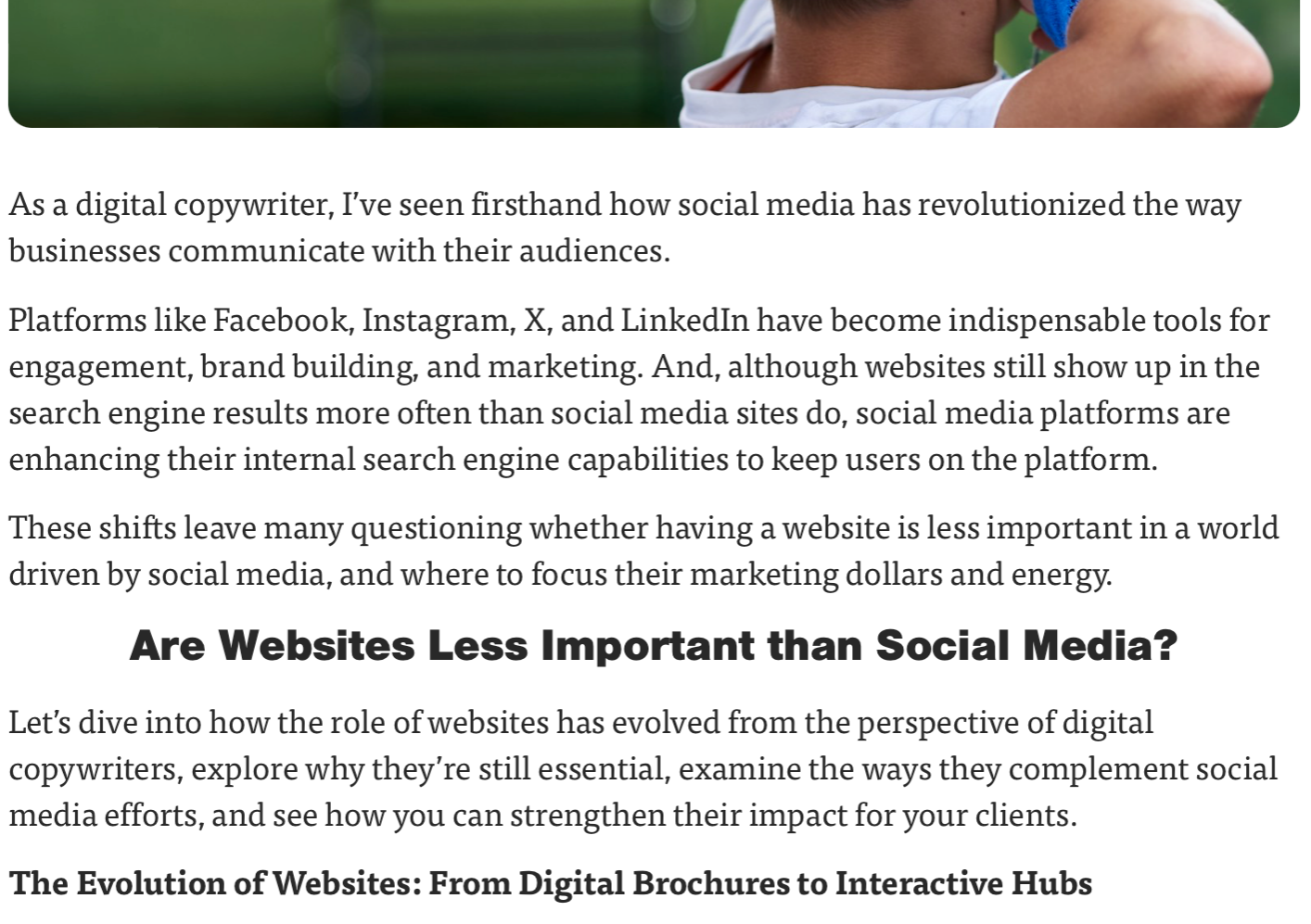


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# Why Websites Still Matter and How to Ignite Them with Social Media

By Jonna Jerome September 16, 2024

8 minute read



As a digital copywriter, I've seen firsthand how social media has revolutionized the way businesses communicate with their audiences.

Platforms like Facebook, Instagram, X, and LinkedIn have become indispensable tools for engagement, brand building, and marketing. And, although websites still show up in the search engine results more often than social media sites do, social media platforms are enhancing their internal search engine capabilities to keep users on the platform.

These shifts leave many questioning whether having a website is less important in a world driven by social media, and where to focus their marketing dollars and energy.

## Are Websites Less Important than Social Media?

Let's dive into how the role of websites has evolved from the perspective of digital copywriters, explore why they're still essential, examine the ways they complement social media efforts, and see how you can strengthen their impact for your clients.

### The Evolution of Websites: From Digital Brochures to Interactive Hubs

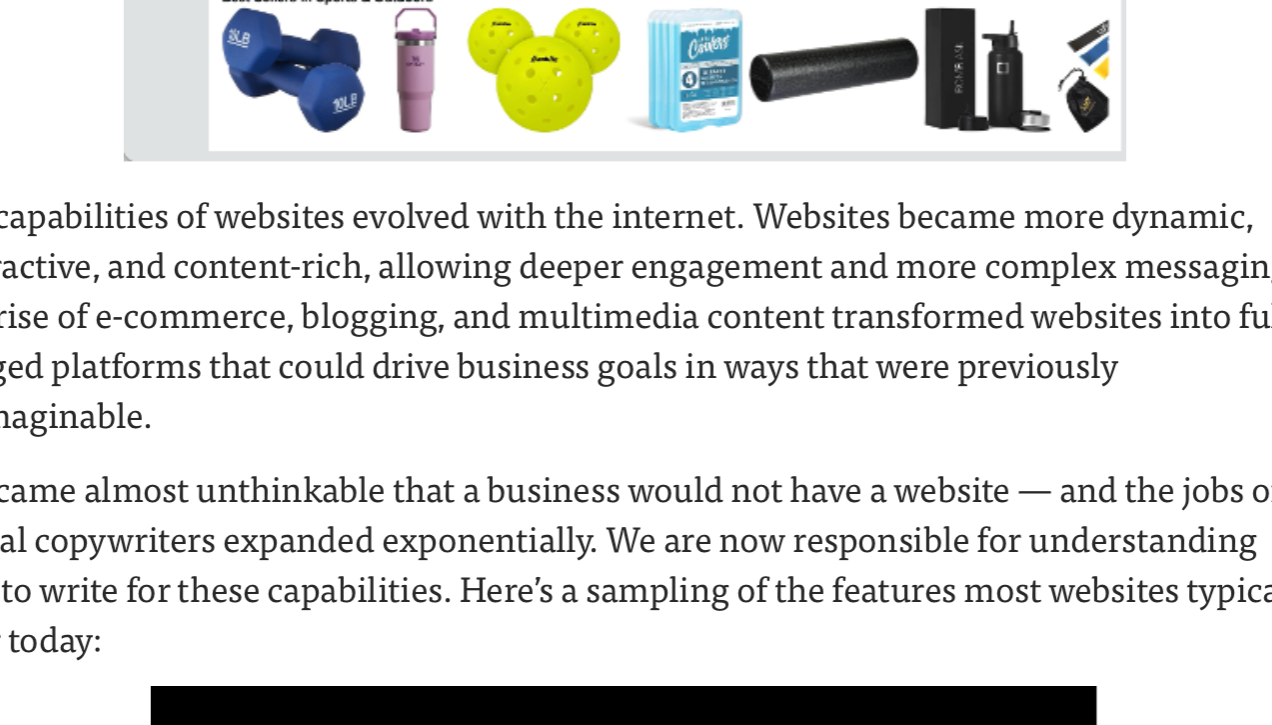
In the early days of the internet, websites and social media operated in largely separate roles. In their early days, websites were more static, serving as "digital brochures" that provided basic business information. Businesses used them largely to support brick-and-mortar storefronts.

In the early days of social media, those platforms were used primarily for personal interaction and networking.

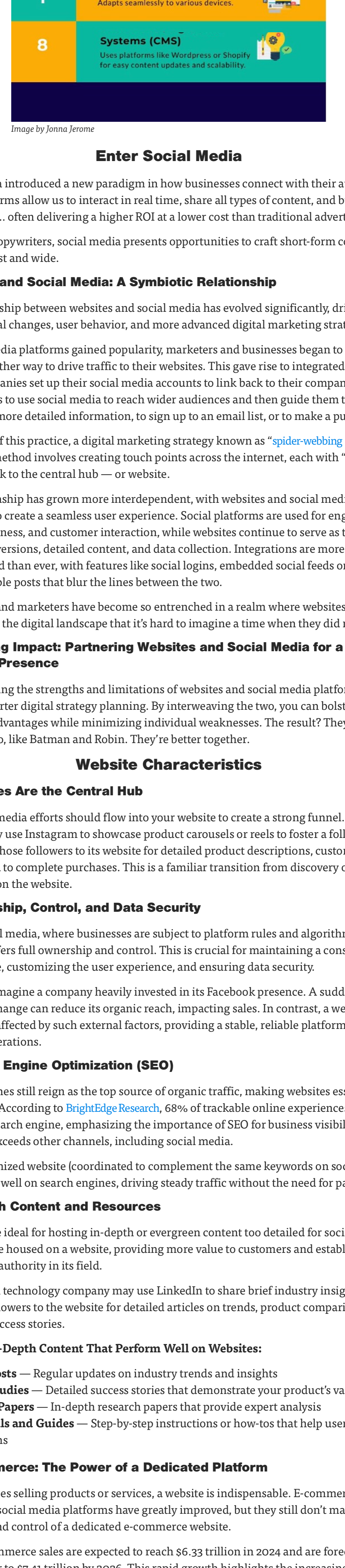
There was little integration between websites and social media.

The focus of digital copywriters at that time was to produce clear, concise content that delivered essential details like the services/products offered, contact and location information, and business hours. Using Amazon as an example, you can see the leaps and bounds of change — and how businesses and copywriters had to adapt.

### Amazon in 1999



### Amazon Today



The capabilities of websites evolved with the internet. Websites became more dynamic, interactive, and content-rich, allowing deeper engagement and more complex messaging. The rise of e-commerce, blogging, and multimedia content transformed websites into full-fledged platforms that could drive business goals in ways that were previously unimaginable.

It became almost unthinkable that a business would not have a website — and the jobs of digital copywriters expanded exponentially. We are now responsible for understanding how to write for these capabilities. Here's a sampling of the features most websites typically offer today:

Key Features of Modern Websites: Responsive Design (Adapts seamlessly to various devices), Systems (CMS) (Uses platforms like WordPress or Shopify for easy content updates and scalability).

## Enter Social Media

Social media introduced a new paradigm in how businesses connect with their audiences. These platforms allow us to interact in real time, share all types of content, and build community... often delivering a higher ROI at a lower cost than traditional advertising.

For digital copywriters, social media presents opportunities to craft short-form content that resonates fast and wide.

### Websites and Social Media: A Symbiotic Relationship

The relationship between websites and social media has evolved significantly, driven by technological changes, user behavior, and more advanced digital marketing strategies.

As social media platforms gained popularity, marketers and businesses began to enlist them as another way to drive traffic to their websites. This gave rise to integrated strategies where companies set up their social media accounts to link back to their company website. The goal was to use social media to reach wider audiences and then guide them to a website for more detailed information, to sign up to an email list, or to make a purchase.

As a result of this practice, a digital marketing strategy known as "spider-webbing" was born. This method involves creating touch points across the internet, each with "threads" weaving back to the central hub — or website.

This relationship has grown more interdependent, with websites and social media working in tandem to create a seamless user experience. Social platforms are used for engagement, brand awareness, and customer interaction, while websites continue to serve as the central hub for conversions, detailed content, and data collection. Integrations are more sophisticated than ever, with features like social logins, embedded social feeds on websites, and shoppable posts that blur the lines between the two.

Businesses and marketers have become so entrenched in a realm where websites and social media share the digital landscape that it's hard to imagine a time when they did not.

### Maximizing Impact: Partnering Websites and Social Media for a Stronger Presence

Understanding the strengths and limitations of websites and social media platforms enables smarter digital strategy planning. By intertwining the two, you can bolster their combined advantages while minimizing individual weaknesses. The result? They are a dynamic duo, like Batman and Robin. They're better together.

## Website Characteristics

### 1. Websites Are the Central Hub

Your social media efforts should flow into your website to create a strong funnel. **Example:** A brand may use Instagram to showcase product carousels or reels to foster a following, then direct those followers to its website for detailed product descriptions, customer reviews, and to complete purchases. This is a familiar transition from discovery on social to conversion on the website.

### 2. Ownership, Control, and Data Security

Unlike social media, where businesses are subject to platform rules and algorithm changes, a website offers full ownership and control. This is crucial for maintaining a consistent brand image, customizing the user experience, and ensuring data security.

**Example:** Imagine a company heavily invested in its Facebook presence. A sudden algorithm change can reduce its organic reach, impacting sales. In contrast, a website remains unaffected by such external factors, providing a stable, reliable platform for business operations.

### 3. Search Engine Optimization (SEO)

Search engines still reign as the top source of organic traffic, making websites essential for businesses. According to [BrightEdge Research](#), 68% of trackable online experiences start through a search engine, emphasizing the importance of SEO for business visibility, which still vastly exceeds other channels, including social media.

A well-optimized website (coordinated to complement the same keywords on social) should rank well on search engines, driving steady traffic without the need for paid ads.

### 4. In-Depth Content and Resources

Websites are ideal for hosting in-depth or evergreen content too detailed for social media, which can be housed on a website, providing more value to customers and establishing the brand as an authority in their field.

**Example:** A technology company may use LinkedIn to share brief industry insights, but direct its followers to the website for detailed articles on trends, product comparisons, and customer success stories.

### Types of In-Depth Content That Perform Well on Websites:

- **Blog Posts** — Regular updates on industry trends and insights
- **Case Studies** — Detailed success stories that demonstrate your product's value
- **White Papers** — In-depth research papers that provide expert analysis
- **Tutorials and Guides** — Step-by-step instructions or how-tos that help users solve problems

### 5. E-commerce: The Power of a Dedicated Platform

For businesses selling products or services, a website is indispensable. E-commerce features on social media platforms have greatly improved, but they still don't match the flexibility and control of a dedicated e-commerce website.

Global e-commerce sales are expected to reach \$6.33 trillion in 2024 and are forecasted to grow further to \$7.41 trillion by 2026. This rapid growth highlights the increasing importance of having a strong online presence for businesses that maintain a robust e-commerce site.

(Numbers from [SellersCommerce](#) and [Shopify](#)).

### 6. Analytics and User Insights

The importance of [web analytics in digital marketing](#) is hard to overstate. Websites give us the ability to uncover [deep insights into user behavior](#), preferences, and content performance. This is gold for refining content strategies, optimizing the user experience, and making data-driven business decisions.

**Example:** Google Analytics can reveal where your website visitors are coming from (which reveals if your social posts are working), what content they engage with, and where they drop off. What could be better information when you are looking to make changes for better performance?

## Social Media Considerations

Many of our content creators have a complicated relationship with social media, because of its very nature of highs and lows — waiting for the response from your latest post can feel like predicting the stock market. Here's a quick summary of the [benefits and challenges](#) to keep in mind when planning your social media campaign:

Benefits & Challenges of Writing for Social Media. Pros: Real-Time Interaction, Content Virality, Targeted Advertising, Community Building, Cost Efficiency, Short Conversion Time. Cons: Algorithm Dependency, Generative AI, Falling Behind on Social Engagement, Short Content Lifespan, Data Ownership, Limited Customization.

Image by Jonna Jerome

### Strategy: How to Optimize Your Website and Social Media to Work with Your Social Media

There are many ways to get your website and social media platforms to play nice together; exploring this topic could fill an entire white paper! However, there are basic steps you can and should take.

The key to successfully integrating your website and social media effort is creating compelling and complementary content for both platforms. This content should reflect your brand's voice, appeal to your target audience, and support your marketing goals. Content that engages users and motivates them to share is a top priority.

As you consider these actions, remember that you don't need to implement everything at once. Depending on your experience level, some terms may be unfamiliar, so I have provided many reference links.

Start with strategies that seem most relevant to your business and easiest for you to do, then gradually add more. Begin by looking at your current digital real estate to identify gaps and opportunities for integration, using the suggestions here as a guide:

1. Optimize [social media button](#) placement on your website.
  - Strategically position buttons for maximum visibility and engagement.
  - Test different layouts to find the best-performing design.
2. Offer effective [social sharing options](#).
  - Use [plugins compatible with](#) (or part of) your website to offer customizable sharing buttons.
  - Experiment with placement and design to increase share rates.
3. Develop your [content strategy](#) to align with social media audiences.
  - Create content for the platforms that attract your target audience.
4. Develop [social media-friendly content](#).
  - Create content that resonates across platforms (e.g., blog posts, infographics).
  - Use compelling headlines and visuals to make the content share-worthy.
5. Apply social media metadata.
  - Use [social Open Graph](#) tags to control how your content appears when shared.
  - Customize titles, descriptions, and images for each major platform.
6. Offer [social login](#) functionality.
  - Allow users to sign up or log in from their social media accounts.
  - Use this to streamline the user experience and potentially gather additional data.
7. [Embed social feeds on your website](#).
  - Use tools to filter and showcase your best social content and integrate user-generated content from social platforms.
8. [Optimize your blog](#) for social engagement.
  - Structure posts for easy consumption and sharing on social platforms.
  - Include visuals and clear calls to action to encourage social interaction.
9. Implement a [cross-platform content strategy](#).
  - Tailor content for each platform's strengths while maintaining brand consistency.
  - Use scheduling tools to optimize posting times across channels.
  - Adapt your website content for visitors coming from these social media platforms.
10. [Optimize your website and social posts](#) for mobile responsiveness and speed.
  - Optimize your website to improve load times and reduce bounce rates for traffic coming from social platforms.
  - Edit in the mobile format view when optimizing your website, and test social links.
11. Leverage [social proof](#) effectively.
  - Display social media follower counts, reviews, or testimonials.
  - Use dynamic social proof to show real-time activity on your site.
12. Create [targeted landing pages](#) for social campaigns.
  - Design specific pages that align with your social media promotions.
  - Check messaging consistency between ads and landing pages.
13. Set up [social listening](#) tools.
  - Monitor brand mentions and social conversations across social platforms.
  - Use insights to pinpoint your social and website strategies.
14. Strategize new [retargeting strategies](#).
  - Use [social media retargeting](#) to retarget website visitors on social platforms.
  - Segment audiences based on user behavior for more effective ads.

## Predicting the Future

Websites and social media will continue to play a unique but complementary role in digital marketing. Technology advances in AI and personalization will further interlock these platforms, creating more seamless user experiences that bridge the gap between social engagement and web-based conversion.

### Trends in Website and Social Media Integration

1. **Personalized User Experiences** — Tailoring content and offers based on user data
2. **Advanced Chatbots** — Providing instant support and engagement on websites
3. **Seamless E-commerce Integration** — Merging social media discovery with website purchasing
4. **Augmented Reality (AR)** — Enhancing product experiences on websites
5. **Cross-Platform Analytics** — Combining social media and website data for comprehensive insights

### The Dual Importance of Websites and Social Media

So, the next time you're finding it challenging to advise a client who doesn't see the need for a website or feels overwhelmed by or doesn't understand social media, you can educate them on the benefits of combining the strengths of both.

Social media platforms are no doubt powerful and have shifted the landscape of digital marketing, yet they have not diminished the importance or the need for websites.

I view websites as the anchor of a brand's online presence, offering a controlled, data-driven platform that complements the immediacy and reach of social media. Together, they're that dynamic duo that ultimately converts followers into customers.