



Website  
Decarbonization  
Readiness  
Assessment for  
SEOs

# A Fresh Search Engine Optimization Tactic: Website Decarbonization

Picture this: you've spent hours fine-tuning page speed, crafting clickable content, optimizing the mobile experience. Now, take all that dedication and give it a green twist. Website decarbonization is like the next-level optimization move, hitting both performance and eco-responsibility in one swoop.

Check out these examples from brands who've gone full eco-ninja on their sites:

- **Patagonia:** By optimizing their site design, they cut data transfer by over 30%. They made it faster, sleeker, and—of course—aligned with their eco-friendly brand vibe.
- **Wholegrain Digital:** They sliced their site's carbon footprint by 66% (yes, 66%) and clocked in at just 0.4 grams of CO<sub>2</sub> per page view. Plus, it loads faster—cue the better user experience.
- **BMW Group:** The car giant dropped their data transfer by over 50% by streamlining backend processes, media, and switching to green hosting. Efficient, fast, and definitely on-brand.

These guys didn't just trim download times—they made their sites energy-efficient, reduced emissions, and added a whole new layer to user engagement. In other words, decarbonization is the kind of power move every SEO and marketing pro needs in their toolkit. You're not only optimizing for speed and user experience—you're optimizing for a better planet.

# What is Website Decarbonization?



Alright, let's talk website decarbonization. Fancy term, right? But let's cut to it: it's like putting your website on an eco-friendly diet. We're talking about stripping down that bloated, energy-guzzling beast into something lean, green, and fast—like a website that *actually* cares about the environment (and doesn't make your users fall asleep waiting for a page to load).

So, how do we do it? Think of it as a Marie Kondo approach to coding, hosting, and media. You're keeping only what brings you and your users joy (a.k.a. speed), while cutting down on the extra junk that secretly drives up emissions and data transfer. Because, believe it or not, our internet habits have a footprint almost as heavy as the aviation industry—yes, you read that right. It's like your website, quietly, is the cousin of a 747.

# Why is Website Decarbonization Important?

"For most websites, images are the biggest contributor to a page's weight."

-Yoast

"Wholegrain Digital's own site achieved an efficiency of 0.083 grams of CO<sub>2</sub> per page view by optimizing media, minimizing scripts, and using green hosting."

-Tom Greenwood

- **Carbon Emissions per Page Load:** The average website produces approximately 4.6 grams of CO<sub>2</sub> per page view. For a site with 10,000 monthly page views, this equates to 553 kg of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions per year, comparable to the carbon absorbed by 27 trees annually.
- **Energy Consumption of Internet Activity:** Globally, internet-related activities contribute to around 2-3% of all CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. This carbon footprint is comparable to the entire aviation industry and is projected to increase as online activity continues to grow.
- **Benefits of Green Hosting:** Hosting with providers that use renewable energy or implement carbon offsetting strategies can reduce a website's carbon footprint by up to 60%, depending on traffic and server use.

# Why Website Decarbonization Should Be on Your Radar

Embracing website decarbonization means understanding that every digital interaction has an environmental footprint.

This shift goes beyond simply reducing emissions—it's about aligning your digital presence with the values of a growing, eco-conscious audience.

For brands, decarbonizing a website offers a unique opportunity to resonate with consumers who prioritize environmental responsibility, setting your organization apart as a sustainability leader in the digital space.

Reducing your website's carbon footprint doesn't mean sacrificing performance or engagement.

Instead, it's about optimizing your site, refining design choices, and embracing technology practices that deliver a seamless, eco-friendly user experience.

Our **Website Decarbonization Readiness Assessment** is designed to evaluate your current practices and highlight key areas where you can make your digital presence more sustainable.





# Website Decarbonization Readiness Assessment


Evaluate how optimized your website is for minimal carbon impact.

1. Does your hosting provider disclose and prioritize low-carbon energy sources?
  - 1 Point ☐ No information on carbon intensity.
  - 2 Points ☐ Provider has basic environmental commitments.
  - 3 Points ☐ Partially renewable energy sources.
  - 4 Points ☐ Renewable energy use but limited data on carbon intensity.
  - 5 Points ☐ 100% renewable energy with transparent carbon intensity data.
2. Do you track data transfer and emissions per page load?
  - 1 Point ☐ No tracking.
  - 2 Points ☐ Limited awareness of data transfer impacts.
  - 3 Points ☐ Some tracking but inconsistent.
  - 4 Points ☐ Regular tracking with some emissions data.
  - 5 Points ☐ Full, ongoing tracking of both data transfer and emissions per user.
3. Do you use caching strategies to reduce data transfer for returning visitors?
  - 1 Point ☐ No caching.
  - 2 Points ☐ Basic, limited caching.
  - 3 Points ☐ Caching in place but inconsistently optimized.
  - 4 Points ☐ Good caching strategy for return visitors.
  - 5 Points ☐ Fully optimized caching across all content types
4. What is the average data size of your website's pages?
  - 1 Point ☐ >5 MB
  - 2 Points ☐ 3-5 MB
  - 3 Points ☐ 2-3 MB
  - 4 Points ☐ 1-2 MB
  - 5 Points ☐ <0.5 MB
5. Are site elements optimized for lower-emission devices and network efficiency?
  - 1 Point ☐ No optimization for devices or network.
  - 2 Points ☐ Minimal optimization for efficiency.
  - 3 Points ☐ Some device and network optimizations.
  - 4 Points ☐ Mostly optimized for efficient use.
  - 5 Points ☐ Fully optimized for lower-emission devices and networks.

# Website Decarbonization Readiness Assessment

Evaluate how optimized your website is for minimal carbon impact.

6. Are media assets (images, videos) optimized to minimize data size and emissions?
- 1 Point ☐ No media optimization.
  - 2 Points ☐ Limited image optimization.
  - 3 Points ☐ Some media compressed, but inefficiencies remain.
  - 4 Points ☐ Most media fully optimized.
  - 5 Points ☐ All media optimized, using low-carbon formats and efficient sizing.
7. Is your code optimized and free of unnecessary frameworks?
- 1 Point ☐ Heavy, unoptimized code
  - 2 Points ☐ Inefficient, redundant frameworks.
  - 3 Points ☐ Some redundant code but partially optimized.
  - 4 Points ☐ Mostly lean and efficient.
  - 5 Points ☐ Fully optimized, lean code without unnecessary frameworks.
8. Are third-party scripts minimized and optimized?
- 1 Point ☐ Over 10 unoptimized scripts.
  - 2 Points ☐ 6-10 third-party scripts with minimal optimization.
  - 3 Points ☐ 3-5 scripts, some optimized.
  - 4 Points ☐ 1-2 well-optimized scripts.
  - 5 Points ☐ No or only one optimized, essential script
9. Do you use a CDN to deliver content more efficiently?
- 1 Point ☐ No CDN.
  - 2 Points ☐ Limited CDN use for some assets.
  - 3 Points ☐ CDN for most content, but only partially optimized.
  - 4 Points ☐ Extensive use of a CDN.
  - 5 Points ☐ Fully optimized CDN for low-carbon impact.
10. Is digital sustainability part of your company's web strategy?
- 1 Point ☐ No sustainability goals.
  - 2 Points ☐ Sustainability goals exist but not digitally focused.
  - 3 Points ☐ Some alignment with digital sustainability.
  - 4 Points ☐ Goals are mostly aligned with sustainability.
  - 5 Points ☐ Full alignment with comprehensive sustainability goals.

An aerial photograph showing a small red cabin with a white roof situated in a dense green forest. To the left of the cabin is a body of water, likely a lake or river, with some lily pads visible. The image is oriented vertically, with the cabin and forest on the right and the water on the left.

# Interpreting Your Website Decarbonization Readiness Score:

**41 - 50: Excellent** – Your website is already optimized for low carbon impact. You're using best practices in areas like efficient hosting, content delivery, coding, and media optimization.

**31 – 40: Good** – Your website has several optimized features and practices in place to reduce carbon impact, but there are still areas where you can improve.

**21 – 30: Moderate** – Your website has some positive attributes, but it's not yet optimized to minimize its environmental impact. A comprehensive review would likely uncover multiple areas for enhancement.

**11 – 20: Needs Improvement** – Your website has minimal decarbonization practices in place. Without enhancements, your site is likely consuming more energy than necessary, which could affect both operational costs and environmental impact.

**1 – 10: High Priority for Decarbonization** – Your website is currently far from optimized for energy efficiency. This level of inefficiency is likely contributing significantly to your organization's digital carbon footprint and may result in poor website performance.



After completing the checklist, take these proposed action items to continue building on your current efforts:

# Next Steps:

**41 – 50: Continue** monitoring for new technologies or practices that may further improve efficiency. Consider sharing your low-carbon strategies publicly as part of your brand's sustainability messaging and stay current on emerging sustainability certifications for websites.

**31 – 40: Identify** areas where your score was below 4, such as image/video optimization, CDN use, or code efficiency, and work on targeted improvements in those areas. Engaging your development team to perform regular performance audits can help refine these elements over time.

**21 – 30: Consider** a structured decarbonization plan that addresses key areas with lower scores, such as hosting, third-party scripts, or data transfer sizes. A focused effort here could yield significant reductions in carbon footprint and also improve site speed and user experience.

**11 – 20: Conduct** a full technical audit focused on carbon reduction and performance. Look at high-impact areas first, like switching to a green hosting provider, reducing data transfer, and optimizing code. This effort will likely involve your IT and web development teams, as well as a potential budget for hosting upgrades.

**1 – 10: Prioritize** a decarbonization project. Begin by switching to a green hosting provider and implementing easy, high-impact changes like image compression, removing unnecessary third-party scripts, and leveraging CDNs. Bringing in external consultants with expertise in green web design could be beneficial to get quick wins and identify a sustainable path forward.

# FAQs About Decarbonizing Websites

1. How can decarbonizing a website affect a brand's reputation and authority in the eyes of Google?

- **Answer:** Google and other search engines increasingly value sustainability as part of corporate responsibility, especially as more users expect brands to be environmentally conscious. By decarbonizing, brands not only meet user expectations but can also improve trust signals and enhance brand authority. Google doesn't directly factor carbon footprint into rankings, but sustainable practices can indirectly contribute to improved SEO as it often leads to better performance and user satisfaction.

2. Does server location impact the carbon footprint, and how does it affect SEO?

- **Answer:** Yes, server location affects both the carbon footprint and load times. Hosting on servers closer to the primary user base reduces data travel, lowering emissions and improving site speed. A well-located server can contribute to improved SEO by reducing time to first byte (TTFB) and improving overall load times, both of which are critical for Core Web Vitals performance.

# FAQs About Decarbonizing Websites

## 3. How does website decarbonization relate to mobile-first optimization?

- **Answer:** Decarbonization aligns closely with mobile-first optimization by emphasizing lightweight content, streamlined code, and efficient loading—all essential for mobile usability. Google's mobile-first indexing prioritizes sites optimized for mobile devices. Since mobile sites typically need to be fast and efficient, decarbonization efforts improve mobile performance and usability, positively affecting mobile SEO.

## 4. What specific tools can SEOs use to measure their website's carbon impact and track improvement over time?

- **Answer:** SEOs can use tools like the **Website Carbon Calculator** (by Wholegrain Digital) and **EcoPing** to estimate a website's carbon footprint based on page views, data transfer, and hosting energy use. Regularly using these tools helps SEOs track the effectiveness of decarbonization efforts and identify high-impact areas for optimization that could benefit SEO, such as large media files or excess code

# FAQs About Decarbonizing Websites

5. How does removing non-essential content support decarbonization and SEO?

- **Answer:** Removing unnecessary pages, scripts, and media reduces data transfer needs and enhances user experience, reducing carbon emissions. It also helps with SEO by streamlining the user journey, improving site architecture, and helping search engines focus on more valuable, relevant content, which may boost rankings.

6. Can reducing server energy use impact the scalability of a website, and what does this mean for SEO?

- **Answer:** Decarbonization practices that optimize server energy use, like implementing caching and reducing server requests, often make websites more scalable by handling traffic more efficiently. For SEOs, this scalability means the website can maintain optimal load times and performance even during traffic spikes, improving user experience and potentially benefiting rankings by ensuring stability across high-traffic periods.

You've got  
this!



Whether you're just starting to explore website decarbonization or ready to fully implement it, you're taking an important step toward building a more sustainable, efficient, and user-friendly digital experience.

If you're interested in learning how to tailor these strategies for your website, we're here to guide you through the process.

Reach out to us at GOOD COMPANY and we'll walk you through every step, from assessing your current footprint to implementing impactful changes.

Good luck, and we're excited to see the positive impact you create by reducing your digital carbon footprint!



## About GOOD COMPANY

Alright, here's the scoop. GOOD COMPANY is the digital marketing agency for brands that actually care about the planet—yes, they exist, and yes, we love them. We're here to help you run digital campaigns that don't just look good but do good, too. We're talking lower carbon footprints, energy-efficient strategies, and eco-friendly everything.

Imagine your digital marketing that drives results without driving up emissions. SEO, paid ads, content, email marketing—we do it all, sustainably. And we're not just claiming it; we're bringing transparency to the table with reports on your digital carbon impact because, let's face it, everyone loves a hero.

So, if you're ready to get results *and* be kind to the planet, let's make some marketing magic. You bring the ambition; we'll bring the impact (and maybe a touch of humor).



**Meet Brad Giddens**—the guy who looked at the world of digital marketing and thought, “We can do better. A lot better.”

With over fifteen years of experience in digital strategy, Brad leads GOOD COMPANY, a collective dedicated to one big mission: creating digital marketing strategies that don't just boost ROI but also shrink carbon footprints.

Brad's journey to eco-consciousness started small, just a few thoughtful choices here and there. But when he stumbled upon the ikigai philosophy—the idea of aligning purpose with passion—it all clicked. And when he found out that the internet's carbon footprint is almost as bad as the airline industry's, well, let's just say he was officially on a mission.

Brad went on to get certified as a Sustainability Excellence Associate (SEA) through the ISSP, giving him the expertise to help brands do the impossible: thrive while being kind to the planet. Now, he's all about decarbonizing digital media, from email marketing to programmatic ads, and showing brands that you can grow and be green at the same time.