



The Ultimate SEO Audit Checklist

A Complete, Step-by-Step Guide by Frontend Horizon

Introduction: Why Every Website Needs a Proper SEO Audit

Search engine optimization isn't magic. It's process. And the first step in that process — the foundation for everything that follows — is a **comprehensive SEO audit**.

An SEO audit is the equivalent of a full diagnostic exam for your website. It reveals what's holding your site back from ranking, what's working in your favor, and exactly where your opportunities lie.

At **Frontend Horizon**, we treat audits as blueprints — not just checklists. Each section below reflects the workflow we use when auditing a client's website, from crawlability and Core Web Vitals to schema, E-E-A-T signals, and content cannibalization.

Whether you're an in-house marketer, a freelancer, or an agency pro, this guide will walk you through **everything** you should inspect before building an SEO strategy that actually moves the needle.

1. Foundation & Setup

Before you touch the site, make sure you have full access to the data and technical environment.

Checklist:

- ✓ Verify site ownership in [Google Search Console](#) and Bing Webmaster Tools.

- ✓ Ensure Google Analytics 4 (GA4) tracking is correctly implemented.
- ✓ Check if Google Tag Manager (GTM) is active and properly firing tags.
- ✓ Confirm CMS access (WordPress, Shopify, Webflow, etc.).
- ✓ Identify hosting provider and CDN (Cloudflare, Fastly, etc.).
- ✓ Record current keyword rankings using [Ahrefs](#), SEMrush, or [SERanking](#).
- ✓ Note organic traffic metrics, conversions, and bounce rate benchmarks.

Deliverable:

Baseline “Before Audit” metrics spreadsheet, exported from GA4 and Search Console.



2. Technical SEO Audit

Technical SEO issues are silent killers. They can block crawlers, dilute authority, and make great content invisible to search engines.

2.1 Crawlability and Indexation

Tools:

- ✓ [Screaming Frog SEO Spider](#)
- ✓ [Sitebulb](#)
- ✓ [Ahrefs Site Audit](#)

Checklist:

- ✓ Crawl the entire site and review crawl depth (preferably ≤ 3 clicks from homepage).
- ✓ Review HTTP status codes — identify 3xx, 4xx, and 5xx errors.
- ✓ Check for redirect chains and loops.
- ✓ Validate canonical tags — ensure each page references itself or the correct canonical target.
- ✓ Identify duplicate content through canonical mismatches or parameters.
- ✓ Review robots.txt — ensure important sections aren’t blocked.
- ✓ Analyze XML sitemap structure — check freshness, coverage, and submission to GSC.

- ✓ Check pagination logic (rel="next" / rel="prev" or canonical usage).
- ✓ Identify orphan pages — those not linked internally or in the sitemap.
- ✓ Review faceted navigation, filters, and infinite scroll handling.

Pro Tip:

In large eCommerce or directory sites, improper crawl directives can waste crawl budget. Limit crawler access to non-indexable URLs via parameters or faceted filters.

2.2 Site Performance & Core Web Vitals

Performance directly influences rankings and user behavior. Google uses Core Web Vitals as part of its ranking algorithm.

Tools:

- ✓ [Google PageSpeed Insights](#)
- ✓ Lighthouse
- ✓ [WebPageTest](#)
- ✓ [GTmetrix](#)

Checklist:

- ✓ Largest Contentful Paint (LCP) < 2.5s
- ✓ First Input Delay (FID) < 100ms
- ✓ Cumulative Layout Shift (CLS) < 0.1
- ✓ Compress and properly size all images.
- ✓ Implement lazy loading.
- ✓ Use modern formats like WebP or AVIF.
- ✓ Minify JavaScript and CSS.
- ✓ Eliminate render-blocking resources.
- ✓ Enable HTTP/2 or HTTP/3 on your server.
- ✓ Leverage browser caching.
- ✓ Use a CDN for static resources.

- ✓ Review mobile vs desktop performance — they often differ drastically.

Deliverable:

A performance report with prioritized fixes ranked by load impact.

2.3 Mobile Optimization

Google indexes mobile-first, period.

Checklist:

- ✓ Responsive design confirmed (not m.domain or separate mobile site).
- ✓ Viewport meta tag configured correctly.
- ✓ Font sizes readable without zoom.
- ✓ Tap targets sufficiently large.
- ✓ No intrusive interstitials or popups.
- ✓ Navigation is consistent between mobile and desktop.
- ✓ Test forms and CTAs on mobile manually.

Tool:

[Google Mobile-Friendly Test](#)

2.4 Site Architecture & Internal Linking

A solid architecture supports both users and crawlers.

Checklist:

- ✓ Clear hierarchical structure (Home > Category > Subcategory > Product/Page).
- ✓ Contextual internal linking between related topics.
- ✓ Avoid “flat” site architecture with too many top-level pages.
- ✓ Breadcrumb navigation present and schema-enabled.
- ✓ Use descriptive anchor text (not “click here”).
- ✓ Remove broken internal links (404s).
- ✓ Audit footer and header link structure.

- ✓ Limit navigation menus to useful, non-duplicative links.
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2.5 URL Structure & Redirects

Checklist:

- ✓ Clean, descriptive URLs (example.com/seo-audit-checklist/).
 - ✓ Hyphens between words, not underscores.
 - ✓ No unnecessary parameters (?ref=, ?utm=).
 - ✓ Ensure trailing slash consistency.
 - ✓ 301 redirects for old URLs, not 302s.
 - ✓ Canonical version chosen (www or non-www).
 - ✓ Redirect HTTP → HTTPS consistently.
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2.6 HTTPS & Security

Checklist:

- ✓ SSL certificate installed and valid.
- ✓ No mixed content errors.
- ✓ No insecure third-party scripts.
- ✓ Updated CMS, plugins, and dependencies.
- ✓ HSTS (HTTP Strict Transport Security) enabled.
- ✓ Monitor for malware or spam injection.

Tool:

[SecurityHeaders.com](https://securityheaders.com)

3. On-Page SEO Audit

On-page elements are where technical precision meets creative execution.

3.1 Metadata

Checklist:

- ✓ Unique title tag for every page.
 - ✓ Titles < 60 characters, containing primary keyword near start.
 - ✓ Meta descriptions < 160 characters, persuasive and relevant.
 - ✓ Include branding at end of key pages (e.g. “| Frontend Horizon”).
 - ✓ Check for missing or duplicate tags via Screaming Frog export.
 - ✓ Avoid auto-generated or default CMS titles (“Home – My Site”).
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3.2 Headings and Content Structure

Checklist:

- ✓ Exactly one H1 per page.
 - ✓ Logical use of H2–H6 for structure.
 - ✓ Primary keyword in H1, variations in subheadings.
 - ✓ Avoid keyword stuffing.
 - ✓ Headings summarize sections clearly for skimmers and crawlers.
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3.3 Content Quality, Depth & Intent

Google’s ranking models emphasize **E-E-A-T** (Experience, Expertise, Authoritativeness, Trustworthiness).

Checklist:

- ✓ Each page serves a clear search intent (informational, commercial, transactional).
- ✓ Minimum 800 words for major service pages; 1,500+ for cornerstone content.
- ✓ Include relevant internal and external citations.
- ✓ Add author bios or brand verification to support E-E-A-T.
- ✓ Content last updated date displayed where relevant.

- ✓ No duplicate or spun content.
- ✓ Include FAQs and schema when suitable.

Tools:

- ✓ [SurferSEO](#)
 - ✓ [Clearscope](#)
 - ✓ [Frase](#)
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3.4 Image Optimization

Checklist:

- ✓ Descriptive filenames (not “IMG_1234.jpg”).
 - ✓ Alt text describes the image naturally.
 - ✓ File sizes optimized (<200KB preferred).
 - ✓ Use next-gen formats (WebP, AVIF).
 - ✓ Image dimensions match display size.
 - ✓ Use CDN for image delivery.
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3.5 Schema Markup & Structured Data

Structured data enhances visibility through rich results.

Checklist:

- ✓ Use JSON-LD format.
- ✓ Test with [Google Rich Results Test](#).
- ✓ Apply relevant schema:
 - Organization
 - BreadcrumbList
 - Article or BlogPosting
 - Product

- LocalBusiness
 - FAQPage / HowTo
 - ✓ Validate all schema for syntax and relevance.
 - ✓ Avoid spammy or misleading markup.
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4. Off-Page SEO Audit

Off-page signals determine trust and authority.

4.1 Backlink Profile Analysis

Tools:

- ✓ [Ahrefs Backlink Checker](#)
- ✓ Moz Link Explorer
- ✓ [Majestic](#)

Checklist:

- ✓ Review total referring domains and backlinks.
- ✓ Assess link quality — prioritize niche relevance and authority.
- ✓ Identify spammy or toxic backlinks.
- ✓ Check for unnatural anchor text ratios.
- ✓ Evaluate lost backlinks (potential outreach opportunity).
- ✓ Identify 404 pages with backlinks for reclaiming.
- ✓ Compare domain authority (DR/DA) vs. competitors.

4.2 Citation and Brand Mentions

Checklist:

- ✓ Consistent NAP across all directories.
- ✓ Optimize Google Business Profile (photos, hours, reviews).

- ✓ Check major citation sources: Yelp, BBB, YellowPages, Bing Places.
 - ✓ Look for unlinked brand mentions and request link attribution.
 - ✓ Use tools like [Brand24](#) or Mention for ongoing monitoring.
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5. Keyword & Content Strategy Audit

Your content is only as strong as your keyword targeting.

Checklist:

- ✓ Build a keyword map — each page targets one core keyword cluster.
- ✓ Identify keyword cannibalization and merge/redirect pages where needed.
- ✓ Check intent alignment between keywords and page type.
- ✓ Perform content gap analysis against top-ranking competitors.
- ✓ Reassess internal linking based on new keyword priorities.

Tools:

- ✓ [Ahrefs Keywords Explorer](#)
 - ✓ [SEMrush Keyword Gap Tool](#)
 - ✓ [Google Keyword Planner](#)
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6. UX, Accessibility & Engagement Audit

Google measures satisfaction through engagement metrics.

Checklist:

- ✓ Logical site navigation.
- ✓ Intuitive design and hierarchy.
- ✓ Strong CTAs and conversion paths.

- ✓ Shorten form fields — reduce friction.
 - ✓ Use heatmaps ([Hotjar](#), [Microsoft Clarity](#)).
 - ✓ Accessible contrast ratios and readable fonts.
 - ✓ Alt text for accessibility.
 - ✓ Avoid autoplay videos or intrusive pop-ups.
 - ✓ Add breadcrumb navigation for clarity.
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7. Local SEO Audit (if applicable)

For local businesses, visibility depends on proximity, prominence, and relevance.

Checklist:

- ✓ Verify and optimize Google Business Profile.
- ✓ Add location schema.
- ✓ Create location-specific landing pages.
- ✓ Ensure consistent NAP across citations.
- ✓ Collect and respond to reviews.
- ✓ Add map embeds and driving directions.
- ✓ Build local backlinks (chambers of commerce, local news).

Tools:

- ✓ [BrightLocal](#)
 - ✓ [Whitespark](#)
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8. Analytics & Measurement Audit

Data integrity determines whether your SEO strategy can actually be measured.

Checklist:

- ✓ GA4 property linked to Search Console.
 - ✓ Conversions defined and tracked (form submissions, sales, downloads).
 - ✓ Events configured in GTM (scroll depth, video plays, clicks).
 - ✓ Custom Looker Studio dashboard created for reporting.
 - ✓ Verify UTM tracking consistency.
 - ✓ Check data layer for eCommerce (if applicable).
 - ✓ Regularly back up analytics configurations.
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9. Prioritization Framework

Not every issue is worth fixing immediately. Rank findings by **Impact × Effort**.

Categories:

- ✓ **High Impact, Low Effort:** Broken links, missing metas, redirects.
- ✓ **High Impact, High Effort:** Page speed optimization, full content rewrite.
- ✓ **Low Impact, Low Effort:** Minor metadata corrections.
- ✓ **Low Impact, High Effort:** Cosmetic changes, low-traffic content tweaks.

Deliverable:

A prioritized roadmap in Excel or Notion with recommended timelines and dependencies.



10. Continuous SEO Maintenance

Search algorithms evolve constantly. Treat SEO as an ongoing process.

Maintenance Schedule:

- ✓ **Weekly:** Check crawl errors, 404s, and index coverage.
- ✓ **Monthly:** Review rankings, traffic, and backlink growth.

- ✓ **Quarterly:** Re-run site audits and update Core Web Vitals.
- ✓ **Bi-Annually:** Refresh cornerstone content and keyword mapping.
- ✓ **Annually:** Full-scale SEO audit and competitive benchmarking.

Conclusion: Turning Audit Data Into Strategy

An SEO audit without execution is just a report.

At **Frontend Horizon**, we go beyond diagnosis — we help clients translate insights into measurable growth. Each technical fix, keyword adjustment, and UX improvement builds toward one goal: **sustainable organic performance**.

If you'd like us to perform a full professional audit and deliver an actionable roadmap tailored to your business, get in touch:

👉 Request a Free Audit Consultation at www.frontendhorizon.com