance wise for stuff like that WordPress has been improving fairly rapidly over the last three, four releases. Core team is doing a quite good job of fixing that.

0:20:40 Joost de Valk: One of the things that's on the slide for one of the future releases to get fixed in Core, but that you need a plug-in for now, is proper pagination. By default all WordPress themes, etcetera, will link to either previous page and the next page, which is kind of painful if you have lots of posts. So you need something that creates a look and feel like this, which technically for those a bit more technically inclined is a B-tree. Basically a method whereby each page is as close by as possible, and so you can go through each page in least number of clicks. I use WP-PageNavi. There are a couple of other ones that are quite okay, but makes sure that you have proper pagination on each category or other archive within your site, because otherwise it’s just... You’re gonna send Google down a dead-end street basically.

0:21:23 Andrea Warner: Okay, one more time, that was WP-PageNavi? Is that what it’s called?

0:21:48 Joost de Valk: Yeah, I’ll type it out for yeah, if I can find my mouse.

0:21:57 Andrea Warner: Remember guys, you don’t have to worry too much about these because we’ll include all these links when we post to everybody.

0:22:02 Joost de Valk: Yeah, but if you want to Google it, that's it. A while back Google introduced rel="next" and rel="prev", and that should help Google with these types of paginations. That is not in Core yet, but will be in Core in 3.4 if I get my way. But it is... As soon as you enable my Word Processor plug-in, that gets done correctly by default. There's not even an option to disable it, because I’ve been cutting down on options in my plug-ins. So it does a lot of stuff like that automatically without you needing to do anything.

0:22:48 Joost de Valk: And then we get to the most painful of things in regards to nine out of 10 WordPress themes. Because while WordPress itself is fairly search engine friendly, most WordPress themes are just pure crap.
0:23:06 Andrea Warner: Is that really true?

0:23:07 Joost de Valk: Yes.

0:23:07 Andrea Warner: Is that really true, most of them are crap? Okay, good to know.

0:23:11 Dan Thies: Yeah, most of everything in any endeavor is crap, so. [laughter]

0:23:16 Joost de Valk: Yeah, let me be honest. There are... The few big names out there are reasonably okay. So, Genesis is quite good. Thesis and what it puts out in HTML wise etcetera is quite good. I hate how it works internally, but that's just the developer's annoyance. WooThemes is a bit more... Has a bit more stuff in there that shouldn't be there in my opinion, but as most WooThemes themes tend to be quite okay. So, if you pick over these big names, then you're usually quite okay. But there is a lot of optimization to be done in most cases. You see what I'd like to see is a structure, as I show here, where the content of a page is on top, and then you get related post, and then you get your main navigation and your utilities, in that order in the HTML. Whether you show that way on screen is not really any of my concern, but this is what I would prefer in the HTML. And there are hardly any themes that do this well.

0:24:01 Leslie Rohde: What are you referring to as utilities in that... Is that side bars or what do we...

0:24:37 Joost de Valk: Yeah, and disclaimers, privacy policies, stuff.


0:24:43 Joost de Valk: Yeah. A lot of these themes tend to now have two navigation's on the top, so you have your main navigation and then a navigation with like contact, hire me and some other stuff in the header, linking to the sitemap as well, etc. And because most people build a WordPress themes and these links are in the top of your page as well, which is annoyance.

0:25:08 Leslie Rohde: Yup. True.

0:25:10 Joost de Valk: Actually, if those menus have dropdowns, some people seem to think that 50-menu item is quite okay. And I don't think it's okay. If you have a main menu with five items, it's not really an issue. But if you have a dropdown menu with five main items and five to ten items underneath each in a dropdown, that basically means 50 links before the search engine has even seen your content. And that's just an issue in some cases. Once you get stuff like that done, then you usually find out that you've slowed down your WordPress and so on. We have a need for speed as users but Google has been showing a need for speed lately as well. And if you've ever encountered ranking number 3 for a certain term and then suddenly dropping to number 5 because it's a very hard equilibrium
to keep and because these other two sites below you are just a tad bit faster--and yes, that has happened to me several times--then you just need to make sure that your site is as fast as possible.

0:26:40 Joost de Valk: Now Google has a Google...Google Page Speed, made it incredibly easy to test what you can do to speed up your site. And there's a lot of documentation in how you can do all that. But for most people that's way too geeky. Luckily, there's a plugin called W3 Total Cache by my good friend Frederick that can take care of all of these for you. The only slight issue with this as well is that it has a lot of options that you need to figure your way around. And yes, that has happened to me several times--then you just need to make sure that your site is as fast as possible.

0:27:31 Joost de Valk: I combine that with a couple of other things. It's a very simple plugin called Use Google Libraries which will automatically load jQuery and all the other JavaScript libraries that Google has on its own CDN, from Google's CDN instead of from your site. So the only thing you have to do is install and activate the plugin. There's no settings or whatever. You just do that and it runs. And it will automatically load jQuery from Google instead of from your server. It might not seem like a whole lot but because it does that, if a lot of people start doing that and more--and more people are starting to do that--then people might already have jQuery in their cache when they visit your site. And since jQuery is about 170k and often it's like 1/3 or 1/4 of the entire page download, that might actually speed up your site tremendously for them. Plus it has the benefit of you not having to pay for the bandwidth of loading jQuery.

0:28:42 Andrea Warner: Most of the people on this call are pretty technical and they follow this, but I'm getting a few 'what's on this one?' Is it possible to explain this one in plain English?

0:28:52 Joost de Valk: Absolutely. Let me grab my browser and show you what happens.

0:29:00 Leslie Rohde: Ask her what jQuery is.

0:29:02 Joost de Valk: jQuery is a JavaScript library that is used to perform almost all the functionality in your browser that is made without reloading the page. So if you can slide something around in your WordPress backend or if you have a slider on your front page, stuff like that, it's usually built with jQuery when using WordPress.

0:29:32 Leslie Rohde: There are a lot of themes that depend on jQuery.

0:29:34 Joost de Valk: Yeah. Most, if not all themes load jQuery at some point. jQuery is the default in WordPress core, so that's why most themes use jQuery as well. There are other libraries as well. But for WordPress actually...jQuery is the way to go. This is a file. Let me just see if I actually loaded it myself. I think I did somewhere. So it's a file that looks like this, which doesn't say anything to you and doesn't have to, but it's fairly big as you can see. I mean, this is quite compressed, but it's still a fairly big chunk of functionality. So if you load
that from your own server you’re actually loading a lot of content extra on each page that could be coming from another way faster server being Google’s.

0:30:35 **Dan Thies**: Because it's loading from a different domain it's actually opening an additional connection in your browser, so it’s not limited by four connections or whatever your browser is doing.

0:30:46 **Joost de Valk**: Your browser can only open eight connections, usually only open eight connections at the same time to any server. But if you use a couple of servers it can open more connections than that. So there are several ways that you can use that. You can use that for stuff like this. You can also use that for a so-called Content Delivery Network for your images. So you can load images and CSS and other stuff from another server where your main HTML is coming from. Was that enough, Andrea, or are you're still getting oh’s and ah’s?

0:31:22 **Andrea Warner**: One other question that's kind of tied to all of this, what's a good load speed to shoot for? What's our aiming at?

0:31:29 **Joost de Valk**: Under 2 seconds.

0:31:31 **Leslie Rohde**: Zero, if you can do it.

0:31:34 **Joost de Valk**: Yeah, zero is great. But if you can do it under 2 seconds that is something you should probably aim for. And you should also note that this really depends on your download speed. So you should be a bit... I mean under 2 seconds on my connection could still be a 2 megabyte front page. You need to think a bit about people on slower connections, and Google actually show you on Google Webmaster Tools whether the things in your site are slower or faster than anyone else. Let me show you now for my own domain, which is scary because it’s actually slower than it should be.

0:32:22 **Leslie Rohde**: Well, the other thing is to use something like YSlow and look at where the speed is being limited by, is it really the size of the downloads or is it the response time of the server, or the total number of HTTP connections and that kind of thing. And so a lot of those things you can optimize a way and for the exactly the same total download if you just rearrange things or package up the code differently, you can reduce the observed page load time.

0:32:50 **Joost de Valk**: Yeah. So if you go to Google Webmaster Tools, and if you don’t have a Google Webmaster Tools account for your site, shame on you; get one as soon as possible. If you go to Google Webmaster Tools and then to the Labs and there’s a Site Performance tab here, where you can see that and what it actually tells you. Google always this line at about a second and a half. You can actually see my site loads at about four to five seconds. What they do here is they take a sample of people using the Google toolbar that come to your website. And so they take about a thousand visitors that come to your website that use the Google Toolbar and they send back to download speed or the load time for that
page, and then use that to make this graph. As you can see my homepage I've worked a bit on and it's actually 1.9, but the other pages on my site that are a bit heavier have a bit more issues. So you can look at that and play with that. And it's actually one of the things that will not only help a bit in ranking--so it's really not that important in most cases--but it's also a tremendous improve of conversions for most people and average pages views per visit.

0:34:15 Dan Thies: Talking about speed it's... Okay, SEO yeah. Sure it might help you, but it's gonna help you with conversion anyway. So go faster.

0:34:22 Joost de Valk: Yeah. And the amount of page views you can get from stuff like that just by making your site quicker because people have to wait less, it's just very very useful.

0:34:36 Dan Thies: Yeah, we're working on a hack that we're getting ready to release with our members and test out to do some page load time sampling with JavaScript and then stuff it into Google Analytics as a custom variable, because the page speed data in Google Analytics doesn't give you any idea of the impact on performance. So we're hoping to get a whole mountain of data on what the curve looks like in terms of improving conversion as you go faster for different types of sites.

0:34:36 Joost de Valk: Yeah. That's pretty cool. You could do a lot of cool things with that. One of the things... I don't know whether you people use my Google Analytics WordPress plugin, and one of the things I'm actually adding to that in the coming week is a change where you can set the sample rate for the page speed stuff in Google Analytics. Because by default Google will measure the page speed, with Google Analytics, with 1 out of every 100 visitors. If you don't have that many visitors yet, then that actually might be a very low threshold. So you wouldn't have any data.

0:35:43 Joost de Valk: Another plugin that I can't recommend enough to people is WP Smush.it. It's very very simple. You install it and what it will do is it will automatically, when you upload any image, it will reduce that image in size by running it through the Smush.it API. Smush.it is a service that will take all of the data in there, like photo data and all other stuff that doesn't need to be there, will take that out of it, and it will make the image smaller without losing any quality. So you'll get smaller images, in some cases up to like 30, 40%, without losing any image quality.

0:36:31 Leslie Rohde: It just does everything that's in wp-content then? Everything in the...

0:36:35 Joost de Valk: No, it will only do it for new uploaded files. You can smush old files with it as well. There's an admin interface for that.

0:36:43 Leslie Rohde: Got it. Got it.

0:36:44 Joost de Valk: So it will show up and what you see here is what you would see in your media library.
0:36:51 Leslie Rohde: Right.

0:36:54 Joost de Valk: Then we all have these days, these social buttons. And you can try and make your site as fast as possible. If you load Facebook the wrong way, then your site will be slow as hell. And I say that while loving Facebook for everything it is, but it’s like both Facebook and Twitter are incredible performance hogs. It is actually very easy to... Or it's fairly easy to load these things differently, so they don’t affect your page load time as much. What I tend to go for is make them load as soon as possible, but after the visitor has been able to start reading. So make sure your content loads first and shows up first properly and then start loading stuff like this. There’s a very good post by Frederick who wrote W3 Total Cache as well, about how to optimize these buttons. I'll add a link to that in the notes later on.

0:38:03 Andrea Warner: That sounds great. Thank you for that.

0:38:07 Joost de Valk: Then there’s a couple ways of testing. Next to Google Page Speed, you can also use this tools.pingdom.com. They actually have a new design for it right now. This is an old screenshot. But it shows you in a waterfall model which types of files you're downloading and how these are dropping into your browser, where you can really see like, "Okay, these files are very large and these are causing issues". As you can see here, I'm actually... On this page SpriteMe--which is the tool on my next slide--it actually has a lot of small images that it's downloading, and there's a way of getting around that. The thing is, a small image in itself isn't bad. If you have a lot of small images, your browser has to open a connection to your server every time, which makes it slow. So what we try to do is combine these into things called sprites. And SpriteMe is a ridiculously easy tool that will actually make these sprites for you and will tell you how to do this in CSS.

0:39:21 Leslie Rohde: That's awesome.

0:39:22 Joost de Valk: It's a tool by Steve Souders who works for Google. And yeah, this has saved me so many hours of coding. So you can just play around with these and combine them, make them into a sprite. It will give you both the image and the CSS changes that you need to make. And then you can then combine eight or 10 or even 25 small images on your site into one big image that gets loaded a lot faster. Now it's very easy to go overboard with this. So if you have a lot of images on your site to make one sprite for everything. But what you will get then is that you'll have a white page when it's loading up for a while and then suddenly, boom, all the images will be there, which is not really the intended behavior. So in that case it's usually a better idea to turn them into a couple of sprites instead of just one big one. So much for performance now. If there are any questions about performance, I'd love to answer them now or later on. But I'm gonna go into the next section. So I don't know if you have any right now, Andrea?

0:40:38 Andrea Warner: Let's keep going unless Dan or Leslie they have one right here.

0:40:42 Joost de Valk: Perfect. Okay. So we've got content. We've gotten pretty quick at
serving it to Google and to our visitors. Now we actually want to tell Google where all that stuff is. So there’s two ways of doing that. One is waiting for Google to discover it, which really isn’t a bad method at all. But, especially if you’re blogging and you want to be a bit quicker about what people are searching for, you want to respond to that, then you need to feed Google a bit more about that stuff. There’s two ways, and funnily enough, Google is very, very good with RSS feeds. So, whatever you do with XML sitemaps, which I’ll talk about after this, you really, really should make sure that your RSS feed is submitted as a sitemap in Google Webmaster Tools. It’s really easy. You just go into Webmaster Tools, you add /feed to your sitemaps, and it will pick that up so fast that it will scare you at times.

**0:42:00 Joost de Valk:** I know that I can now do a new blog post on my blog and search for my own content within thirty seconds. And that is a sort of thing that we couldn’t have done 2, 3 years ago. And it will take a bit more time if it’s using XML sitemaps. So, RSS feeds are really good for that because they’re usually quite small and easy to pick up. XML sitemaps are a better way of showing Google all the content that is on your site. In my WordPress SEO plugin there is actually a thing that will create these for you. As you can see, it creates an index sitemap and then creates sitemap per post type and per taxonomy, to keep them small and make it easier for Google to pick up the right ones. Especially as you can see it has a last modified date for each and every one of them, which means that Google isn’t going to pick up XML sitemaps that actually haven’t changed.

**0:43:03 Joost de Valk:** Recently, Google changed the design of how that looks in Google Webmaster Tools which I was very happy with. Because what I do in my plugin is that I add images and URLs. So you’ll see, for instance, from my post site that there are 675 URLs in there, and it has indexed 673 of those. But you’ll also see that there are 455 images in my XML sitemap. Now, the indexed numbers for images are weird. I’ve never seen those to be correct anywhere, but it’s good to know that thing in all of my XML sitemaps might contain both. So, if there are images in your post that will try to automatically add those to your XML sitemap to increase your visibility in Google Image Search as well. That kind of works wonders for people who have a lot of good images and good ALT tags etcetera for those images.

**0:44:08 Leslie Rohde:** Now are you finding that 37 that is not the real number, that in fact...

**0:44:12 Joost de Valk:** No, there are way more.

**0:44:13 Leslie Rohde:** Way more? Yeah, one wonders why they are reporting such a low number then.

**0:44:18 Joost de Valk:** My guess is because they don’t know.

**0:44:20 Leslie Rohde:** Yeah, that would be... That would be my guess, too. [chuckle]

**0:44:25 Joost de Valk:** It’s just that image search is sometimes a bit weird. So, it might be that these 37 are the ones shown in universal. I honestly don’t know. It’s just that I know
that there are more because they get traffic for more.

0:44:44 Leslie Rohde: Right. Right.

0:44:46 Joost de Valk: So, its... But that’s... I’m happy that they show it like this. A while back it would say just URLs, and it would call every sitemap that had images in them, an images sitemap. So, I would get emails like, "I don’t want the images sitemap. I want the normal URL sitemap." Yeah, those are in there as well but Google doesn’t know how to show you that. So that... And I’m very happy that they changed the design of this.

0:45:17 Dan Thies: It’s good that you’re doing tech support for Google’s Webmaster Tools, Joost. That’s nice of you. [chuckle]

0:45:22 Joost de Valk: I end up doing that an awful lot. And they know that, luckily. So they help me out every once in a while, as well. But yeah, I end up doing stuff like that an awful lot. The same goes for Bing, but not a whole lot of people use Bing Webmaster Tools, unfortunately, because it actually works quite good. And... But, yeah. In the next release of my WordPress SEO plugin will also be support for Yandex. I don’t know if there’s anyone optimizing for Russia here, but Yandex actually has a Webmaster Tools as well that are quite good. And recently, I was hacked yoast.com and Yandex caught it before Google and Bing did. And I got an email from Yandex Webmaster Tools saying this and this page has been hacked, or has spam on it. The because of that was a hack. They actually alluded to that in an email. So, yeah, these Webmaster Tools from Bing, from Google, from Yandex, they’re all pretty cool. And I think that if you’re quite serious about your site, you should probably use all of them.

0:46:33 Dan Thies: Okay, there's one question that keeps getting asked, so do you mind if I ask that now?

0:46:38 Joost de Valk: No. Go ahead.

0:46:39 Dan Thies: Okay. Jerry, for example is saying, so should we add both XML sitemaps and feed to Webmaster Tools?

0:46:47 Joost de Valk: Yes.

0:46:49 Dan Thies: Okay. And then how about video sitemaps, are they necessary?

0:46:53 Joost de Valk: Yeah, they're awesomely cool. Let me show you something that... I'm working on a video sitemap module for my WordPress SEO plugin, that I’m testing right now. And as you can see it works. It works so well that I get to rank with the image of Matt Cutts in the search results, which is awesomely funny. Especially when Matt Cutts sometimes opens up a screen on a conference and people see that sort of stuff, it’s really funny. Yeah, video sitemaps are really cool. You should combine them with a couple of other things. So, if you do video you should also do Facebook, Open Graph tags on your
video page to make sure that Google properly recognizes the video, as well. Google will actually recognize the Facebook video tags and use those for indexing. But video sitemaps are very, very, very powerful. It's very easy to rank with a video these days, way easier than to rank with a normal page.

0:48:06 Dan Thies: Joost, have you found a good video player plugin that handles HTML5 video for the iDevices and creates the video site maps. We’ve been using one called a S3 Flow Shield off and on, that creates the video site map, but they haven't got the HTML5 video support in yet.

0:48:24 Joost de Valk: No. To be honest, what I built for myself basically uses all the bigger video platforms. So you just do a Vimeo on that, you don’t need any other plugin than that, and it will do it automatically. And since Vimeo does HTML5 correctly in most cases I think, that should solve it.

0:48:48 Dan Thies: Beautiful. Thank you.

0:48:50 Joost de Valk: It should be released probably somewhere around the end of next month; it needs a bit more testing. So I’ve talked about my own plugins a bit already also, I’ll about them a bit more but to be honest, the biggest thing with plugins these days is one thing, it's called preventing malice. There are so many crappy plugins out there that got people hacked every time that I’d thought it would be wise to quickly show you what you should be looking for when you’re installing your plugins. So this is basic WordPress.org landing page and there is a couple of things that you should take note of before installing a plugin. First of all is the number of ratings. If it has only one rating, the chance of it being a good plugin is close to zero. The same goes for when the last updated date is more than six months ago, or when the change log which should be in the menu there isn't there or hasn't been updated. It's simple stuff like that that can show you whether the plugin author actually gives a shit and if they don't, then you probably shouldn’t be running their code in your site.

0:50:20 Joost de Valk: We, as the WordPress.org people--tough I don’t work for them but I do a lot of work with a lot of these people--plugins get disabled on WordPress.org fairly regularly for being very easy to hack into. So you should be aware that when you add a plugin, you're adding code that hasn't been tested by as many people as WordPress itself has been, and that is usually the vector of attack people choose when they want to hack your blog. I say as someone who gets hacked twice a month regardless of which plugins I run, probably because people just like hacking me, but getting hacked with WordPress is a serious issue. And so you should make sure that you take some precaution when installing plugins. So there's one plugin you should of course install [chuckle] which is my WordPress SEO plugin. And not because of all the fancy stuff I talked about before but mostly because of this.

0:51:38 Dan Thies: Beautiful Joost, you're my hero for that. It's a good preview. I'll thank you forever for that.
0:51:46 **Joost de Valk:** I actually didn't come up with that. I think it was SEMOFO who created the first one in the web...

0:51:52 **Dan Thies:** Yeah, I'm just building these things by hand and content management systems with JavaScript for almost 10 years, but to see it just, I can just click and install is awesome.

0:52:02 **Joost de Valk:** Yeah. You will see there's a small bug in this screenshot. I took this this afternoon and it's limiting my meta description because it's a video snippet, when it's not a video snippet. So there's a small bug in my own code right now in my own site. But yeah, this should help you tremendously in creating content. This, and the next feature which is the page analysis, which should help you to do things that are usually considered... Well, important for a good SEO. I should note that the keyword density is in there. I don't care about keyword density all that much which is why it goes green at like, I think at 0.9%. I just want to make sure that if you have a focus this keyword which you enter in your...

0:53:03 **Dan Thies:** Should use it on the page? [laughter]

0:53:05 **Joost de Valk:** You should actually use it, yeah. Yeah so I don’t... And the funny thing is I've had a couple of people e-mail me because when your keyword density is over 5% and it goes red and starts saying that that is an issue, people e-mail me, "I've always been taught that 8% was a good keyword density," no it's not. So that's why it turns red, it's because I have an opinion.

0:53:32 **Leslie Rohde:** Eight per cent may have actually been okay when a normal page size is about 2000 words, but now our pages are 10, 12, 15,000 words when you include all the stuff on them. And so 8% of 15,000, that would be stuffing.

0:53:51 **Joost de Valk:** And even 8% of 200... Because it just counts the words in your article...

0:53:56 **Leslie Rohde:** I know. Yeah, it never really made a lot of sense but I mean it's a reasonable...

0:53:59 **Joost de Valk:** Well, the funny thing is, if you did it in the past before, it worked wonders.

0:54:04 **Leslie Rohde:** Yeah but that was Alta Vista... [chuckle]

0:54:07 **Joost de Valk:** Yeah. That's when we used to double cloak our content.

0:54:13 **Dan Thies:** Yes, yes.

0:54:15 **Joost de Valk:** One with the real stuff for search engines and one with the malice
that we wanted to spread to our competitors who were scraping us. Yeah. That’s for us oldies. For all new people in the industry shouldn’t really care about stuff like that. The thing is, I can't stress enough that you should be using this for each and every post you write and that you should be teaching your editors to use this. This is why I wrote the plugin in the first place. I want people to write better content. This is in use on Search Engine Land and on Mashable and on The Next Web and all these site we've seen quite a considerable uptake in traffic for new posts as compared to old posts. So this question I get an awful lot. I've been using All-in-one, All-in-one SEO, and I want to switch to WordPress SEO, what do I do?

0:55:16 Joost de Valk: Well you do two things. You install WordPress SEO, you disable All-in-one SEO, and then you go to the import section in my WordPress SEO plugin and you import. It is as easy that and then you're done. If you are using any of the other SEO plugins or themes or anything else then... Nathan Rise who works for Studio Press who built Genesis, has build a plugin called SEO Data Transporter that helps you migrate data from one plugin to another from a theme to a plugin or wherever you go. This data being your meta descriptions, your specific SEO titles, stuff like that. And it will help you move those from one to the other without any issue. I think he can't be commended enough for building something like that when you're one of the people... Building a theme that has this sort of functionality in it should actually make it easy for people to get away for the your stuff as well. So I've done my fair share of contributions to that, to add more plugins, SEO Data Transporter comes highly recommended. As always links to this will be sent later on. And then there's my Google Analytics for WordPress plugin, which still is my most downloaded plugin and probably is one of the things I’ve... If you're using Google Analytics you should be using, because it makes it very easy to set all sorts of custom variables.

0:56:53 Dan Thies: Can I interrupt you real quick, Joost? Because I want to know one thing about SEO plugins. You know, the thing that I liked most about your SEO plugin when it came out was that it didn't do anything. That is, a lot of these SEO plugins that are still bumping around out there will throw noindex and nofollow on tag pages and category pages, all kinds of stuff that we consider worst practices for WordPress SEO. And these are pages you might actually wanted to get ranked, if you're doing your taxonomy right. If your structure is right those pages are good pages. But just so you understand, Joost's plugin doesn't do any SEO for you, because there isn’t any SEO to do for you. It's all about...

0:57:36 Joost de Valk: Well, there is some to be honest. There are a couple of things that I do now by default because I think that they just should be done. So I noindex your outbound pages, and I noindex your... 

0:57:54 Leslie Rohde: That's probably fair. [chuckle]

0:57:57 Joost de Valk: I noindex your log in and registration pages.

0:58:01 Leslie Rohde: I don't know. That has some good content on it.
0:58:04 Joost de Valk: And I do noindex search results by default as well.

0:58:11 Leslie Rohde: So pretty much all of the best practices that should be done.

0:58:14 Joost de Valk: Yeah. With that basically Google says that you should do, I do. And that’s what I try to do, but yeah I agree. The options are in there in my plugin to noindex specific taxonomies, but in most cases you shouldn’t. It’s just as there’s an option to my plugin to disable author archives entirely or to disable date archives entirely. That doesn’t mean that you should use them.

0:58:45 Dan Thies: The thing I like about this is it lets me do everything that I would want to do with SEO pretty much without having to go find another plugin. I can edit my robots text, I can do whatever I would want to do and I can do it all in one place. So anyway, I can't strongly enough recommend and endorse Joost's SEO plugin, but it's nowhere near as good as the Analytics plugin.

[laughter]

0:59:08 Joost de Valk: Yeah. So, Google Analytics for WordPress, just try it out and especially advance features if you a play bit with Google Analytics then you will see that there’s an awful lot of power hidden that most people don’t use. Stuff like setting a custom variable for an author of each post so you can easily see page views per author for your site, which could be very useful if you’re a multi-author site. Stuff like that is really cool. It does Page Speed tracking as well. We’ve talked about that before, I thought I’d mention it. Google has moved this to another position within the new Google Analytics interface. I get lost in that all the time. But yeah, it is important to look at these things. And with that I’m at the end of my presentation.

1:00:04 Dan Thies: Well, there’s one thing I want to call out about the WordPress analytics plugin and that is the... That you're now using the asynchronous method.

1:00:14 Joost de Valk: Yeah.

1:00:16 Dan Thies: Which is something that we've been telling people pretty much since it came out that they'd rather implement, but it hasn't always been the easiest thing to do in WordPress and now it's...

1:00:25 Joost de Valk: Could be painful, yeah.

1:00:26 Joost de Valk: With this plugin, you want it anyway to be able to set custom variables to see what the difference is between logged-in versus not logged-in users and all those kind of additional things that are... You have visitor variables set by default for Google for known returning users for example, but there are things that are specific to WordPress sites and Content Management Systems and community type sites that you would do with WordPress that Joost’s plugin lets you just check a box and it’s happening. The data's going
into Analytics and you don’t have to do anything else. So it’s just fantastic for a lot of the purposes that, the different things that we teach people to do, it’s all in one place.

1:01:05 Joost de Valk: Thanks. I’ll get all these endorsements and writing, right?

[chuckle]

1:01:11 Dan Thies: If you like.

1:01:11 Leslie Rohde: Yeah, we transcribe everything. So, yeah. It'll be there.

[chuckle]

1:01:16 Dan Thies: So, I have a question. Leslie and I had a question. Before we let any of the people who showed up to ask you questions, ask questions, we noticed that you're cutting down on the number of ads on your site. And this would be a good time, I guess, for us to disclose that, full disclosure... We’ve been paying Joost $300 a month for advertising and we're thinking about pumping it up to $500 to buy one of the four ad slots that you have now as opposed to eight. Probably the first thing we'll advertise is the replay of this webinar, because we should get great clickthrough that. [laughter] But, we... One of the first things that Leslie asked when I told him, "Hey, Joost is cutting down on the number of ads," he said, "Gosh. I wonder if that’s about Google’s page layout and excessive advertising." I couldn’t image that it would be, but actually it’s not, right? It’s about...

1:02:09 Joost de Valk: No, no it's not. It's basically about me getting a new design in a couple of weeks, if all goes well, and wanting to sell more of my own stuff and less of your stuff.

1:02:25 Leslie Rohde: It's really mercenary reasons.

[laughter]

1:02:28 Joost de Valk: Yeah. It's just to make money. I haven't been affected by any of those updates, luckily. To be honest, I find that the people I see affected by those--and I see a lot of bloggers that email me because they're affected by those--are mostly people running... Well, different ads than mine. Usually either very crappy affiliate ads or AdSense.

1:02:55 Dan Thies: Well, the funny thing is how we ended up advertising on your site. I think I was giving you a hard time on Twitter about one of the advertisers being kind of spammy.

1:03:04 Joost de Valk: Yeah.

1:03:05 Dan Thies: Kind of a blog network or something and you said, "Okay. I got rid of it. Hey, would you like to buy an ad?"
[laughter]

1:03:09 Joost de Valk: Yes.

1:03:12 Dan Thies: Gosh! Really? It's that cheap? You bet. No problem. That was an easy call.

1:03:16 Joost de Valk: Well, the funny thing is, it was making me fairly decent money. I mean... Yeah, it was making me okay money and I liked seeing what kind of people would want to advertise on my site. But in the end, I'm doing the blog and all the other things because A, I like doing it, and B, because it gets me clients. And if I miss one client because he sees too many ads on my site, then it's not worth it. And C, the kind of clients I do consulting for now are so big, that it, for me, it felt weird to have a lot advertising on my site when you are also taking paychecks from companies, like Facebook.

1:04:04 Dan Thies: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. I would imagine, that anybody that's running a news site or anything like that ought to at least be tempted to talk to you at this point. And it's... You may mention later, but you do this really cheaply right now.

1:04:25 Joost de Valk: Those are the website reviews. Yeah, those are pretty cheap. And they're cheap for a reason because I want to stay accessible to the normal public instead of just working for the big guys. So I work for eBay. I did some work for Tribune. I work for Facebook, companies like that. And I charged quite a hefty day rate. But I don't want to work for just those big companies because then I would only see a very small portion of the web.

1:05:01 Dan Thies: Yeah. You never really... You lose track of what's really going on.

1:05:06 Joost de Valk: If I've learned one thing as a corporate SEO is that you lose track of what's actually happening.

1:05:12 Leslie Rohde: Yeah. Speaking of what's happening, Andrea tells me that we have got, I think she said a ton of questions. I'm not sure how may, how much a question weighs. So...

1:05:23 Dan Thies: Probably three pounds...

1:05:24 Leslie Rohde: I'm not sure. Maybe longer questions weigh more. But we should probably actually see what the broader web, that's on this phone call at least, has to ask you about.

1:05:35 Joost de Valk: Yeah. Let's do that. Absolutely. I'm trying to see whether I can see those questions somewhere as well, but I think only Andrea can, right?
1:05:45 **Andrea Warner:** Yeah, let me give you...

1:05:49 **Leslie Rohde:** We just usually make her do that.

1:05:51 **Andrea Warner:** And just first, very quickly, thank you so much for that presentation. Wonderful information. And then there are so many questions. We could start now and I think we'd be here for two weeks, if we went nonstop. Anyway, there are some places on the screen that are ways to get a hold of Joost. And we have conversations like this a lot in SEO BrainTrust. Dan and Leslie are available on a weekly Q&A call, weekly coaching call and our members call in and talk with them and get their questions answered and if you want to find out more about us, we're at seobraintrust.com. Okay, let's start with this. This is kinda a fun one. Yoast.com is at the domain, Yoast.com without the www, which I think is set in Google Webmaster Tools. My question is, is that for SEO purposes?

1:06:39 **Joost de Valk:** No. It's just because I hate www.

1:06:44 **Dan Thies:** Hear, hear.

[laughter]

1:06:47 **Joost de Valk:** It's, yeah.

1:06:49 **Leslie Rohde:** What a dumb idea.

1:06:50 **Dan Thies:** It's kind of like flashing when you got the stick in. What are they for?

[laughter]

1:06:55 **Joost de Valk:** Yeah. So, you know, there's no real reason for that. To be honest, I do run a couple of other sites where I do have it because for several geo hosting options you actually need a www. So sometimes it's useful. For Yoast.com, I just don't need it, so I just don't add it.

1:07:17 **Andrea Warner:** Right, perfect. Alright, so there are several questions about S3. For example, Collette says, "What if you're using Amazon S3 to store all your images? Is it better to store on your server and then do the optimizing that you talked about?"

1:07:30 **Joost de Valk:** No. It's better to actually... It depends on which plugin you use to do the S3 stuff. But usually you can do the optimization before it goes to S3. I do have to say that S3 is by far, not the best Content Delivery Network out there. And a lot of people seem to think it's very cheap, and it is very cheap but a lot of CDNs out there are very cheap as well now.

1:08:00 **Dan Thies:** That's not even the best one Amazon offers?
1:08:02 **Joost de Valk:** No. S3 is quite okay if you're in the US, but it's a small wake up call to everyone listening who's in the US. I'm actually not US, I'm in Holland, in the Netherlands and a lot of your readers might be in Europe and S3 is horrible here. So...

1:08:23 **Leslie Rohde:** Now, in what perspective? In terms of the turnaround time, in terms of accessibility?

1:08:27 **Joost de Valk:** Yeah. So S3 has only one data center in Europe, and that's in Ireland. And Ireland doesn't have the best connections to the rest of Europe.

1:08:37 **Leslie Rohde:** Right, I don't think the British want them to have connection or something. But that's what I heard. [laughter]

1:08:42 **Andrea Warner:** Okay, what do you recommend then?

1:08:45 **Joost de Valk:** I use MaxCDN myself. I like them an awful lot and they're quite cheap as well. I think they're $25 for the first terabyte and most people will never get through their first terabyte.

1:09:00 **Andrea Warner:** MaxCDN, there you go guys. I put that in the chat for you.

1:09:04 **Joost de Valk:** Let me give you a very good link for that.

1:09:09 **Leslie Rohde:** Oh, here it comes.

[laughter]

1:09:15 **Joost de Valk:** Wait for it. Oh, it happens... You have to send it to everyone. Oh, I can't. [laughter]

1:09:21 **Andrea Warner:** Okay, I'll do that real quick.

1:09:23 **Leslie Rohde:** Your accomplice, Andrea, will do that for you.

[laughter]

1:09:27 **Andrea Warner:** It's so fun really.

1:09:28 **Joost de Valk:** Yeah. I like MaxCDN a lot. MaxCDN integrates very well a W3 Total Cache as well. So the combination is very cool.

1:09:38 **Andrea Warner:** Okay, great. Alright, you kind of... You gave me some good segues into a couple of your other questions. One of your fellow countrymen, Quincy, asked, "Do you recommend using a server that is closer to Google servers in the US rather than in the Netherlands?"
1:09:52 **Joost de Valk:** No, absolutely not. If you're in the Netherlands and your public is in the Netherlands, then your server should be in the Netherlands. It just depends on where the majority of your readers are. So my Yoast.com server is in Chicago, my Yoast.nl server is in Amsterdam.

1:10:15 **Dan Thies:** Remember, like Joost said, the speed sampling that Google is doing, they're using Google Toolbar users who are actually using your site. So, if your users are in the Netherlands and your host is in Netherlands and that makes you faster there, that's gonna help you. It's not about how long it takes Google to fetch your page.

1:10:34 **Joost de Valk:** Yeah, actually, I ran a host survey, a WordPress host survey, on my blog yesterday and I've had a lot of people answer that. And then I'm absolutely shocked by the number of Europeans running your blog that are catering towards a European audience from a US server. It's just ridiculous.

1:10:56 **Leslie Rohde:** Although, I think to some extent, I mean, I've bought hosting in both Europe and in the US and actually the US hosting is a lower price. However, that doesn't... That's not an excuse.

1:11:09 **Joost de Valk:** It used to be true in the past, but because most companies in the US now have servers in Amsterdam and London as well, most but not all of them, there's really no need to anymore.

1:11:21 **Leslie Rohde:** Well, I mean even Rackspace, I've used Rackspace in both Europe and in America.

1:11:26 **Joost de Valk:** Yeah.

1:11:27 **Leslie Rohde:** And their pricing is actually higher in Europe for European servers. But again, it's the real deal is what your conversion is going to be to your customers. So, that's not an excuse, I'm just saying that maybe that's what you're...

1:11:38 **Dan Thies:** Your hosting cost should be rounding error at the end of the day.

1:11:41 **Leslie Rohde:** It should be, yeah.

1:11:43 **Joost de Valk:** Absolutely. Yeah, if your hosting cost is not a rounding error, then you're doing it wrong. And that doesn't say, by the way, that you should always be on a $5 dollar a month hosting package, because most of those suck.

1:12:01 **Leslie Rohde:** No doubt.

1:12:02 **Andrea Warner:** Okay. All right. Next question. 'Is there any way to change future permalink structure without screwing up all the past posts?'
1:12:13 Joost de Valk: No, unfortunately not. It's one of my pet peeves. I would like for us to change out of WordPress Core at some point, but I'm not seeing that happening anytime soon. I recently did a post with that, a small tool to help you do redirect if you're coming from specific permalink structures, but yeah, it can be a bit painful.

1:12:40 Andrea Warner: Okay. Thank you. There's a kind of a general question, 'Any thoughts on WordPress for mobile and mobile search?'

1:12:48 Joost de Valk: Yeah, it's just as good as any other system, in that it doesn't have any specific things for it yet. And I don't think we'll have a lot of stuff in Core. There are more and more good WordPress themes that are actually responsive. So that it will load nicely on iPhones, etcetera. Especially StudioPress seems to be leading the way in doing that, in making really cool ones. So those would be Genesis-based themes. And there are a couple of plugins that have some things for, say, W3 Total Cache, for instance has a separate cache for mobile user agents. And for normal user agents, and I'm going to be adding a mobile XML sitemap option to my SEO plugin site. And once we have that, I don't think there are a lot of others CMSs out there that can actually beat that. So it just works. You have to be aware of who you want to reach and what are you really... You've done a lot of mobile when you design your site.

1:14:05 Andrea Warner: Okay. All right. Next question. 'Should we be dating our blog post? I've heard other SEO experts saying no. I want to date mine so the reader has a point of reference and knows that the post he's reading was written five years ago or five hours ago.'

1:14:22 Joost de Valk: I've said no... You shouldn't date them in the past. Unfortunately, Google has become a bit smarter at that recently. And so they'll show date on your blog post sometimes even when you don't have a date on your pages.

1:14:43 Leslie Rohde: Well, I like them dated. Oftentimes, I'm searching for something and I'd... Somebody says something is true and I got to know what version are they talking about. You run into that all the time.

1:14:53 Joost de Valk: It's true. It's at tactic to get more traffic sometimes, and not the very best of ones. I've gone back to actually dating all my posts, because I do agree that it's the best for the user. And funnily enough, we're talking more and more, talk with Google, and we think about the user first and about Google second.

1:15:20 Leslie Rohde: Yeah, that's the SEO prescription to Dan I've been teaching for a number of years, is that you don't want the talk to wag the dog, right?

1:15:30 Joost de Valk: No.

1:15:30 Leslie Rohde: So a ranking at number one that doesn't get any clicks or worse, gets
a bunch of clicks and doesn't make any money is not real SEO. That's pretend SEO or cocktail party SEO where you can brag about it but you're still living in a house trailer even though you have a bunch of number one listings. Better thing about being first.

1:15:51 Joost de Valk: Yeah, fully agree. I've been doing the same for years and I haven't had any clients hit by Panda. So, I must be doing something right.

1:16:00 Leslie Rohde: Yeah, must be.

1:16:03 Andrea Warner: All right. Great. Okay. Here's a question from a Joomla person. He says 'A WordPress site is less likely to get hacked and more secure than a Joomla site?'

1:16:13 Joost de Valk: No. They're just as likely to get hacked. The thing is, if someone wants to enter and really wants to enter, you can hack both of them in an instant.

1:16:27 Leslie Rohde: Yeah. For one thing, I mean... Depending upon how you've installed MySQL or where, they can even find one of those hacks. So, there's always a way to hack. The only non-hackable computer is one that has no access to the outside world.

1:16:42 Joost de Valk: Yeah, so a good friend of mine goes by the nickname of RSnake on the interwebs has shown me so many ways to get into a WordPress blog that he scared the shit out of me. And then I realized he had... Most of these aren't hacks in Core. There are only... As far as I know, there are no real ways to hack a WordPress Core install just by using WordPress. But there are always all these other mitigating factors around that will make it easy to hack. Whether you're on bad hosting or... Lots of different reasons for your site to get hacked. So, no, there's no specific reason for Joomla or WordPress to get hacked. What is true is that both systems sometimes make it very easy by having crap extensions.

1:17:37 Dan Thies: So the safest thing, although maybe not recommended, would be to remove your blog from the internet and then just blog via, say, Amazon, by publishing your post on Kindle.

1:17:49 Joost de Valk: Yeah.

1:17:50 Leslie Rohde: That's a unique idea. [chuckle]

1:17:53 Joost de Valk: Yeah, it's true.

1:17:53 Leslie Rohde: Every time I get hacked, because I'm tired of that...

1:17:57 Joost de Valk: There are some good services out there to monitor your site for hacks. I like Sucuri, S-U-C-U-R-I. And they monitor your site and then once you got hacked they'll cl an it up for you as well.
1:18:14 Andrea Warner: One more time, S-A-C-U-R-I?

1:18:15 Joost de Valk: Sorry, S-U-C-U-R-I.

1:18:21 Andrea Warner: Okay, I hope that I got that right.


1:18:22 Leslie Rohde: I think that's Dutch.

[laughter]

1:18:29 Joost de Valk: No, it's not.

[laughter]

1:18:33 Joost de Valk: Yeah, tools like that are quite useful.

1:18:40 Andrea Warner: Great. Thank you for that. Okay, I think this will be the last question we'll take today and then I've been working behind the scenes to come up with the plan to get all of the other questions answered, because we like everybody to be happy and there are seriously so many questions. So I'll tell you our plan in just a second. Okay, here's this thing, 'I used Thesis, would your SEO WordPress plugin be overkill? It looks like it has a lot of interesting features, but I don't want the plugin installed as a theme if they don't work well together.' And I think this is one of the beautiful things about your plugin. So can you answer that?

1:19:12 Joost de Valk: My plugin works with all well-coded WordPress themes, which means that it works with almost anything and not with Thesis.

1:19:20 Leslie Rohde: Oh, interesting. Okay. Well, that's because where the theme is built, right?

1:19:20 Joost de Valk: Yeah. Thesis' main developer has a tendency of thinking he knows better, and for that reason not using WordPress core functionality, which makes it incredibly hard to hook into stuff. So it works okay-ish now but it doesn't work as it fully should. And I, for one, have stopped supporting Thesis.

1:19:56 Leslie Rohde: Well, that's a bummer for me because mine's based on Thesis.

1:20:00 Joost de Valk: Yeah, it's just...

1:20:02 Dan Thies: They should fix that Leslie.

1:20:05 Joost de Valk: And I'll be very honest there. The standard response I give to people
asking me to help them when their theme collides with my plugin is, "Okay, you've paid for a theme, right?" "Yeah." "How much have you paid for that plugin?" "Exactly." "Now, go to the one you paid and make them fix it."

1:20:25 Leslie Rohde: Yeah. Thesis, of course, went in a completely different path about how to manage the add-ins to create what they call a theme or framework now. It's like a different code branch. And that's the challenge because not everybody has decided that was a good place to go and because the Thesis developers have sort of decided to be somewhat proprietorial about it and that's made it worse.

1:20:54 Joost de Valk: Yeah, so my advice will be to, at this point in time, not use the two together, and when you're up for redesign switch to something else.

1:21:04 Leslie Rohde: But it works fine in Genesis for example.

1:21:06 Joost de Valk: Yeah, absolutely.

1:21:07 Andrea Warner: Okay, there was an audible gasp when you said that. [laughter] I could see it. So Genesis is an alternative. What are a couple others that you...

1:21:16 Joost de Valk: Alright, Genesis has SEO functionality in the theme that will actually disable itself when my plugin is active. The same goes for WooThemes. I think almost every other theme will do the right thing.

1:21:35 Dan Thies: It works for me with the one I'm using.

1:21:38 Joost de Valk: If a theme is on WordPress.org, the chance of it working with my plugin is almost 100%. If the theme is not on WordPress.org then you should check beforehand, but most will actually work.

1:21:58 Andrea Warner: Alright, great. Alright, so this is our plan for getting through the rest of these questions. There, seriously, are thousands. Behind the scenes, talk to Dan and Leslie into doing another webinar with you all and go through these questions. And of course, we love to have you. I'll tell you more about it but if not then we'll at least give the questions beforehand that we don't have the answers to. So it still needs to...

1:22:22 Joost de Valk: Okay. We'll figure something out. I've had fun so far. So I guess we'll...

1:22:27 Andrea Warner: Yes, that's wonderful. Thank you so much. So Joost...

1:22:31 Dan Thies: This often happens when we have a good webinar. We end up having to do a second one just to deal with questions.

1:22:38 Joost de Valk: Well, I see there's about 650 people in the room or something, so I'm not really surprised.
[laughter]


1:22:45 Leslie Rohde: Yeah, we had over 2,000 registered. So yeah I mean at the replay we'll get a lot of traffic.

1:22:53 Joost de Valk: And I haven't even blogged about it.


1:23:01 Joost de Valk: Yeah, I was testing your reach.

1:23:04 Leslie Rohde: Yeah, there we go. Alright.

[laughter]

1:23:11 Andrea Warner: Alright, great. Okay, guys. So you know where to find Joost. He's on Twitter @yoast and his website is Yoast.com.

1:23:18 Joost de Valk: And I didn't actually remove my email address, so you're all in luck.

1:23:23 Andrea Warner: Oh, yeah, there you go. He meant to take that off. So you better have that. Anyway, so you know where to find him. If you're not using his plugins you should be and we'll give another webinar put together with your questions. We'll love to have you if you can make it. Everybody on the call, thank you so much for your time today, and we'll see you soon at seobraintrust.com. Have a nice day everyone.

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