TECHNICAL ON-PAGE SEO CHECKLIST

Although there are numerous factors that affect your search visibility, the technical side of search engine optimisation (SEO) is central to your website's performance and online visibility.

Well-executed technical on-page SEO helps both search engines and human users to find and read your website, improving search rankings and user experience (UX).

URL best practice

- [ ] • Are all of your URLs descriptive, memorable, easy to spell and concise? For example, domain.com/women/skirts.html

Site structure

Navigability is an extremely important part of both the user experience and crawler indexing, and also vital to Domain Authority and to conversion.

- [ ] **1.** Do you have an exhaustive XML sitemap (ie, file that lists the URLs for your site) that follows a logical, hierarchical structure

- [ ] **2.** Do all internal links work? Are they up-to-date and do they look natural?

- [ ] **3.** Are all redirects in place necessary and serving the purpose for which they're intended?

- [ ] **4.** Have you uploaded your sitemap to Google's Search Console?

- [ ] **5.** Are you sure that it automatically updates regularly using an XML sitemap generator such as Google XML Sitemaps (a plugin for WordPress)?

- [ ] **6.** Have you got an HTML sitemap (ie, one that can be read by human users) as well as an XML sitemap?

- [ ] **7.** Does the XML sitemap match the indexed pages in Google Search Console?

Site speed

This is an important UX ranking factor as, according to research, half of consumers expect a web page to load in two seconds or less and 40% of people will abandon a website that takes more than three seconds.

- [ ] **1.** Is your site using the correct technologies, avoiding Flash and over-reliance on Javascript?

- [ ] **2.** Have you used Google's PageSpeed Insights tool, which evaluates the speed of your site both for desktop and mobile, and provides a list of issues and suggestions of how to fix them?

- [ ] **3.** Are you keeping images as small as possible? Oversized images take longer to load. If you have a WordPress site, consider adding the WP Smush.it plugin to ensure your images load quickly

- [ ] **4.** If you've got a lot of content, have you tried enabling compression? This speeds up page load time by making your content less bulky, similar to when you create a zip file for storing and sharing documents. Or tried using an asynchronou function to ensure your page is loading your content ahead of your widgets (therefore minimising user frustration?

Content & Keywords

Google rewards high quality content as it aims to return the most relevant and useful results for users, and has become wise to content that's been created with search engines rather than humans in mind. Websites that produce content with the aim of enhancing a page's search engine ranking rather than answering a searcher's query is counter-productive.

- [ ] **1.** Have you carried out thorough keyword research? As well as helping your site to rank, it will give you a much greater insight into what your customers want.
- [ ] **2.** Have you considered the value of long tail keywords (longer and more specific phrases that people are more likely to use when they're closer to converting) that have less volume, but may bring more targeted visitors to your site?
- [ ] **3.** Do keywords appear in your copy in a natural way?
- [ ] **4.** Likewise, have you avoided over-optimised copy? This includes text stuffed with keywords and written simply to increase traffic or rankings rather than to answer search queries.
- [ ] **5.** Is each page compelling, with substantial, unique, relevant and engaging (SURE) content?
- [ ] **6.** Is your user-focused content section easy to find?
- [ ] **7.** Have you included clear CTAs, such as 'download this guide now', 'sign up for our newsletter' or prominent social share buttons? This helps to boost click through rates which is great on its own, but also an SEO ranking signal as it indicates to search engines that the webpage is useful to users.
- [ ] **8.** Is text easy to read, using sub headings, short paragraphs, pull quotes and bullet points?

HTML

Meta tags

These are sections of HTML code in the header of a web page that are used by both search engines and users to determine whether a page will answer a particular search query. You can edit and optimise the text displayed within your meta tags.

Meta title – This is displayed on search engine results pages (SERPs) as the page link and used by Google to determine the relevance of a page to the search query.

Meta descriptions – A short summary of the page that often appears below the page link on SERPs and 155 character description of the on page content (with a minimum of 90 characters recommended). A good meta description can increase your click through rate.

- [ ] **1.** Are your meta title tags as accurate, precise and descriptive as possible (within the 56-character limit)? Do they contain your brand and the relevant keyword(s) for the page?

- [ ] **2.** Are your meta descriptions unique, clear and concise in describing what is featured on each page? These are restricted to 155 characters, but should be a minimum of 90 to make them useful. Do they include a call to action (CTA)? Do they include your keywords, brand and CTA (eg, call us today on...)?

  <meta name=description content=This is a concise web-page description>

- [ ] **3.** Do your metas include relevant keywords in a natural, user friendly way?

Header tags

These summarise the content on your pages for consumers and search engines. The header tag, or the **<H1>** tag in HTML, will usually be the title or a post. **<H2>** and **<H3>** tags emphasise other text on the page.

- [ ] **1.** Are your <H1> tags unique and, ideally, between 60 and 80 characters? Have you included keywords near the beginning?
- [ ] **2.** Are you using <H2> tags as stand-alone subheadings for breaking up content for ease and speed of understanding?
- [ ] **3.** Are you using <H3> tags as sub-subheadings to further break up a page's content for ease and speed of understanding?

Image tags

An <img> tag defines an image in an HTML page, and has two required attributes: the image source tag, which provides the source of the image inserted, and alt attribute, which describes the image. The latter is the text which will be voiced by screen readers, and also how Google attributes subject relevance to any image.

- [ ] **1.** Do your image file names accurately describe the images?
- [ ] **2.** Have you optimised your alt attributes so that they reflect the image subject and context?

Hyperlinks

Too many links per page can dilute its Domain or Page Authority and appear unnatural to both search engines and human readers.

- [ ] **1.** Have you applied common sense to ensure a sensible link-to-content ratio? Is there a good mix of both internal and external links?

Text links (anchor text)

Your anchor text is the format in which a text link is placed (hypertext).

- [ ] **1.** Is your anchor text succinct and relevant to the content of the destination page?

Semantic markup

Semantic (or schema) markup allows you to use HTML tags (rich snippets) to give Google a specific understanding of the content on a page, and the context, allowing your pages to be indexed faster and more accurately. It also allows Google to display this data as appropriate when people perform searches.

- [ ] **1.** Are you optimising for rich snippets to enable Google to return rich results that stand out from simple text-only results?

- [ ] **2.** Are you using Schema.org to make markup more straightforward and effective? This is a collaborative, community project that creates and maintains a standard 'schema' list for defined content types and code.

Canonicalisation

Canonicalisation is the process of redirecting search engines from one or more of your brand's URLs to a single, accepted (or canonical) URL.

- [ ] **1.** Are you using canonical tags? For example: **<link href="http://www.your_site.com/"ref="canonical" />**
- [ ] **2.** Have you considered using 301 redirects in addition to canonical tags? This will help to ensure all pages achieve the maximum Page Authority possible.
- [ ] **3.** Do you tags always refer to your preferred version of the destination URL?
- [ ] **4.** Do all duplicate versions of a page contain the same URL within the canonical tag?

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ABOUT US

Click Consult is a multi award-winning search and digital marketing agency with two decades of experience. Part of global consumer brand business Ceuta Group, we have a team of 70-plus specialists and a portfolio of more than 60 clients worldwide.

Click was named SEO Agency of the Year 2019, adding to our long list of other awards and accolades, and also ranks within Econsultancy's 'Top 100 Digital Agencies', and Prolific North's 'Top 50 Digital Agencies'. We're also a Google Premier Partner, a Bing Select Partner and feature in The Drum Recommends.

We're here to help - whether you're looking to hire an agency to undertake technical and creative work behind the scenes until the present situation is clear, or you just need some free advice. You can get in touch using hello@click.co.uk.

HOW CAN WE HELP YOU?

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