

SEO Audit Template

This SEO audit template/checklist focuses on three things: technical, content, and link issues.

Finding technical issues

[Are all important pages indexable?](#)

[Are all important pages crawlable?](#)

[Can Google actually see the content on all important pages?](#)

[Is your site free of other critical technical issues?](#)

Finding content issues

[Has your site's traffic remained stable during recent Google updates?](#)

[Have any specific pages lost significant traffic recently?](#)

[Have you got any old pages with low traffic?](#)

[Have you got any low-hanging fruit keywords?](#)

[Have you got any low-hanging featured snippet opportunities?](#)

[Have you got any content gaps with competitors?](#)

Finding link issues

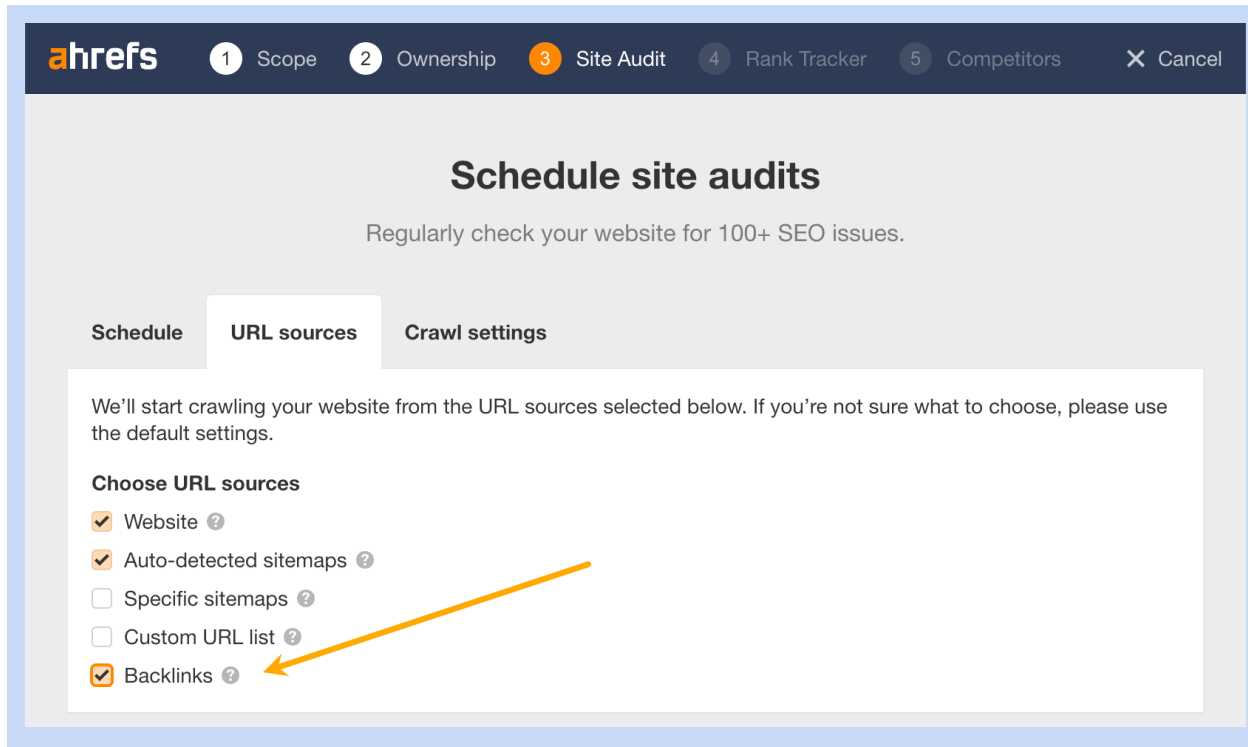
[Have you got any dead pages with backlinks you could redirect?](#)

[Could you boost any pages with internal links?](#)

[Do your competitors have any easily replicable backlinks?](#)

BEFORE YOU START

Set up a free [Ahrefs Webmaster Tools \(AWT\)](#) account and start crawling your website. When setting up your project, make sure to tick the "Backlinks" option under "Crawl settings." This is important for one of the checks in the audit.



Technical issues

Are all important pages indexable?

Pages can't show up in Google unless they're indexed, so all important pages must be indexable. You can check this with a free [Ahrefs Webmaster Tools \(AWT\)](#) account.

1. Crawl your website with [Site Audit](#)
2. Go to **Page Explorer**
3. Filter for Noindex pages
4. Eyeball the list for pages that should be indexed

Overview

All issues 1

Crawl log

Bulk export

Tools

Page explorer 2

Link explorer

Internal link opportunities

Structure explorer

Reports

Internal pages

Indexability

Links

Redirects

Content

Social tags



Duplicates

Page explorer ? How to use

All URLs Pages Resources Content Links Redirects Directives: Noindex 3 maps Ahrefs metrics

Crawl history ?

All filter results 4 Lost from filter results 0 Lost 0

PR	URL	Organic traffic	HTTP status code	Depth	Is indexable page	Canonical
8	 Log In · SEO Blog by Ahrefs — ... https://ahrefs.com/blog/wp-login.php?redirect_to=https%3A%2F%2Fblog.ahrefs.com%2Fwp-admin%2Fpost.php%3Fpost%3D146201%26action%3Dedit&reauth=1	0	200	2	No	
8	 Do you want to write for the Ahr... https://ahrefs.com/blog/write-for-us/	0	200	1	No	

Remove the noindex directive from any pages that should be indexed.

TIP

If there are too many pages to reasonably look through, filter for only URLs in the sitemap.

Page explorer ? How to use

All URLs Pages Resources Content Links Redirects Directives: Noindex Sitem

Advanced filter ▲

AND OR

Previous Current URL Exists ×

Previous Current Is in sitemap Yes ×

+ Rule + Group

Apply 0 results matching Reset

If you're still seeing URLs in the filtered report, something is definitely wrong. Either you actually meant to noindex them (in which case, they shouldn't be in the sitemap), or they should be indexed and you need to remove the noindex directive.

□ Are all important pages crawlable?

Google rarely indexes pages it can't crawl, so you need to make sure that all important pages on your website are crawlable. You can do this in [Google Search Console](#).

1. Go to Indexing > Pages
2. Click the "Blocked by robots.txt" issue
3. Make sure no important pages that you want to rank are listed here

Google Search Console interface showing the "Blocked by robots.txt" report. The report lists three URLs that are blocked by robots.txt, with their last crawled dates. The "Pages" tab is selected, and the "Blocked by robots.txt" issue is highlighted with a yellow circle. The table shows the following data:

URL	Last crawled
https://ahrefs.com/blog/page/2/?s=digest	Oct 2, 2023
https://ahrefs.com/blog/zh/?s=울산-대마초구입->텔LOVETHC <<-허브판매->텔LOVETHC <<-캔디구매-마리화나파는곳-GHB판매CB&tWrz=BrQf	Oct 1, 2023
https://ahrefs.com/blog/zh/?s=해운대-mdma판매->텔lovethc <<-대마판매-캔디팝니다->텔lovethc <<-대마파는곳-허브판매-엑상대마판매ip	Sep 30, 2023

TIP

There's often lots of clutter in this report, like URLs with parameters (e.g., `domain.com/search=?`). You'll want to filter these out to make it easier to spot important pages.

For example, if we filter out URLs with the `?` parameter, we see no results.

Filter by URL

Does not contain

URL Last crawled

If you see important pages that should be crawlable, you'll need to remove or edit the rule causing this in your robots.txt file. You can use [Google's robots.txt tester](#) to find the affecting rule.

robots.txt Tester

Edit your robots.txt and check for errors. [Learn more.](#)

Latest version seen on 9/19/23, 11:54 PM OK (200) 356 Bytes ▾

[See live robots.txt](#)

```
2 Disallow: /article
3 Disallow: /site-explorer/ajax/
4 Allow: /site-explorer/$
5 Disallow: /site-explorer/*
6 Allow: /link-intersect/$
7 Disallow: /link-intersect/*
8 Disallow: /v4*
9 Disallow: /blog/*?s=*
10 Disallow: /seo/for/*?*draft
11 Disallow: /academy/*?*draft
12 Disallow: /team-new
13 Disallow: /team-new-a
14 Disallow: /team-new-b
15 Disallow: /seo-toolbar/welcome
16
```

✖ 0 Errors ⚠ 0 Warnings

Submit

It's also best practice to make sure all important pages are internally linked so Google can find them. You can do this with Ahrefs' Site Audit. Just go to the Links report > "Issues" > look for the "Orphan page (has no incoming internal links)" issue.

Overview
All issues 1
Crawl log
Bulk export




Tools
Page explorer
Link explorer
Internal link opportunities
Structure explorer

Reports
Internal pages
Indexability
Links
Redirects

Links

Overview Issues 1

Actual 3 New 0 All tracked 23 Turned off 0 Importance

Issue	Crawled
INDEXABLE	
 Orphan page (has no incoming internal links)	1
 Page has links to redirect	9
 Page has only one dofollow incoming internal link	2

If any important pages are orphaned, add internal links to them.

Can Google actually see the content on all important pages?

NOTE 

You likely don't need to worry about this unless your site runs on a JavaScript framework.

Google can't index content it can't see. If you're concerned about this, a quick check you can do is to search for a snippet of your content in Google inside quotation marks. If the page is returned, your content was likely seen.



"Since I originally wrote this, lazy loading has m X



Images

Videos

News

Books

Maps

Flights

Finance

About 1 results (0.29 seconds)



Ahrefs

https://ahrefs.com > blog > javascript-seo

What SEOs Really Need to Know About JavaScript SEO

21 Sept 2023 — Use lazy loading. **Since I originally wrote this, lazy loading has mostly moved from being JavaScript-driven to being handled by browsers.** You ...

If the page isn't returned, read [Patrick's guide to JavaScript SEO](#) to learn how to fix it.

Is your site free of other critical technical issues?

Sites can face all kinds of technical issues, but most aren't that important and "fixing" them won't really move the needle. You can find the most pressing issues to fix by filtering the **All issues** report in Site Audit for "errors."

ahrefs Dashboard Site Explorer Keywords Explorer Site Audit Rank Tracker More ▾

Site Audit / Ahrefs Blog / Today, 09:43 AM ▾ Segment ▾

Overview

- All issues 2
- Crawl log
- Bulk export

Tools


- Page explorer
- Link explorer
- Internal link opportunities
- Structure explorer

All issues

Actual 2 New 0 All tracked 47 Turned off 9 Importance: Error X

Issue	Crawled	Change	Ad
Localization			
⚠ Missing reciprocal hreflang (no return-tag)	436	85 ▼	
⚠ Translated, no self hreflang Custom	10	0	

If you're unsure how to deal with any of them, click the "?" next to each issue to see a description and advice on how to fix it.

⚠ Missing reciprocal hreflang (no return-tag) 436 85 ▼ 2 0 87 0  ?

Issue details

Confirmation (return) links are missing for the pages declared in hreflang annotations.

If page A links to page B in hreflang annotations, page B must link to page A in return. If this is not the case for all pages that use hreflang annotations, those annotations may be ignored or misinterpreted correctly.


This issue can also be triggered by misused "x-default" hreflang. Whenever the optional "x-default" hreflang value is used, all pages of the hreflang group must reference the same "default" page.

How to fix

To fix the issue, make sure all the page versions translated or targeted to users in a certain region have the same set of hreflang annotations which includes URLs to all the page versions. This will always provide return links between the alternate pages.

[Learn more](#)

[View affected URLs](#) [Close](#)

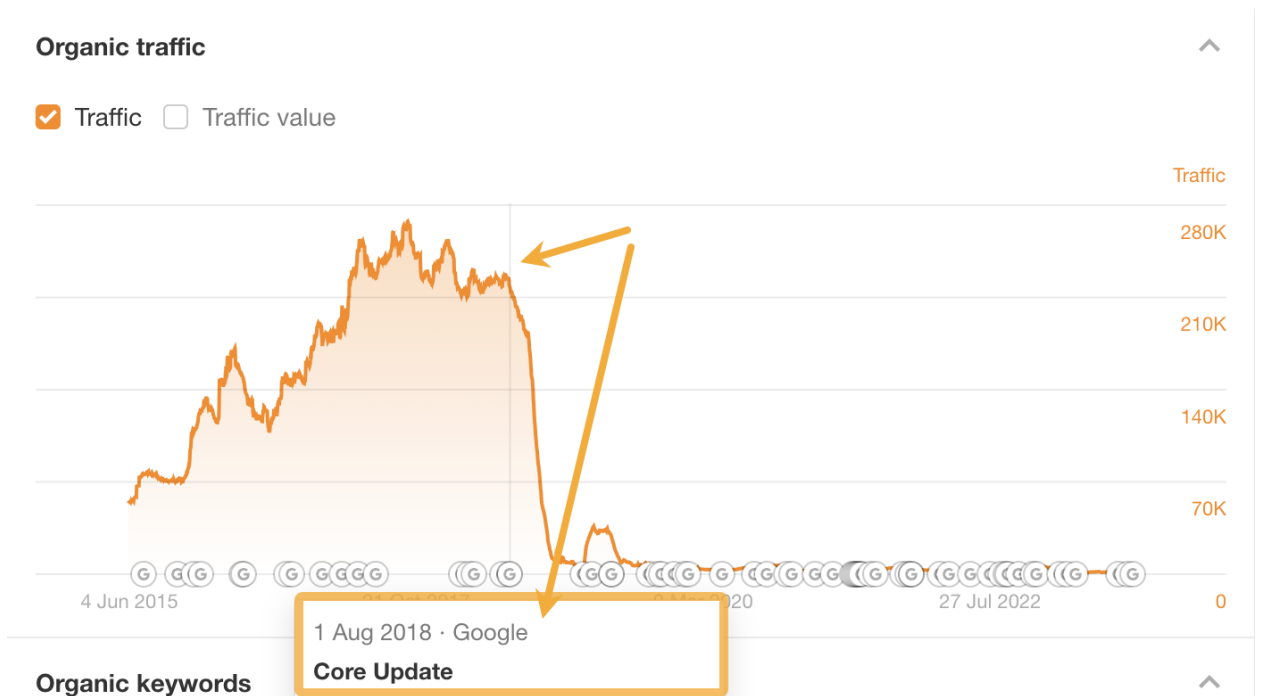


Content issues

Has your site's traffic remained stable during recent Google updates?

Most Google updates these days relate to content quality (e.g., Core Updates). If you see a traffic drop coinciding with one of these, it can often point to issues with your content as a whole. You can check for this in Ahrefs' Site Explorer.

1. Enter your domain into Site Explorer
2. Click the "Organic search" tab on the **Overview** report
3. Look for traffic drops on the organic traffic graph (make sure Google updates is turned on)



TIP 💡

Always double-check that Ahrefs estimates align with reality before jumping to conclusions. You can do this in GSC.

If you see a traffic drop aligning with a Google update, your next step is to investigate what the update targeted for insight into what might have caused the drop. [Our list of Google algorithm updates](#) can help with that.

For example, if you saw a traffic drop around 21st February 2023, it's likely that it was the product reviews update (assuming you publish this kind of content, of course).

You can also use the **Top pages** report in Site Explorer to narrow down any issues that might be related to a specific type of page or section of the site. To do that, compare traffic between two dates (one before and one after the update) and see which pages had the biggest traffic declines.

798 pages Total traffic: 502.3K

30 Dec 2020 ▼

Compare with: 20 Nov 2020 ▼

URL	Status	Traffic	Change	Value
https://ahrefs.com/blog/affiliate-marketing/ ▼		53,195 10.6%	-12.1K	\$20.8K
https://ahrefs.com/blog/free-keyword-research-tools/ ▼		43,841 8.7%	-6.5K	\$50.8K
https://ahrefs.com/blog/free-seo-tools/ ▼		26,130 5.2%	-2.3K	\$42.0K
https://ahrefs.com/blog/most-visited-websites/ ▼		17,777 3.5%	-4.8K	\$12.2K
https://ahrefs.com/blog/seo-basics/ ▼		13,812 2.7%	-6.1K	\$25.4K
https://ahrefs.com/blog/find-email-address/ ▼		13,604 2.7%	-3.8K	\$9.5K

Have any specific pages lost significant traffic recently?

Even if your site's overall organic traffic is stable or improving, traffic to some pages could be declining. This can point to quality issues with certain pages (lack of EEAT, unhelpful or outdated content, etc.).

To find pages with the biggest estimated organic traffic losses in the last 6 months, you can use Site Explorer.

1. Enter your domain into Site Explorer
2. Go to the **Opportunities** report
3. Click the "Content with declining traffic" issue

290 pages Total traffic: 71K

10 Oct 2023 ▼

Compare with: 10 Apr 2023 ▼

URL	Status	Traffic	Change ▲
https://ahrefs.com/blog/affiliate-marketing/ ▼		10,722 15.1%	-4.1K
https://ahrefs.com/blog/top-google-searches/ ▼		3,900 5.5%	-2.0K
https://ahrefs.com/blog/submit-website-to-search-engines/ ▼		1,646 2.3%	-1.6K
https://ahrefs.com/blog/competitive-analysis/ ▼		0	-1.1K
https://ahrefs.com/blog/seo-checklist/ ▼		1,298 1.8%	-981

TIP 💡

Again, always double-check that Ahrefs estimates align with reality before jumping to conclusions. You can do this in GSC.

If you see pages with significant traffic drops, investigate them further. A good starting point is to plug the individual URLs back into Site Explorer and check whether the traffic drop to the page coincides with a Google update.

Organic traffic

Traffic Traffic value



If it does, read up on [what the update affected](#). If it didn't, check for other issues such as outdated content or unhelpful advice.

Have you got any old pages with low traffic?

Old pages with little or no traffic are low-hanging fruit. You can often boost their performance by updating or rewriting them. Alternatively, if they're no longer needed but have backlinks, you can delete and redirect them to boost other pages.

You can find old pages with little or no traffic in Ahrefs.

1. Enter your domain into Site Explorer
2. Go to the **Opportunities** report
3. Click the "Pages only published once" issue

ahrefs Dashboard Site Explorer Keywords Explorer Site Audit Rank Tracker Content Explorer More Credits used

ahrefs.com In URL How to use

All pages News Pages published once: Any time Platform Language Live & broken Filter explicit results

Page traffic: Up to 50 More filters

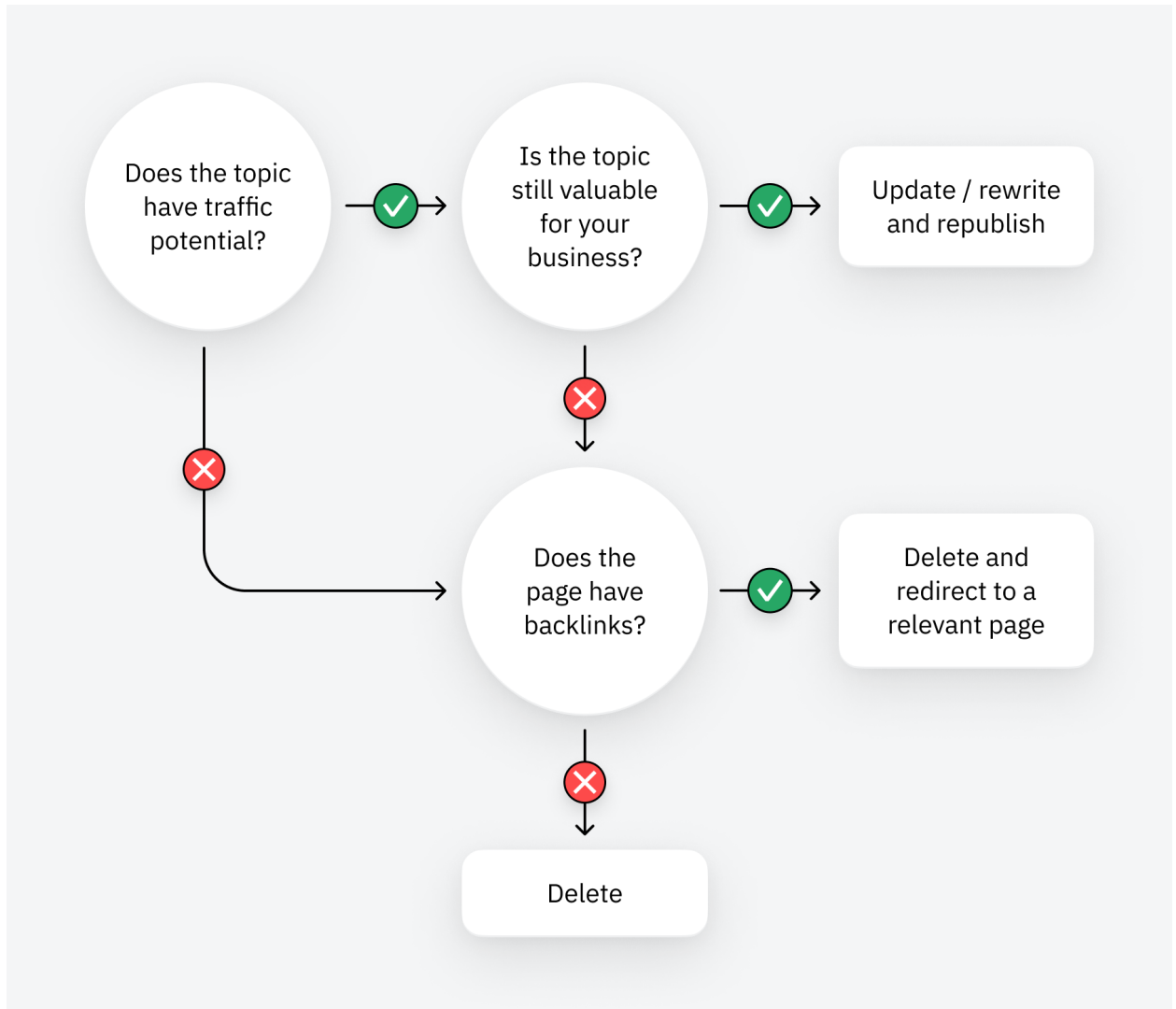
Pages over time

Pages Authors Websites Languages

4,101 pages Filter Highlight unlinked Sort by: Relevance Trends: Last 6 m

<p>How to Improve Page Speed from Start to Finish (Advanced G... https://ahrefs.com/blog/advanced-pagespeed-guide/ Patrick Stox explains how page speed works, and what actions to take for your site.... There are lots of tools to test page speed, and lots of different metrics to target. But do you understand how those optimizations</p> <p>Patrick Stox · 31 Mar 2020 · 8,696 words · En 206 11 WordPress</p>	<p>DR</p> <p>91</p>	<p>URL Rating</p> <p>19</p>	<p>Ref. domains</p> <p>202</p>	<p>Page traffic</p> <p><1</p> <p>Website traffic 2.7M</p>
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Follow this flowchart to figure out the best course of action for each URL:



Have you got any low-hanging fruit keywords?

Pages that rank in positions 4-15 are low-hanging fruit. Boosting them by just a few positions can send tons more traffic their way. You can find these keywords in Ahrefs' Site Explorer.

1. Enter your domain into Site Explorer
2. Go to the **Opportunities** report
3. Click the "Low-hanging fruit keywords" issue

ahrefs Dashboard Site Explorer Keywords Explorer Site Audit Rank Tracker

https ahrefs.com/blog/

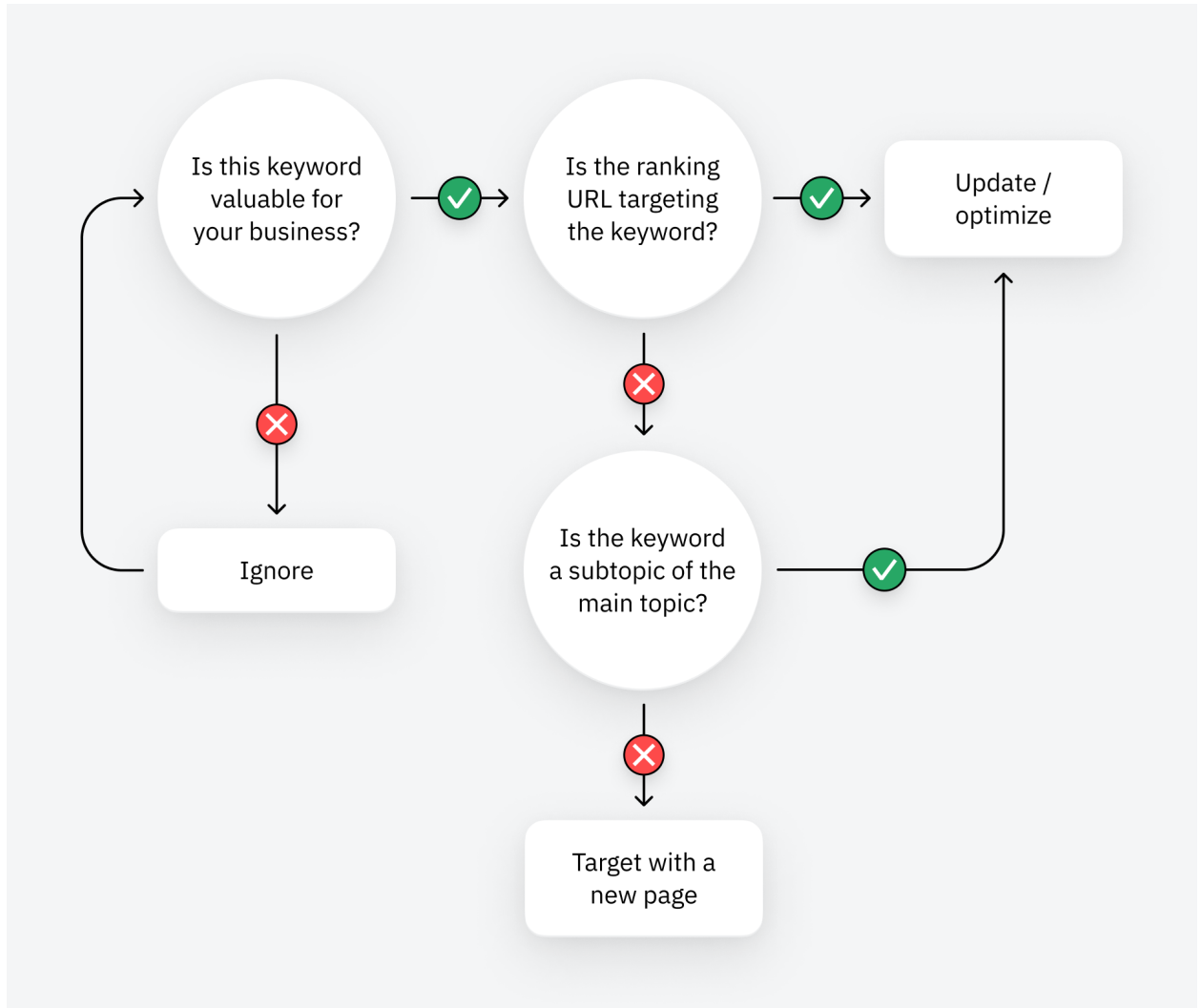
Organic keywords ? How to use

Monthly volume United States Position: 4-15 X Volume KD

24,521 keywords 10 Oct 2023 Don't compare Filters

<input type="checkbox"/> Keyword	Volume	KD	Traffic	Pos
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> search engines	143.0K	81	4,750	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> affiliate marketing	153.0K	92	3,644	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> high ticket affiliate marketing	12.0K	29	1,283	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> seo tools	13.0K	89	1,207	

Follow this flowchart to find the best course of action for each keyword:



Have you got any low-hanging featured snippet opportunities?

Featured snippets are boxes that appear at the top search results for some keywords. They show a short, relevant snippet from one of the top-ranking pages.

If you already rank in positions 2-8 for a keyword with a snippet, that's low-hanging fruit. You can often shortcut your way to the top of Google by winning the snippet. You can use Ahrefs' Site Explorer to find the best featured snippet opportunities.

1. Enter your domain into Site Explorer
2. Go to the **Opportunities** report
3. Click the "Featured snippets" opportunity

This will show you keywords where you currently rank in positions 2-8 where Google shows a featured snippet.

ahrefs Dashboard Site Explorer Keywords Explorer Site Audit Rank Tracker Content Explorer Web Explorer

https://ahrefs.com/blog/top-google-searches/ Exact URL

Organic keywords How to use

Monthly volume United States Position: 2-8 SERP features: where target doesn't rank

464 keywords 10 Oct 2023 Don't compare Filters

Keyword	Volume	KD	Traffic	Position	Update
+ most searched words	1.1K	52	91	5	4 d a
+ most searched keywords	400	52	37	4	17 S
+ most search word on google	500	54	32	6	1 d a
+ most googled thing	450	43	31	5	18 S
+ most popular serches	250	47	30	4	23 S
+ most searched word on google	700	43	29	6	2 d a
+ most looked up thing on google	300	41	27	4	3 d a
+ what is the most googled thing	400	43	24	5	24 S

Follow the advice in [this guide](#) to optimize for the snippets.

Have you got any content gaps with competitors?

If competitors are ranking for keywords you haven't covered, these are content gaps that may be worth covering. You can find these in Ahrefs' Site Explorer.

1. Enter your domain into Site Explorer
2. Go to the **Opportunities** report
3. Click the "Top suggestions from Content gap" opportunity

This will take your top organic competitors and look for keywords they rank for in the top 10 where you're nowhere to be seen in the top 100.

☰ Content gap

Monthly volume ▾ United States ▾ 10 Oct 2023 ▾ + More filters

Common keywords

161,102 keywords Target's position: No ✕ Competitors' positions: At least 1 in top 10 ✕

<input type="checkbox"/> Keyword	SF	Volume ▾	KD	CPC		moz.com/ Position	Traffic	backlinko.co Position	T
<input type="checkbox"/> + my business	3	1.2M	71	9.94	SERP ▾	43 ▾	0	—	
<input type="checkbox"/> + paraphrasing tool	1	731.0K	72	0.66	SERP ▾	—		—	
<input type="checkbox"/> + megapersonal	1	453.0K	8	0.84	SERP ▾	—		—	
<input type="checkbox"/> + chatgpt app	5	350.0K	81	0.59	SERP ▾	—		—	
<input type="checkbox"/> + paraphrase	3	345.0K	71	0.16	SERP ▾	—		—	

Consider covering these topics if they are likely to have value for your business.

Link issues

- Have you got any dead pages with backlinks you could redirect?

Backlinks to broken pages are effectively wasted. You can reclaim their value by reinstating the dead page or redirecting them to another relevant page. To find broken pages with backlinks, you can use Ahrefs' Site Explorer.

1. Enter your domain into Site Explorer
2. Go to the **Opportunities** report
3. Click the "Redirects to implement" opportunity

ahrefs Dashboard Site Explorer Keywords Explorer Site Audit Rank Tracker Content Explorer Web E

http + https ahrefs.com/blog Path

Best by links ? How to use

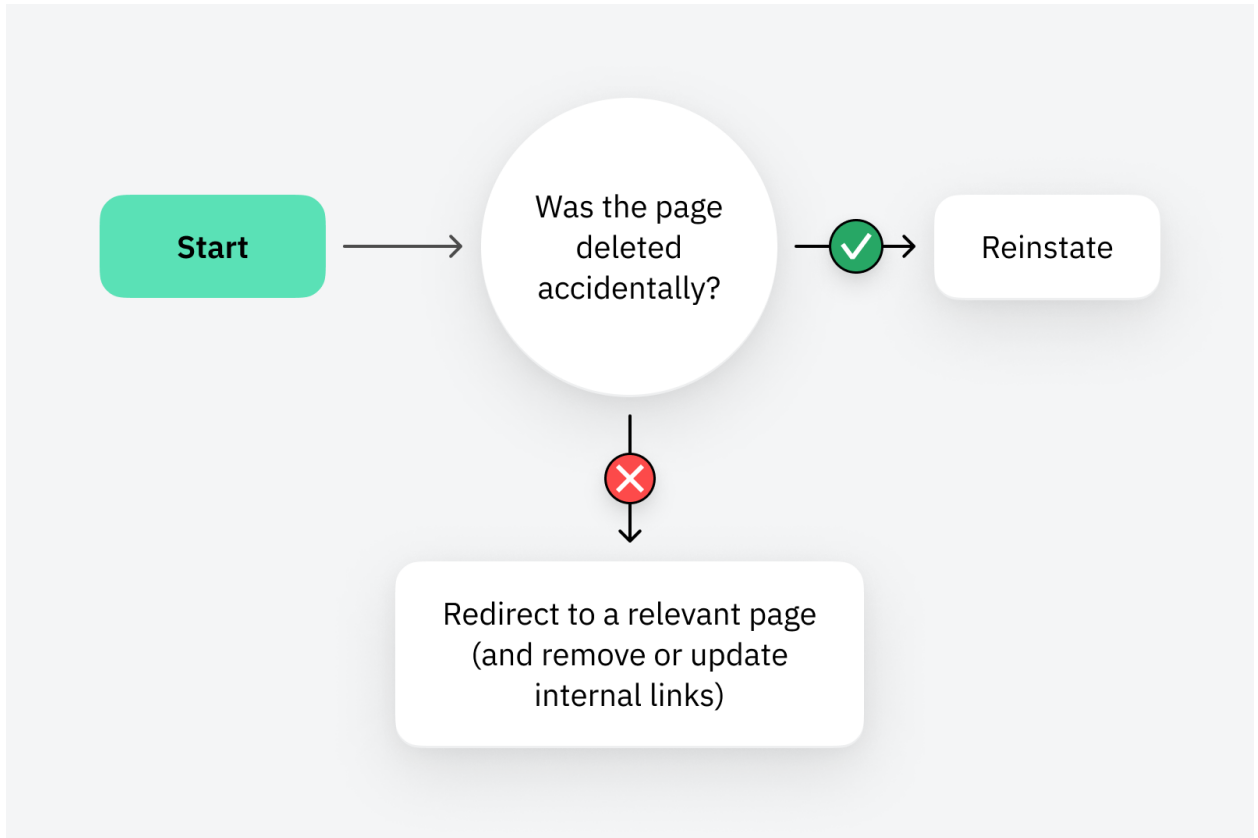
All Dofollow Nofollow HTTP code: 404 Not found DR Links to page Word or p

External backlinks Internal backlinks

379 pages All New Lost Show history: Don't show

Target page	UR	Referring domains	Top DR	Links to page	Dofollow	N
https://ahrefs.com/blog/asking-for-tweets/ 404	4.9	41	96	53	31	
https://ahrefs.com/blog/five-questions-kevin-indig/ 404	9	39	84	50	42	
https://ahrefs.com/blog/what-is-a-sitemap/ 404	5	18	72	25	24	

Follow this flowchart to find the best course of action for each dead URL:



You can use Ahrefs' Site Audit to find internal links to a broken page. Just go to Link Explorer, paste the dead page's URL into the search box, and select "Target page" from the dropdown.

ahrefs Dashboard Site Explorer Keywords Explorer Site Audit Rank Tracker Content Explorer Web Explorer More Academy Credits usage Ahrefs Enterprise

Site Audit / Ahrefs Blog / Today, 07:44 AM Segment

Link explorer How to use

All links Crawled Internal External Resources Redirects Canonicals Hreflangs Target URL

Advanced filter

Crawl history Show chart

All filter results 4 Lost from filter results 0 Lost 0 Changes: Don't show Columns Export

Link type	Is nofollow	Source URL	Source HTTP status code	Target URL	Target HTTP status code	Target no-crawl reason
Href link	No	https://ahrefs.com/blog/zh/seo-glossary/	200	https://ahrefs.com/blog/what-is-a-sitemap/	404	
Href link	No	https://ahrefs.com/blog/ecommerce-out-of-stock-products/	200	https://ahrefs.com/blog/what-is-a-sitemap/	404	

❑ Could you boost any pages with internal links?

Internal links are links from one page on your website to another. Adding them to important pages can help to boost their rankings. You can find relevant internal linking opportunities in Ahrefs' Site Audit.

1. Go to your site's project in Site Audit
2. Click the **Internal Link Opportunities** tool

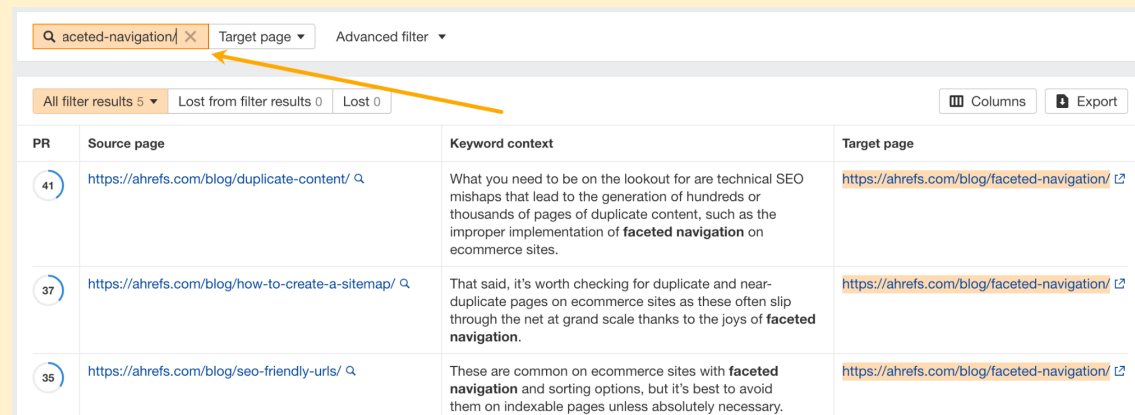
Pay attention to the Source page, Keyword context, and Target page columns. These tell you where it might make sense to add internal links to and from.

Source page	Keyword context	Target page
https://ahrefs.com/blog/duplicate-content/	What you need to be on the lookout for are technical SEO mishaps that lead to the generation of hundreds or thousands of pages of duplicate content, such as the improper implementation of faceted navigation on ecommerce sites.	https://ahrefs.com/blog/faceted-navigation/

For example, the suggestion above is to add a link to [our post about faceted navigation](https://ahrefs.com/blog/faceted-navigation/) from the section mentioning that term in [our guide to duplicate content](https://ahrefs.com/blog/duplicate-content/).

TIP

If you want to prioritize adding internal links to a particular page, such as one ranking in positions 2-10 already (which is where you'll probably get the most bang for your buck), paste its URL into the search box and select "Target page" from the dropdown.



PR	Source page	Keyword context	Target page
41	https://ahrefs.com/blog/duplicate-content/	What you need to be on the lookout for are technical SEO mishaps that lead to the generation of hundreds or thousands of pages of duplicate content, such as the improper implementation of faceted navigation on ecommerce sites.	https://ahrefs.com/blog/faceted-navigation/
37	https://ahrefs.com/blog/how-to-create-a-sitemap/	That said, it's worth checking for duplicate and near-duplicate pages on ecommerce sites as these often slip through the net at grand scale thanks to the joys of faceted navigation .	https://ahrefs.com/blog/faceted-navigation/
35	https://ahrefs.com/blog/seo-friendly-urls/	These are common on ecommerce sites with faceted navigation and sorting options, but it's best to avoid them on indexable pages unless absolutely necessary.	https://ahrefs.com/blog/faceted-navigation/

❑ Do your competitors have any easily replicable backlinks?

Backlinks are a strong ranking factor. This makes sense, as getting high-quality ones is challenging. If you've never built links before, the best starting point is to see if your competitors have any easily replicable backlinks. You can do this in Ahrefs' Site Explorer.

1. Enter your domain into Site Explorer
2. Choose the URL mode from the dropdown
3. Go to the **Opportunities** report
4. Click the "Top links from Link Intersect" opportunity

You will see a list of sites linking to one or more of your top 10 organic competitors, but not to you.

Link Intersect ? How to use

☰ 10 targets vs. ahrefs.com/ All intersections ▼

281 domains not linking to ahrefs.com/						
Referring domain	DR	Ahrefs rank	Intersect ↓	1 chrom.	2 b	
ahrefs.com ▼	91	941	4	37		n/a
freefoto.ca ▼	25	7,731,044	2	n/a		9
intercom.help ▼	89	2,205	1	1		n/a
scriptstown.com ▼	87	2,934	1	1		n/a
g2crowd.com ▼	83	7,305	1	n/a		n/a
seranking.com ▼	81	10,003	1	n/a		n/a
guru99.com ▼	80	14,327	1	1		n/a
cpapracticeadvisor.com ▼	77	25,223	1	n/a		1

This report is most useful for finding niche and local directories where it makes sense to add your website. You can usually spot these just by eyeballing the domains.

Learn more ways to find your competitors' replicable links in [this post](#).