

The DOWNTIME Survival Guide



Things to do before your site crashes ...

1



Buy DNS backup service

A lot of downtime (and headaches) can be attributed to problems related to your DNS. DNS backup services constantly grab your DNS data and act as a backup if your primary DNS goes down.

2



Buy a monitoring service

You can purchase a service that pings your website every few minutes and notifies you (via text message, email, etc) if it goes down.

3



Always backup your database

In addition to making regular backups of your website and databases, make sure you create an additional backup before tweaking the database itself.

4



Make sure your domain name registration is up to date

So many downtime fiascos could be solved by simply remembering to renew your domain name. Go ahead and set your domain name to autorenew. Or purchase your name for the next ten years and set the domain registrar lock.

5



Use Google Webmaster Tools (GWT)

Using GWT is a no-brainer. It provides you with detailed reports about your pages' visibility on Google and will notify you of any errors that are encountered while crawling it.

6



Use appropriate server downtime error codes

Be sure to use appropriate redirect server codes. Consult the internet or your IT team for proper use of server codes. **Example:** it's generally better to tell crawlers that the downtime is temporary by returning a 503 HTTP result code (Service Unavailable) instead of returning an HTTP result code 404 (Not Found).

What to do if your site crashes...

1



Confirm that your site has gone down

Verify that your site is actually down. Make sure the problem isn't your browser or internet connection. To be doubly sure, phone a friend and have them test your site.

2



Try to determine the cause

If you can, try to pinpoint why the downtime is occurring. Programming error? DNS problem? Expired domain? Hardware related?

3



Contact your hosting company or IT support

Get on the horn with your hosting company and see if they can assist you with your outage. Contact your IT support team or that super-nerdy neighbor of yours.

4



Notify users of the outage

Don't leave your users in the dark. Put out a message on your social media accounts to let users know what's going on and when you plan to have things up and running. If the outage is planned, send out an email beforehand letting users know the date and duration of the outage.

5



Regularly check in with your IT team

Regular communication with your IT team is crucial. Cooperative with them if they need any help finding information about your website or server. Get an estimate from them as to how long it will take for the problem to be resolved.

6



Stay calm

Chill out! It's not the end of the world. Downtime affects the best of us. Staying calm will go a long way in making sure that you and your team can resolve the problem as quickly as possible.



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