022 - SEO Requires a Solid Technical Foundation with Justin Meadows

Justin Meadows 0:00
One thing that's really important from a speed point of view with WordPress, I think this is something that a lot of people run. It's a common one anyway, is that sometimes people build a site, and then they'll get someone else to come in and build some other bits and get someone else to come in and build some other bits. And then they'll have these different page builders. So there's page builders like Elementor, WP bakery, Divi, Beaver Builder, all these things, add more CSS and scripts into the page as it loads. And it's even adding a bunch of CSS on pages that don't need to load that CSS to see it. And so that's a very easy way to bomb the performance of your website is just having a bunch of different page builders. So make sure and there's a lot of it's a common trap as well to go with these user friendly themes that are all in one multipurpose themes that can do anything. But that also means that they're loading a bunch of extra CSS and stuff that is not needed.

Intro Music 1:02
Welcome to the SEO Leverage Podcast, where we talk about search, marketing, and conversion.

Gert Mellak 1:12
And then what come this is Greg Mellak from Seoleverage.com and we are on episode 22. Today I have a special guest, Justin Meadow from tunewp.com Welcome, Justin.

Justin Meadows 1:24
Good, how goin?

Gert Mellak 1:25
Thank you so much for for taking the time. We have met in Sydney last week last year, which I really enjoyed meeting you in person I've had heard a lot about you, your your company tunewp.com, tech support, etc. And I remember after we met in person, we had a great time here and they had a beer after the event. I remember we had a client afterwards asking me shortly afterwards, if I knew someone who could do tech support. So we I personally have been in programming for many, many years, too many to be honest, I think there have been SEO now. But I remember sending this person to you and they came back really happy. So there was, there was talk, had someone who finally took care of their of their SEO responded fast. We know all the issues people have with programmers taking some time, especially if it's small tweaks they're not really interested in financially, it really takes a lot of time to get those things done. And at the same time, it's really, really important for SEO to have this technical foundation right. Okay. So, before we dive into this, I would want to ask you, if you could give our listeners a

little bit of a background. Where do you come from? Where does tunewp come from? And and what's your focus now?

Justin Meadows 2:38
Yeah also, that's, that's great to hear. I'm glad I got that out, you know, clients are happy. But yeah, now my, my background, actually, I started with SEO and went to web development. So I'll go the opposite journey. But I wasn't in SEO for very, for as long as I think. So in around 2009. I started fiddling around learning SEO, doing it on my own blogs, and just implementing that as yeah, just working, playing around with it. And then once I realized I could, you know, understood the fundamentals, I could get it to work, I could get good results from it, I started offering it to other businesses around the area for cash flow and that's something because although I could rank my websites, I didn't know how to monetize them very well. So by alright, I'll go help other other businesses and that's where I can make money. And the Yeah, I quickly found that most of the times, the first thing I need to do was fix their website. And so that led me down the path of website development. And at first I hated it, I hated having to fix their websites. But I built a pretty good team around me to help me with that. And I grew to like that side of things more. I like this, the websites support and building other websites and that sort of thing. And I found it a lot harder to hire, and train people around me who could help me with the SEO and I found that was a bottleneck for me is obviously I had to be across everything. So I decided to just turn off that part of the business and focus on the WordPress side of things. And now we just focus on support. So we don't even do website builds very much anymore. We mainly just take existing websites and optimize them. We look after the performance of the websites, the security, the maintenance, the updates, the hosting, all that sort of thing. And we have a 24 hour support desk to make sure that we can respond quickly and implement changes quickly for our clients. Keep keep them ahead of the game, that sort of thing.

Gert Mellak 4:41
Yeah, that's amazing. That's amazing. That's amazing. Yeah, I can certainly relate to this to this role of being on top of all projects in SEO, we have very, very much we spend a lot of time training etc. But I still don't hand over projects completely. I'm still on top of every single project we have and revise it on a weekly basis, see how is going and how to use his record videos and do the consulting calls with clients etc. So it's definitely definitely challenging but I do know that the tech thing is just a really important part so when we do a site audit for example, very often it's like yeah. I decide all these ways you could essentially create a new fresh wordpress installation, move over the entire content and start fresh because besides it might be too slow, might be not mobile optimized at all, the theme might be having javascript errors etc, lots of windows popping up. I had another, had a site with a cookie banner, a bad plugin and a pop up showing right when you enter the site and we do a lot of usability user experience studies. We've test sites on our mobile phones on different phones and see what what comes up what could be an obstacle and mobile is really a topic we have seen growing really really fast in the last years. Google was very quick giving the industry a heads up and say look mobile is coming get get ready for these these things we quickly saw with smartphones 30, 40, 50% and more mobile traffic coming to websites. Today we're facing a situation where hardly any client has more desktop and mobile traffic on our site what's your landscape here but we also see clients

that have 70, 80% or more mobile traffic on their website which is just an incredible evolution and it's really it's been interesting when i ask clients how they test their website and they see you on the chrome browser on the desktop right this is where i tried to get them every Friday, I tell them look every Friday before you sign up for the week, make sure you open your website on a mobile phone and just try to accomplish a normal task. You will expect the user to accomplish switch off your wi fi to not get to also see how slow the site is but because wi fi very often covered like images and stuff like that which has a wi fi connection with 3g 4g whatever try to navigate your website on the mobile phone just to get a feeling of of how your what your website looks like to 80% of your customers. Very often we have a wrong impression where it's okay now everything looks fine everything works everything is fast but for 80% of our customers this is not the case and user experience is just getting so important with every google update I feel like who shifts more towards usability, more towards loading speed etc. What's your your view based on your client portfolio when it comes to mobile

Justin Meadows 7:29
Yeah look I definitely think it's very similar case yeah like four years ago. It was, it was like I said mobile was around 30, 40% or something and now it's more than 50% to 70% mobile usage so it's mostly, they're mostly they're more mobile than desktop and website design has I mean Google has been from the very early stages saying mobile is important guys. Make sure you're doing that right and you know it's been it's been a slow sort of build up of how much noise Google's making about the importance of mobile but yeah the early like most of the website designs these days are still designed as a desktop design with a whole bunch of really awesome looking things for on a desktop experience but then what happens on the mobile version is an afterthought and it's just like well, we'll try and make it look okay on mobile. They're not coming at it from the point of view of what makes an awesome mobile experience and really in in a lot of markets that that the desktop is largely irrelevant. It's still, it's still you know it does depend on the market and there are some things that people just you know expensive items people are not going to buy online from a phone as much you know they'll go to a desktop. People still still sort of you know there's still gonna be some things like that that the desktop experience is still important but definitely the mobile experience is more and more important these days. I think we've we've sort of followed the same path we from when I very first started doing my website design we were doing mobile responsive we didn't build ever built any that weren't mobile responsive but but certainly we were treating the mobile version as a secondary thing and just making sure that it didn't, there wasn't any horrible errors. It well, it wasn't that you know we're making it look really good for mobile so that's something that we've changed in our procedures and, and now, now with the changing from not only mobile first, but mobile only indexing, coming up next month is when we're now looking at work. We've also been focusing with our speed optimization on on largely the desktop version first and then looking at mobile. But now we're just focusing only on the mobile because if you optimize the mobile speed, the desktop speed's always great.

Gert Mellak 10:08
When we take science and I, we could talk about how did this what the disk speed is, but just get your get your mobile speed fixed and desktop is going to is going to a test. Yeah, we were

looking at it speed also from from different uh, from two different areas. I think one, obviously, everybody likes a fast loading site. Everybody wants to load a site loading fast, we have no patience, we have no time. So everybody, whatever you do, you're probably too busy to wait a couple of seconds to see your website loads or you switch back, click on something else. There is a lot of offer, there's hardly anything unique on a website, you would wait five seconds to load for, these days. So speed is definitely important for users. But something which was interesting that also Christoph Cemper from Link Research Tools, confirmed the other day on on the show is, it speed obviously is also interesting for Google. So for Google, crawling a site faster means at scale, they are saving millions of dollars. So they have a really strong financial interest to their facing their shareholders facing their data structure, they can essentially probably ask, since since they launched this core web biters we're going to address in a moment, this topic, I think, they probably then can crawl the website half in half the time probably because everybody's like crazy, this is going to be a ranking factor, we need to make our sites even faster, faster, faster, faster. Google will have the benefit. The added benefit, let's put it this way. Don't want to suggest any hidden agenda here, they will have the added benefit of of saving a lot of money or being able to crawl more pages with the same resources. Right. So this is only this also, some people understand a little bit. It's not only for users, very often also the platform's push the agenda, they are really interested in this, I will say similar thing with Facebook, and latest Facebook ads changes, you can see kind of the agenda that might be behind their efforts. But on Google, we clearly see that they have a strong internal interest as well to be able to crawl crawl the site faster, when you can't say, sorry, yeah.

Justin Meadows 12:08
I also think from a historic perspective, Google's edge over the other search engines way back in the wild west days of the you know, when Google wasn't the dominant search engine, one of the big things that helped it become dominant is that it was the fastest search engine you can, it was a simple page, you typed it in it loads of results fast. And so if they can have a quick experience, if if they can get you from typing in what you want to get into the page and reading the information that you want, as quickly as possible, that helps them and grow their business.

Gert Mellak 12:41
Absolutely, we're heading into a direction where Google will extract everything we have on our websites and show it on board. We're heading definitely heading this down down this path, we see many surges, also already also called zero click searches. If you want to know the height of the Eiffel Tower, you don't have to go to any website who is going to extract information and show it to you. They have the structured data, the knowledge graph, as they call it, where they know or certain details about certain entities, Obama's birth, the height of buildings, age of famous celebrities, etc. In all this and they're going to answer directly in search results. This makes SEO especially when you do it on your own, really challenging because you kind of need to find your way around what Google might be answering very soon themselves and extract the data from from website, which is a little bit of shady approach today. They leverage the content someone has put together with with a lot of resources, and then just show it on the site and say, yeah, we just want to make users happy. It's fine. Yeah. But at the end of the day, Google is still trying to make users happy. Google knows the past result in the past website makes users

happy. And this is where speed is so important. Google is pushing a concept called core web vitals and this is a concept they announced this is going to be part of the ranking, part of the ranking factors, we already know speed is a part of the ranking factor. They now went one step further with this core web pages. I was wondering if you could break down this concept for our listeners a little bit what is what is core web wireless about? Why should we pay attention to this?

Justin Meadows 14:16
Yeah, so it's it's mainly just three different metrics that Google have landed on that they think are the most important things to use to measure those a number of reasons for the different, that they landed on these and not not a bunch of other metrics, because some of them can be deceptive give you sort of a false sense of speed. These these other ones that they agree sort of show that you have the best mobile experience or the best, you know, the best speed experience. So there's, I always I always get these mixed up and confused but LCP is the Largest Contentful Paint and so that that is the amount of time that takes likes to load the largest element on the page. And it's only the element that is showing above the fold. So it's at the top of the, the top of the page. So, so the way to help optimize your site for that is to make sure you don't have a lot of really heavy elements in your design, above the fold, and in the top of the screen, especially for mobile, mobile is very sensitive to this. It's, it's a common thing that we say, LCP has been a tricky one for us to sort of optimize for, and because it involves changing the design, really. And the other, the other scores, were sort of, once you did your normal speed optimizations they sort of were taken care of, but LCP was often one that was not handled by not an amount sort of speed optimization practices, but just rearranging things so that instead of having a really large, you know, nice hero image, as the background of that top section of your page, went on the mobile version, having that exact same image, just, you know, reduced in size, but it's still loading a big image that really hurts your LCP. So that's a common thing that we see. And you're better off, just going with no background for that, that top section, because most of the time, your head, your headline should be there at the top of the page there. And that should be taking up most of the screen. So any image that you put behind that is largely going to be lost. And so really, the benefit that it brings is not worth the impact it has on speed. So that's definitely one. One tip I'd give for that one. The other one is the first input delay FID and that that score is usually sort of fixed up when you've got good hosting and a good CDN. And you don't have scripts and CSS, interfering with the load time. So yeah

Gert Mellak 16:55
Right, so just interrupt for for, for listeners who might not know what a CDN is a content delivery network, we use them to distribute images, images and JavaScript content across different servers. So if you haven't a global audience, you're going to not be loading, for example, from Australia, from a server from the States, which will take longer to load, you probably have a copy of the same content in a server within Australia, that's going to deliver delivery content, which is a good, good way to make sites fast. I've seen incredible success with CDNs. Okay, sorry to interrupt it is mine to make. Yeah.

Justin Meadows 17:30

Yeah, going more on to the CDNs, we've actually been doing some testing, I've been getting all of our clients to move over to CloudFlare for the last couple of years. Because it's a really good free CDN. It's, it gets great results, just turning that on. And using that, and it's free. So it's like why not, it also makes the process of migrating from one server to another server very easy and managing your DNS is just easy when you've got that set up. The other thing is there's a bit of a security improvement there as well. Things like your servers, location of your servers hidden from bots, and that sort of thing. And it does filter out a lot of bots from arriving at your website. But you know, with the thing we tested against was Stackpath, which is a rival CDN has many of the same features, uhm. With CloudFlare. On its pro account, they it's $20 US per month, and Simon stackpath. So they're both the same, from a price point of view at that pro level. And definitely with CloudFlare, they have a few features like APR and some image optimization features that get really good results at that pro level. And in particular, that makes a big difference between the load time in other other continents. So even with the just the CloudFlare for free, there was still a couple of seconds of delay in other continents. But with those pro features enabled, that was the same, pretty much the same everywhere. With Stackpath, we found that it did actually get a slightly better speed. Let's go. So that was slightly better than the CloudFlare. But the other thing to consider was there's a security feature, the web application firewall, which filters out all those ports and malicious rules and that sort of thing. And that slows down the speed significantly on Stackpath but not so much on CloudFlare.

Gert Mellak 19:31
So this is something everybody could could do. Right and they to make an informed decision.

Justin Meadows 19:43
So yeah, the at this stage, we're sticking with CloudFlare but we you can get if you're happy to not have that security feature, you can get slightly better results with slack.

Gert Mellak 19:55
I do. I do remember the the exact moment when I discovered CloudFlare and this was unfortunately, very late in my development career, because I did a lot of development inside migrations and DNS update and we had to wait 24 hours to make sure everybody's query thing is propagated across the entire internet. And without very, it was just instantly we had speed optimization standard out there with a much better job just by signing up, we have a pro account for for our site is where it's definitely definitely worth it. I appreciate your suggestion to science, we also bring this up when someone still has their own DNS hosting or GoDaddy or some other provider for for DNS hosting, just to make sure if it works, step get Cloudflare, you have some sort of brief firewall for a start and then upgrade whatever package you think you need are also, very often, it's a good way to just make sure 301 redirections, don't even go to the server because the DNS just make sure the redirection is is taking place. And there's a lot of features I really like also, from an SEO point of view, there's one more core web vital this cumulative layout shift. What is it?

Justin Meadows 21:02

So that's about how much the the elements on your website move around as it's loading. And so this is mainly affected by things like CSS, if your CSS is shuffling things around, as it loads or things like having I think in particular, one of the things that we're targeting with this is having ads and stuff. Like I know that this is a frustrating experience when you are scrolling through and then an ad loads and everything moves and you're about to click on a button and you click on the ad instead accidentally. So that that's the thing in particular, on most most business websites are found it's not a huge issue, because they're not trying to do tricky things that don't have those ads in there. So generally speaking, it doesn't come up as an issue very much and if you're building your site the right way, and you've got all the you know, you've got a nice simple website anyway, then you're not going to run into issues with that one.

Gert Mellak 21:58
Awesome yeah, that's that's definitely an important one. I very often when clients ask me the first time for what the core web vitals are, I pretty much tell them it's it's a measurement on how much you're annoying users, right? So pretty much how long do they have to wait for the biggest element to load they really want to know what it is because you come to a website there is a huge slider and it takes a few seconds to load it drives me crazy, right? If there is a video and it's really the basic content on a page it drives me crazy because I have to load wait for the video to load right if things shift shift around because then the I think I'm I'm heading to the right menu item and it just shifts because they have like a huge header or hero hero banner as they call it very often on top of the header or something like this. It's really making people mad and if they can't click on something because there's something in the background still loading and you have a feeling you'll see the the circus still spinning on a browser and you want to do something on the page but something is I don't even know what it is I'm not going to know what it is but it can't it just can't do something. This first input delay really you don't want to annoy your users and very often you find it out when you when you navigate one mobile phone and says okay, if I only had two seconds to make a decision very often you can you can figure out is the work that needs to be done on their website. Or are we good to go with user experience I really appreciate you breaking this down. I want to quickly before we wrap this up touch base on on WordPress I know you guys have focused on WordPress especially you also do 10x Pro support 10x pros or whatever platform we have been using as well. We have been working with 10x Pro support which I found the channeling to get them a few features we were missing from an SEO point of view I think in these days it's a really solid SEO platform as well so we have clients building out their entire websites on on 10x Pro now we'll get here to get them help from you for example on your team when it comes to the design theme adaptions and like advanced configurations and stuff like that, but I want to focus a little bit on WordPress most of our clients are still on WordPress. WordPress, I saw a statistics the other day I don't know was it 70% 80% of websites run on WordPress something like this? I think it was it was crazy.

Justin Meadows 24:10
Yeah, it's massive. Yeah.

Gert Mellak 24:11

So so I I know many everybody who is running the site and WordPress has issues. So I noticed for sure I have seen people switch eventually because they get got hacked all the time. They didn't know how to protect their website how often to reestablish it they were running Facebook ads to their WordPress and WordPress was failing because the plugin updated etc. So it definitely makes sense to have someone professional I think near the WordPress site this at least this is what I recommend that if they don't have a person they can trust and it can help them quickly when something breaks. Also make sure your security and stuff like that is taken care of. We definitely send them usually your way. But I was wondering if there were a couple of things you could suggest to someone who has a WordPress site, which they could essentially take out on their own. If that's the case for this site or do on their site or, or make sure just so they take something away from this episode that makes the site better. Yeah, there is?

Justin Meadows 25:10
Yeah, sure. So from a from a speed point of view, in particular, you want to have a good caching plugin. Caching plugin, it depends on where you are in the world. But the main thing that we've been testing out a few, and WP Fastest Cache is one that we really like. The other one is WP rocket. So both of those are fairly easy to implement, and getting those that both premium plugins, but it's well worth paying for those and implementing the features. Implementing lazy loading, you can actually get the WP rocket lazy loading on its own if you go with WP fastest cache. And we've found that that combination works really well. And you can also integrate those with your CloudFlare CDN. So I would strongly recommend doing that. And that that APO feature   fea feature in CloudFlare. Pro premium is that is integrating with WordPress, in particular. So you put in a WordPress plug in, and that provides a deeper integration so that the cached copy of your website that's in CloudFlare is more comprehensive. It gives you a much faster result. There's there's other there's there's a few different image compression tools out there. To be honest, we use different ones at different times for different applications. And yeah,

Gert Mellak 26:44
So you just usually install anything for security purposes on WordPress.

Justin Meadows 26:47
Yeah, absolutely. WordPress is a really good free firewall for the security of your website, you definitely make sure you, you want to have that. You also want to make sure you're taking backups automatically. I think it's good to have both server level and WordPress level backups. Because we've had service fail. And we've had WordPress backups. Well, you know, it's good to have a couple of options there. So yeah, some people think just just go with the hosting. But I've just yet we've been burned before. So we always take several layers of backups. One thing that's really important from a speed point of view with WordPress, and I think this is something that a lot of people run, it's a common one anyway, is that sometimes people build a site and then they'll get someone else to come in and build some other bits and get someone else to come in and build some other bits. And then they'll have these different page builders settings, page builders like Elementor, WPBakery, Divi, Beaver Builder, all these things, add more CSS and scripts into the page as it loads. And it's even adding a bunch of CSS on pages that don't need to load that CSS to say it. And so that's a very easy way to bomb the performance of your

website is just having a bunch of different page builders. So make sure and there's a lot of it's a common trap as well to go with these user friendly themes that are all in one multipurpose themes that can do anything. But that also means that they're loading a bunch of extra CSS and stuff that is not needed. So you're better off going with a very lightweight theme. And we've actually also found that so our preferred page builder is Beaver Builder, that it gets a very good from a performance point of view is one of the better ones. It's also very user friendly. It's very easy to yeah, basically, it does a lot of things like being able to create a template and rows that you can reuse on other pages. So it makes it very easy to build out new landing pages. And

Gert Mellak 28:50
Awesome.

Justin Meadows 28:50
That's something, we've also, yeah, we've also been testing that against just using Gutenberg blocks and Genesis blocks. Genesis theme is the theme that we've been developing with for years. It's a very lightweight base sort of claim Canvas theme that doesn't have much to it, you've got to it's just got the framework there. And they've now got a blocks feature that adds to the Gutenberg blocks to give you some more customization and the ability to save and reuse blocks that you've built before. And we found that gets a better mobile speed score than Beaver. But definitely both of those are miles above the likes of Divi. Divi is horrible from a performance point of view.

Gert Mellak 29:42
And obviously we're on Divi but we were also looking into switching that one. Well, this was this was amazing. So let me let me recap a little bit. So we want to we have a WordPress we want to make sure we have good caching tagging, you mentioned WP fastest cache WP rocket. By the way, we're going to link to the plugins you mentioned in the suggestion you gave out there, etc on the show notes. If someone wants to look them up, it's going to be on SEO leverage.com forward slash podcast episode 22. We get a caching plugin caching essentially means we pre prepare essentially what needs to be delivered to a user's browser? And

Justin Meadows 30:19
The way I

Gert Mellak 30:19
do it is to do this directly when they access the website, right?

Justin Meadows 30:23
Yeah, the way I sort of describe it is, it's like being given a new Lego set, you have all these different pieces. And then you've got to put it all together yourself. Whereas if you're caching, then you just been given a prebuilt. Lego set, all the pieces are in right place, it's a lot faster for the browser to, you know, deal with a website where all the pieces already in place for it,

Gert Mellak 30:47

There's plenty I usually try to explain it with a restaurant I used to when I was a kid, I used to help out in my uncle's restaurant, and I was a department preparing Coca Cola and opening up the bottles, etc. And I knew he was going to come in the next two minutes asking for a few bottles, I always had a few bottles already open my cans ready and have them as fast as possible, because I already had been prepared by your Lego analogy. I like it much better. In any case, the WordPress already prepares what needs to be not what needs to be delivered. And it's not going to need the server to prepare this for every single user. Lazy loading is an interesting concept. We see very often on e commerce sites where you scroll down and images, for example, though, when you scroll down, they don't load before. So there's less data that needs to be loaded when accessing the site. And it's it's not a big deal. It takes milliseconds to load those images, those smaller images when you scroll down, you don't have to have so many requests going to the server to load all this stuff is definitely interesting. You mentioned WP Rocket lazy loading here. I'm going to link to this one as well. Page builders is an interesting one I get asked very often and we didn't do the testing. So now we have some some test data we're going to tell our clients as well. You mentioned Beaver Builder, and Genesis here I've had very good things about Genesis. haven't heard anything about Beaver Builder, to be honest. But I'm also not in this WordPress space anymore. So we're definitely going to link to those Genesis

Justin Meadows 32:20
One of the one of the initial things that attracted us to Beaver as well is that it's very easy to edit in the back end, quite often with other some of the other page builders, when you're loading it up to make changes, it can be very slow. So it's nice for the the user experience. It's also for the person who's managing the website.

Gert Mellak 32:38
Absolutely. This important one, I remember one side, it was a consulting firm, where we were managing their SEO, and it was crazy. There were so well, I don't remember the page per lead was but there's so many blocks, so many icons, so many stuff that got loaded, just show me the page where I can then finally start this was like 10 seconds to just to load the interface before I did anything. And this was really, really annoying. You talked about CloudFlare software essentially, lives within a server and the domain holder, if you want would just be would this be correct. So if you have your domain registered on GoDaddy, and you have your server somewhere CloudFlare would live in between?

Justin Meadows 33:16
Yeah, yeah, exactly.

Gert Mellak 33:18
So essentially, whatever whatever request goes to your server would go through CloudFlare, which enables them to do a lot of a lot of optimization and filtering work, right.

Justin Meadows 33:26
Yeah, yeah. So instead of instead of the request going all the way, it just goes to the nearest CloudFlare. And, like data center, and that's where it has all the information. It's also a useful

tool for just managing the your tech team. So if you have someone who's the IT guy looking after your emails, and you've got a website guy who's looking after your website, that's generally two sort of different disciplines. And you can easily give access to both of them in CloudFlare, without having to also give up access to your domain registrar, which can be something that some people don't like doing is giving, you know, logins or access to their domains, because that really is the key to your website.

Gert Mellak 34:10
Absolutely. I was going to say this is really the master key, right? This is really the master key. We just had one client who had his site messed up because he found a program on on Upwork. ahead, they gave them essentially the master key to their hosting. We're able to do all kinds of stuff, they then said, Yeah, we're done. And then afterwards, a lot of things turned out to not work anymore. And then you you have this person you have no relation with they don't have a service. They don't have a company they don't have a business. It's just an anonymous person. Pretty much you don't you're not verifying the ID probably when you when you ask them to do it and do our job on your website. But essentially, you are handing your entire online business over to a person you have you barely know. And when they explained it this way, this can turn red and then I'm going to do this anymore. I think they ended up with you anyway. All right. It's something we really need to consider, right? We always need to be the owners of everything. And this comes also, we see this on Google ads, for example, my clients, I've been doing this for almost 20 years now. My clients always were the owners of the Google Ads account. Okay. So if you pay someone to run your ads, there is no reason why they need to own your account. Right? Yeah, exactly. Just pay for leads are different. It's a different game. But if you pay someone a service to run your ads, there is no way they should be owning the account, you you should be the one owning the account and giving access the same way. I'm not going to to give my plumber the property rights on my entire house because he needs to fix a pipe. But this is something people do in the online space all the time to get they find someone, they say, do you know how to do this, maybe they can ask a couple of questions to verify if this person really knows what they do. But then essentially, you hand everything over. And then obviously, you might need to go back to backups, which you have mentioned, sometimes on the server, even though there is a backup, it might not be either working available, be complete, etc. So you want to have multiple stages of backup, I think that was a very important suggestion as well. And the second, you really don't know what they do, I've seen really, really weird things people essentially left like one one php file essentially was like in File Explorer on we're on a windows that gave everybody who knew what this file was called access to all the files on the site. And people might leave a backdoor open, we've seen everything right, people might leave a backdoor open. They're, they're not on your project anymore, but if they decide half a year later that they want to access your hosting, change your files, screw up your site, or redirect all the traffic to their competitors, they can do this because they left their backdoor open. This is why it's so important. If you don't have someone on your team you really trust, find a trusted provider like Justin and his team, where you know, they're going to be around tomorrow, if there were

any claims, really. But you have multiple people who can step in and fix things, and have a very good control and a trusted process.

Justin Meadows 37:05
Okay, yeah, just just quickly back to CloudFlare. That's actually something that we've always done as well as create the account in the clients name. So if we're setting up a CloudFlare account for you, we'll do it in your name. And then we'll just have logins you'll have logins, but and you own it, if the password gets changed, you're the only person who can reset it, not us. Like, I've seen a number of times where clients have come over to us and they've had CloudFlare set up, but it's in there the developers account and we can't, they're not going to give us access to it. And we have to create a new one and change it overnight sort of thing. Like it's, yeah, it's important to do things in, make sure it's all set up in your accounts.

Gert Mellak 37:42
I think this speaks in favor of the trusted relationship you seem to be having with your clients. At least this is the data we get from our clients and the people that really responsible really try to understand what is the situation. W have seen speed audits you do on sites, we have seen the optimization work you have been doing on site, very often we identify speed as one or just initially, before we hit record, we identified one of them, one of the clients that will roadblock this, that's really all the time shifting the rankings around is that they don't have a solid technical foundation. Okay, and this is where I really want to wrap this up, we got a lot of advice. I will link, going link to all the plugins but I want to wrap this up saying really, the technical foundation of a website is the same as an engine on a car that just needs to work. Whatever car I purchased today, I expect you to bring me from A to B, I don't need to understand the motor. And I don't but I know that if anything is not working right in the engine, it's not going to bring me from A to B. And this is where on the website we have the very similar, very, very same situation really, right. If the website's technical foundation isn't going to work, your ads are not going to work, you're not going to get your leads, you might not get your rankings you might annoy users, people might always turn to your competitors brand because your site doesn't work. Correct. You might get negative feedback I've seen forum post about slow sites where it's a now you can just they would have a good price. But yes, it is crappy, you have a second date it doesn't work or, or the checkout has issues if it's an ecommerce site or stuff like that. So we see all this. And this is really what's very often called a sunk cost right, you think everything is alright, everything is working. So you can open your website, everything seems to be working. But there might be issues you're not even aware of. And this is where speed audit a site audit really comes in handy. And so you get a neutral view about what is the situation right now. And then, essentially a task list on what needs to be fixed to get this solid foundation happening. And really where we very often come in is once the solid foundation is created, or while very often your team works on this foundation. We work on the content side of things. But SEO progress mostly can only happen if there is a solid technical foundation, a usable and speedy site. Justin, thank you so much for joining us today. I think this was really really valuable insights as well. I think we are going to bring you on another time in the future. To talk a little bit more about more specifics here. I think we people are going to have a long checklist to go through. Already. If someone

wants to get in touch with you wants to consider a speed audit or get in touch with your team what would be the best way?

Justin Meadows 40:21
support@tunedwp.com is the best way to get in touch. But yeah, you can certainly go over to our website tunewp.com and sign up for one of our free speed audits. And we can yet give you the list of recommendations for your site and what's going to make the biggest difference and then you can decide what to do from there.

Gert Mellak 40:40
Perfect and we're going to leave a link to speed audit, as well. Thank you so much, Justin, it was a pleasure to have you and yeah looking forward to having you again on the show in the future, hopefully and we'll talk a little bit more about what we can do to improve our sites.

Justin Meadows 40:53
Yeah, no worries. Thanks for having me, man. Thanks. Cheers.