

20 Actionable Sitefinity Tips & Tricks Every Sitefinity User Should Know

Sitefinity by Progress is an all-in-one content management solution for websites. With multi-site, multi-channel content management it empowers your entire digital presence from one place. Visus LLC is a Sitefinity Partner, MVP, and Delivery Partner specializing in providing clients Sitefinity solutions. In working with Sitefinity, we uncovered some Tips & Tricks that will help make your use of Sitefinity easier, quicker, and even a little more fun. Enjoy!

#1

Set it and forget it!

Make sure your Automatic Sitemap Generation is activated.

In the Administration menu, within the Tools section, look for Sitemap. Here you'll find options for setting the frequency for generating the sitemap and whether it should be submitted automatically to Google and Bing search engines. Make sure Automatic Sitemap Generation and Submittal are enabled. If you don't find the Sitemap tool in the Tools section, you'll need to install the Sitemap Generator module.

Key Point: Having this feature run automatically ensures search engines crawl the most recent version of your website.

#2

Don't ignore this error!

What to do when you get an authentication error.

Have you seen this error? **"IDX10803 Unable to create to obtain configuration from:"** It means that Sitefinity can't obtain the metadata.xml file that defines the OpenID Connect endpoints it needs for authentication. Double check the relying party defined in the AuthenticationConfig.Config file (found in /App_Data/Sitefinity/Configuration/), and make sure that the site can make requests to itself. Note: if this environment is using an IP address whitelist to control access, make sure that you've allowed incoming traffic from the environment's own IP address. Also, make sure (if using HTTPS) that your SSL certificate is signed by a trusted public certificate authority.

Key Point: Fixing this error will allow your website to authenticate.

#3

Check this default when running a single site

Turn off Multi-Site Module with a single site.

By default, your Sitefinity main site has a URL of localhost in the multi-site configuration, and this will cause all links generated by Sitefinity to use localhost as the domain name, even when the site is running in an environment that uses a real URL. Make sure to disable the multi-site module if it is not being used. When the multi-site module is enabled, the multi-site configuration site URLs take precedence over other methods that Sitefinity uses to determine the site URL. Or, alternatively, make sure you properly define URLs for your single site in the multi-site configuration, even when you have only a single site, and have not configured multi-site yet.

Key Point: By making certain you're in Single Site mode, not multi-site, you ensure your site is not using localhost for the domain name in its links.

#4

Avoid Custom Backend Admins

Custom backend page templates can break with upgrades.

While Sitefinity makes it possible to add pages to the backend administration, which can be handy for building custom administration interfaces, it is unwise to create a custom admin template for use with these pages (unless it is not based on an existing template). Sitefinity upgrades will change these existing templates from time to time, and these changes may break custom code in widgets, which could end up requiring costly fixes be made to any custom code on pages using these templates. Instead, create an 'Admin' section within the normal Sitefinity pages, and use page permissions and roles to restrict access to your administrators.

Key Point: By avoiding custom backend templates you will protect the integrity of your widgets against upgrades that might break your custom code.

#5

Yikes! Avoid a *Proceed with Caution* warning!

Always add all external redirects to Trusted Domains in Advanced settings.

If you have a link redirecting to an external site, your users may get an error: "Proceed with caution! You are being directed to ... This site is out of our control." This can look scary. To prevent that message, any redirects to external sites need to be added to Trusted Domains in Sitefinity's Advanced settings for Web Security. For more info:

<https://www.progress.com/blogs/sitefinity-cms-11-1-now-includes-openredirect-protection>

<https://www.progress.com/documentation/sitefinity-cms/administration-configure-redirect-validation>

Key Point: You can prevent users getting a scary error message when clicking on external links.

#6

Control your styling and keep load times fast

How to control your CSS Load sequence.

Did you know that you can control the load order of your CSS if you're using themes in Sitefinity to control styling? Simply edit the `cssLoadOrder.xml` file (located in `~/App_Data/Sitefinity/WebsiteTemplates/YourTemplate/App_Themes/MyTheme/Global/`).

```
<cssFiles>
<file>cssfile1.css</file>
<file>cssfile2.css</file>
<file>cssfile3.css</file>
</cssFiles>
```

Key Point: By controlling your CSS Load Order you can ensure page load times are maintained and your pages load fast.

#7

Target only those elements on page editor you want

Be sure to override styles to the backend page editor.

If Sitefinity makes a mess of your styles in the backend page editor, you can override styles by using the `.sfPageEditor` class to target elements that appear on the page editor only.

Key Point: It's an easy fix if your styles are missing.

#8

Edit photos directly from within Sitefinity

Skip expensive 3rd-party photo editing costs.

Sitefinity allows you to edit images right in the CMS backend. After uploading an image to the library, go to the image properties page. From here, you can crop, resize, and rotate the uploaded image. Once you're done you can overwrite the existing image or save it as a new image. This allows your team to edit photos without the need of a third-party photo editing application.

Key Point: You can save \$ and edit photos directly from within Sitefinity.

#9

Use Multisite to manage multiple sites

How to manage multiple sites from one Sitefinity CMS.

You can use Sitefinity CMS to manage multiple sites using one Sitefinity CMS instance. With Sitefinity's Multisite feature, you can share content between different sites, assign different languages and permissions to different sites, and enable or disable different modules between sites.

Key Point: Save time and effort by managing multiple sites from a single interface.

#10

Widgets? Hands off!

How to protect widgets with advanced controls.

Sometimes you don't want your client accessing certain widgets in Sitefinity if they are too advanced for the user or could break your site. You can explicitly choose which page editor widgets to hide and show to the client by going to the Toolbox section of the Advanced settings and enabling/disabling the widgets of your choice. If you disable a certain widget, that widget will no longer appear to the client in the page editor.

Key Point: You can avoid widget problems by protecting them from unwanted users.

#11

Avoid duplicate URLs!

What to do when you get a “URL already exists” message.

When creating or editing a page in Sitefinity, you might come across the error “URL already exists” when saving the page. But, when you go to check, there is no such URL anywhere within the current pages on your site. It can be super frustrating because it seems like the error is there for no reason. However, you can get this error if a page in the Recycle Bin has the URL you are trying to use. Don’t forget to check the Recycle Bin and delete the page permanently to fix this error.

Key Point: Keep your Recycle Bin clean and avoid duplicate URL issues

#12

No code needed for responsive design

How to easily create responsive layouts.

Built-in Sitefinity layouts can be made responsive without any coding knowledge, using the ‘Responsive & Mobile Design’ option under the ‘Design’ menu item.

Key Point: Creating responsive layouts is easy and quick.

#13

No more generic loading screen

You can custom brand your application initialization page.

When working with Sitefinity, you’re bound to see the application initialization page that shows a generic loading image. Did you know you can brand that quite easily with your own logo? Simply find the `<div class="process" ng-show="currentAppState === 'Initializing'">` tag and replace the current image with your own. Note: it’s easiest to use a base64 image, like what’s already there.

Bonus tip: You can also customize the existing “Upgrading” and “Failed” statuses, which are noted in their own “currentAppState” containers, above the “Initializing” container.

Key Point: You can easily add you own logo to loading page.

#14

Make your libraries obey

How to fix errors when calling functions or other objects.

In all versions of Sitefinity, MVC widgets may or may not load external JS libraries when you expect them to. This also depends upon the browser that is using your Sitefinity site. This can lead to errors when trying to call functions or use other objects, like Kendo UI. The solution? Ensure jQuery is loaded in the `<head>` of your main layout/template and make sure to use Sitefinity’s built-in script references where possible (for example, reference jQuery with `ScriptRef.JQuery`). Also consider loading JavaScript libraries dynamically to limit or eliminate render-blocking script loading.

Key Point: Place your jQuery library reference in `<head>` for libraries to load properly.

#15

Avoid slowing from large images

You can automate your image compression process.

Often images are not compressed or optimized before being uploaded to the site. This means that even if a site is initially developed and deployed with all the site images completely optimized, the site can get drastically slower over time. As more and more non-optimized (uncompressed) images are uploaded and displayed on the site, it will become slower and slower. To combat this, you can create an upload override, that can use automated services to automatically compress uploaded images. Kraken.IO is one such service that allows for easy integration. You can even configure the compression settings in the Sitefinity Admin section. For start, you can download the full code for a Kraken.IO implementation here:

<https://github.com/Sitefinity/SitefinityImageOptimization>

Note: you'll need to sign up for a Kraken.IO account, but if you don't exceed limitations, it's free.

Key Point: Automation of image compression will keep your website loading quickly.

#16

Watch those moves to production from dev

How to avoid version changes from dev to production.

While SiteSync is great at moving content and settings from staging to production environments, it cannot be used to deploy version changes from environment to environment. Plan Sitefinity version changes with care; you may need to put a hold on content changes to schedule moving version changes through the pipeline from development to production.

Key Point: Manage version changes for dev and production sites carefully to avoid issues.

#17

Watch for these licensing warnings!

You can ignore staging site and licensing warnings.

Perhaps you're using a deployment strategy that swaps a warm staging site to production; for example, using an Azure Deployment Slot. Likely, you will test some aspects of the staging site before swapping it to production. If so, don't be surprised to see warnings on the Sitefinity back-end Dashboard. If your staging site URL is not included in the Sitefinity license, it gets logged to the database as running an unlicensed site. Don't worry, though, those warnings will go away and will not have an impact on your production site. If, however, the warnings pertain to permanent or production URLs, those URLs should be added to the Sitefinity license to prevent front-end pages from displaying a message about running a trial version of Sitefinity.

Key Point: Licensing warnings for temporary staging sites will go away and not affect the production site.

#18

Multi-language made easy

How to quickly setup a multi-language site.

Need a multi-language site? Preparing Sitefinity to deliver a multi-language site is easy. Go to Administration -> Basic Settings -> Languages, click Add languages... and select the language(s) of your choice. If you want even more granular control, click the link to "Show cultures", and you can deliver different versions of your pages for English (United Kingdom) and English (United States), or Spanish (Spain) and Spanish (Mexico). The possibilities are vast. Now you have the option of adding new versions of each of your pages or using the default language.

Bonus tip: Of course, you'll still need to provide the translated content, but Visus' partnership with Lionbridge Technologies, Inc. can help you there.

Key Point: Setting up a multi-language site is a simple step-by-step process.

#19

Version 13 upgrade errors?

How to fix build errors in Azure App Services after Version 13 upgrade.

If you start to see the error 'Multiple assemblies with equivalent identity have been imported' with regard to System.ComponentModel.Annotations in Azure App Services after upgrading to version 13, the solution is to force Azure to use MsBuild 15 for the build process, rather than the default version 14. To do this, you need to download a deployment script from the advanced kudu tools for your app service, and modify the section dealing with the MsBuild path so that it a) always sets the path, regardless of whether it is already set, and b) sets the path as follows:

```
SET MSBUILD_PATH=%ProgramFiles(x86)%\MSBuild-15.3.409.57025\MSBuild\15.0\Bin\MSBuild.
```

Key Point: There's a fix for Azure App Services V. 13 upgrade build errors.

#20

Broken Content Block Widget

How to fix an unclickable Content Block error

When editing a page, if the Content Block widget becomes unclickable, it may be a problem with the URL the page has been set to. When setting the URL to anything that starts with /sitefinity (for example /sitefinity-cms, /sitefinitytest), it may cause an issue that loads an older version of the page editor UI and breaks the Content Block widget. If you are getting this error, try changing the URL in Title & Properties to something that doesn't begin with '/sitefinity'. Note that using 'sitefinity' anywhere else but the start of the URL doesn't cause this issue (for example, /progress-sitefinity).

Key Point: Using /sitefinity at the beginning of a page's URL may cause the Content Block to break in the page editor.