

Best SEO Audit Checklist

Quick Overview

- Check indexed pages
 - Perform a website search for your organization name
 - See how many pages are returned
 - Is the homepage showing up as the first result? On the first page?
 - If the homepage isn't showing up as the first result, there could be issues, like a penalty or poor site architecture/internal linking, affecting the site.
- Search for the brand and branded terms
 - Is the homepage showing up at the top, or are correct pages showing up.
 - If the desired pages are not showing up as the first result then this is an issue.
- Check Google's cache for key pages
 - Is the content showing up?
 - Are navigation links present?
 - Are there links that aren't visible on the site?

Content

- Homepage content
 - Does the homepage have at least one paragraph?
- Landing pages
 - Do these pages have at least a few paragraphs?
 - Is it template text or is it completely unique?
- Site contains real and substantial content
 - Is there real content on the site or is the "content" simply a list of links.
- Proper keyword targeting
 - Is the intent right?
 - Are there pages targeting head terms, mid-tail, and long-tail keywords?
- Keyword cannibalization
 - Do a site: search Google for important keyword phrases.
 - Check for duplicate content/page titles in the SEOmoz Pro Campaign App.

SEO Audit Checklist

- Formatting
 - Is the content formatted well and easy to read quickly?
 - Are H tags used?
 - Are images used?
 - Is the text broken down into easy to read paragraphs?
- Good Headlines on Blog Posts
 - Good headlines go a long way. Make sure the headlines are well written and draw users in.
- Amount of content vs. ads
 - Since the implementation of Panda, the amount of ad-space on a page has become important to evaluate.
 - Make sure there is significant unique content above the fold.
 - If you have more ads than unique content, you are probably going to have a problem.

Duplicate Content

- There should be one URL for each piece of content
 - Do URLs include parameters or tracking code - This will result in multiple URLs for a piece of content.
 - Does the same content reside on completely different URLs?
- Do a search to check for duplicate content
 - Take a content snippet, put it in quotes and search for it.
 - Does the content show up elsewhere on the domain?
 - Has it been scraped? - If the content has been scraped, you should file a [content removal request](#) with Google.
- Sub-domain duplicate content
 - Does the same content exist on different sub-domains?
- Check for a secure version of the site
 - Does the content exist on a secure version of the site?
- Check other sites owned by the company

SEO Audit Checklist

- Is the content replicated on other domains owned by the company?

Accessibility

- Check the robots.txt
 - Has the entire site, or important content been blocked? Is link equity being orphaned due to pages being blocked via the robots.txt?
- Turn off JavaScript, cookies, and CSS
 - Use the Web Developer Toolbar
 - Is the content there?
 - Do the navigation links work?
- Now change your user agent to Googlebot.
 - Use the User Agent Add-on
 - Are they cloaking?
 - Does it look the same as before?
- Check the SEOmoz PRO Campaign
 - Check for 4xx errors and 5xx errors.

Site Architecture

- Hierarchy
 - Are category pages set up in the appropriate way to flow link equity to key pages?
- Landing pages
 - Do they have landing pages high enough in the architecture to receive enough link equity to compete for competitive terms?
- Number of category pages
 - How many category pages are there?
 - Have they been scaled out too much?
 - Category pages should be built out only when there is enough demand for new or sub category pages.

SEO Audit Checklist

- Pagination/Faceted Navigation
 - Is pagination or faceted navigation more appropriate? Or, should they be used in tandem?
 - Does pagination exist to help long tail content get indexed?
 - Is the pagination prohibitive to crawling (uses JavaScript).
- Number of clicks to content
 - Pages targeting really competitive head terms should be one or two clicks from the homepage.
 - Pages targeting moderately competitive keywords should be 2 or three clicks from the homepage.
 - Pages targeting the long tail should be 5 clicks away (obviously exceptions must be made here for sites with a ton of content).
- Prioritized content
 - Most important content should be higher up in the pagination

Technical Issues

- Proper use of 301's
 - Are 301's being used for all redirects?
 - If the root is being directed to a landing page, are they using a 301 instead of a 302?
 - Use [Live HTTP Headers](#) FireFox plugin to check 301s.
- Use of JavaScript
 - Is content being served in JavaScript?
 - Are links being served in JavaScript? Is this to do PR sculpting or is it accidental?
- Use of iframes
 - Is content being pulled in via iframes?
- Use of Flash
 - Is the entire site done in flash, or is flash used sparingly in a way that doesn't hinder crawling?

SEO Audit Checklist

Site Speed

- How long does the page take to load - Is it significant for users or search engines?
- What improvements can be made?
- Alt text
 - Is alt text present?
 - Does the alt text use keyword phrases?
 - Does the alt text reinforce the topical themes presented in the content?
- Check for Errors in Google Webmaster Tools
 - Google WMT will give you a good list of technical problems showing up on your site that they are encountering (such as: 4xx and 5xx errors, inaccessible pages in the XML sitemap, and soft 404's)
- XML Sitemaps
 - Are XML sitemaps in place?
 - Are XML sitemaps covering for poor site architecture?
 - Are XML sitemaps structured to show indexation problems?
 - Do the sitemaps follow proper XML protocols?

Canonicalization

- Canonical version of the site established through 301's
- Canonical version of site is specified in Google Webmaster Tools
- Rel canonical link tag is properly implemented across the site
 - Make sure it points to the correct page, and every page doesn't point to the homepage.
- Uses absolute URLs instead of relative URLs
 - This can cause a lot of problems if you have a root domain with secure sections.

URLs

- Clean URLs
 - No excessive parameters or session ID's

SEO Audit Checklist

- URLs exposed to search engines should be static.
- Short URLs
 - 115 characters or shorter – this character limit isn't set in stone, but shorter URLs are better for usability.
- Descriptive URLs
 - Get your primary keyword phrase in there.

Internal Linking

- Number of links on a page
 - 100 is a good target, but not a rule.
- Vertical Links
 - Homepage links to category pages.
 - Category pages link to subcategory and product pages as appropriate.
 - Product pages link to relevant category pages.
- Horizontal Links
 - Category pages link to other relevant category pages.
 - Product pages link to other relevant product pages.
- Links are in content
 - Does not utilize massive blocks of links stuck in the content to do internal linking.
- Footer links
 - Does not use a block of footer links instead of proper navigation.
 - Does not link to landing pages with optimized anchors.
- Good internal anchor text
- Check for broken links
 - Link Checker and Xenu are good tools for this.

Title Tags

- Unique title tags
 - Every page should have a unique title tag.
- Keyword rich

SEO Audit Checklist

- Pages should contain the primary keyword phrase.
- Is possible to use the secondary keyword phrase in a non spammy way?
- Primary keyword phrase at the beginning of the title tag
- Page titles include branding
 - In most cases the brand should be included at the end of the page title to help build a brand or entice users if you are a well known brand
- 65 - 70 characters in length
 - If the title is longer than this, the entirety will not be displayed in the SERPs.
- Have they been keyword stuffed by someone else?

Meta Tags

- Meta keywords tag used
 - This data should be removed as competitors can scrape this data.
- Meta description is appropriate
 - Each page has a unique meta description.
 - Meta descriptions are representative of the content and entice users.
- Rewrite meta descriptions for key pages
 - For key landing pages, write meta descriptions by hand instead of systematically implementing.
- Meta robots tag
 - Noindex pages only appropriate pages.
 - Not blocking important pages.

If you run into trouble just give us a call 303.351.1645.

[**Start A FREE marketing audit and get results in 48 hours or less.**](#)