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Assess Your Website - What To Do

Do your pages contain multiple H1 tags?

There shouldn't be multiple H1 tags on a single page.
The H1 tag is the focus of the page's topic, and thus it should only occur on each page once.
If you include more than one H1 tag on a page, it will cause the dilution of the focus of the page.

What to do: Remove all but one H1 tag making the others H2 or H3 tags.

Is your website plagued by too many links?

Too many links can be a problem, but not in the way you would think. Google no longer penalizes for more than 100 links on a page (John Mueller said so in 2014). But, if you do have more than that quantity, maybe significantly more, it can be considered a spam signal if you are being spammy.

What to do: Remove any unnecessary links on your pages.

Are your images too large?

If images on your site are too large, you risk running into issues with load time, which was implemented as a mobile ranking signal starting July 2018. If you have a 2MB image loading on your page, this is a major problem. It isn't necessary, and you waste an opportunity to identify these issues in the first place.

What to do: Test your pages using Google PageSpeed Insights, which has been updated to deliver results based on real-world data.

Does your website have all required page titles and meta descriptions?

Missing SEO titles on a website can be a problem. If your site is missing an SEO title, search engines could automatically generate one based on your content. You never want auto-generate titles and descriptions. You don't want to leave anything to chance when it comes to optimizing a site properly, so all page titles should be manually written.

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What to do: Add Important Information in Your Meta Description per page. Keep in mind you also have the meta description tag to communicate key information. Without knowing anything about your company or your location, I suggest you emphasize the more important keyword and the location first. Something like:

PAGE TITLE: Residential Builders in City | Company Name

META DESCRIPTION: Home and commercial builders, licensed in state. [Another sentence that contains a key selling point.] Contact us for a free estimate today.

How deeply has content on your website been optimized?

There are different levels of content optimization. Other optimizations are deeper, with images, links, and keywords being fully optimized.

What to do: Questions you may want to ask to ensure that content on your site is properly optimized include:

- Does my content include targeted keywords throughout the body copy?
- Does my content include headings optimized with keyword variations?
- Does my content include lists, images, and quotes where needed?
- Does my content include bold and italicized text for emphasis where needed?
- Does my content read well to a user?

Don't just add these things randomly throughout your content. They should be contextually relevant and support the content.

Has content on your website been proofread?

Have you performed any proofreading on the content on your site before posting? I can't tell you how many times I have performed an audit and found silly errors like grammatical errors within the content, spelling errors, and other major issues.

What to do: Be sure to proofread your content before posting. This will save a lot of editing work in the future. When it's part of your job, however, and it's expected, grin and bear it. Or party and enjoy it, whichever side of the table you're on.

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Have images on your website been optimized?

Image optimizations include things like keyword phrases in the file name, image size, image load time, and making sure that images are optimized for Google image search. Image size should match or otherwise appear to complement the design of your site. You wouldn't include images that are completely irrelevant if you were doing marketing correctly, right? In the same vein, don't include images that appear to be completely spamming your audience.

What to do: Check your image sizes and relevance on your pages.

Improved Site Usability

If users can easily navigate your website, it's likely they will stick around. Because search engines recognize '*time on page*' as a fundamental indicator of a site's value for any given query.

What to do: Browse your website testing usability. Ask friends and family to check out your website for ease of use, give them a task to find on your website. For example, find the FAQs, what does my website have to offer, or can you find the contact information.

Is thin content present on your Website?

Thin content by itself, so long as it is high quality enough that it answers a user's question, is not necessarily an issue.

Thin content becomes an issue when it is of no value at all. Thin content should not be measured by word count but in terms of quality, uniqueness, authority, relevance, and trust.

What to do, ask yourself:

1. Is the content quality content?
2. Is it unique content (is it written uniquely enough that it doesn't appear anywhere else (on Google or on-site)?
3. Does the content authoritatively satisfy the user's question?
4. Is the content relevant and does it create trust with your visitors to the page?

If you answered yes to any of the above, go through your content and update.

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Are your landing pages properly optimized?

There is a situation where having multiple landing pages optimized with the same keywords on the site does not actually make your site more relevant. In fact, it can cause confusion for the search engines and what is called keyword cannibalization. Keyword cannibalization happens when several pages on your website compete for the same keyword or phrase in Google. Here's how to find and fix it. The reason is simple: when you have multiple pages ranking for the same keyword, you're actually competing with yourself. For example, if your website sells shoes, and "shoes" is the only keyword you target, you're essentially telling Google that every page is about "shoes" regardless of whether they're hiking shoes, tennis shoes, sneakers, etc.

What to do: Create a keyword matrix. Simply create a spreadsheet that lists all of your site's important URLs and their associated keywords. For example, if your site sells shoes, then your spreadsheet might look like this:

URLs	Keywords
www.yoursite.com/shoes	shoes
www.yoursite.com/tennisshoes	tennis shoes
www.yoursite.com/womensshoes	women's shoes
www.yoursite.com/menssneakers	men's sneakers
www.yoursite.com/lifestyleshoes	lifestyle shoes
www.yoursite.com/hikingshoes	hiking shoes
www.yoursite.com/basketballshoes	basketball shoes

When you've listed out your URLs and their keywords, run down the list and look for any duplicate entries. If you spot any – especially across core pages – you're probably suffering from keyword cannibalization. Now it's time to fix those pages!

Note that keyword cannibalization can even occur if the meta information in your title tags seems to target the same keyword, so double-check those too.

1. Restructure Your Website

The simplest solution is often to take your most authoritative page and turn it into a landing page that links to other unique variations that fall under the umbrella of your targeted keywords. If we return to our shoe-product example, it might make sense to make "shoes" our canonical source page and link all of the more specific variations back to it.

2. Create New Landing Pages

Alternatively, you might lack a landing page that consolidates all of your product pages in one place. In this case, you'd benefit from creating a unique landing page to serve as your authoritative source page and link to all of your variations from there. In our example, we might create a page called "hiking shoes" and another called "sneakers for men."

3. Consolidate Your Content

If your pages aren't unique enough to warrant having multiple pages targeting the same keyword, consider combining them into one page. This is a chance to take two underperforming pages and turn them into a more authoritative source. It may also solve thin content issues.

4. Find New Keywords

Finally, if you're already blessed with highly diverse, content-rich pages, and the only thing your website is suffering from is a poorly planned keyword strategy, maybe all you need to do is find new keywords. Just make sure your keywords accurately describe your page's content.

Do you have Robots.txt file?

Robots.txt files instruct crawlers about the entire site. One of the things I tend to run into in website audits is a robots.txt file that is not properly configured. Googlebot is an example of a crawler. Google deploys Googlebot to crawl websites and record information on that site to understand how to rank the site in Google's search results.

You can find any site's robots.txt file by add /robots.txt after the web address like this: www.mywebsite.com/robots.txt

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Here is what a basic, fresh, robots.txt file looks like:

```
User-agent: *
Disallow: /
```

The asterisk * after user-agent tells the crawlers that the robots.txt file is for all bots that come to the site.

The slash / after "Disallow" tells the robot to not go to any pages on the site.

Here is an example of a robot.txt:

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```
Sitemap: https://moz.com/sitemaps-1-sitemap.xml
Sitemap: https://moz.com/blog-sitemap.xml


User-agent: *
Allow: /researchtools/ose/$
Allow: /researchtools/ose/dotbot$
Allow: /researchtools/ose/links$
Allow: /researchtools/ose/just-discovered$
Allow: /researchtools/ose/pages$
Allow: /researchtools/ose/domains$
Allow: /researchtools/ose/anchors$
Allow: /products/
Allow: /local/
Allow: /learn/
Allow: /researchtools/ose/
Allow: /researchtools/ose/dotbot$

Disallow: /products/content/
Disallow: /local/enterprise/confirm
Disallow: /researchtools/ose/
Disallow: /page-strength/*
Disallow: /thumbs/*
Disallow: /api/user?*
Disallow: /checkout/freetrial/*
Disallow: /local/search/
Disallow: /local/details/
Disallow: /messages/
Disallow: /content/audit/*
Disallow: /content/search/*
Disallow: /marketplace/
Disallow: /cpresources/
Disallow: /vendor/
Disallow: /community/q/questions/*/view_counts
Disallow: /admin-preview/*
```

What to do: test to see if you have a robot.txt, if not have your web team add it.

Is your Website responsive?

Is your website responsive? Consumers are addicted to smartphones and tablets. And that isn't changing any time soon. This is even more important with the arrival of Google's mobile-first index. We now live in a mobile-first era and are moving toward a mobile-first index.

In this environment, responsive design has become a standard component of any website strategy plan, regardless of industry. According to Google, if your site is mobile-responsive, you are in the clear. Congrats!

What to do: Google's Test My Site tool to see which specific areas of your website need work:

It will test based on a 3G network, which will remain the most common network for worldwide mobile browsing through 2020 (according to the tool). Test My Site scans hundreds of different factors.

Comparing your site against industry benchmarks.

Once the report is generated, you can instantly see how you stack up against competitors and what potential customers you're leaving on the table. With a curated content library, Google will list your "top fixes" in order of importance, giving you detailed steps on how to improve your site speed, content delivery, and any lagging factors impacting the user experience.

If your mobile site isn't responsive, fast, and ready to roll, your rankings will suffer greatly. Get your website mobile responsive.

Is your social media implementation on your website done?

This comes up in audits a lot. I see things where social media links were not set up properly. These things will impact the quality of your site. Also if you are constantly machine-gunning your social posts, and not interacting with customers properly, you are doing it wrong.

What to do: Double check you have your social media set up correctly. As well as set up a plan for posting on your social sites.

Are submission/contact forms properly working?

If a lead generation form is not properly working, you may not be getting all possible leads coming through. If there's a typo in an email address or a typo in a line of code that is breaking the form, these need to be fixed.

Nothing's worse than getting information from a form and finding that that phone number is one digit off or the email address is wrong due to a programming error, and not necessarily due to submission error.

What to do: Test test test.

Does your website have URLs that are too long?

By making sure that URLs are reasonably short, and not having URLs that are extra long (over 100 characters), it is possible to avoid user experience issues. It is important to note that much longer URLs can lead to user experience issues. When in doubt, if you have two URLs you want to use in a redirect scenario, and one is shorter than the other one, use the shorter version. Shorter URLs are much easier to parse, copy and paste, and share on social.

In addition, it is considered a standard SEO best practice to limit URLs to less than 100 characters. The reason why comes down to usability and user experience.

What to do: Make a checklist of your website's URLs. If you see long URLs update them to smaller ones. It all comes down to your industry and what you do. This advice might not make as much sense for an e-commerce site that may have just as many URLs with such parameters.

How targeted are keywords on your website?

You can have the best content in the world. You can have the fastest-loading website ever. But, in the end, keywords are the name of the game. Keyword queries are how search engines find what people are searching for. The more targeted your keywords on-site are, the better that search engines will be able to discern where to place your site in the search results.

What exactly is meant by targeted keywords? These are any words that users use to find your site, that are mapped to queries from search engines.

And what is the best, most awesome method to use to optimize these keywords? The keyword optimization concept of linear distribution applies. It's not about how many keywords you can add to the page, but more about what linear distribution tells the search engines. It is better to have keywords sprinkled throughout the text evenly (from the title tag, description, and meta keywords down to the bottom of the page) than stuff everything up the wazoo with keywords.

What to do: Audit your title tags, description, meta keywords and paragraphs on the page are all relevant and work together.

Do you have Google Analytics setup on your website?

Expanding on our earlier discussions about the right accounts being linked, even just setting up Google Analytics can be overlooked by even the most experienced SEO professionals. It is a detail that, while not always identified during an audit, can wreak havoc on reporting data later.

What to do: Set up a free Google Analytic site and load the code to your website.

Does your website otherwise have any other major quality issues?

Other quality issues that can impact your site include bad design. Be honest. Look at your site and other competitors in the space. How much do you really like your site in comparison to those competitors? This is one of those things that you just can't really put a finger on. If you really don't like what your design is doing, it may be time to go back to the drawing board and start again from scratch.

What to do: Compare your website with your competitors marking down what you like, and possibly how you might improve your website. Think about being the user.

To Conclude

A simple principle: give the user information as fast possible that's as accurate as possible.
That means perfectly optimized images, a fast page speed, and text that you can read without straining your eyes. And Test test test!