



TECHNICAL SEO

AUDIT CHECKLIST 2026

Complete Audit Framework for Modern Websites

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How to Use This Checklist

This checklist covers every critical technical SEO element for modern websites in 2026. Use it to:

- Audit your own website or client sites
- Identify technical issues preventing rankings
- Prioritize fixes based on impact
- Track progress during implementation

Priority Levels

● **HIGH PRIORITY:** Critical issues that directly impact rankings or user experience. Fix immediately.

● **MEDIUM PRIORITY:** Important optimizations that improve performance. Address after high-priority items.

● **LOW PRIORITY:** Nice-to-have improvements. Tackle when time permits.

Automated Audits with Orbit HQ

Orbit HQ automatically checks all items in this checklist and provides AI-generated fixes for most issues. Instead of manually auditing and fixing, let AI handle the heavy lifting.

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1. Crawlability & Indexability

● High Priority

- Verify robots.txt is not blocking important pages
- Check for noindex tags on pages that should be indexed
- Ensure XML sitemap exists and is submitted to Google Search Console
- Verify sitemap includes all important pages (not 404s or redirects)
- Check that Google can crawl JavaScript content (if applicable)
- Verify no orphan pages (pages with no internal links)
- Check for crawl errors in Google Search Console

How to Check

Robots.txt: Visit `yoursite.com/robots.txt`

```
# Good robots.txt example
User-agent: *
Disallow: /admin/
Disallow: /cart/
Disallow: /checkout/
Allow: /

Sitemap: https://yoursite.com/sitemap.xml
```

XML Sitemap: Visit `yoursite.com/sitemap.xml`

- Should list all important pages
- Should not include 404s, redirects, or noindex pages
- Should be updated automatically when content changes
- Large sites: Use sitemap index files (max 50,000 URLs per sitemap)



Medium Priority

- Optimize crawl budget for large sites (prioritize important pages)
- Check for duplicate content in sitemaps
- Verify sitemap is compressed (gzip) for large sites
- Set up separate sitemaps for different content types (blog, products, etc.)

2. Site Architecture & URL Structure

● High Priority

- Ensure all pages are reachable within 3 clicks from homepage
- Use clean, descriptive URLs (avoid IDs and parameters)
- Implement proper URL hierarchy (categories → subcategories → pages)
- Fix broken internal links (404 errors)
- Ensure HTTPS is enforced site-wide (no mixed content)
- Verify www vs non-www redirect is consistent
- Check for redirect chains (A → B → C should be A → C)

URL Best Practices

✗ Bad	✓ Good
yoursite.com/page?id=12345	yoursite.com/blog/technical-seo-guide
yoursite.com/category1/cat2/cat3/product	yoursite.com/products/product-name
yoursite.com/index.php?page=about	yoursite.com/about



Medium Priority

- Implement breadcrumb navigation
- Add breadcrumb schema markup
- Create HTML sitemap for users
- Optimize internal linking structure (link to important pages more)
- Use descriptive anchor text for internal links

3. Page Speed & Core Web Vitals

● High Priority

- Achieve LCP (Largest Contentful Paint) under 2.5 seconds
- Achieve FID (First Input Delay) under 100ms
- Achieve CLS (Cumulative Layout Shift) under 0.1
- Compress images (WebP format recommended)
- Enable GZIP or Brotli compression for text files
- Minify CSS, JavaScript, and HTML
- Eliminate render-blocking resources
- Implement lazy loading for images below the fold

How to Test

- **PageSpeed Insights:** pagespeed.web.dev
- **Chrome DevTools:** Lighthouse tab
- **Search Console:** Core Web Vitals report

Quick Wins for Page Speed

1. **Image Optimization:** Use WebP format, compress to 80-85% quality
2. **CDN:** Use a Content Delivery Network (Cloudflare, AWS CloudFront)
3. **Caching:** Set proper cache headers (1 year for static assets)
4. **Font Loading:** Use `font-display: swap` to prevent invisible text

5. **Critical CSS:** Inline critical CSS, defer non-critical CSS

Medium Priority

- Implement HTTP/2 or HTTP/3
- Use preconnect for critical third-party origins
- Optimize third-party scripts (analytics, ads, etc.)
- Reduce JavaScript execution time
- Implement service workers for offline functionality

4. Mobile Optimization

● High Priority

- Ensure site is mobile-responsive (passes Mobile-Friendly Test)
- Use viewport meta tag correctly
- Ensure text is readable without zooming (16px minimum)
- Make tap targets at least 48x48px
- Avoid horizontal scrolling
- Test on real devices (iOS and Android)
- Ensure mobile page speed is acceptable (LCP under 2.5s)

Viewport Meta Tag

```
<meta name="viewport" content="width=device-width, initial-scale=1.0">
```

Mobile Testing Tools

- **Google Mobile-Friendly Test:** search.google.com/test/mobile-friendly
- **Chrome DevTools:** Device mode (toggle device toolbar)
- **BrowserStack:** Test on real devices



Medium Priority

- Implement AMP (Accelerated Mobile Pages) for blog content
- Optimize images for mobile (smaller file sizes)
- Reduce mobile-specific JavaScript
- Test on slow 3G connections

5. On-Page SEO Elements

● High Priority

- Every page has a unique, descriptive title tag (50-60 characters)
- Every page has a unique meta description (150-160 characters)
- Each page has exactly one H1 tag
- Heading hierarchy is logical (H1 → H2 → H3, no skipping)
- Images have descriptive alt text
- Canonical tags are set correctly (self-referencing or to preferred version)
- No duplicate title tags or meta descriptions

Title Tag Best Practices

 Good:

```
<title>Technical SEO Checklist 2026 | Complete Audit Guide | Orbit HQ</title>
```

 Bad:

```
<title>Home</title>
<title>This is a really long title tag that goes on and on and will be truncated in</title>
```

Meta Description Best Practices

 Good:

```
<meta name="description" content="Complete technical SEO audit checklist for 2026.">
```

Covers crawlability, site speed, mobile optimization, schema markup, and more. Download free PDF guide.">

✖ Bad:

```
<meta name="description" content="Welcome to our website.">
```



Medium Priority

- Implement Open Graph tags for social sharing
- Add Twitter Card meta tags
- Use semantic HTML5 elements (article, nav, aside, etc.)
- Optimize heading tags with target keywords
- Add FAQ schema to FAQ pages

6. Schema Markup (Structured Data)

● High Priority

- Implement Organization schema on homepage
- Add WebSite schema with site search (if applicable)
- Implement Breadcrumb schema on all pages
- Add Article schema to blog posts
- Implement Product schema for e-commerce (with reviews, price, availability)
- Validate schema with Google Rich Results Test
- Check for schema errors in Search Console

Essential Schema Types

Page Type	Schema Type	Priority
Homepage	Organization, WebSite	● High
Blog Posts	Article, BlogPosting	● High
Products	Product, Offer, AggregateRating	● High
Local Business	LocalBusiness	● High
FAQ Pages	FAQPage	● Medium

How-To Guides	HowTo	 Medium
Events	Event	 Medium

Schema Validation Tools

- **Google Rich Results Test:** search.google.com/test/rich-results
- **Schema Markup Validator:** validator.schema.org
- **Search Console:** Enhancements reports

Orbit HQ Schema Generator

Orbit HQ automatically generates and validates schema markup for all your pages. No manual JSON-LD coding required.

7. International SEO (If Applicable)

● High Priority (for multi-language/region sites)

- Implement hreflang tags for multi-language content
- Use proper URL structure (subdirectories or subdomains)
- Set correct language in HTML lang attribute
- Target correct country in Search Console
- Ensure content is truly translated (not machine-translated)

Hreflang Implementation

```
<link rel="alternate" hreflang="en" href="https://example.com/page" />
<link rel="alternate" hreflang="es" href="https://example.com/es/page" />
<link rel="alternate" hreflang="fr" href="https://example.com/fr/page" />
<link rel="alternate" hreflang="x-default" href="https://example.com/page" />
```

8. Security & Technical Issues

● High Priority

- Entire site uses HTTPS (SSL certificate installed)
- No mixed content warnings (all resources load via HTTPS)
- HTTP redirects to HTTPS automatically
- Security headers are set (HSTS, X-Frame-Options, etc.)
- No malware or hacked content warnings in Search Console
- Server returns correct HTTP status codes (200, 301, 404, etc.)

Essential Security Headers

```
Strict-Transport-Security: max-age=31536000; includeSubDomains
X-Content-Type-Options: nosniff
X-Frame-Options: SAMEORIGIN
X-XSS-Protection: 1; mode=block
Referrer-Policy: strict-origin-when-cross-origin
```

9. Content Quality & Optimization

● High Priority

- No thin content pages (minimum 300 words for most pages)
- No duplicate content (check with Copyscape or Siteliner)
- Content matches search intent for target keywords
- Important pages have sufficient internal links pointing to them
- No keyword stuffing (natural keyword usage)

● Medium Priority

- Content is updated regularly (especially for time-sensitive topics)
- Add table of contents to long-form content
- Use bullet points and short paragraphs for readability
- Include relevant images, videos, or infographics
- Implement content clusters (pillar pages + supporting content)

10. Monitoring & Maintenance

● High Priority

- Google Search Console is set up and verified
- Google Analytics (or alternative) is installed
- Monitor for crawl errors weekly
- Check Core Web Vitals monthly
- Review Search Console coverage report monthly
- Set up alerts for critical issues (downtime, security, etc.)

● Medium Priority

- Set up rank tracking for target keywords
- Monitor backlink profile (new/lost links)
- Track page speed trends over time
- Review top-performing content quarterly
- Audit and update old content annually

Automated Monitoring with Orbit HQ

Orbit HQ continuously monitors all these metrics and alerts you to issues before they impact rankings. AI-powered insights help you prioritize fixes based on potential impact.

- Automated technical audits (daily)
- Core Web Vitals tracking
- Crawl error monitoring
- Rank tracking across multiple search engines
- Backlink monitoring

Get started: tryorbithq.com

Audit Summary & Next Steps

After Completing This Checklist

- Prioritize fixes:** Start with high-priority items that have the biggest impact
- Create an action plan:** Assign tasks and deadlines
- Implement fixes:** Work through the list systematically
- Re-audit:** Check your work after implementation
- Monitor results:** Track rankings and traffic improvements

Common Issues by Site Type

Site Type	Most Common Issues
E-commerce	Duplicate content (product variations), slow page speed, missing schema
Blog/Content	Thin content, poor internal linking, missing schema markup
SaaS	JavaScript rendering issues, poor site architecture, missing technical docs
Local Business	Missing LocalBusiness schema, no location pages, poor mobile experience

Maintenance Schedule

- Weekly:** Check Search Console for new errors
- Monthly:** Review Core Web Vitals, check for broken links
- Quarterly:** Full technical audit, content refresh
- Annually:** Comprehensive SEO strategy review

Automate Your Technical SEO

Stop manually checking hundreds of items. Let Orbit HQ handle it:

- Automated daily technical audits
- AI-generated fixes for common issues
- Priority-based recommendations
- One-click schema markup generation
- Continuous monitoring and alerts

Get Started Today

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