

# Load test your website

Having enough traffic come to your site that it causes it to crash may sound like an unachievable, and almost enviable, problem to some. But the ecommerce websites of retailers Currys, Tesco, PC World and Boots did crash<sup>2</sup> under unprecedented high volumes of Cyber Monday traffic before-causing unknown losses.

**How could they be so unprepared?** Well, analysis from Big Data labs showed “the traffic at midnight on Cyber Monday 2014 was 157% higher than the previous year”<sup>3</sup>. In other words they neglected the first rule of business (and, indeed, life), always

expect the unexpected. And the fact is growth of this type looks set to continue- so now there really is no excuse not to have your store prepared.

But it doesn't just stop at preventing crashes - the truth is your site doesn't even have to completely fail for you to be left with frustrated and abandoning shoppers. During Black Friday 2015 the average retailer homepage took 5.31 seconds to load, with the slowest site taking over 13.51 seconds to open. Yet typically it has been shown that 40%<sup>4</sup> of people abandon a website that takes more than 3 seconds to load. Shoppers may be a little more willing to deal with a slower site for big deals but it is still important to minimize their chances of frustration and maximize your chances for profit.



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## **To keep your site running, but also running well, do the following-**

**Contact your web hosting provider to discuss the traffic limitations of your store and the possibility of increasing your hosting service temporarily.**

Many servers worth their salt should be able to handle increased traffic sustainably without upgrading but to be sure, analyze the data from previous years, as well competitors, to give your discussion a starting point. If you do need to upgrade then check how long it will take to be up and running as there is no point if it won't be in place for when you need it.

**Consider reducing the size of Cascading Style Sheets (CSS).**

To make developers' lives easier these often contain information that is stored in an unnecessarily spaced out manner - stripping out this excess space can reduce the speed the CSS takes to load by up to a third<sup>5</sup>.

**Compress and resize images.**

Images can really slow a website down and, by their nature, ecommerce stores have a lot of them. Look specifically for the size of an image vs how it is being viewed on your site - for example an image that is very large but only being used as a thumbnail is going to slow you down unnecessarily. Seeking these out and replacing them, however, can be time consuming so if you need to focus your efforts, we would recommend concentrating on home and and top products pages.





## Note:

You can check your page speed using the free Google tool PageSpeed Insights<sup>6</sup>.

Simply enter your site URL to check how your site stacks up in terms of load speed.



## **Could your business do with a boost for the holiday season?**

Personalization could be the answer. Why not speak to one of our  
ecommerce specialists to find out more?

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