

The Ghost Publication Launch Checklist

30 practical checks, from choosing your theme to inviting your first readers.

Print and tick, or mark up this PDF in your reader. Work on a staging site where possible. Skip checks that do not apply to your publication.

Choose your foundation

☐ **Know who you are publishing for**

Write one sentence describing your reader and what they will come to you for.

☐ **Check your hosting plan**

Confirm your Ghost version and that your plan supports custom themes. Ghost(Pro) Starter excludes custom themes.

☐ **Connect your domain**

Check that your chosen address opens securely with HTTPS and redirects consistently.

☐ **Keep a recovery copy**

Save a copy of your theme, content export and important settings before making changes.

☐ **Install the right theme file**

Upload the theme ZIP in Ghost Admin. Check compatibility and read its setup instructions.

☐ **Set your publication identity**

Add your site title, description, logo, icon and navigation. Keep names and links consistent.

Make it ready to read

Test with the sort of content you actually publish.

☐ **Add representative articles**

Include a short post, a long article and any content types you plan to use regularly.

☐ **Try a long headline**

Check headings, excerpts and article cards with realistic titles rather than short placeholders.

☐ **Check your images**

Review feature-image crops, captions and alternative text. Use appropriately sized, compressed images.

☐ **Read the whole article**

Check headings, lists, quotes, links and the Ghost cards you use. Make sure text remains comfortable to read.

☐ **Open tags and author pages**

Check archive headings, descriptions, profile details and pagination where available.

☐ **Try search and a missing page**

Use search if your site offers it, and open a made-up URL to check the 404 page.

☐ **Use a narrow screen**

Read on a phone in portrait and landscape. Look for clipped text, sideways scrolling and awkward menus.

☐ **Use the keyboard and zoom**

Tab through links and controls. Check visible focus, readable contrast and the page at 200% zoom.

Memberships and email

Follow the journey as a new reader would.

☐ Choose your membership offer

Decide whether the publication is public, free-members-only or paid, and explain what each reader gets.

☐ Check access rules

Open public, members-only and paid posts while signed out and with the relevant test membership.

☐ Check paid membership setup

If you charge readers, review prices, billing periods and payment settings. Follow the payment provider's testing guidance.

☐ Test signup and sign-in

Use an email address you control. Follow the sign-in link, check your account page and sign out again.

☐ Set the sender and reply address

Use a recognisable sender and an inbox you read. Complete any domain authentication your email provider requires.

☐ Send yourself a newsletter preview

Check the subject, images, links and reading layout in your inbox and on a phone.

☐ Check consent and privacy wording

Explain which emails people are choosing and which services process their details. Keep marketing choices clear.

☐ Check the way out

Test unsubscribe and email preferences. Confirm that someone who opts out stops receiving marketing emails.

Check, then launch

Do one final pass on the public site.

☐ Set titles and descriptions

Check the browser tab, publication metadata and the title and description of important pages.

☐ Set sharing images

Add a clear social image, typically 1200 x 630 pixels, and check its crop and text at a small size.

☐ Follow your important links

Open navigation, contact, subscription and purchase links. Remove broken links and unfinished destinations.

☐ Check mobile speed

Run PageSpeed Insights on the homepage and a typical article. Start with oversized images and unnecessary scripts.

☐ Remove placeholders

Replace sample content and check contact details, pricing and policies. Use claims you can support.

☐ Check public access

When you are ready, remove any private-site restriction and confirm the public site and /sitemap.xml open.

☐ Invite readers who opted in

Send launch news only to people who chose those emails. Make the message useful and include an unsubscribe link.

☐ Recheck after launch

Keep a fresh recovery copy and revisit the site on desktop and mobile. Ask a reader to try the key journeys.