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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

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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 were 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

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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/

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- 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 <u>Quality</u>, not Quantity

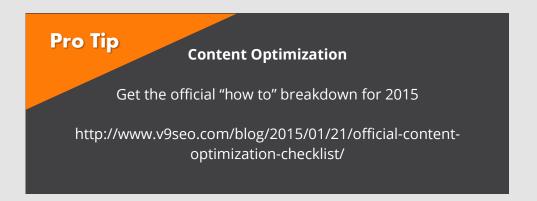
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Content – Content Quality

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



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- 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 nicheLink 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