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**What is an SEO audit? Check out our comprehensive guide on this topic!**

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What is an SEO audit? Check out our comprehensive guide on this topic! From this article you will learn what an SEO audit is, you will find advice on when to decide to perform an audit and what it should look like when properly conducted. In addition, we have for you our sample SEO audit and an e-book that allows you to prepare a free SEO audit yourself.

## What is an SEO audit?

Before we start analyzing the benefits of a website audit, let's first define what an SEO audit is.

An SEO audit (SEO is an acronym for Search Engine Optimization) is the process of assessing a website for potential improvements to its visibility in search engines. This assessment is usually performed by an SEO expert or SEO team. The auditor uses various tools and metrics to be able to suggest improvements or find existing errors on the audited website. The comments collected in the SEO audit are used by programmers, editors and other people associated with the website to perform even better work focused on proper SEO.

SEO audit is a powerful tool that helps website owners find out what type of activities are required to be able to rank high in search results for the best keyword phrases related to their business.

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Regardless of which website an SEO audit will be carried out for and by whom such a service will be performed, the goals of an SEO audit are usually similar, for example:

- an overview of all SEO-relevant elements on a given website,
- assessment of optimization and adjustment of each element important for SEO,
- identifying the strengths and weaknesses of website optimization,
- tips on how to improve the optimization of a given element,
- detecting problems in adapting the website to the Webmaster guidelines.

Having a properly optimized website is important because more and more attention from the Google search engine is directed towards being user-friendly and indexing robots. To make a website friendly to both users and robots, it is necessary to adapt it to the latest usability trends and adapt it to the guidelines for webmasters (in the case of the Google search engine).

## What is an SEO audit?

A website audit in itself does not solve the problems encountered when creating the report. It's best to treat it as a to-do list

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to increase your visibility in search results and, consequently, increase your incoming organic traffic.

The audit will tell you what your website looks like in terms of SEO and what your strengths and weaknesses are. Once you understand this, you can start making the necessary changes to improve your score!

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## Types of SEO audits

Audits can be divided into several types. The basic division includes the method of performing an audit:

Manual audit - the most detailed, time-consuming and expensive audit. All activities are performed manually;

Automatic audit - there are many tools that are able to perform an automatic website audit. Many technical parameters of the website are checked. Unfortunately, without a human factor to check and interpret the results, it will never be fully valuable;

Manual-automatic audit - a combination of the above methods in performing audits. First, you use a proven Sitechecker tool, and then complete the activities with a manual audit. This is the best method to reliably audit the website, not by doing everything manually, but by verifying the results of automation tools.

Sometimes it happens that an SEO audit is not a full audit, but covers only some areas that currently require checking. Belong to them:

On-site audit - covers only issues related to the construction of the audited website. This includes, among others, technical issues related to the architecture and accessibility of the website and the quality of the content on it:

- Off-site audit - everything that concerns issues that do not directly concern the website, but build its authority on the Internet;
- Technical audit - i.e. all technical issues from website construction to crawling and speed of operation;
- Core Web Vitals audit - each page should be aligned with Google's Core Web Vitals guidelines. The report covers all technical issues related to them;
- Keyword audit - mainly concerns the selection of appropriate keywords for current and newly created content;
- Competition audit - analysis of competition activities, both on-site and off-site, aimed at showing differences and indicating opportunities to overtake rivals in search results (SERP);
- Content quality audit - verification of structure, content, length, keyword density and duplicates, and many other content-related issues;
- JavaScript rendering audit - checks issues related to the correct rendering of the page, mainly by search engine bots for the purpose of correct indexing.

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## When to perform an SEO audit?

There is no clear answer to this question, but we recommend doing it at least once a year, and if we have the opportunity and resources, to perform cyclical SEO audits every few months by different teams. If SEO is important to you, you need to work

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on it regularly and monitor the effects.

Here is a list of key moments when we most often perform audits.

1. The process of creating a website - to research the market and determine what our needs and benefits from SEO are.
2. When major/important changes are made to the site, e.g. publishing a new page/changing redirects.
3. Before starting a UI redesign/change, to identify issues that may be unnecessarily carried over to the new site.
4. Before or after switching to a new keyword strategy;
5. Following Google updates to understand how changes in algorithms affect your website.
6. To eliminate threats/penalties, e.g. to disavow inappropriate links to the website.
7. Taking over a client from another agency or SEO specialist. It allows us to determine what level our SEO is at and what needs to be improved.

## **SEO audit in the process of creating a new website**

A website audit can be carried out at the design stage, which will allow the implementation of solutions consistent with SEO principles. When we plan to create a new website, it is a good idea to present graphics or a mockup to an SEO specialist. This will allow you to enrich the website documentation with additional notes for programmers and developers. Thanks to this, already at the stage of writing the website, you can avoid many mistakes and take advantage of possible opportunities.

Such an audit is very specific because it is often based on materials that cannot be checked by available tools. Many elements need to be verified yourself. An SEO mock-up audit is a kind of test of an SEO specialist's skills.

There is practically no chance to perform a free SEO audit for a website mockup. There is no tool that would analyze a website mock-up and determine opportunities and threats based on it. Why do we have to commission such an audit or perform it ourselves?

Performing an SEO audit at this time can protect the website from various problems that may prove difficult to correct later.

## **SEO audit of a newly created website**

An audit of such a newly created website usually focuses mainly on technical aspects that can be used by the owner "now" or in the future, after carrying out the first activities promoting the website on the Internet.

Performing an SEO audit at this time may be very problematic or even pointless if the website owner is reluctant to change. However, if we are aware that an SEO audit can still have a positive impact on the planned promotion of the website on the Internet - it is worth performing such an audit.

You can also try to perform the audit yourself, using the help in this article or using one of the many website auditing tools.

## **SEO audit when key changes are introduced**

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Most often, owners decide to perform such an audit when they change the appearance or functionality of the website. The structure of the website is often changed to a different one, more comprehensive and appropriate to the company's changing offer. There are also situations when the website owner changes the domain or combines several websites into one. There are many possible scenarios.

An SEO audit in such situations usually involves finding opportunities, threats and analyzing keywords that are worth using to "attack" the search results with new or changed content. In such a case, an SEO audit is unlikely to be a comprehensive assessment of the entire website, but only an analysis of a specific part of the page.

For this purpose, it is possible to use tools that will help analyze even part of the page or even keywords. You can also try to do the audit yourself.

SEO audit to eliminate threats or penalties

The life of the website varies. Sometimes a few poorly thought-out decisions can result in a website being penalized by the search engine algorithm. This may be a penalty for content, incoming links or even reporting a problem of website hacking.

The SEO audit will be replaced by an analysis and a set of actions aimed at removing the problem. This may include preparing - after analysis - a file for the disavow tool, analyzing the content on the website and making recommendations for its improvement, or website diagnostics and removing the source and effects of the hack.

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### **SEO audit after taking over the client from another agency/SEO specialist**

Most often, changing the company/person responsible for positioning or simply online promotion requires verification of previous SEO activities. However, it is not about verifying previously reported activities (although this is important), but about a comprehensive look at whether the positioning strategy carried out so far was good and planned for a long time.

Starting the adventure of promoting a website on the Internet should be based on a well-thought-out strategy preceded by an SEO audit of the website, competition and everything that may be useful during further activities.

In this case, an SEO audit is mainly a competition analysis, an analysis of the website's visibility in search results and, depending on the website, perhaps also an audit of the website itself. Most often, the audit performed in such a situation is the most comprehensive.

Of course, it does not mean that in other cases a comprehensive audit cannot be performed, but in this particular case it is highly recommended.

There are many other cases in which it is worth performing an SEO audit. However, these are probably the most important moments when you should "smile" at an SEO specialist and conduct an audit.

### **What should an audit look like?**

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There is no single template for an SEO audit. The generated report is a mixture of knowledge, experience and aesthetics of an SEO specialist. Most often, however, a website audit is a text document resembling a book, more or less extensive. It has a table of contents, illustrations, explanations, footnotes and a number of other solutions found in books and publications - often scientific ones.

The audit report usually covers two categories: on-site and off-site.

- The on-site report contains information about the audited website in terms of its operation and online presence. The information relates only to the website (especially its content and structure) to which the audit applies;
- The off-site report contains all information that affects the optimization of the website, but is not dependent on it (or is only partially dependent). This is mainly about link building, and thus gaining the website's authority in the eyes of search engine algorithms.

At the end there is usually a summary and, if the audit is aimed at sales, also a price list with the scope of services. How long does an SEO audit take and what does it depend on?

The duration of the audit depends on the size and complexity of the website being audited. On average, for a small or medium-sized company or startup, it takes anywhere from a few days to a few weeks to complete a proper SEO audit. A larger company with an extensive website and a lot of content may require a month or even several months for analysis.

## **How much does an SEO audit cost?**

Can you get an SEO audit for free? In very extreme cases – yes! And we're not talking about simple analyzes generated by an machine, but a full-fledged document that will help our website!

You can come across SEO specialists who are just building their portfolios or agencies that carry out various types of promotional campaigns. Naturally, such situations do not happen often. It will probably be quicker to learn how to audit a website yourself, which is actually not impossible! It is worth considering that a free audit created by a novice SEO specialist may contain errors in the form of bad recommendations and conclusions or incorrect assumptions. Implementing such an audit may ultimately do more harm than good.

Example prices for an SEO audit

A typical simple SEO audit usually costs between PLN 500 and PLN 2,000. Most often, this price includes the time that an SEO specialist must devote to analyzing the website and all factors related to it. The audit amount depends on the size of the site. The size of the page is determined by the number of subpages and the number of different subpage views (home page, product, category, etc.), but also by the strength of the brand. You can find SEO audits that will cost even several or several thousand zlotys. However, these are extensive analyzes examining each element of the website from many angles and possibilities. Such audits can be found with really large and well-known brands.

## **Free SEO audit, is it possible?**

If for various reasons you do not want to spend money on an SEO audit or you simply want to learn how to perform audits - no

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problem! There are many options for free SEO audits prepared using automated tools. You will achieve a more accurate analysis by conducting a website assessment yourself. You can do it for free using free tools and this guide.

Examples of audit points worth remembering when planning it.

1. Analysis of the current website visibility in search results

- a. For what phrases is the website visible in search results?
- b. What positions does the website occupy for important keywords?
- c. How much organic traffic do the websites generate?
- d. What is the current visibility of the website?

2. Page titles

- a. Are they constructed correctly?
- b. Don't they repeat themselves?
- c. Aren't they too long?
- d. Do they display correctly in the SERP results?

3. Meta descriptions

- a. Are they configured correctly?
- b. Are they constructed correctly?
- c. Aren't they too long?
- d. Aren't they duplicating each other?
- e. Do they display correctly in the SERP results?

4. H1-H6 headings

- a. Is the heading hierarchy maintained?
- b. Aren't they duplicating each other?
- c. Do they contain keywords?

5. URLs

- a. Do they cause duplication of content on the website?
- b. Are redirections implemented correctly?
- c. Are they too long?
- d. Do they contain keywords?

6. Keyword targeting

- a. Are the relevant pages optimized for keywords?
  - b. Are there situations where several pages are optimized for the same keyword?
  - c. Does the published content position for all auxiliary phrases?
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## 7. Graphics

- a. Doesn't their size cause the page to load slower?
- b. Do the graphics have correctly configured alternative descriptions (alt attribute)?
- c. Are they properly embedded on the page and displayed correctly?

## 8. Robot instructions

- a. Is there a sitemap on the website?
- b. Is there a robots.txt file uploaded to the website?
- c. Is the website accessible and readable by robots?
- d. Have any blocks for search engine robots been implemented correctly?

## 9. Content uniqueness

- a. Is all content on the website unique?
- b. Which content on the website can be copied?
- c. Has all published content been checked for plagiarism and uniqueness?

## 10. Internal linking

- a. Is it made optimally?
- b. Are the links in the menu visible to the Google robot?
- c. Do internal links have the appropriate attributes?
- d. Do the links on the website have an appropriate structure that allows search engine robots to access all subpages?
- e. Are there any orphan pages? to which no internal links lead?

## 11. Page loading speed

- a. Does the website meet all Core Web Vitals?
- b. Does the page load quickly enough?
- c. What delays page loading times?

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### Example SEO audit tools

Below is a list of the best free and paid tools for performing a site-wide SEO audit. Not all of these SEO audit tools will be perfect - many of them have their weaknesses - but the most important thing is that they allow you to perform an audit.

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- Microsoft Excel – allows you to enter any values in the spreadsheet, sort and filter them, and thus analyze various obtained data about the website. Its advantage is that it is easy to obtain and relatively low price;
- Google Sheets - just like Excel, it is a spreadsheet tool, but its greatest advantage is its availability on any device with a browser and its free nature;
- Google Search Console – is a free Google service that allows you to monitor the position of a website in Google search results and improve and solve problems related to it.
- Pagespeed Insight – this is a free tool from Google, mainly used to measure and extract information about the website's loading speed and performance.

Ahrefs – is one of the key tools for SEO analysis. It can be used for link analysis, keyword search, website traffic estimation, website research, content search, SEO auditing and tracking the position of competitors' websites. Its advantage is the ability to perform extensive analyses; the price of this program depends mainly on the length of the subscription and how much data is needed to be checked. Once you've verified your site ownership with your Google Search Console account, you can use Ahrefs for free to analyze your site.

StellarSphinx - Visitor Analytics & SEO Tools is an app to analyze your site visitors and analyze any site`s information such as alexa data, similarWeb data, whois data, social media data, moz check, search engine index, google page rank, IP analysis, malware check etc

Senuto – a tool for checking and analyzing the visibility of websites in Google search results. It also allows us to analyze the possibilities of developing the content that we already have on the website by optimizing it for subsequent key phrases;

Semstorm – this is a very important tool that allows you to check and improve the visibility of your website in search engines. It is used, among other things, to monitor the position of keywords and analyze them in terms of the number of searches in browsers on a monthly basis. It also enables comparison with the competition;

WebPageTest – is a free tool for analyzing website loading time. Thanks to it, you can choose the browser that will be used for the test, the user's geographical location and the type of Internet connection.

YSlow – this is a free tool very similar to Pagespeed Insight, its author is Yahoo!, and the results it shows are consistent with the results of the Google tool. In the case of SEO analyses, it is worth performing a test using both of these tools:

Screaming Frog – is an extensive website crawler that allows you to analyze on-site factors. There is a free version with a limited number of functions and a paid version that has no limits and is sold in an annual subscription;

Sitebulb – this is a competitive tool for Screaming Frog. It is a website crawler used to analyze and report SEO on our websites. The choice depends on your own preferences and financial possibilities;

Clusteric Search Auditor is a tool used to analyze internal and external links of the audited website or to analyze competitors' links. Additionally, it can be used to check the quality of expired domains. This is a paid tool, the advantage of which is a lifetime license - you pay once for purchasing the license.

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## **Effects after implementing the recommendations from the SEO audit.**

The ultimate goal of an SEO audit is to help a company, and especially its website, improve its online visibility and therefore improve its position in search engines. The results of an SEO audit depend on the method that was used for analysis. Some methods provide useful insights, while others do not. For example, consulting an SEO audit checklist with an SEO specialist can help a website owner discover some issues that need fixing. However, this solution will not provide an in-depth analysis of your website or company.

## **Analysis of the correctness of implementation after an SEO audit**

The audit does not solve problems, but creates a list of tasks that need to be performed in order to increase the potential of your website in search results. It is important to remember that SEO is not a one-time or overnight activity. Improving your search engine rankings takes time and effort. An SEO audit can (and should) ultimately lead to increased sales and organic traffic. However, this is not an instantaneous process and it may take months for the expected results to appear.

Even if there are no immediate changes to your site's visibility, implementing SEO audit guidelines should yield positive results over time, helping you resolve current issues and providing insight into issues that may be barriers to future progress. Therefore, it is necessary to check whether all conclusions resulting from the audit have been translated into appropriate tasks and then implemented on the website.

The situation is different for every website and every organization. Generally speaking, the greatest benefits of a website audit occur within a few months of implementation.

Examples of effects after the conducted and implemented audit:

- Reducing the number of errors on the website. This is one of the first and most important benefits that is sometimes difficult to notice immediately;
  - Increased user satisfaction as users are able to complete their tasks easier and faster. Again, this will be valuable in the medium term and may also lead to more positive reviews of the site;
  - Improving the site's position in rankings, which leads to increased organic traffic. This may take a little longer to become noticeable;
  - Increased number of sales leads, which should increase sales in the medium term;
  - More efficient internal processes as you take full advantage of your website content and make more offline sales (or online sales through other channels). This one is harder to measure, but should have an immediate impact on performance.
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## **- Incorrect meta tags.**

The description of a website is located in a meta tag in the HTML code, if this description is not appropriate or does not accurately describe what is on your website it may confuse or discourage the user;

## **- Improper use of anchors.**

It is important that you do not attempt to manipulate search engines by linking to your pages with anchor text that does not adequately describe the content;

## **- Duplicate content.**

If you have duplicate content, search engines may index the same pages more than once or not at all, which could result in your page being excluded from search results. If your site has URLs containing similar content, you can point search engines to the canonical page using the rel=cannonical attribute;

## **- Links not working.**

If you have bad links - that is, sitelinks that don't exist on your site - it's important to fix them because these problems can cause errors or prevent search engines from indexing key pages on your site. It is worth checking the links in terms of the correctness of the URL slug element and the correctness of the http/https protocols entered in the addresses;

These are just some of the possible errors that may occur during SEO audits. To avoid problems, you should obtain as much information as possible about what the specialist to whom we commission the audit will perform and what experience he has in carrying out the audit. However, if we do the audit ourselves, it is worth considering what problems exist on our website before performing the audit and paying attention to them first.

## **POSTED BY**

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