SEO CHECKLIST

FOR PERFORMING A
SELF-AUDIT OF YOUR WEBSITE

CREATIVE MINDSCAPE

STAGE 1: INDEXING

Items to Check	Importance	Difficulty Fixing	Priority (1–3)	Your Notes
How many pages are indexed by Google?	Medium	Easy	3	
When you perform a site: search, does the homepage come up first?	High	Moderate	1	
Does the site have index bloat? (Are any pages indexed that should not be indexed?)	Medium	Easy	2	
Do you have any specific crawl issues?	High	Moderate	1	
Does the site have mirror sites?	Medium	Moderate	2	
If the site uses mirror sites to reduce server load, are the mirrors noindexed?	Medium	Moderate	2	
Does the site have an xml sitemap (or sitemaps with an index)?	High	Easy	1	
Is the xml sitemap following proper xml protocol?	High	Easy	2	
Do you need a sitemap generation recommendation?	Low	Moderate	2	
Are your sitemaps clean?	Medium	Moderate	1	
Are URLs duplicated in the sitemap?	Low	Moderate	2	

Items to Check	Importance	Difficulty Fixing	Priority (1–3)	Your Notes
Is a link to the site's xml sitemap or sitemap index in your robots.txt?	Low	Moderate	3	
Have you submitted sitemaps to Google and Bing?	High	Easy	1	
Do you have all sitemaps you should? Web, mobile, image, video, news	Medium	Moderate	2	
Does your sitemap have less than 50,000 links or < 10MB unzipped?	Medium	Moderate	2	
Does the site have separate sitemaps for the main categories/sections of the site?	Medium	Difficult	3	
Have there been dips in crawl analysis?	Medium	Moderate	3	
Do you have query parameters being indexed?	Low	Difficult	3	
Are there errors in your robots.txt file?	High	Easy	1	
Are you excluding pages you shouldn't in robots.txt?	Medium	Moderate	2	
Are there pages/directories you should include in your robots.txt?	Low	Moderate	2	
Are you excluding pages you shouldn't w/ noindex?	High	Difficult	1	
Are there any pages with a nofollow tag?	High	Moderate	1	

Items to Check	Importance	Difficulty Fixing	Priority (1–3)	Your Notes
Does the site block login and cart pages?	High	Moderate	1	
Does the site offer print pages?	Low	Easy	2	
If the site offers print pages, do the print pages use CSS or unique URLs?	Low	Moderate	2	
If the site offers print pages with unique URLs are these pages blocked by the search engines?	Low	Moderate	3	
If the site is a blog, does it use a plugin to ping the search engines to let it know it's updated?	Medium	Moderate	2	
See if your site is redirecting Google Ips	Medium	Difficult	2	

Next Up: Accessibility

STAGE 2: ACCESSIBILITY

Items to Check	Importance	Difficulty Fixing	Priority (1–3)	Your Notes
Are URLs SEF (search engine friendly)?	Medium	Easy	1	
Do the URLs use query parameters?	Medium	Moderate	2	
How does the site (both content and navigation) look/function when you turn off CSS, JavaScript, and cookies?	High	Difficult	1	
Do all of the navigation links work when Javascript is turned off?	Medium	Moderate	2	
When you view the cached version of the homepage, does all the content show up?	High	Easy	1	
When you view the cached version of the homepage, are navigation links present?	High	Easy	1	
When you view the cached version of the homepage, do links show up that aren't visible on the page?	High	Easy	1	
Is any content being pulled in with iframes or from an external source?	High	Moderate	2	
How is the site's overall speed performance?	High	Difficult	1	

Items to Check	Importance	Difficulty Fixing	Priority (1–3)	Your Notes
What are the page speeds of your top 10 landing pages?	High	Moderate	1	
How does your homepage load speed compare to your top competitors?	High	Moderate	1	
Are images optimized for fast page load?	High	Moderate	1	
Are JavaScript and CSS linked to external files?	Medium	Moderate	2	
Are JavaScript and CSS minified to reduce load time?	Medium	Moderate	2	
Does the site leverage caching well to minimize page load time and reduce HTTP requests?	High	Moderate	2	
Is Flash used for important elements? *(Flash should be used sparingly, if at all.)*	Low	Easy	3	
Do images have ALT text?	Low	Easy	3	
Are there 404 pages?	High	Moderate	1	
Is there a trend of 404 pages?	Medium	Moderate	2	
Are 404 pages serving the correct header response?	Low	Moderate	2	
Is there a trend of soft 404 pages?	Medium	Moderate	2	

Items to Check	Importance	Difficulty Fixing	Priority (1–3)	Your Notes
Are any of the 404 pages significant or indexed?	Medium	Difficult	2	
Are pages in the site pointing to 404 pages?	High	Easy	1	
Do you use a custom 404 page to reel visitors back?	High	Easy	1	
Are there 500 error pages?	High	Moderate	1	
Is there a trend of 500 errors?	Medium	Moderate	2	
Are there errors for mobile?	High	Moderate	1	
Is the site using 302 redirects?	High	Moderate	1	
Are 301 redirects set up properly?	Medium	Moderate	2	
Do any pages have meta refreshes?	Low	Moderate	3	
Does the site use AJAX pages?	Low	Difficult	3	
If site is using AJAX, is content in AJAX being indexed?	Low	Difficult	3	
Are headers images?	Medium	Easy	2	
Is page copy in images?	Medium	Easy	2	

Items to Check	Importance	Difficulty Fixing	Priority (1–3)	Your Notes
Is the site cloaking by cookie detection?	High	Moderate	1	
Is site currently being developed?	Medium	Easy	3	
If so, is the dev server excluded via robots.txt or password-protected?	Medium	Moderate	3	
Are there PDFs on the site?	Low	Moderate	3	
Is content in PDFs also in HTML?	Low	Moderate	3	
Does the site have malware?	High	Moderate	1	
Has the site been hacked?	High	Moderate	1	
Is the website in a bad neighborhood?	High	Moderate	1	

Next Up: Architecture

STAGE 3: ARCHITECTURE				
Items to Check	Importance	Difficulty Fixing	Priority (1–3)	Your Notes
Is the site organization intuitive?	High	Moderate	1	
Does every category and subcategory have a clear purpose?	Medium	Moderate	2	
Does the URL structure follow the category/subcategory structure as you drill down?	Medium	Moderate	2	
Are key organic landing pages close to the homepage?	Medium	Difficult	1	
How many category pages does the site have?	Low	Easy	3	
Are there too many category pages? Not enough?	Low	Easy	3	
Are pages targeting competitive head terms more than two clicks from homepage?	Medium	Moderate	2	
Does the site use faceted navigation?	Low	Easy	3	
If it's not using faceted navigation, should it?	Low	Moderate	2	
If the site uses faceted navigation, does it create duplicate content issues?	Medium	Moderate	2	
Does site use breadcrumbs?	Low	Easy	2	

Items to Check	Importance	Difficulty Fixing	Priority (1–3)	Your Notes
If site uses breadcrumbs, do links point to canonical versions of the page (i.e., ideally, pages w/o query parameters)?	Low	Easy	3	
If site uses breadcrumbs, do breadcrumbs follow organization of the site?	Low	Easy	3	
Does the navigation have a reasonable number of options?	Medium	Easy	2	
Do category pages have followed links to sub-category pages?	Medium	Moderate	2	
Do sub-category pages have followed links to product pages?	Medium	Moderate	2	

Next Up: Linking

STAGE 4: LINKING				
Items to Check	Importance	Difficulty Fixing	Priority (1–3)	Your Notes
Have you experienced a decline in inbound links?	High	Moderate	1	
Are you overoptimized?	Medium	Moderate	2	
What is ratio of homepage to deep page linking?	Medium	Moderate	2	
Does it appear you've been buying links?	High	Difficult	1	
Where have most of your links come from?	Medium	Difficult	2	
Does the site have links in your xml sitemap that weren't captured in the Screaming Frog crawl?	Low	Easy	3	
Do you have a DMOZ link?	Medium	Moderate	2	
Do you have a Yahoo Directory link?	Low	Moderate	3	
Do you have any links from Wikipedia?	Medium	Moderate	2	
What linkable assets do you have?	Low	Moderate	3	
What are your most linked to pages?	Medium	Moderate	2	
Does that coordinate with top organic pages?	Medium	Moderate	3	

Items to Check	Importance	Difficulty Fixing	Priority (1–3)	Your Notes
Do you have a strong internal linking structure?	Low	Easy	3	
Do blog posts and content pages interlink a lot?	Medium	Moderate	2	
Does the logo point to the canonical version of the homepage?	High	Moderate	2	
Are there any pages with too many links?	High	Easy	1	
How many links do you have on your homepage and top pages?	Medium	Easy	3	
Do you have broken links throughout the site?	High	Moderate	1	
Are there broken links on the page?	High	Moderate	1	
Do you have too many links on a page?	Medium	Moderate	2	
Does the site have an HTML sitemap?	Medium	Moderate	2	
What internal pages do you link to the most?	Medium	Moderate	2	
Does logo link to homepage?	Low	Easy	3	
What is the quality of outbound linking?	High	Difficult	1	
Do you have microsites?	Medium	Moderate	2	

Items to Check	Importance	Difficulty Fixing	Priority (1–3)	Your Notes
If you have microsites, are you interlinking with the same terms the main site is ranking for?	Low	Moderate	2	
Do you have a link network?	High	Difficult	1	
Does the site have a resources/directory/links page that's really a link exchange?	High	Difficult	1	

Next Up: On-Page SEO

STAGE 5: ON-PAGE SEO				
Items to Check	Importance	Difficulty Fixing	Priority (1–3)	Your Notes
Are your images optimized for SEO?	Medium	Moderate	2	
Are your images optimized for download?	Medium	Easy	2	
When you search for brands you rank for in Google web search in Google Images do you come up?	High	Moderate	1	
Do you host your images on another domain?	Low	Moderate	3	
Do you have visibility for image searches?	Low	Moderate	3	
Are there page titles that surpass 70 characters?	Medium	Easy	2	
Are there descriptions that surpass 155 characters?	Medium	Easy	2	
Are page titles optimized?	High	Easy	1	
Do descriptions have powerful CTAs?	Medium	Moderate	2	
Are you missing page titles?	High	Easy	1	
Are you missing descriptions?	High	Easy	1	
What is the quality of your calls to action?	Medium	Moderate	2	

Items to Check	Importance	Difficulty Fixing	Priority (1–3)	Your Notes
Does the site have ads?	Medium	Easy	2	
If the site has ads, how many are above the fold?	Medium	Easy	2	
If the site has ads, are you relevant to the site?	Medium	Easy	2	
Do any of the pages blink, move, or play videos/sound automatically?	Low	Moderate	3	
Is the page you're checking adequately optimized for the keyword(s) you're going after?	High	Moderate	1	
Are pages keyword stuffed? If so, fix.	High	Moderate	1	

Next Up: Semantics

STAGE 6: SEMANTICS

Items to Check	Importance	Difficulty Fixing	Priority (1–3)	Your Notes
Is the site using structured markup (e.g., schema.org, Facebook Open Graph, GoodRelations, XFN, etc)?	Medium	Difficult	2	
Does the site have content that's rich snippet-worthy that schema.org supports (e.g., video, reviews, ratings, product, etc.)?	Medium	Difficult	2	
Is the markup validated?	Medium	Difficult	2	
Does the site need microdata for local business?	High	Difficult	1	
Are competitors using structured markup?	Medium	Difficult	2	
Do the rich snippets follow Google's guidelines?	High	Difficult	1	

Need Help?

If you don't have the time or resources to conduct your own SEO audit, or if you need help fixing some of the issues you found in your audit, contact Creative Mindscape for a custom quote. Visit https://creativemindscape.com/ or send an email to Neil Henry, director of our SEO Services division, at neil@creativemindscape.com to learn more.