

Technical SEO Checklist

Ten critical checks that decide whether search engines can crawl, render, understand and rank your website — plus the warning signs that a problem is bigger than it looks.

- Print it, work through it, tick the boxes
- Every check rated Critical, High or Moderate
- Clear line between what you can fix and what needs a specialist
- 25 additional checks most websites never run

How to Use This Checklist

If your rankings have dropped, important pages are not getting indexed, or your site recently went through a redesign or migration, technical problems may be limiting how search engines access and understand your website. Work through the checks in order. Prioritise issues affecting your service, product, location and conversion pages before spending time on minor technical warnings.

- 1 Start with your money pages.** A warning on a blog post from 2019 matters far less than a crawl block on the page that brings you work.
- 2 Tick what you have verified, not what you assume.** Most technical problems are invisible from the front end of the site.
- 3 Clear every Critical before touching anything else.** A page that cannot be indexed cannot rank, no matter how good the content or how strong the backlinks.
- 4 Note where you get stuck.** The "when you may need help" line under each check tells you when a problem has stopped being a settings change and started being a project.

READING THE RATINGS

Severity Key

CRITICAL

Can stop pages ranking at all. Search engines cannot access, index or correctly interpret the page. Fix before anything else, and before spending another dollar driving traffic to it.

HIGH

Costs you positions you have already earned. The page is accessible, but search engines are not getting the best version of it. This is what separates two otherwise equal competitors.

MODERATE

Worth fixing, rarely urgent. Protects what is already working and widens the gap on competitors who ignore these entirely.

Severity is contextual. The same issue on an orphaned blog post and on your main service page are not the same problem. Where a check lists two ratings, the higher one applies when revenue-generating pages are affected.

Technical SEO Checklist

Use the following checks to identify problems that may be preventing search engines from crawling, indexing, understanding or efficiently serving your pages.

1 Find Out Why Important Pages Aren't Being Crawled or Indexed

Start with pages that have disappeared from search, recently launched URLs, or pages showing "Crawled – currently not indexed" or "Discovered – currently not indexed" in Google Search Console.

- | | |
|--|---|
| ☐ Page Indexing report reviewed in Search Console | ☐ robots.txt reviewed for crawl blocks |
| ☐ Important URLs inspected individually with URL Inspection | ☐ Important URLs included in the XML sitemap |
| ☐ No accidental noindex directives on key pages | ☐ Pages return a valid 200 HTTP status |

Remember: robots.txt controls crawling, not indexing. Google recommends using noindex when the goal is to keep a page out of the index.

Why it matters: A technically blocked or inaccessible page may never have the opportunity to rank, regardless of its content or backlinks.

Severity: **CRITICAL** when important revenue-generating pages are affected.

When you may need help: If large groups of pages are excluded, indexing changes suddenly, or you cannot determine whether crawling, rendering, canonicalization or site quality is responsible.

2 Check Whether Google Is Choosing the Wrong Version of Your Pages

Duplicate and near-duplicate URLs can cause Google to select a different canonical page from the one you intended — common with URL parameters, filters, HTTP/HTTPS versions, trailing-slash variations and duplicated CMS templates.

- | | |
|---|---|
| ☐ User-declared and Google-selected canonical compared in URL Inspection | ☐ XML sitemap lists canonical URLs only |
| ☐ rel="canonical" tags verified on key templates | ☐ HTTP and HTTPS versions resolved to one |
| ☐ Redirects consistent with the declared canonical | ☐ Parameter and filtered URLs handled |
| ☐ Internal links point to the canonical URL | ☐ Duplicate or near-duplicate pages identified |

Remember: a canonical tag is a signal, not a command. Google can select another URL when its other signals point elsewhere.

Why it matters: Google may consolidate ranking signals around the wrong URL, or show a different page than the one you want users to find.

Severity: **CRITICAL** for important pages · **HIGH** for widespread duplicate URL issues.

When you may need help: When hundreds or thousands of duplicate URLs exist, canonicals conflict with redirects or internal links, or Google repeatedly ignores your preferred canonical.

3 Fix Broken Links, Redirects and Server Errors

Broken links and incorrect redirects create dead ends for visitors and crawlers, and become particularly dangerous after URL changes, redesigns, CMS migrations or domain migrations.

- ☐ 404 and 410 URLs identified
- ☐ 5xx server errors identified
- ☐ Redirect chains found and shortened
- ☐ Redirect loops eliminated
- ☐ Internal links no longer point through redirects
- ☐ Important old URLs mapped to correct destinations
- ☐ No redirects landing on unrelated pages
- ☐ Crawl errors monitored after any migration

Why it matters: Incorrect redirects can interrupt crawling, weaken the relationship between old and new URLs, and make important content inaccessible.

Severity: **CRITICAL** after migrations · **HIGH** for widespread errors.

When you may need help: When redirect rules affect hundreds of URLs, a migration caused a ranking decline, or multiple redirect rules conflict.

4 Make Important Pages Easier to Find

Being technically crawlable does not automatically mean a page is easy to discover. Pages buried deep in the site or receiving few meaningful internal links are harder for both users and crawlers to reach.

- ☐ Site hierarchy reviewed
- ☐ Main navigation includes key commercial pages
- ☐ Internal links point to priority pages
- ☐ Breadcrumbs implemented
- ☐ Crawl depth checked (three clicks or fewer)
- ☐ Orphan pages identified
- ☐ URL structure reviewed
- ☐ Sitemap submitted in Search Console

Why it matters: Strong site architecture helps search engines discover pages and understand the relationships between different areas of your website.

Severity: **HIGH** when important commercial pages are orphaned or deeply buried.

When you may need help: Large ecommerce, multi-location or content-heavy sites may require significant architecture and internal-link restructuring.

5 Check Whether Google Can Properly Render Your Pages

A page may work perfectly in your browser while important content is missing when a search engine renders it — especially on sites relying on JavaScript, lazy loading, client-side rendering or interactive frameworks.

- | | |
|---|---|
| ☐ Rendered HTML compared with what users see | ☐ Images present |
| ☐ Main page copy present in rendered HTML | ☐ Product or service information present |
| ☐ Navigation present | ☐ Structured data present |
| ☐ Internal links present | ☐ Canonical tags present |

Why it matters: If critical content or links only appear after unsupported or failed JavaScript execution, search engines may receive an incomplete version of the page.

Severity: **CRITICAL** when primary content is missing.

When you may need help: Rendering problems involving React, Vue, Angular, hydration, client-side routing or blocked resources usually require SEO and development teams working together.

6 Fix Slow Pages and Poor Core Web Vitals

Focus on real user data where available rather than chasing a perfect performance score. Common causes are oversized images, slow servers, render-blocking resources, excessive JavaScript, third-party scripts and unstable page elements.

- | | |
|--|--|
| ☐ PageSpeed Insights field data reviewed | ☐ CLS at 0.1 or less |
| ☐ Core Web Vitals report reviewed in Search Console | ☐ Oversized images compressed |
| ☐ LCP at 2.5 seconds or less | ☐ Server response time checked |
| ☐ INP under 200 milliseconds | ☐ Render-blocking and third-party scripts audited |

Why it matters: Slow or unstable pages frustrate visitors and form part of the broader page-experience signals Google's systems seek to reward.

Severity: **HIGH** when important templates consistently fail.

When you may need help: Site-wide failures usually require changes to code, hosting, templates, caching or third-party scripts.

7 Fix Mobile Usability and Page Experience Problems

Technical SEO should reflect how people actually use the website. Pages that are difficult to navigate, read or interact with on a phone create poor experiences even when they load correctly.

- ☐ Key templates tested on multiple screen sizes
- ☐ Layouts respond correctly
- ☐ Font sizes readable without zooming
- ☐ Buttons and tap targets large enough
- ☐ Navigation usable on mobile
- ☐ No intrusive popups
- ☐ No layout shifts while loading
- ☐ No important content hidden on mobile

Why it matters: A page should be both accessible to search engines and usable by the visitors search sends to it.

Severity: **HIGH** when core pages are difficult to use on mobile.

When you may need help: Template-wide layout or performance problems generally require developer changes rather than individual page edits.

8 Check HTTPS and Technical Site Configuration

Configuration mistakes can create duplicate versions of your website, expose insecure pages, or produce conflicting signals that undermine everything else you fix.

- ☐ All important pages use HTTPS
- ☐ HTTP consistently redirects to HTTPS
- ☐ One preferred hostname in use
- ☐ Internal links point directly to final HTTPS URLs
- ☐ Canonicals reference the correct version
- ☐ Certificates valid and not near expiry
- ☐ Important resources not blocked
- ☐ Important pages return the correct HTTP status

Why it matters: Inconsistent configuration can create duplicate URLs, unnecessary redirects, crawl problems and poor user trust.

Severity: **CRITICAL** for security or accessibility failures · otherwise **HIGH**.

When you may need help: Server, CDN, certificate, domain or CMS configuration problems usually require developer or hosting access.

9 Add and Validate Structured Data

Structured data gives search engines explicit information about eligible page content and can make pages eligible for supported rich-result experiences.

- ☐ Pages tested with the Rich Results Test
- ☐ Structured-data reports reviewed in Search Console
- ☐ Schema types match the visible page content
- ☐ Required-property errors fixed
- ☐ Markup rechecked after template or CMS updates
- ☐ Marked-up pages remain crawlable and indexable

Why it matters: Invalid or inappropriate markup can prevent pages from becoming eligible for supported rich-result features.

Severity: **MODERATE** in most cases, higher when rich-result visibility is commercially important.

When you may need help: Large-scale schema implementations, dynamically generated markup or template-level errors may require development support.

10 Make Sure Search Engines and AI Crawlers Can Access Your Content

Search experiences increasingly use crawled web content to support AI-generated answers, which makes accessibility and clean technical foundations important across both traditional and AI-assisted discovery.

- ☐ robots.txt reviewed line by line
- ☐ Googlebot accessibility confirmed
- ☐ Important content present in rendered HTML
- ☐ JavaScript dependencies identified
- ☐ Semantic page structure in place
- ☐ Duplicate URLs reduced
- ☐ Internal links crawlable
- ☐ Any bot-specific restrictions are intentional

One important distinction: controls for Google's AI features in Search rely on Googlebot and Search preview controls. Google-Extended applies to certain other Google AI uses and is not the control for appearing in Google's AI search features.

Why it matters: Accidentally restricting crawler access can reduce your content's ability to participate in both conventional search discovery and AI-driven search experiences.

Severity: **HIGH** if important content is unintentionally inaccessible.

When you may need help: If your organisation intentionally manages different search, AI, training or commercial crawlers, those policies should be reviewed carefully rather than applying blanket blocks.

Beyond the Ten: Checks Most Sites Never Run

None of these will single-handedly sink a website. Together they are the difference between a site that is technically fine and a site that is technically sharp — and they are where most competitors stop looking.

Crawl Efficiency

- ☐ Server log files reviewed for what Googlebot actually crawls
- ☐ Internal site-search result pages kept out of the index
- ☐ Crawl budget not consumed by parameter and filter URLs
- ☐ Staging and development environments blocked from indexing
- ☐ Index bloat checked with a site: search
- ☐ Pagination crawlable, with no infinite scroll dead ends

Content and Duplication

- ☐ Soft 404s identified (empty pages returning a 200)
- ☐ Duplicate meta descriptions checked at scale
- ☐ Near-duplicate location or service pages consolidated
- ☐ One clear H1 per page
- ☐ Duplicate title tags checked at scale
- ☐ Thin pages either improved, merged or removed

Media and Assets

- ☐ Descriptive alt text on meaningful images
- ☐ Broken images identified
- ☐ Next-generation image formats in use
- ☐ Video content marked up where relevant
- ☐ Lazy loading not hiding the largest element on the page

Reliability and Trust

- ☐ Uptime monitoring in place
- ☐ 404 page helps visitors continue rather than dead-ending them
- ☐ Certificate expiry reminder set
- ☐ No mixed content warnings on secure pages
- ☐ Site scanned for malware or injected content

AI Search Readiness

- ☐ Key content readable without JavaScript execution
- ☐ Author, business and location information clearly stated
- ☐ Semantic HTML used for headings, lists and tables
- ☐ lms.txt considered for guiding AI models to your best content

Measurement

- ☐ Search Console and analytics verified on the correct property
- ☐ Conversion tracking working on forms and calls
- ☐ Migrations and major changes annotated so you can read the data later
- ☐ Rankings tracked for commercial terms, not just brand terms

What Your Results Mean

Any Critical unticked. Stop everything else. A page search engines cannot reach, render or index cannot rank, and every dollar you spend driving traffic to it is wasted. These are usually fixable in days, not months — once you know which one you have.

Several High unticked, no Criticals. Your site works, but it is handing positions to competitors who have done this work. This is the most common situation, and the most commonly ignored.

Mostly Moderate. Your foundations are sound. You are now competing on content, authority and the details — which is where you want to be.

You could not complete a check. That is a result too. The checks you could not verify are usually the ones hiding the real problem, because they need access, tooling or experience the rest do not.

Found Technical Issues You Can't Safely Fix?

Pinnacle Technologies identifies the technical problems limiting your visibility, prioritises the fixes that actually move rankings, and makes sure search engines can properly crawl, index and understand your site. Start with a free scan of your website — no commitment, no sales call required to see your results.

[Run My Free Website Audit →](#)

pinnacletechnologies.ai/audit

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This checklist reflects publicly documented guidance from Google Search Central, including its documentation on crawling and indexing, canonicalization, JavaScript SEO, Core Web Vitals, page experience, structured data and AI features in Search. Search behaviour changes; recheck anything time-sensitive against current documentation.

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