

SEO Audit Checklist

Does your Website Pass?

- TECHNICAL -

Accessibility & Crawling

- ☐ DNS - Make sure your domain name server is configured properly
- ☐ 404s - Proper header responses and minimal reported errors
- ☐ Redirects - Use 301s and 302 appropriately, no daisy chains
- ☐ Server Errors - Address recurring issues or bad header responses
- ☐ Geo Targeting - Server location, country-targeting, language declarations & hreflang
- ☐ Robots.txt - Block sparingly and appropriately
- ☐ HTTPS - If you're not secure, consider it - check for proper configuration
- ☐ W3 Code Validation - Eliminate critical errors, get that code lean & mean
- ☐ W3 CSS Validation - Not required, but you should keep it tidy and use best practices

Indexing

- ☐ Indexed Pages - Cross reference sitemaps, WMT & live queries to find gaps/duplicates
- ☐ Canonicalization - Make sure there is a single preferred version of each page
- ☐ Structured Data - Icing on the cake, but apply within guidelines for rich snippets
- ☐ Duplicate Indexation - Check for content duplication onsite and offsite
- ☐ On-page Content Indexation - Ensure search engines and crawling and indexing content
- ☐ XML Sitemaps - Segment logical and check configuration to help crawling & diagnostics
- ☐ Content Above the Fold - Location counts - get some unique content above the fold

Site Structure

- ☐ Information Architecture – Clean, logical structure with navigable directories
- ☐ Keyword Friendly URLs – Avoid parameters, internal naming conventions & stuffing
- ☐ Capitalization in URLs – Be consistent (lowercase) and check server response for variants
- ☐ Dashes vs. Underscores – Consistency is key; we prefer dashes
- ☐ Pagination – Not required, but use where appropriate and markup properly
- ☐ Navigation – Consistent, easy to use and accessible for users and bots
- ☐ Breadcrumbs – Make them logical and useful for navigation, markup properly
- ☐ Footer – Get rid of spam, include useful pages, link badges & update copyright dates

Site Speed

- ☐ Server Speed – Speed matters - keep your site running as fast as possible for all users
- ☐ Code to Text Ratios – Lean code and rich content makes a great balance
- ☐ Page Size – Optimize all elements to keep page size lower, preferably under 750 KB
- ☐ HTTP/DNS Requests – Consolidate and minimize calls and domains needed to render pages
- ☐ Image File Size – Use CSS to cut down on the number of images and optimize remaining files
- ☐ Browser Caching – Set dates out as far as possible, don't require fresh fetching every time
- ☐ Combining, Minifying & Externalizing Scripts – Fewer & faster scripts that don't block rendering
- ☐ 3rd Party Code – Know what's on your site and eliminate excessive code

Management

- ☐ **Mobile Handling** – **Get the green light on Google's Mobile Friendly Tool**
- ☐ **WMT Mobile Usability Report** – **Dig deeper and fix any mobile usability issues**
- ☐ **Verified in Webmaster Tools (WMT)** – **Verify all versions and check data regularly**
- ☐ **Analytics** – **Properly implement analytics on all pages**
- ☐ **Security Alerts** – **Keep all software, plugins and platforms up to date and prevent hacks**

Too much Geek Speak?

V9 offers SEO Audits – let us pop the hood & interpret this for you!

Pro Tip

Mobile Compatibility

Google recently launched a Mobile-Friendly Test
<https://www.google.com/webmasters/tools/mobile-friendly/>

- CONTENT -

Content – Site Hierarchy

- ☐ Navigation – **Main, secondary & footer navigation should be read-able & optimized**
- ☐ Internal Anchor Text – **Should be incorporated & optimized throughout the website**
- ☐ Breadcrumbs – **Should show where a user is on the site and their path back to the homepage**
- ☐ Footer Links – **Should not recreate the top navigation, but should include the most useful pages**

Content – Blogging

- ☐ Blog Location – **Should be a unique subdirectory on your website, e.g. /blog**
- ☐ Posting Velocity – **Blogs should be posted at regular intervals, ideally at least once a week**
- ☐ Social sharing icons – **Should be located on each blog, ideally at the top of each post**
- ☐ Categories & Tags – **Categories or tags should be optimized & incorporated into each post**
- ☐ Imagery – **Each blog post should have at least one image that adds value to the post**
- ☐ Social Meta Data – **Each blog post should incorporate Facebook Open Graph at a minimum**
- ☐ Blog Relevancy – **Blog topics should be closely related to your area of expertise**
- ☐ Blog Formatting – **Blogs should be well formatted, easy to read and grammatically correct**

Pro Tip

Blog Metrics

BuzzSumo is a great tool to measure you & your competitors' blogging performance

<https://www.buzzsumo.com>

*Remember: Blogging
is all about Quality,
not Quantity*

Content – Content Quality

- ☐ **Bounce Rates** – Bounce rate should be below 80% on organic landing pages
- ☐ **User Engagement** – Time on site, exit rate & unique sessions should be monitored
- ☐ **Content Freshness** – Pages with fluid topics (e.g. “best slr cameras”) should be updated regularly
- ☐ **Unique Content** – Every indexed & do-follow page should contain unique content
- ☐ **On-Page Ads** – Avoid excessive use of on-page ads, including minimizing ads above the fold

Content – Content Optimization

- ☐ **Title Tags** – Should focus on the page, include a keyword & contain no more than 55 characters
- ☐ **Highly Targeted Pages** – Pages should be highly targeted and focus on a primary keyword phrase
- ☐ **Keyword Representation** – Primary keywords should be incorporated in each page
- ☐ **Keyword Variation** – Pages should include relevant variations of the primary keyword phrase
- ☐ **Relevancy** – Content pages and silos should include a range of relevant topics
- ☐ **Meta Descriptions** – Should include a keyword, focus on CTR & be no longer than 155 characters
- ☐ **Image Alt Tags** – Alt text should be incorporated on every website image
- ☐ **H1 Tags** – Should be the main headline & only used one time per page
- ☐ **Conversion Rate Optimization** – Every page should have a clear call to action

Pro Tip

Content Optimization

Get the official “how to” breakdown for 2015

<http://www.v9seo.com/blog/2015/01/21/official-content-optimization-checklist/>

- LINKS -

Links - Management

- ☐ Google Webmaster Tools - Make sure your site is penalty-free, and check up on any warnings
- ☐ Disavow History - Have you cleaned your links? It's not a bad idea to go in for a routine disavow

Health Assessment

- ☐ Toxic Link Report - Inspect your website's links to avoid an algorithmic or manual penalty
- ☐ Deep Link Report - Most of your links should point to internal pages rather than the homepage
- ☐ TLD Variety - Check for links from a variety of domains — .com, .net, .gov., org, etc.
- ☐ Link Trust and Authority - A high-ranked website has links from authoritative sites
- ☐ Anchor Text Analysis - Branded anchors are best, along with a mix of keywords and generic text
- ☐ NoFollow/Follow Ratio - Both link types have value. Assess your redirects and image links, too
- ☐ Topical Relevance - The best links come from websites that deal with the same topics as yours

Competitive Assessment

- ☐ Domain Authority - Your DA should be competitive with the best sites in your niche
- ☐ Link Velocity - Strong websites earn links at a consistent rate — no unusual spikes or drops
- ☐ Link Quantity - Great link profiles have plenty of links from plenty of different domains