

Ticket: SQL Timeout / Performance Bottleneck in Author Sitemap Provider

Priority: Critical / Blocker

Component: Yoast SEO - Author Sitemap Provider

Environment: WordPress VIP

Data Scale: 7.3M Users | 34.6M Usermeta Rows

1. Issue Summary

A critical database performance issue has been identified when accessing `sitemap_index.xml` (specifically triggering the Author Sitemap generation). On large-scale environments like WordPress VIP, the query used to fetch users who haven't had their profile updated metadata set is timing out.

The query currently takes **~63.5 seconds**, exceeding the database threshold and causing a 504 gateway timeout or a terminated SQL process.

2. Technical Evidence

Source Code Reference: [class-author-sitemap-provider.php L207-L217](#)

Slow Query Log (WP VIP):

None

```
/sitemap_index.xml | Queries: 413 | Total DB time: 69.1757s
```

```
--- #1 [63.5859s] *** SLOW *** ---
```

```
SELECT wp_users.ID
FROM wp_users
      LEFT JOIN wp_usermeta ON
          (
              wp_users.ID = wp_usermeta.user_id
              AND
              wp_usermeta.meta_key = '_yoast_wpseo_profile_updated'
          )
      LEFT JOIN wp_usermeta AS mt1 ON ( wp_users.ID = mt1.user_id )
WHERE 1=1 AND (
    (
        wp_usermeta.user_id IS NULL
    )
    AND
    (
```

```

(
  (
    ( mt1.meta_key = 'wp_capabilities' AND mt1.meta_value LIKE '%"edit\\_posts"' )
    OR
    ( mt1.meta_key = 'wp_capabilities' AND mt1.meta_value LIKE '%"administrator"' )
    OR
    ( mt1.meta_key = 'wp_capabilities' AND mt1.meta_value LIKE '%"editor"' )
    OR
    ( mt1.meta_key = 'wp_capabilities' AND mt1.meta_value LIKE '%"author"' )
    OR
    ( mt1.meta_key = 'wp_capabilities' AND mt1.meta_value LIKE '%"contributor"' )
    OR
    ( mt1.meta_key = 'wp_capabilities' AND mt1.meta_value LIKE '%"wpseo\\_manager"' )
    OR
    ( mt1.meta_key = 'wp_capabilities' AND mt1.meta_value LIKE '%"wpseo\\_editor"' )
  )
)
)
)
) ORDER BY user_login ASC

```

Origin:

```

require('wp-blog-header.php')
wp
WP->main
WP->query_posts
WP_Query->query
WP_Query->get_posts
do_action_ref_array('pre_get_posts')
WP_Hook->do_action
WP_Hook->apply_filters
WPSEO_Sitemaps->redirect
WPSEO_Sitemaps->build_sitemap
WPSEO_Sitemaps->build_root_map
WPSEO_Author_Sitemap_Provider->get_index_links
WPSEO_Author_Sitemap_Provider->update_user_meta
get_users
WP_User_Query->__construct
WP_User_Query->query

```

- **Single Query Duration:** 63.58s
- **Total DB Time:** 69.17s

2. Ask / Support Required:

- Please confirm if this query behavior is expected for large datasets or a known issue.
- Suggest a scalable solution or best practice for handling author sitemaps with millions of users.
- Provide any way to disable, limit, or bypass this query (via config, hook, or filter) with affecting intended features.
- Share if there are any existing fixes or optimizations available for this.