



How to Run an SEO Audit

A 9-step guide for increasing your organic traffic

```
1      <!doctype html>
2      <html lang="en">
3          <head>
4              <title>The Ryte way to your
5      <meta http-equiv="content-type"
6      <meta name="robots" content
7      <meta property="og:image"
8      <meta property="og:type" c
9      <meta property="og:url" co
10
11      <link rel="canonical" href=
12      <link rel="shortcut icon"
13
14          </head>
15          <body>
16
```

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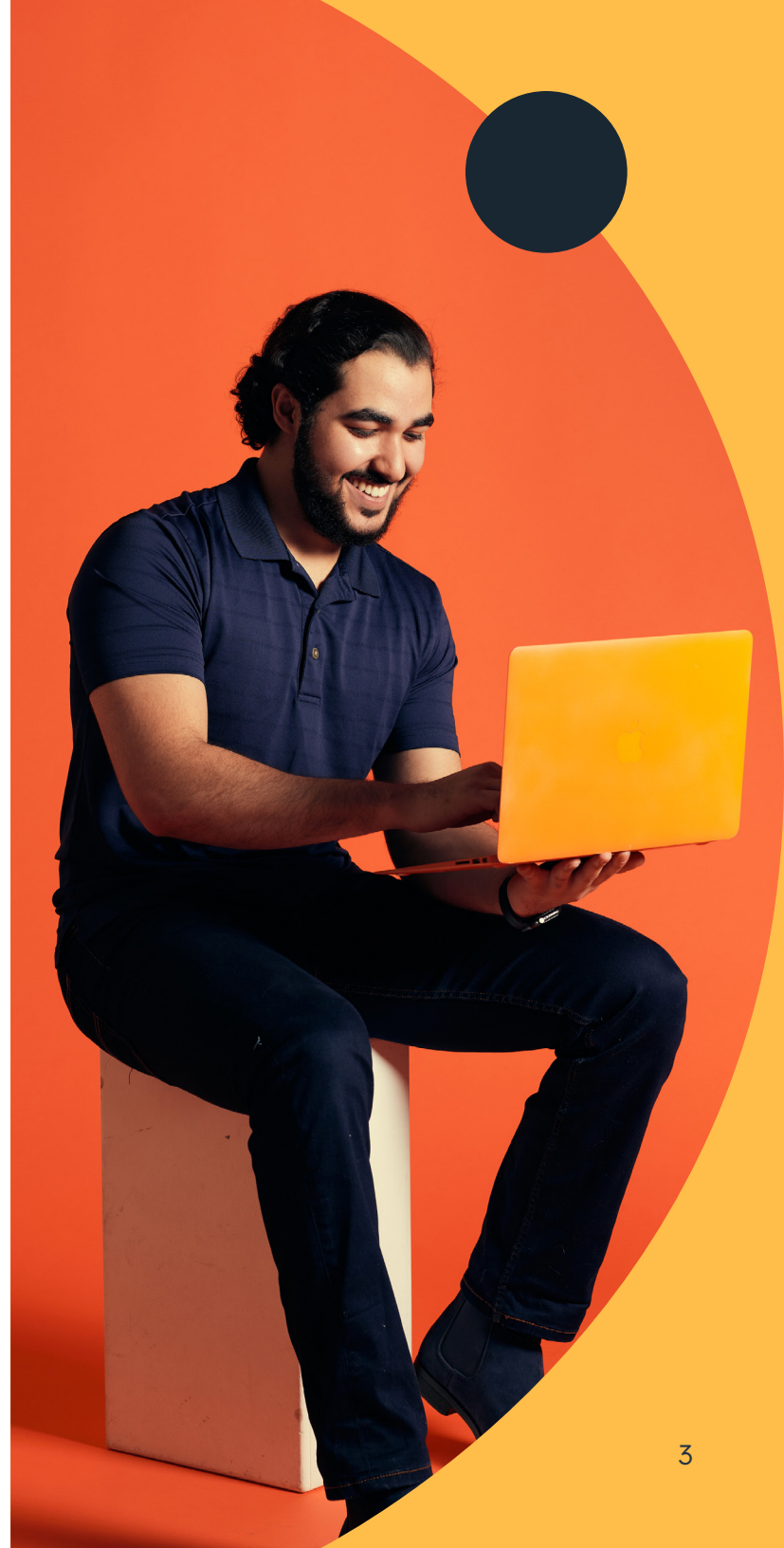
TIP:
Click on any of the sections to
navigate right to it.

Introduction

Search-engine optimization (SEO) is an important, baseline component of every online marketing measure. After all, a website can only be successful and receive a large volume of qualified traffic if it is visible on Google and other search engine results and listed high in the rankings.

To ensure that a website meets all requirements for high visibility on search-engine results pages (SERPs), a regular SEO audit is indispensable. Auditing your website provides the necessary optimization measures to achieve sustainable success on SERPs and increase your website traffic.

In this ebook, we'll teach you all of the relevant steps needed to conduct a thorough SEO audit.



INTRODUCTION

Why should I conduct an SEO audit?

One of the biggest mistakes that webmasters, marketers, and SEOs can make is to consider SEO a static measure. Continuity and website improvements over time characterize a successful SEO strategy.

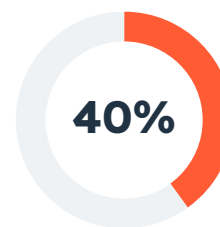
Buyer behavior is subject to constant change, which means marketers and SEOs have to change their methods in line with with how buyers search on the internet.

For example, a few years ago, it still was common to search for websites and products exclusively on your desktop or notebook at home. Today, more than half of all users in industrialized countries **use their smartphones and other mobile devices** to search for relevant information or products online. Because of this, modern website should be optimized for mobile devices (mobile optimization). This is the only way to ensure that mobile users also have a positive user experience.

Another example of how user demands transform SEO practices is loading speed. Just 10 years ago, users had to be patient when they loaded a website because connection speeds with modems were slower, with waiting times up to several seconds until the page fully loaded. **A study found** that more than 40 percent of users leave a website if it takes more than three seconds to load.



Search engines, especially Google, have evolved tremendously over the past decade. These changes happen not only because of user demands, but also because Google's technology has evolved to be able to understand complex search queries and deliver relevant search results. It is no longer enough to achieve good rankings for content by stuffing keywords in the page meta-data.



40 percent of users leave a website if it takes more than three seconds to load.

INTRODUCTION

Today, search engines evaluate content as well as the technical characteristics of your website. Google uses various algorithms to determine the relevance and quality of a website in relation to a search query.

These algorithms are continuously improving. Hundreds of “Google Updates” take place annually, with algorithms adapted or completely revamped.

Today, Google even uses artificial intelligence to answer search queries that have never been made before with RankBrain. At the same time, voice search and digital assistants are further developing web searches that place new demands on websites and their operators. What Google expects from webmasters and SEO managers is defined in the so-called “Google Webmaster Guidelines.”

What does all of this mean for marketers? Increasing user demands and evolving search engine quality make it necessary for you to continuously adapt and improve your websites and SEO quality. To find out what you need to work on, you should regularly conduct an SEO audit.



Who needs to conduct SEO audits?

An SEO audit is a daily task for SEO service providers and agencies. In-house SEOs should also conduct audits at regular intervals to check the health status of corporate websites. At the same time, SEO audits at agencies serve to document the progress of website projects for clients. In addition, an SEO audit is important in determining possible SEO measures when making initial contact with customers.

This ebook is intended not only for professionals who need valuable support in their work practices, but also for SEO beginners who want to familiarize themselves with the topic of website optimization. The SEO Audit Guide will give you insights into the world of SEO professionals.



Anyone who is professionally involved in optimizing websites or is responsible for a commercial website should be able to carry out an SEO audit.





An SEO audit takes as long as is necessary to complete. Be careful not to allow too little time for an SEO audit. After all, your work should uncover possible mistakes or optimization potentials that can have a lasting impact on the website's traffic success.

How long does an SEO audit take?

It would be pointless to state that “an SEO audit takes x or y hours.” After all, no two websites are alike, and individual requirements, both technical and content-related, are different. Depending on your website's size, the type of tools you use, and your experience, the time it takes to complete an SEO audit varies.

If only individual aspects of a new URL need to be checked, the audit can be done in a few minutes, but if you need to review a large website project with several thousand subpages, an SEO audit can take several days.

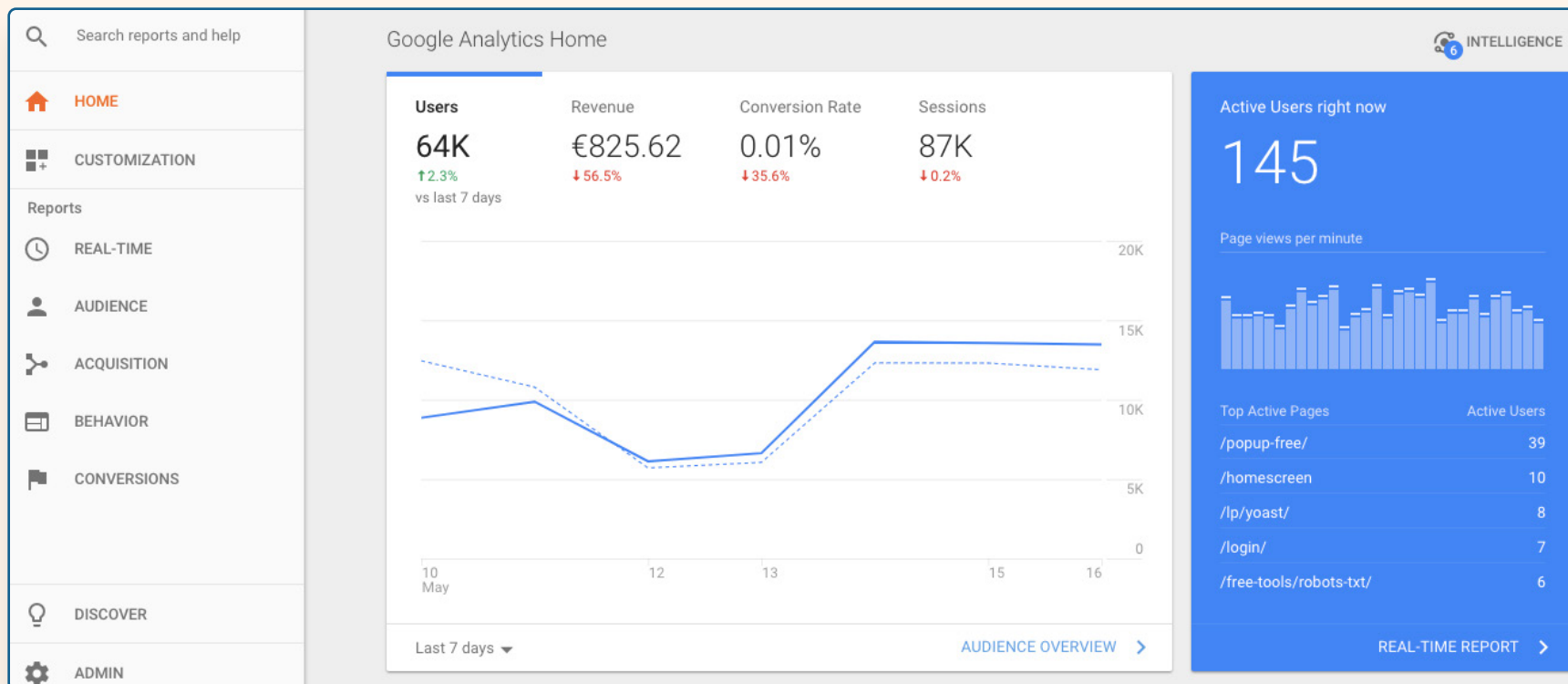
Which tools should I use?

Various tools are used in an SEO audit to help you analyze individual aspects while also taking some work off your shoulders, saving you time, and allowing you to function more efficiently.

However, even if you work with such tools during an SEO audit, the process still requires your attention regularly. Regardless of the tools used, you should also access the page “manually” with your desktop PC, notebook, smartphone, or tablet and click on different pages to get a firsthand perspective on the user experience when accessing your website.

INTRODUCTION

The following tools can help you with an audit:



Google Analytics: With Google Analytics, you get important insights regarding traffic and user behavior on your website, and if necessary, you can track individual events to measure the site's performance. In addition, the tool can be linked with data from Google Search Console and Google AdWords, providing you with additional insights into how your website treats visitors. Google Analytics is free and offers extensive analysis options for your SEO audit.

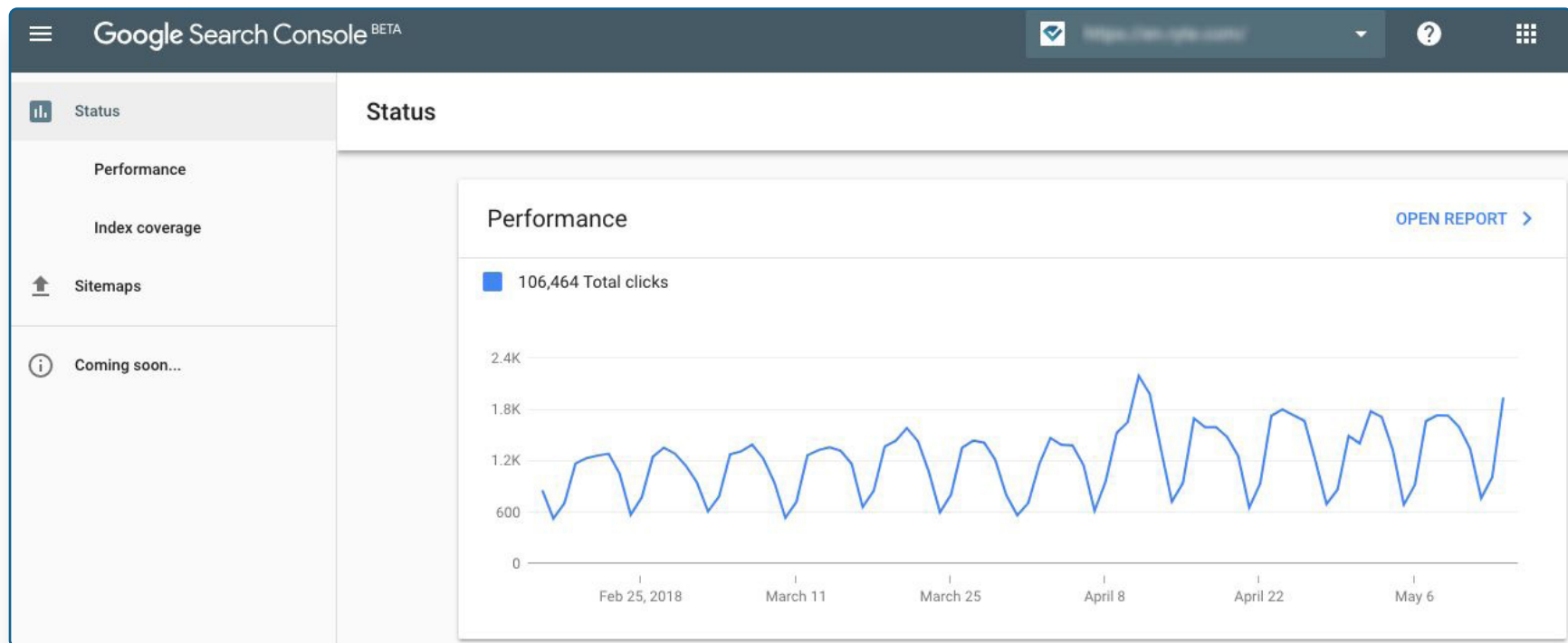


Important: Please observe the applicable data-protection regulations of the GDPR before implementation!

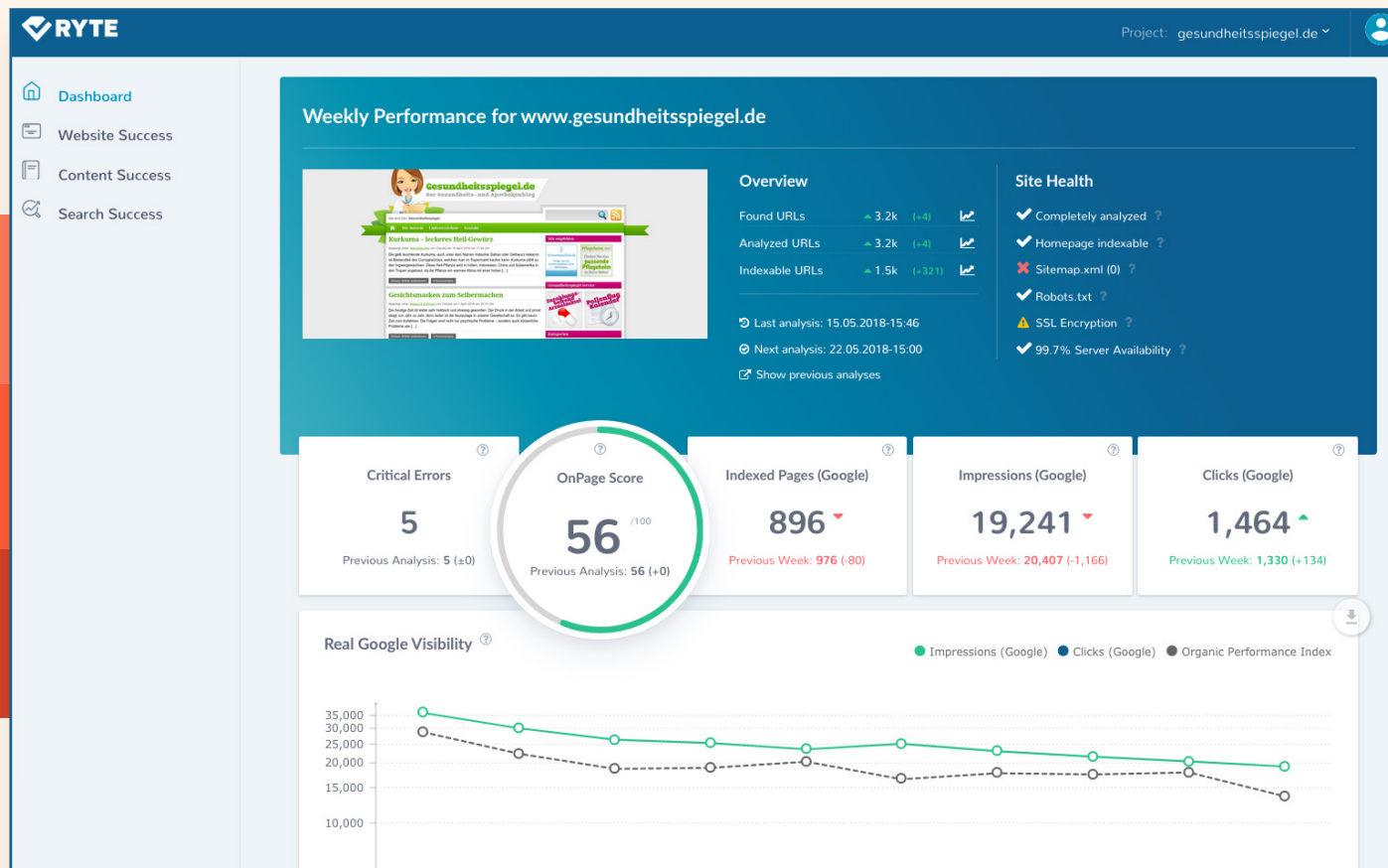
INTRODUCTION

Google Search Console: The free Google Search Console (GSC) is essential for any web project. The tool's data comes directly from Google and can help you in many ways, e.g., with a ranking analysis. In addition, you will gain important insights into your website's health, as well as information about web crawling or indexing errors. In addition, you can use the GSC to send URLs to the Google index or devalue links using the "Disavow tool." Thus, the GSC offers great benefits beyond an SEO audit.

Google Search: Before you ask yourself why Google Search is an SEO tool, there are several possible uses: For example, you can use the site query to check how many of your pages are in the index. The cache display, on the other hand, tells you when Googlebot last crawled one of your URLs.

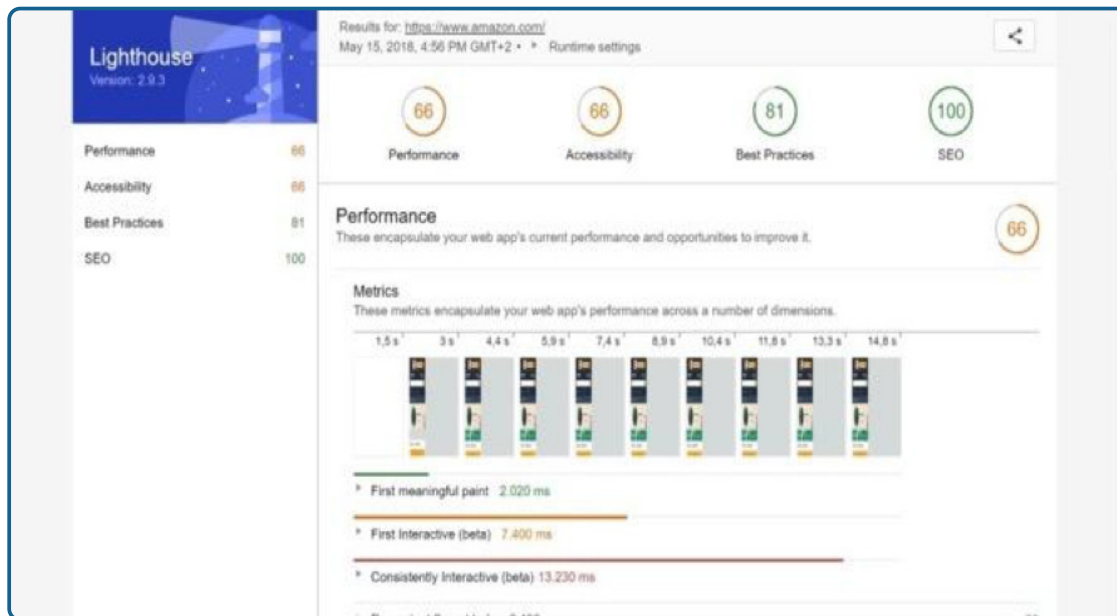


Ryte: With Ryte, you can perform extensive On-Page analyses of your website, even with the free version. Many reports can also be saved directly as PDF files. You can also create custom filters to perform your SEO audits efficiently.



Plugins

With a few clicks, you can turn your Chrome browser into an SEO-analysis machine. These plug-ins offer first clues for your SEO audits:



You now know which tools can support your SEO audit and what the audit's goals are, so let's take the first step in your auditing process.

Google Lighthouse Plug-In for Chrome: Google Lighthouse crawls current URLs and provides you with many starting points for On-Page optimization. You can install the Google Chrome extension for free.

Google Tag Assistant: Google Tag Assistant is also a handy plugin that lets you check whether Google tracking codes are implemented and whether they are functioning properly.

SEO META in 1-Click Plug-in for Chrome: This handy extension for Chrome allows you to get the central information about metadata and heading structures of a URL in one click. It also checks whether the robots.txt or Sitemap.xml is implemented.



STEP 1:

Crawling and Indexing

You can create a beautiful website and fill it with interesting and useful content, but if the pages have not been crawled and indexed by Google, no one will find it in the SERPs.

Search engines like Google have a large index in which information about domains and individual URLs is stored. As soon as a user makes a search query, the search engine compares its index with the query. Algorithms are used to determine the quality and relevance of the indexed pages. The search results are listed in order of importance based on algorithmic judgments (rankings).

To get your website URLs into the Google index, the Googlebot must crawl your page. Googlebot is a computer program (web crawler) that continuously searches the Internet. The web crawler visits websites and follows the links/URLs. Once a URL has been crawled, Googlebot stores relevant information, including an image of the page, in the Google index. Thus, the page is then officially “indexed.”

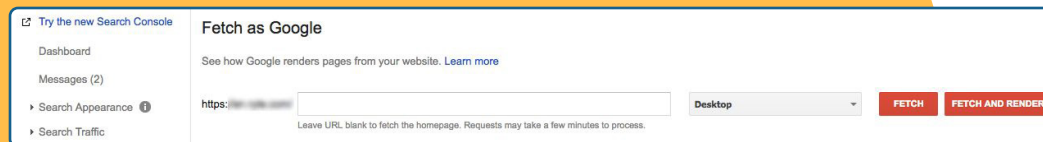
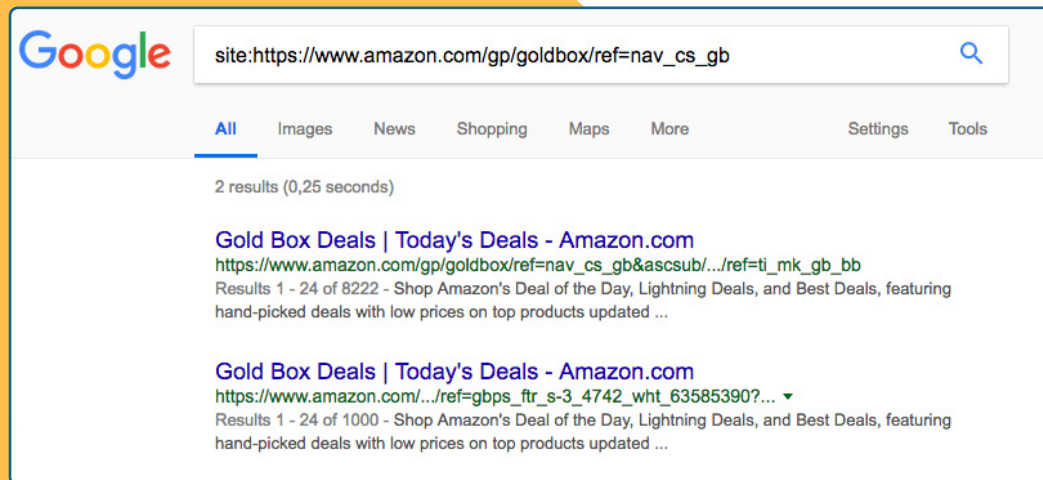
Googlebot has a limited budget for crawling URLs on your domain (crawl budget). Accordingly, the Googlebot never can crawl all your URLs during its visit. How much crawl budget is available depends on various factors, such as the topicality of your content or the number of incoming links. However, you can make crawling easier for Googlebot in a few easy steps to get the most out of your crawl budget.



Your website must be crawled and indexed by Googlebot to ensure that your URLs are part of Google SERP rankings. Thus, you should do everything you can to ensure that the Googlebot can crawl and index your URLs easily.



STEP 1: CRAWLING AND INDEXING



Site query with Google

With the help of a “site query,” you can check to see whether a certain URL is even in the Google index. To do this, enter the URL in the Google search bar and type “**info:**” or “**site:**” in front of it. By clicking on the magnifying glass, Google will show you whether your URL is indexed.

If the desired URL is not indexed, check your internal links to ensure that the site even has internal links to the url,in the first place, then send the URL directly to the Google index. You can do this by clicking “**Google Index**” in the Google Search Console, then “**Google-like retrieval.**” Retrieve the URL, then click “**send to Google Index.**”



STEP 1: CRAWLING AND INDEXING

Check robots.txt

Robots.txt is a small text file retrieved by Googlebot and other bots before crawling your site. Robots.txt contains instructions for bots, allowing you to control crawling directly while excluding certain areas. However, it is recommended to let Googlebot crawl as much as possible on your site to index the content in the best possible way.

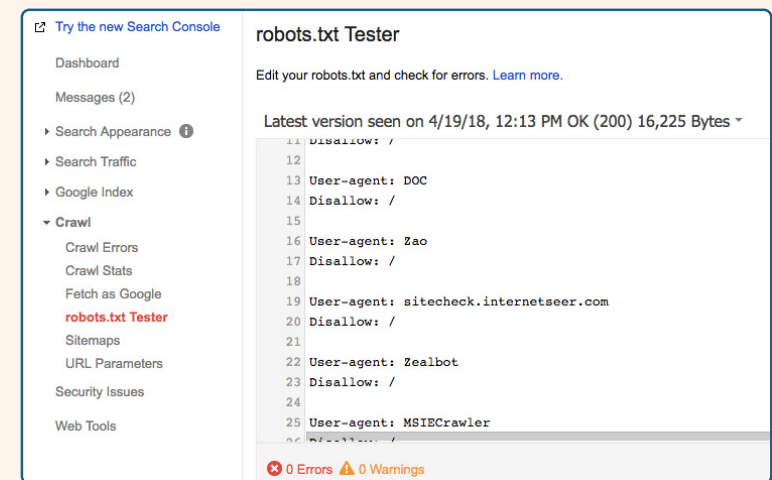
Robots.txt Audit Checklist

- Check to make sure the Robots.txt is in the root directory of your domain: **www.exampledomain.com/robots.txt**
- Areas that should not be crawled are excluded with the “Disallow” function, so take a good look at the disallow instructions to make sure it’s accurate for your website or to make sure there aren’t any pages that aren’t being indexed that should be.
- If you are unsure, robots.txt should not contain any restrictions:

User-agent: * Disallow: /

- Is there a link to your XML Sitemap in robots.txt?

If you want to check your existing robots.txt, GSC’s robots.txt-Tester is a good choice. You can find it in the “Crawling” section.





Sitemap Audit Checklist:

- ✓ Is the XML sitemap file stored in your correct directory?
- ✓ Does the file contain all URLs in the correct form?
- ✓ Are all of your most important URLs included?
- ✓ Is the file up to date?

You can check your XML Sitemap with the Google Search Console.

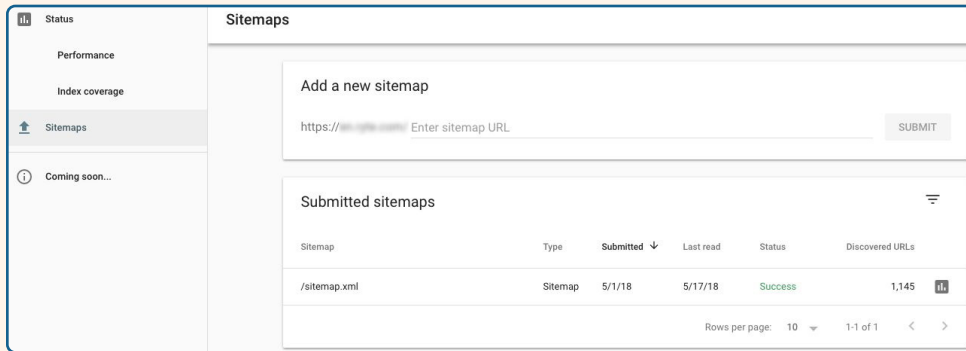
Control XML-Sitemap

An XML Sitemap informs Google about all of your website's existing URLs with a machine-readable file that contains information about URLs, updates, and optional priorities. Creating an XML Sitemap is possible with most CMS platforms, but there are also special tools to help you create a unique one. As soon as the file is created, it is stored in the root of the domain and in the Google Search Console. Google can then access the data and check it when necessary.





STEP 1: CRAWLING AND INDEXING






An XML-Sitemap does not guarantee that the URLs it contains are all crawled and indexed. Depending on the size and scope of the link to your project, it may take several months for all URLs to be indexed. The sitemap merely tells the Googlebot which URLs are available on your site.

Statements in robots.txt only prevent certain directories from being crawled, but indexing does not prevent entry into the file.

The GSC not only shows you whether the sitemap is working correctly, but also gives you an overview of the URLs that are available and indexed in the sitemap.

What you can do:

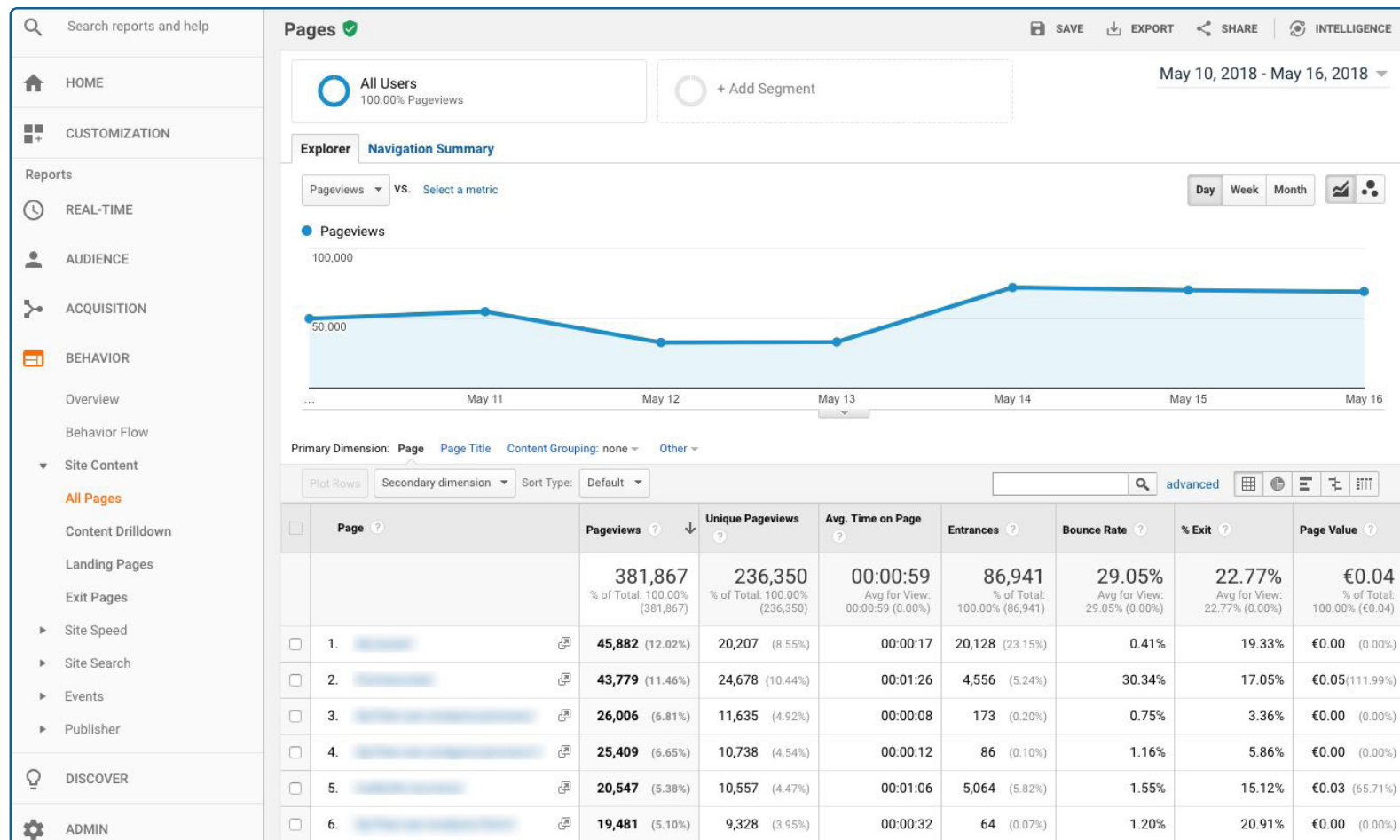
-  **In the event of errors in the sitemap:** Correct the errors with a sitemap tool, update the file, then upload it again.
-  **If URLs are missing:** Check the configuration of your sitemap tool, add the missing URLs, then update the file on your server.
-  **If no sitemap is available:** If you have not yet created and uploaded a sitemap, you should definitely do so, as it makes crawling easier for Google.



STEP 1: CRAWLING AND INDEXING

Check URLs with Google Analytics

Errors on websites and problems with usability are noticeable in user behavior. To check how your users navigate your website, you can manage individual URLs with Google Analytics, which shows you central interaction data such as bounce rates, average time spent on your site, and site traffic. You can find the report in the section: **“Behavior” > “Site content” > “All pages.”**











Search for your own brand in search engines:

To see how well Google recognizes your site as a brand, you should use Google to search for the domain name. Also, use the brand to find keywords related to your site.

Audit Checklist:

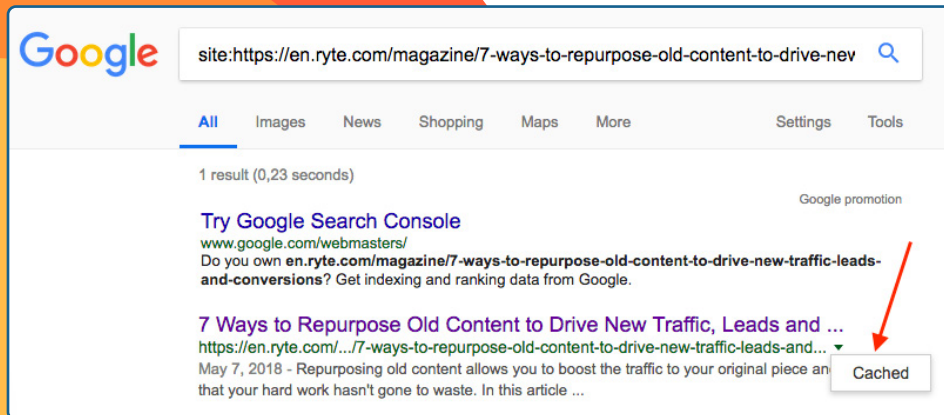
-  If your homepage is displayed first when you enter the brand name, this is a good sign.
-  If the matching subpages are displayed in the first position for the combination brand + search term, this is also good.
-  If the search results are different when entering the “Brand,” this may indicate possible Google penalties or errors in content or directory creation.

Troubleshooting:

-  Is there a URL “cannibalization,” in which the same content can be found on several URLs?
-  Is your homepage not linked page-wide with the “Home,” “Start,” or “Homepage” buttons?
-  Are there any inbound, faulty links that could lead to downgrading individual subpages?



STEP 1: CRAWLING AND INDEXING



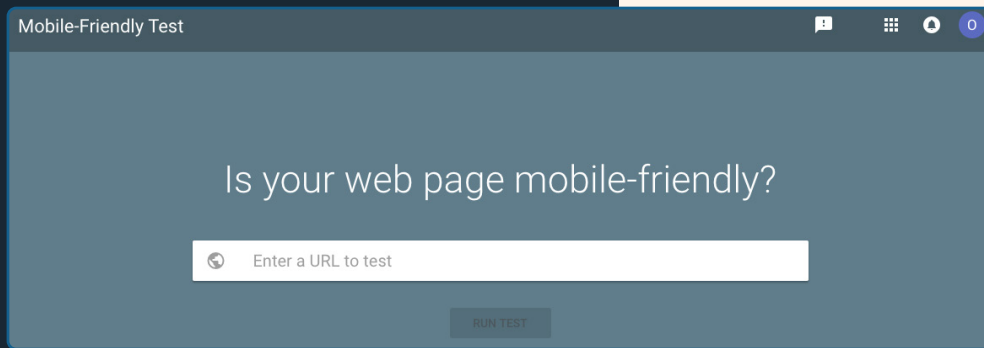
How old is the Google cache of my URLs?

The Googlebot can crawl and index many pages daily, but with several billion URLs on the internet, it is very likely that the indexed content is not always up to date. You can check when your URLs were last indexed using a simple method. To do this, first perform a site query with the desired URL, then click on the small green triangle at the end of the green URL, then “In cache.”

What to do if the cache is very old:

If the cache date is very old, and it is a very important subpage, e.g., a category page for your online shops that has ranked well in search results, you should let Google crawl the page directly again.

Use the GSC to send the URL directly to the Google index. You also can do this, for example, after you change or optimize important content. We already explained how this works in the “Site query with Google” section.





Mobile-Friendly Check: Can mobile users access my site?

We already pointed out in the introduction how important it is that your website be easily accessible through smartphones or other mobile devices without restrictions because on average, more than 50 percent of online users are now mobile. Thus, part of your SEO audit requires checking your website's mobile-friendliness.

Again, Google offers a free tool. With the “Mobile-Friendly Test,” you can quickly check whether your URL is optimized for mobile devices.

If your website is registered in the GSC, you can check the old version in the section “**Search queries**” > “**Usability**” on mobile devices for mobile-friendliness errors.

Troubleshooting:

-  Use a responsive web design that automatically adapts to the screen size of the device you are using.
-  Check whether you may need to change fonts or button sizes.



STEP 2: Identify Possible Indexing Problems

Problems with indexing can lead to URLs not getting into the Google index and, thus, not getting ranked on SERPs. Scripts or faulty links can play a vital role in such woes.

Check JavaScript and CSS

Too many JavaScript files can hinder the construction of a website. In this case, the Googlebot cannot crawl the page completely and, thus, cannot index it correctly. The same applies to faulty CSS files, which can lead to problems when rendering the website, for example.

Find orphan URLs

Orphan pages are not connected to the rest of the website via internal links and crawlers cannot reach these URLs to index them. Such “orphan pages” arise after structural changes are made to a website when links or navigation menus are changed. Orphan pages can be found in the sitemap, but without special software, like Ryte Website Success, they are usually very difficult to find.

Troubleshooting:

- ✔ Get a list of all orphan URLs.
- ✔ Add internal links on your site that refer to these pages.
- ✔ Check internal links and menus for errors.
- ✔ Add these pages to the XML Sitemap.





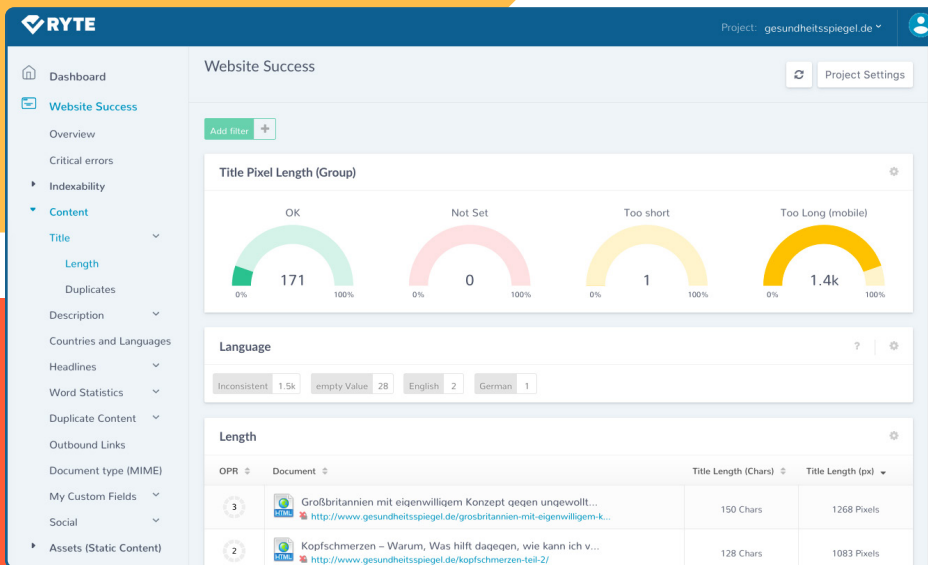
STEP 3: CHECK YOUR ON-PAGE ELEMENTS

STEP 3: Check Your On-Page Elements

The On-Page check is one of the most important components of your SEO audit. This way, you can check both your content and the presence of duplicate content.

Low-hanging fruit: Check your page titles

Title tags are probably the easiest on-page elements to optimize. They are used to rank relevant elements on your website, so special attention should be paid to them. With your tool set, you have several options to check page titles.

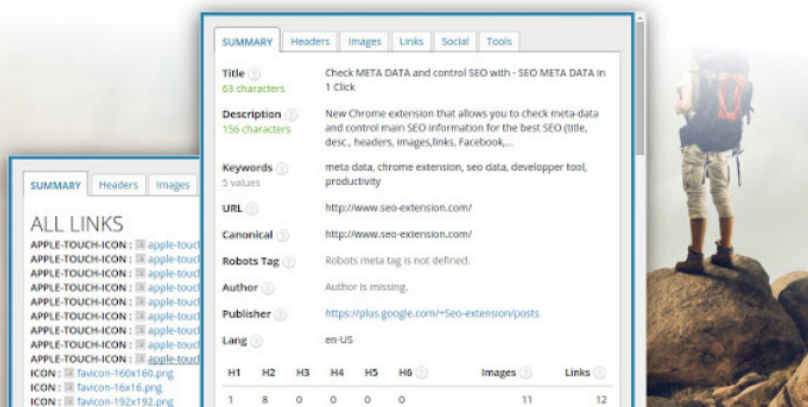


Ryte: Ryte Website Success allows you to check the presence and length of page titles quickly.



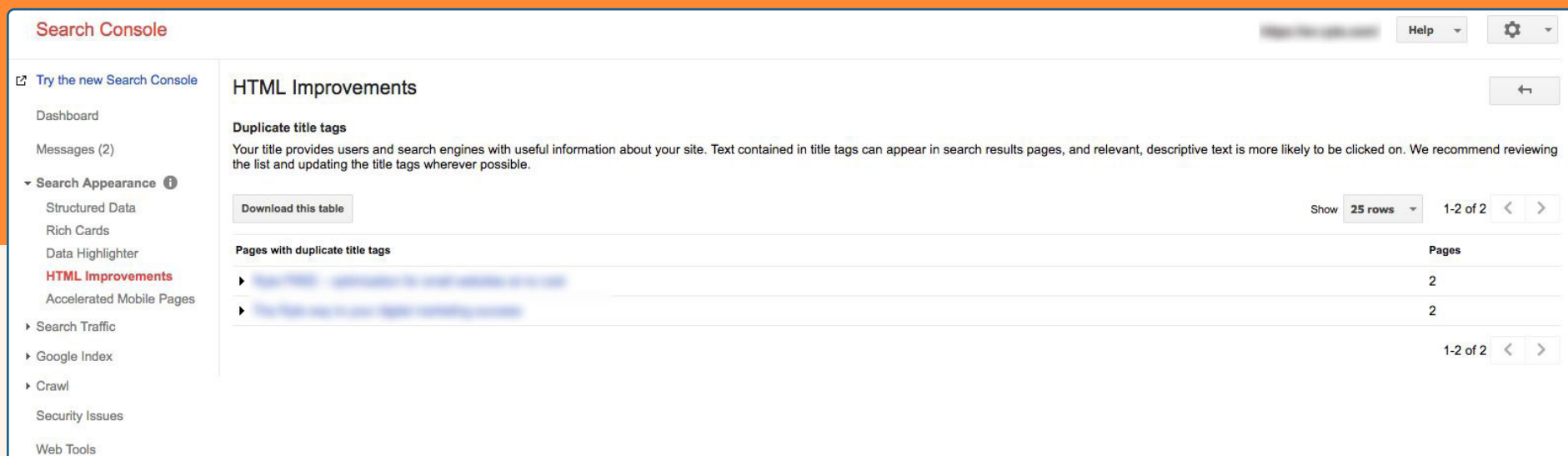
STEP 3: CHECK YOUR ON-PAGE ELEMENTS

Check main SEO info and all **meta data**



SEO META in 1-Click Plug-In for Chrome: If you want to display the page title of a single page, this plug-in is enough for now. For example, it is useful for an SEO audit that is only intended for one URL.

Google Search Console: This Google tool can show you duplicate, missing, or overly short meta descriptions. To do this, click “Display in search,” then “HTML improvements.” The incorrect page titles can be downloaded directly as an Excel spreadsheet.





STEP 3: CHECK YOUR ON-PAGE ELEMENTS

Check meta-descriptions

Although the meta-description is not relevant for ranking, it can positively influence the click rate in SERPs. Google can use meta-descriptions for snippets in the SERPs. Thus, this meta element is one of the first components of your website that a user sees during a web search.

What is important:

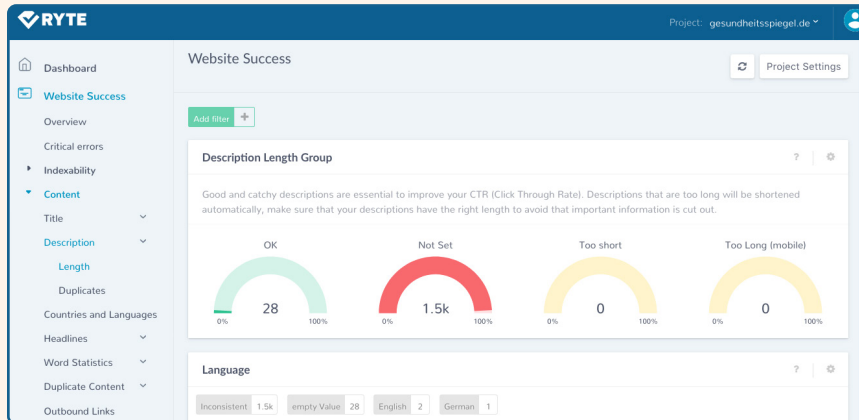
- 🕒 Does each URL have an individual meta description?
- 🕒 Have I exhausted the maximum length of over 250 characters per description?
- 🕒 Does the meta-description contain the central keyword of the target page?
- 🕒 Does the meta-description contain a call to action?



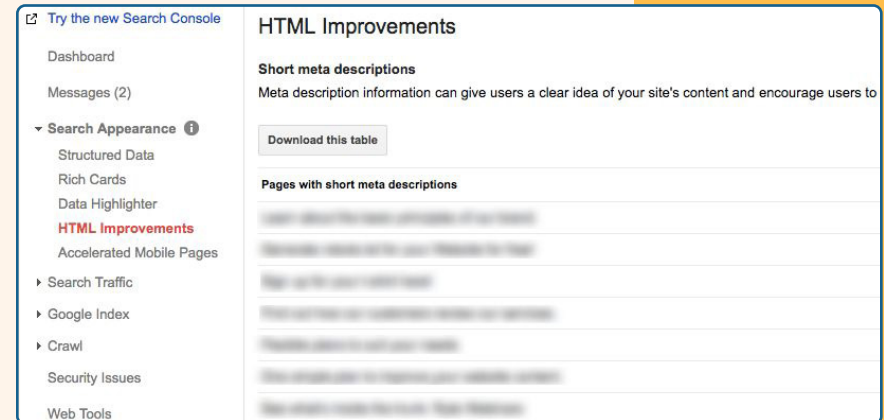


STEP 3: CHECK YOUR ON-PAGE ELEMENTS

Tools to help you control the meta-description:



Ryte: The Website Success module shows you existing meta-descriptions and can identify short or missing description texts.



Google Search Console: Like with the title, the GSC lets you search for URLs with duplicate or overly short meta descriptions. You also can find the report in Ryte under “**HTML Improvements.**”






STEP 3: CHECK YOUR ON-PAGE ELEMENTS

Check headline structure, especially the H1 tags

With the help of headlines, you can tailor your URLs' content for users and search engines alike. Users can capture content better and faster using headlines, and the same applies to Google headlines which are created in content as H-tags. The H1 heading is particularly important. It is the central heading of the target page and should only be used once on each URL.

What is important:

-  Is there only one H1 heading?
-  Have the H-tags been inserted in chronologically descending order?
-  Are H-tags used exclusively for formatting headlines, but not for formatting other layout elements?





STEP 3: CHECK YOUR ON-PAGE ELEMENTS

ALT attributes: What is displayed without a picture?

ALT attributes are displayed if a browser cannot display images for technical reasons. For example, screen readers for the blind use these texts. Therefore, ALT attributes are an important element of your website in terms of accessibility and alternative displaying of images. In addition, the texts of ALT attributes strengthen the keyword focus of a target page.

Thus, check whether all graphics on your pages use ALT attributes.

What is important:

- ✓ Are there URLs without ALT attributes?
- ✓ Does the ALT attribute contain a relevant keyword?










STEP 3: CHECK YOUR ON-PAGE ELEMENTS

Check URLs: Length, structure, and coding

Length, structure, and letters in the URL can help users share URLs or enter them into a browser easily. Erroneous URLs can lead to an accumulation of error pages and negatively affect the user experience.

For this reason, you should take a closer look at your URLs. In principle, Google also can read longer URLs, with over 1,000 characters, but for usability, it makes sense to keep URLs as short as possible.

What is important:

-  Are my URLs as short as possible?
-  Do I use talking URLs?
-  Do I avoid session IDs?
-  Are there any special characters in my URLs?
-  Is the encoding of my URLs correct?





STEP 3: CHECK YOUR ON-PAGE ELEMENTS

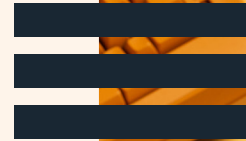
Check loading times

Nothing can interfere more when surfing the web than a website that loads very slowly. This is also not a good sign for Google and for shop operators; very millisecond more loading time means a loss in sales. That makes it all the more important that your website has the appropriate loading speed.

The loading time of a web page should be kept to a minimum and can be influenced by many factors.

What is important:

- 🌐 Check if loading times of important pages are too long
- 🌐 How long is the time “Time to first byte”?
- 🌐 Are large CSS/JS/HTML files compressed?
- 🌐 Are image sizes optimized?





STEP 3: CHECK YOUR ON-PAGE ELEMENTS

Canonical Tags: Are they used correctly?

With the help of canonical tags, you can show Google that there is an “original page” for the same content on different URLs. Google then uses the canonical URL for indexing and ignores the other one. This prevents duplicate content. However, if the canonical tag is implemented incorrectly, duplicate content remains and cannibalizes your site in SERPs.

What is important:

- 🌐 Does the canonical tag point to itself?
- 🌐 Does the canonical tag contain an absolute URL, not a relative URL?
- 🌐 Is only one canonical tag implemented per URL?
- 🌐 Does the canonical tag point to a page tagged with noindex or redirect?





STEP 3: CHECK YOUR ON-PAGE ELEMENTS

Pagination: Are the tags implemented correctly?

Pagination can be used to tell Google that a series of pages will follow. Google pays particular attention to the first page of this series. The HTML tags “**rel=next**” and “**rel=prev**” are used for this.

What is important:

- 🌐 Does “rel=prev” or “rel=next” point to a page with noindex?
- 🌐 Does the canonical tag always refer to the page itself when paginating?





What is important:

- ✓ Were there major ranking fluctuations within three months?
- ✓ Are there significant ranking losses compared with last year?
- ✓ Did you make any changes to your website before the ranking losses? If so, which ones?
- ✓ Were links to your website set up before the ranking changes?
- ✓ Has content been removed or added?

STEP 4: Monitor Your Rankings

Using the rankings of your page in Google search results, you can control the success, as well as the errors, of your optimization measures. Thus, strong ranking losses can indicate technical errors or inadequate content.

To be vigilant for possible errors, it is important to check your rankings, which particularly depend on changes. Therefore, you should always look at your URLs' rankings regularly.

Monitoring SERP rankings

To control SERP rankings, you can use both the GSC and Ryte Search Success, which uses 100% real Google data.



STEP 5: Evaluate Your Content

Content plays a central role in how your website is ranked in search results. It should be unique and provide added value for your site's users.

Check the relationship between content and advertising

If your website contains ads, you should ensure that they do not take up a disproportionate amount of space, which can lead to lower Google rankings.

In the GSC you can check whether the balance between your non-ad content and ad content on your website is reasonable. Use the Ads-to-Content Ratio function in the GSC's **"Web Tools"** section.

What is important:

-  If you have too many ad blocks on your site, you should reduce them.
-  Make sure your ads add value for your users.
-  Check whether the section "above the fold" can be read without advertising.

Web Tools

Ad Experience Report

Desktop

Mobile

Abusive Experiences

Testing Tools

Other Resources

Search Console

Ad Experience Report: Desktop

Select a property below to view its ad experience status and view examples of issues that need fixing.

If you are not verified for the relevant property, add it using the button below.

If someone in your organization (for example, your webmaster) is already verified for site ownership on Search Console, ask them to add you as an [owner](#) or [user](#). This will give you access to the Report.

Choose a verified property ▾

Add a property



STEP 5: EVALUATE YOUR CONTENT

Control keyword focus

The keyword focus ensures that all relevant content elements are aligned with the central keyword of the target page, which forms the page's thematic focus.

What is important:

- ✔ Does the page title contain the main keyword?
- ✔ Does the H1 heading contain the main keyword?
- ✔ Can the central keyword be found in the meta-description?
- ✔ Is there a main keyword in the body text?
- ✔ Are synonyms of the main keyword used in the subheadlines?
- ✔ Do ALT tags contain the main keyword?
- ✔ Did you use the main keyword in the URL?
- ✔ Do you have any instances of keyword cannibalization?





STEP 5: EVALUATE YOUR CONTENT

Check individual pages for duplicate content

Duplicate content always exists when the same content is accessible under different URLs. Duplicate content can mean that search engines can no longer determine exactly which URL in your domain is more relevant, which can lead to keyword cannibalism in SERPs. Google then must weigh your URLs and decide which one best fits the respective request. This means that a less-important URL could receive high priority, and users could end up looking at a page that does not contain the information they are supposed to see.

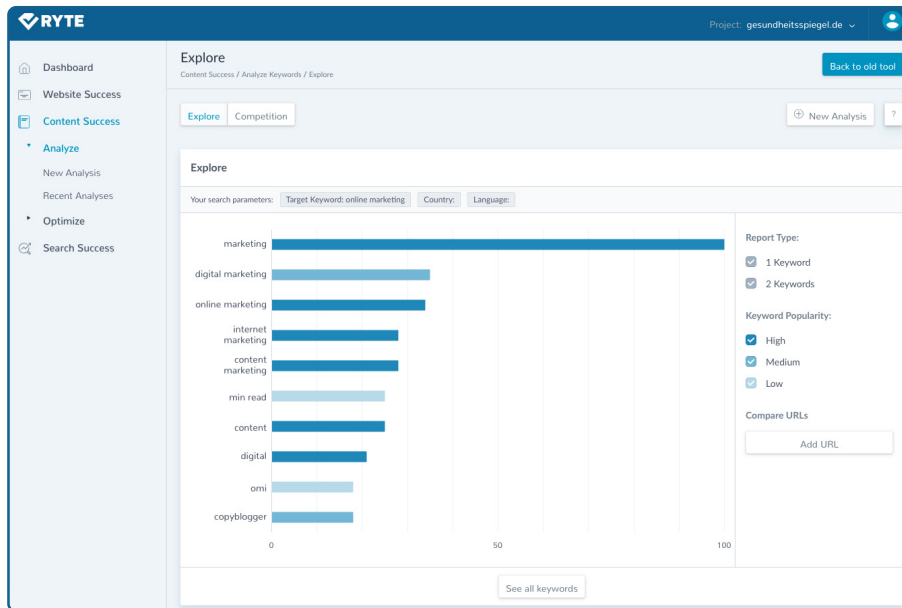
What is important:

- 🔄 Set up 301 redirects to avoid duplicate content when browsing your site with or without www.
- 🔄 Add noindex and nofollow to pages that only offer thin content or nearly duplicate content.
- 🔄 Use pagination to show Google that this is a list of pages.
- 🔄 Use the canonical tag to link Google to the canonical page for the same content.





STEP 5: EVALUATE YOUR CONTENT



What is important:

- TF*IDF analysis is only an orientation for content optimization. Your text can follow the curve, but should be well-structured, easy to read and offer added value.
- With the help of the TF*IDF analysis, you can determine possible missing terms that strengthen your target page's topic relevance.
- Content is not just text. When optimizing content, pay attention to appealing and thematically suitable images, videos, information graphics, etc.

Perform a TF*IDF analysis of individual pages

The goal of any content optimization should be to create the best, most unique content on your topic with the greatest added value for your website's users. A TF*IDF analysis can help you easily create value-adding content for your website.

TF*IDF is a formula that determines the relative frequency of a word within a document. A TF*IDF analysis helps you determine whether your target page contains the key terms related to the focus keyword. The result of a TF*IDF analysis can be used to determine the quality of the written content from the perspective of a search engine.

With Ryte Content Success, you can perform a TF*IDF analysis on any URL.



STEP 6:

Optimize Your Site Architecture and Internal Links

Web-page architecture and internal links are important for the “blood circulation” of your website. This ensures that the link juice is distributed evenly on the website.



How many links should there be on my URL?

The more internal links you find on a page, the less the link force that a single link can distribute to other URLs on your page. Additionally, a large number of internal links on a page makes Googlebot crawl the page even deeper, using up the crawl budget faster.



Check the horizontal and vertical link structure

To ensure that the link force is optimally distributed across all your website’s directories and pages, internal links should be set systematically, e.g., based on menus or content. For Google, the relevance of a subpage also can be strengthened by ensuring that as many internal links as possible always refer to it with the same link text.

Vertical link structure:

-  Is the home page linked to all important category pages?
-  Are there links from product pages to the thematically relevant category pages?

Horizontal link structure:

-  Are there links from category pages to other relevant category pages?
-  Are there links from product pages to other thematically suitable product pages?



Check internal links in footer and content

By linking your subpages to the same link text, you ensure that the relevance of these target pages for Google is strengthened. In your SEO audit, you should check the internal links in the footer and content.

What is important:

- ✓ Do links from the content refer to other topic-relevant subpages?
- ✓ Are the same link texts always used for internal links to the same subpages?
- ✓ Are the anchor texts in the footer correct?
- ✓ Are there larger link blocks instead of meaningful and user-friendly navigation?



STEP 7:

Update Status Codes and Link Forwarding

Correct status codes and working redirects lead to a better user experience.

Perform a URL status-code check

When a client makes a request to a server, the server should output the status code “200 OK.” If the page is no longer available, the status code is “404 not found.” You can easily find the status codes of your pages with an SEO software, like Ryte. Go to the Status Code report in Ryte to get an overview of all of the status codes on your site.

What is important:

- ✔ Is a correct error page displayed for status code “404”?
- ✔ Are there current server errors (5xx codes)?
- ✔ Do most of your URLs deliver a status code of “200 OK”?







Are redirects required?

If a website can be accessed both with “www” and without “www,” duplicate content exists, i.e., the same content can be accessed with different URLs. To avoid duplicate content in this case, you should set up a 301 redirect that redirects from one URL version to the desired one. For this purpose, an entry can be made in the htaccess file, which forces the server to forward the URL.




What is important:

-  Is your website accessible with “www,” as well as without “www”?
-  Can you access your website with both “https” and “http”?

Are all 301 redirects working?

If 301 redirects already have been set on your site, you should check them during the SEO audit to ensure they work correctly, i.e., that users will see the correct page when a URL is redirected. At the same time, forwarding is important for Google because it gives the search engine the URL it wants, then indexes it. In addition, page rank is forwarded from the “old” URL to the “new” URL with 301 redirects. Redirects are best found with an SEO software like Ryte. Ryte shows you all of your redirects in the “Redirects” report.

What is important:

-  Are there any forwarding chains?
-  Are the 301 redirects working?
-  Is the page redirected to the correct one?



STEP 8:

Technique, Scripts, and Coding




Scripts and technology can directly influence your website's performance. For example, too many scripts can reduce load speed. It is also possible that when using the “wrong” technology, some users may not be able to access your entire site.

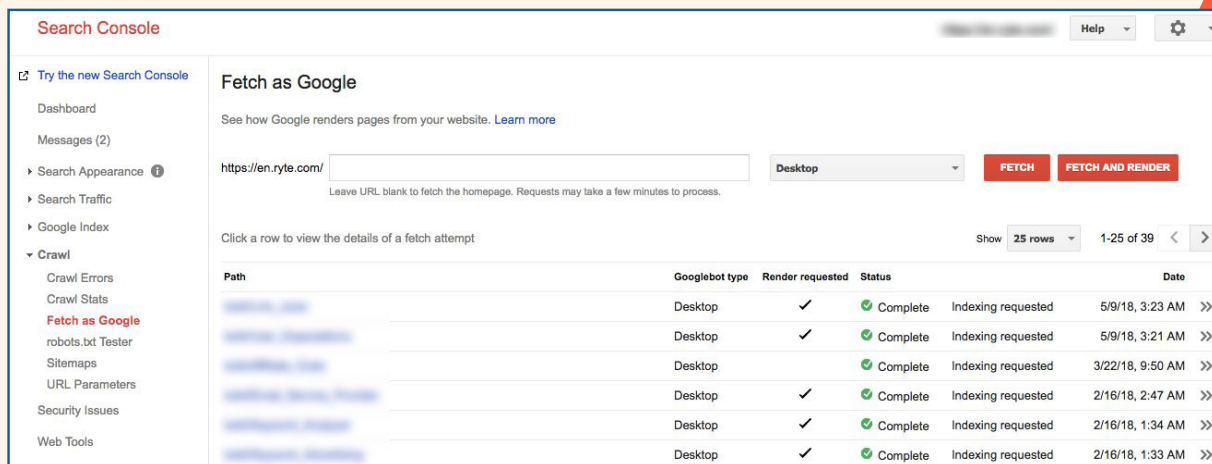
Where and how is JavaScript integrated?

With the help of JavaScript (JS), your website's functionality can be increased enormously. At the same time, the scripts are mostly used for tracking user behavior. Check where Java code is implemented and if it works at all during the SEO audit.

You can use the GSC to access individual pages on your website. The tool shows you whether problems occur when rendering the page and whether JS files are affecting page structure or loading.

What is important:

-  Is JavaScript used for content output?
-  Where are the JS files? At the beginning or end of the source code?
-  Do JavaScripts prevent pages from loading?






The screenshot shows the 'Fetch as Google' interface in Google Search Console. It includes a sidebar with navigation links like 'Dashboard', 'Messages (2)', 'Search Appearance', 'Search Traffic', 'Google Index', and 'Crawl'. The main area has a 'Fetch as Google' header and a text input field containing 'https://en.ryte.com/'. Below the input field are 'Desktop' and 'FETCH' buttons. A table below shows fetch attempts with columns for Path, Googlebot type, Render requested, Status, Indexing requested, and Date. The table contains 6 rows of data, all showing 'Complete' status and 'Indexing requested'.




Path	Googlebot type	Render requested	Status	Indexing requested	Date
https://en.ryte.com/	Desktop	✓	Complete	Indexing requested	5/9/18, 3:23 AM
https://en.ryte.com/	Desktop	✓	Complete	Indexing requested	5/9/18, 3:21 AM
https://en.ryte.com/	Desktop	✓	Complete	Indexing requested	3/22/18, 9:50 AM
https://en.ryte.com/	Desktop	✓	Complete	Indexing requested	2/16/18, 2:47 AM
https://en.ryte.com/	Desktop	✓	Complete	Indexing requested	2/16/18, 1:34 AM
https://en.ryte.com/	Desktop	✓	Complete	Indexing requested	2/16/18, 1:33 AM



What is important (iframes):

-  Is content integrated via iframe?
-  What content is delivered via iframe?
-  Are the iframes used really necessary, and do they offer the user added value?

What is important (Flash):

-  Is Flash only used for individual elements or for the entire website?
-  Do Flash elements hinder the performance of the site?
-  Can Flash content be implemented with other technical solutions?

Do I use iframes, and if so, where?





With iframes, you can load content from other websites onto your website. For example, YouTube videos are often integrated via iframe.

Are there Flash elements?

Animated web content can be created with the help of Flash. However, Adobe will stop supporting Flash at the end of 2020. Since 2016, the Flash plug-in is no longer integrated into Google Chrome by default, as it often has led to security problems. Thus, you always should consider whether you want to continue using Flash.



What to Audit:

-  Does the URL language also change when you select a different language version?
-  Are menus translated?
-  Have the country versions been stored in the GSC?
-  Have currencies or units been adjusted to the respective country?

STEP 9: Internationalization

When websites are designed for international visitors in different languages or for different countries, some special aspects need to be considered to ensure that Google indexes the content correctly and assigns it to the respective nation/language.

Are there country- or language-specific URLs?

URLs should be aligned with country- or -language specific URLs to accommodate other languages/countries. For example, language/country versions can be clarified by using directories named with nations' abbreviations. The URL's language also should change. You can do these exams "by hand," usually without any special tools.







STEP 9: INTERNATIONALIZATION

Are hreflang tags implemented correctly?

Hreflang tags help Google correctly assign your website to a country and/or language. For the assignment to work smoothly, hreflang and rel=alternate must be integrated correctly.

With the GSC, you can check whether Google correctly assigns the target country or the language of your website. To do this, click on the tool in the section **“Search queries ->International alignment.”**

What is important:

-  Are the hreflang tags implemented correctly?
-  Do the pages have an rel=alternate reference?
-  Are the language/country codes correct?
-  Are language versions forwarded correctly?



CONCLUSION

An SEO audit consists of many small steps that provide a thorough profile of your website's health. The more detailed your report is, the better individual optimization measures can be derived from it.

Therefore, take enough time for your SEO audit. In addition, perform page checks at regular intervals. This is the only way to determine whether your website has made progress or whether there is a need for further action.

Want a little more help with your SEO audit? HubSpot and Ryte have solutions for you:



HubSpot SEO & Content Strategy Tool

Build your authority in search with tools that help you plan your SEO strategy, optimize your content, and measure real return on investment.

HubSpot's SEO tools are integrated with all our content tools so you never miss an optimization opportunity.

[Get Started Using HubSpot SEO Tools](#)



The Ryte Suite

Make your SEO audit faster and easier with Ryte.

Ryte Website Success scans your website and provides a list of the errors that are hurting your organic traffic and usability. Check each factor in this audit in just a few minutes.

Best part? It's free!

[Find my errors for free](#)