

What's In An SEO Site Audit?

By David Meade, [Writer Services](#)

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There are a variety of reasons why a site owner needs to perform a full [SEO](#) audit of his or her website. First, algorithms are constantly updated through a series of iterations, and websites may not be keeping up with the digital times. Another reason to perform a site audit is that the content on a site changes (perhaps there are now broken links). Finally, site owners need metrics to determine where their website currently stands and what areas can be improved.

Most people are familiar with the [SEO](#) Technical Audit, where 30 or so items are audited and reported. This is extremely valuable, but what is often overlooked is the SEO Site Audit. In the SEO Site Audit a company's onsite and offsite SEO is analyzed to see if it is at risk of getting hit by any [Google](#) algorithm updates. This is a very popular SEO Audit Report. It's a good idea to get one initially and then every six months for comparison purposes.

The report will show how to optimize a site and strategy to avoid any penalties -and how to produce optimum results. A competitor analysis is often part of the report.

This is a long-term strategic plan that may help a website rank and show its owner some techniques to boost the site's traffic. The report addresses recommendations to fix problems, and it runs a check to see if the site has been penalized by [Google](#) or if it is at risk. It also analyzes of course all of the meta and title tags.

Writing articles crafted around keywords a company wants to rank for is normally a recommendation of the [SEO](#) Site Audit. Generally these articles should be more than 800 words in length and updated weekly.

As soon as content goes up, the website will need backlinks. They will give [Google](#) the type of link structure they are looking for to rank a site.



One mistake many make is that nearly all of their backlinks go to their homepage. I would suggest pointing backlinks to inner pages as well or else a site will face an unnatural link pattern penalty in the long term. Google expects to see backlinks appear randomly.

In the articles, content creators will need to use the keywords they want to rank for in anchor text.

It's a good idea to use variations on the keywords, as using the same keywords (anchor text) will likely end up in a penalty.

By anchor text I mean the keywords used in your backlinks. For example if you posted on a blog and used the words "best SEO copywriting services" and linked this back to your site, this would be the anchor text. It's recommended to only use anchor text if it truly enhances the user experience, as in the information supplements what the user is reading. Of course, site owners will also want to be sure they are linking to quality sites.

Site owners need long tail variations of the keyword for copywriting and other keywords they want to target. To do this just, they can put their main keyword into the Google keyword tool and find related keywords to utilize. They should use as many long tail

variations (keywords that are three or four words long or even longer) of the keywords as they can find.

As for backlinks, they should be from as many different sites and sources as possible to look natural. For example, get backlinks from contextual backlinks and [social](#) bookmarking sites, to name a few. Education (edu) and government (gov) backlinks are very high quality because of their authority rating and the length of time most of them have been indexed - the more diverse the better. Always, remember to add to the user experience though, so never clutter a Web page with anchor text or backlinks that don't add anything to that user experience.

Let's wrap all of this together in a plan:

#1 Write articles weekly. Ensure these articles are of high quality - one well-written article is better than five fluff pieces.

#2 Start driving backlinks to content. This will not only help the content to rank but make a link profile look natural.

#3 Get as many contextual backlinks as possible. These are backlinks from links inside content such as articles.

#4 Submit content to [social](#) networking sites. If there is one thing that is proving effective at the moment it is this.

#5 Create a Google+ page. Get content on there and link back to a site from the content. These pages may rank very well for competitive keywords.

#6 On YouTube, site owners should use keywords they want to rank for in the titles, tags and descriptions of the videos and put up detailed descriptions on the videos.

#7 Write press releases and submit them. (Although many of the press release distribution sites were recently hit by Panda, so possibly scale back on the actual money spent there or choose one with a good reputation.)

Panda 4.0 reinforces these practices:

- Quality content is readable by the algorithm
- The user experience is quite important – if you someone is writing for a car dealership, for example, then he or she will want to know not only about the front-end sales experience but also the back-end service after the car is purchased
- A unique and innovative quality should be applied to your content – it needs to be differentiated from your competition

- Analyze your site from a competitive aspect – are they using Infographics or something that you haven't thought of?

Lead your competition with style and grace. Hire a creative, non-paradigm thinker as a consultant or update your in-house strategy with a SEO Technical Audit and a SEO Site Audit. These will provide you with a baseline and move your company's needle in a positive direction.

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- See more at:

<http://www.websitemagazine.com/content/blogs/posts/archive/2014/07/22/what-s-in-an-seo-site-audit.aspx#sthash.IDDcRyAm.dpuf>

On- And Off-Page Optimization of Web Pages

By David Meade (Pen Name)

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Three of the factors that dominate the [SEO](#) field are on-page optimization, off-page optimization, and the quality and uniqueness of Web writing.

These principles are extremely important – if you write your value proposition correctly and your Web text correctly, you will likely achieve higher rankings. An entertaining writing style will keep visitors on your page, and the use of copywriting principles will produce high conversion (sale) rates for every visitor.

After all, content is king in [SEO](#). A well researched and written set of Web Pages is a primary key to high SEO ranking. You must produce true and original value. You need psychologically appealing copy which can increase your revenue. The vast majority of existing websites can be vastly improved with the appropriate use of optimizing Web copy for both the users and the search engines.

ON-PAGE OPTIMIZATION

Keywords

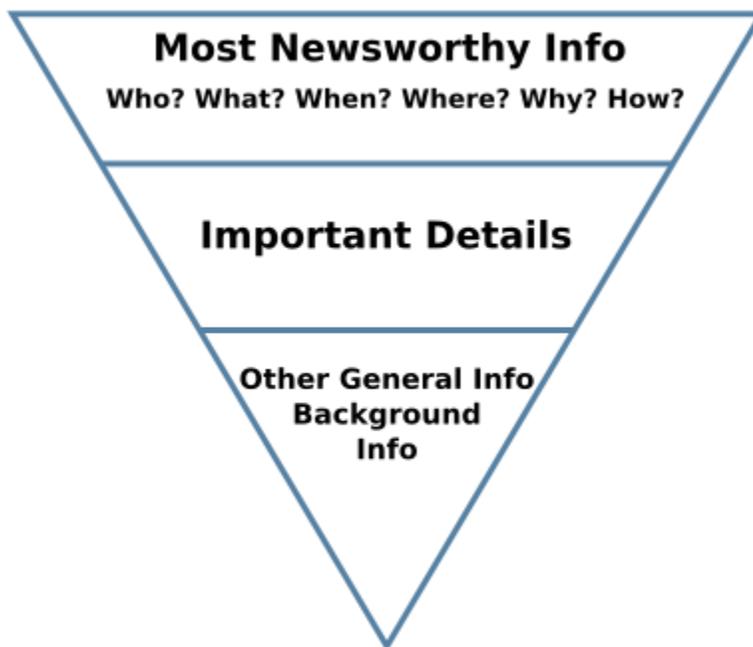
When setting up your website, keyword choice is a paramount concern. Studies have shown that more than half of Web searches are for keyword phrases.

Keywords should emphasize the niche of your business. Keywords should appear on every page of your website – particularly in the first paragraph and the last paragraph on each page. Keyword density is not a material factor, though. You need to focus on the writing of your Web pages in a natural manner because user experience matters most.

Keyword density which exceeds 5 percent may result in demotion by [Google](#). When I optimize a website, I usually put the keyword in the title tag once, in the page content and in the meta description. If you have good, solid content this is usually enough. Matt Cutts, the head of Google's Webspam Team, has said that good content will trump [SEO](#) every time, so the smart thing to do is to focus on your copy and on creating good content.

Unique Content

To rank in the search engines, websites must have original content. No one is sure of the exact percentage of copied text that the [Google](#) algorithm uses to exclude, but always write original content, and you won't have a problem. Just like readers pay more attention to the words at the top, search engines likely do too. Make sure to write content with the inverted pyramid in mind.



Length of Web Pages

The longer a reader stays on a Web page, the higher [Google](#) and the other search engines may rank it. Time on site shows reader engagement and the search engines want users to enjoy the content of the websites they send them to. One of the ways to keep readers on your site is to publish in-depth articles, as readers will likely take their time consuming the information if it's informative and of high quality.

Meta Tags

The title tag is a required page element according to the W3C (World Wide Web Consortium). It should have a maximum of 58 characters and include your keywords or key phrase.

The description tag is what Google and the other search engines will display to the public as the 'first view' of the website. It should have a maximum of 160 characters and be phrased like a headline – with a captivating question or hook. If you are designing your own Web Page with Word Press then there is a Meta Tag Plug-In which you can install which will meet these requirements.

The keywords tag is not utilized by Google, but it is by other search engines and it is within this description you'll place key phrases and words you want to be recognized in search terms for. Regardless, in terms of the Penguin and Panda updates, it is believed that using more than a couple of keywords in this meta tag may result in a penalty.

You can check your competitor's information by right clicking on their Web pages and "View Page Source." Then use Ctrl-F to find the title and meta tags. This is one reason why some experts say to actually [minimize or exclude meta tags](#), because you are essentially do the competitors' keyword research for them.

Alt Tags

The alt attribute is an attribute of the image tag and is meant to be an alternative for non-visual browsers when they come across images. Since they cannot read images, they need a description. All of your photos should have these tags, using appropriate keywords.

Two images (or a video and an image) per page are recommended. They break up visual monotony and keep users engaged (remember, the more they are engaged, the less likely they are to leave your website quickly).

Updating Your Web Page

Having a good content plan is essential for the success of a website. The Google crawler thrives on unique original content published consistently. Every time you publish, Google gets a "ping" asking the crawler to come back and visit your site.

Anchor Text

In writing Web text, any anchor text (Hyperlinks) should be infused with relevant keywords.

Headline Tags

This is the heading of your Web page, much like the heading of a newspaper article. You should have at least one H1 tag with a keyword per page.

Domain Name

Needless to say, your domain name should include your primary keyword phrase but exact match [domain names](#) may be considered low quality by Google. [Relevancy, over keywords](#), should always be given priority.

Dynamic vs. Static URL

By default, when you install a [WordPress](#), your URLs are set to be dynamic URLs. These are not search engine friendly. It is very important for your Page's SEO On-Page optimization to change dynamic URLs to static URLs. First you need to go to your wp-admin, and then go to Setting → Permalinks. By default you will see the "Default" option selected that makes your URLs be dynamic. To change this setting and select "Custom Structure" you just type `/%postname%`. This will create URLs to be static instead of dynamic.

Canonical URL

A canonical page is the preferred version of a set of pages with highly similar content.

There's a [three-step process](#) you need to follow. The first step you take on [WordPress](#). The second step you take is in Google Webmaster Tools. The All In One SEO Pack takes care of step number three. Once it is activated, navigate to settings and ensure that the "Canonical URLs" checkbox is selected.

Here's a checklist for Word Press Recommendations:

- Use the latest version
- Optimize the keywords
- Avoid duplicate content
- Optimize the main headings (post titles)
- Add your blog to Google Webmaster Tools

- Avoid Flash
- Don't use text within images
- Don't use Frames
- Consider a Google Sitemap
- Submit a video to YouTube
- Submit your domain name to Google early on
- Aim for 400 – 1,000 words per page
- Engage in [Social Media](#) Optimization
- Submit to the DMOZ Open Directory Project
- Engage in a Backlink Strategy

OFF-PAGE OPTIMIZATION

Backlinks

The higher your achievement goals the more backlinks you likely need. Backlinks are a key ranking factor to Google. Any small business should be looking to start out at least 50-100 quality backlinks to have proper search engine optimization. I have personally seen Google Page Rank increase from 1 to 5 with proper handling of backlinks. I have seen very high ranking appear for certain Web pages with as few as 450-500 backlinks.

There are online tools you can use if you have the time, or you can hire a professional SEO consultant. But remember – only quality editorial-style links (backlinks) work. The days of reciprocal, FFA and shared links are over. Articles are an excellent link method if done properly – submissions to quality sites with a high PR rank, and of course articles must be original, high quality and have sufficient content – at least 700 words.

Sitemap

If you use Word Press, there is a Plug-In that will accomplish this for you. After it's finished, it pings Google to alert it that the Sitemap is available.

Social Bookmarking

[Social](#) bookmarking is considered by many to be a ranking factor, and you should have around 30 bookmarks on sites such as Delicious, Digg & Stumbleupon. Reddit is an

entertainment, social networking service and news website where registered community members can submit content, such as text posts or direct links. Only registered users can then vote submissions "up" or "down" to organize the posts and determine their position on the site's pages.

I have personally found Reddit to be an excellent site to establish your initial presence on from a backlink perspective. You can post articles, videos and book links there. Usually Google and the other search engines will index you within days after posting your link to this site because it has a very high Google Page Rank. Remember, though, indexing and ranking in the search results are two different functions. If you type your URL into a search inquiry and find it, you've been indexed. Appearing in search engine results will be the next task. The highest ranking [social](#) bookmarking sites (Page Rank of 8) are Delicious.com, Digg.com, Reddit.com, Stumbleupon.com, Citeulike.org, Connotes.org, Chime.in and Slashdot.org.

Although not as popular as they once were submission to directories is also still important. Marketers can [manage local listings](#) with services like Yext, Moz Local and others.

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- See more at:

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