

# Guidelines for carrying out an SEO audit

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A search engine optimisation (SEO) audit refers to the process of analysing the health of a website. The auditor uses a checklist to analyse the site and suggests ways of improving the performance of the website. Carrying out an SEO audit will therefore help identify fix and problems with your site, thus allowing you to stay updated and ahead of the competition.

There are numerous paid and free [SEO analysis](#) tools that you can use to audit your site. However, if you can afford it, you could consider hiring a professional SEO auditor to carry out a manual audit.



Here are some of the things you need to check when performing an SEO audit:

## 1. URL structure

When it comes to your URL, here are some of the things you need to check:

- **Length** – It would be advisable to keep your URL as short as possible. The recommended length is 100 characters or less, with the least number of slashes and dashes
- **Keywords** – The URL should contain keywords which properly describe the content of the page. This will improve the page ranking
- **Underscores or hyphens** – If the URL is made up of two words or more, it would be advisable to separate them using hyphens rather than underscores
- **Dynamic or static** – Dynamic URLs such as <http://www.yoursite.com/forums/thread.php?threadid=78362&sort=date> are not very friendly to search engines. It would be advisable to change them to static URLs such as <http://www.yoursite.com/forums/benefits-of-static-urls.html>

## 2. Content

Check if the content on your pages is long enough and optimised for relevant keywords. However, avoid keyword stuffing which will only make it appear unnatural. You should also ensure that the content is easy to read by keeping your sentences short and paragraph structure clear. Look out for [duplicate content](#) which could result in your website getting penalised. Finally, find out how much time visitors are spending on each page. This will give you an idea of what needs to

be improved.

### 3. Internal linking

When it comes to SEO, [internal linking](#) is very important. The more internal links you have, the better your site will rank in search engines. Therefore, you need to ensure that all your pages contain at least three internal links. The links should use relevant anchor text, preferably containing targeted keywords. Make sure outgoing links point to sites that are credible. Linking to a spammy site will have a negative effect on the reputation of your site. Finally, check for links that are broken and remove them.

### 4. Images

Besides keeping your visitors engaged, images can also offer great SEO value. When analysing your web images, make sure the file names offer a proper description of what the image is all about. For example, instead of `IMG_20160423_155045.jpeg`, use `mercedes-benz-e-class-first-drive.jpeg`. You should also ensure that the image alt tag is descriptive.

Finally, check if the images have been compressed to their minimum size. Large images will slow down the loading speed of your site, thus having a negative effect on its search engine ranking. [Optimising your images](#) can greatly improve the ranking of your site.

## ABOUT CHARLES MBURUGU

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