

# KOOZAI

SEO & GSC Guide

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# SEO Health Checks

## Introduction

This document will run through some tips for ongoing SEO of your sites. It will cover some regular checks, help on posting new content and explain how to use Google Search Console (GSC).

## Technical SEO

Most of these should be in place, but it is worth checking on a regular basis.

- Monitor the coverage report in GSC (more on this below). Check through warnings and exclusions regularly for pages which should be indexed.
- Make sure the site stays on the HTTPS version, as this is a ranking factor.
- Make sure the website is only accessible on one domain. www/non-www. versions and https/http versions should redirect to the one version across the site. If they don't resolve to the same URL, then this could be classed as duplication.
- Ensure page speeds stay high through the PageSpeed Insights tools.
- Ensure the site works correctly on mobile. This can be checked through GSC and real-life testing.
- Fix broken pages and 404s. Fix links pointing to 404 pages and implement redirects so that these historic 404s resolve to a 200 page.

## Content

General Steps and help for creating content:

- Solve the readers problems and give information rather than writing for SEO.
- Use lists, FAQs and sub-headings to help appear in featured snippets.
- Break things up with relevant images and include alt text on these.
- Use shorter sentences and make the text easier to read. This helps accessibility and avoids user frustration.

## On-Page SEO

### Tips for on-page SEO:

- Use short yet descriptive URLs. URLs are truncated in search results, so long ones are cut down. Words rather than numbers are also beneficial to give trust and help with CTRs
- Title tags should include keywords and give precedence to the most important ones, so include the top keywords first.
- Encourage clicks in meta descriptions by including CTAs and USPs.
- Use external linking on topics which don't fit within your remit. For example, external links to official sources. These should open in new tabs to avoid sending users away from your site.

- Name images descriptively and include title tags. Images should also be small in size to help with page speeds.
- Include internal linking, especially through keyword rich terms.

## How To Use Google Search Console

### Find your most visited pages

- Access the Performance section and navigate to the "Page" tab (located next to Queries).
- Adjust the date range to "Last 12 months" (selecting a full year provides a comprehensive traffic overview, but feel free to customise the time frame).
- Ensure that "Total clicks" is chosen.
- Click the small downward arrow next to "Clicks" to arrange the pages in descending order, starting from the highest number of clicks.

### Find the queries with the highest click-through rates (CTR)

- Access the Performance section and navigate to the "Queries" tab.
- Adjust the date range to "Last 12 months" (selecting a full year provides a comprehensive traffic overview, but feel free to customise the time frame).
- Ensure that "Average CTR" is chosen.
- Click the small downward arrow next to "CTR" to arrange the queries in descending order, starting from the highest CTR.

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*Note: It is helpful to examine this data in conjunction with "Impressions" (check "Total impressions" to view this information side-by-side). A query may have a high CTR but low impressions, or vice versa—both data points are necessary for a complete understanding.*

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### Analyse the average click-through rate (CTR)

- Access the Performance section and click on the date field to customise the time period according to your preferences. You can choose any range you're interested in. Alternatively, click on "Compare" to evaluate two date ranges simultaneously.
- Observe the metric "Average CTR".
- Access the Performance section.
- Click on the date field to customise the time period according to your preferences. You can choose any range you're interested in. Alternatively, click on "Compare" to evaluate two date ranges simultaneously.
- Observe the metric "Total impressions".
- Go to the Status section and select Performance.
- Click on the date field to customise the time period according to your preferences. You can choose any range you're interested in. Alternatively, click on "Compare" to evaluate two date ranges simultaneously.
- Observe the metric "Average position".

### Keep track of your CTR trends

It's essential to monitor your CTR over time. Any significant changes hold significance. If your CTR has decreased while impressions have increased, it indicates that you're ranking for more keywords, resulting in a decline in average CTR. On the other hand, if your CTR has increased while impressions have decreased, it suggests that you've lost keywords. If both CTR and impressions have increased, it indicates that you're on the right track.

### Monitor the trends in your impressions

As you continue to create more content and optimise your existing pages, you should observe a growth in the number of impressions. However, it's important to note that there can be exceptions. For example, if you intentionally focus on a smaller set of high-conversion keywords instead of numerous average-conversion ones or if you're prioritising other marketing channels, the impression numbers may not follow a straightforward upward trend.

### Observe the average position over time

While average position can be a concern for many, it's not always a highly useful metric on a larger scale. When a page or set of pages start ranking for additional keywords, the average position usually increases. After all, unless you're consistently ranking at the same position or higher for all existing keywords, your overall "average" position will naturally increase.

It's advisable not to place excessive emphasis on this metric alone and consider it in conjunction with other relevant factors.

### Find your highest-ranking pages

- Access the Performance section.
- Navigate to the "Page" tab.
- Adjust the date range to "Last 28 days" to obtain an up-to-date and accurate snapshot of your pages.
- Ensure that "Average position" is selected.
- Click the small upward arrow next to "Position" to sort the pages from the smallest (good) to the highest (bad) positions.

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*Note: When examining the average position by URL, keep in mind that this number represents the mean of all rankings for that specific page. For example, if a page ranks #1 for a high-volume query and #43 for a low-volume one, the average position will still be 22. Therefore, it's important not to solely rely on "average position" to judge the success or failure of a page.*

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### Identify your lowest-ranking pages

Follow the same steps as mentioned above to identify your highest-ranking pages, but this time, click the small upward arrow next to "Position" to sort the pages from the highest (bad) to the smallest (good) positions.

### Identify ranking increases and decreases

- Access the Performance section and navigate to the "Query" tab.
- Click on "Date range" to modify the dates and then select the "Compare" tab.
- Choose two equivalent time periods and click "Apply."
- At this point, you have the option to analyse the data within GSC or export it. For a more in-depth analysis, I highly recommend the latter option, as it will make your task much easier.

- To do so, click the downward arrow below "Search Appearance," and then download the data as a CSV file or export it to Google Sheets.
- After you have this data in spreadsheet form, you can add a column for the position differences (Last 28 days Position - Previous 28 days Position), then sort by size.
- If the difference is positive, your site has moved up for that query. If it's negative, you've dropped.

#### Find your top-performing queries in terms of traffic

- Access the Performance section and navigate to the "Query" tab.
- Click on "Date range" to select the desired time period.
- Ensure that "Total clicks" is chosen.

#### Sort queries

- Click the small downward arrow next to "Clicks" to sort the queries from highest to lowest in terms of traffic.
- Knowing which queries drive the most search traffic can be highly valuable. Consider optimising the ranking pages for conversion, regularly updating them to maintain their rankings, investing in paid promotion for them, utilising them as internal links to lower-ranked but equally important relevant pages, and more.
- Compare your site's search performance across different devices (desktop, mobile, and tablet).
- Access the Performance section.
- Go to the "Devices" tab.
- Make sure "Total clicks," "Total impressions," "Average CTR," and "Average Position" are selected.
- Compare the performance of your website across desktop, mobile, and tablet devices.

#### Compare your site's search performance across various countries

- Access the Performance section.
- Go to the "Countries" tab.
- Make sure "Total clicks," "Total impressions," "Average CTR," and "Average Position" are selected.
- Compare the performance of your website across different nations.

#### Determine the number of indexed pages on your site

- Start by going to the "Overview" section.
- Scroll down to the Index coverage summary.
- Take note of the count labelled "Valid pages" to learn how many of your pages have been indexed.

#### Determine which pages are not indexed and the reasons behind it

- Go to the Overview section and select Index coverage.
- Scroll down to the Details box to identify the specific Errors that are causing indexing issues and their frequency.
- Double-click on any Error type to view the affected page URLs.

#### Monitor the total number of indexed pages and indexing errors

- Go to the Overview section and select Index coverage.
- Ensure that "Error," "Valid with warnings," "Valid," and "Excluded" are all selected.
- The total number of indexed pages on your site should generally increase over time due to various factors such as publishing new blog posts, creating new landing pages, and adding additional site pages. Additionally, fixing indexing errors can contribute to this growth.



- If the number of indexing errors significantly increases, it could indicate a problem with your site template or a submission of a sitemap with URLs that Google cannot crawl due to factors like 'noindex' directives, robots.txt restrictions, or password-protected pages.
- If the total number of indexed pages on your site drops without a proportional increase in errors, it is possible that you may be unintentionally blocking access to existing URLs. In such cases, examine your excluded pages and look for clues to diagnose the issue.

#### Identify mobile usability issues

- Access the Mobile Usability section.
- Ensure that "Error" is selected.
- Scroll down to the Details box to identify the specific Errors causing mobile usability issues and their frequency.
- Double-click on any Error type to view the affected page URLs.

#### Determine the total number of backlinks to your site

- Click on the Links section.
- Open the Top linked pages report.
- Look at the box labelled "Total external links."
- Click the downward arrow next to "Incoming links" to sort the pages from highest to lowest in terms of backlinks.
- Every backlink serves as a signal to Google that your content is reliable and valuable. In general, the more backlinks you have, the better. However, it's important to prioritize quality over quantity. A single backlink from a high-authority site carries more value than multiple links from low-authority sites. To see which sites are linking to a specific page, simply double-click on the corresponding URL in the report.
- Identify the URLs with the highest number of backlinks.
- Access the Links section.

#### Open the Top linked pages report

Click the downward arrow next to "Incoming links" to sort the URLs from highest to lowest based on the number of backlinks.

If you want to boost the ranking of a specific page, obtaining a backlink from a highly linked page can be a beneficial strategy. Such backlinks contribute to the page's authority, which can then be passed on to other pages on your site through internal linking.

#### Identify the sites that link to your website the most

- Access the Links section.
- Scroll down to "Top linking sites" and click on "More."
- Knowing the top referring domains that link to your website is extremely valuable for promotional purposes. It's recommended to prioritize these sites when engaging in link-building campaigns. However, it's advisable to use tools like Moz, SEMrush, or Ahrefs to filter out low-authority domains before proceeding.
- These sites could also serve as potential partners for co-marketing campaigns or social media collaborations.

#### Identify the most popular anchor text used in external links

- Access the Links section.

- Scroll down to "Top linking text" and click on "More."
- Anchor text should be descriptive and specific, preferably including relevant keywords. If you notice websites linking to your pages using generic anchor text such as "Click here," "Learn more," or "Check it out," consider reaching out to them via email and requesting an update to the hyperlink.

#### Determine the total number of internal links on your site

- Access the Links section.
- Scroll down to "Top linked pages" and click on "More."
- Take note of the count labelled "Total internal links."

#### Find and resolve AMP errors

- Access the AMP section.
- Ensure that "Error" is selected.
- Scroll down to the "Details" box to identify the specific types of AMP issues and their frequency.
- Google recommends addressing errors before examining pages with "Valid with warnings" status. By default, errors are ranked based on severity, frequency, and whether they have been resolved.

#### View how Google perceives a specific URL

- Click on the magnifying glass icon at the top of the page.
- Enter the URL of the page (ensuring it belongs to the property you are currently viewing).
- This action will initiate the URL inspection in Google Search Console.
- Interpret the results as follows: If the URL appears on Google, it means it has been indexed and can potentially appear in search results.
- However, its appearance is not guaranteed. If the URL has been flagged as spam or if you have removed or temporarily blocked the content, it may not show up. You can manually search for the URL on Google to verify if it is accessible to searchers.
- To gather more information about the URL's presence on Google, such as sitemap references, the referring page that led Googlebot to the URL, the last crawl date, crawl permissions, fetch status, indexing disallowance, canonical URL settings, and the selected canonical URL, open the Index coverage card.
- The Enhancements section provides insights on the AMP version of the page (if applicable) and any specific issues related to job posting or recipe structured data.