

Technical SEO Audit Checklist

The complete 2026 walkthrough - by Leonardo Tuan, SEO & Organic Growth Lead

The exact framework I run on client audits, in the order I run it: crawlability first (nothing downstream matters if Google cannot reach the page), then architecture, Core Web Vitals, structured data, and on-page. Tick each check, and prioritise findings by traffic impact (P0-P2), not by the order you find them.

Crawlability & indexation

- ☐ **Robots.txt:** no accidental Disallow rules blocking important sections.
- ☐ **XML sitemap:** only canonical, indexable, 200-status URLs (no redirects, 404s, or noindex).
- ☐ **GSC Index Coverage:** review every exclusion bucket - each needs a different fix.
- ☐ **Noindex audit:** export every noindexed page; confirm none should be indexed.
- ☐ **Canonical audit:** self-referencing canonicals; none pointing to params, wrong pages, or 404s.
- ☐ **Crawl budget & traps:** contain faceted nav, infinite calendars, session IDs, internal search.
- ☐ **HTTP status codes:** no internal links to 4xx/5xx; no redirect chains longer than one hop.
- ☐ **HTTPS & mixed content:** whole site on HTTPS; HTTP versions 301 to HTTPS, not to a 200.

Site architecture & internal links

- ☐ **Click depth:** important pages sit no more than 3-4 clicks from the homepage.
- ☐ **Orphaned pages:** every sitemap URL has at least one internal link pointing to it.
- ☐ **Link distribution:** your most internally-linked pages are the ones you want to rank.
- ☐ **Pillar-cluster structure:** related pages link to a pillar and back (no self-competition).
- ☐ **Breadcrumbs & URLs:** reflect a logical site hierarchy.
- ☐ **Pagination:** self-referencing canonicals per page, not collapsed to page 1.
- ☐ **Anchor text:** descriptive and varied; no 'click here' or repeated exact-match.
- ☐ **Nav/footer bloat:** prune global links that do not earn their place.

Core Web Vitals

- ☐ **LCP:** check real-user (GSC) + lab (PageSpeed); fix hero images, render-blocking CSS/JS, slow TTFB.
- ☐ **INP:** test menus, filters, forms; reduce heavy JavaScript on interaction.
- ☐ **CLS:** reserve dimensions for images/ads; avoid text shifts from font swaps.
- ☐ **Mobile vs desktop:** vitals are scored separately - mobile is what gets ranked.

- ☐ **Server response (TTFB):** keep under ~0.8s; check hosting, caching, and DB queries.
- ☐ **Third-party scripts:** defer or async-load tag managers, chat widgets, and ad scripts.

Structured data

- ☐ **Validation:** run every template through the Rich Results Test - fix errors, not just warnings.
- ☐ **Schema-to-content match:** markup reflects what is visibly on the page.
- ☐ **No duplicates:** no conflicting schema blocks describing the same entity on one page.
- ☐ **Org & author markup:** present for E-E-A-T content (health, finance, legal).

On-page

- ☐ **Title tags:** unique, primary keyword near the front, under ~60 chars; no duplicates.
- ☐ **Meta descriptions:** present, unique, compelling, under ~155 chars.
- ☐ **Heading hierarchy:** one H1 with the primary keyword; logical H2/H3s (not styling).
- ☐ **Images:** descriptive filenames, real alt text, modern formats (WebP/AVIF), compressed.
- ☐ **Content vs intent:** the page actually answers what the ranking query implies.
- ☐ **Duplicate content:** run a site-wide similarity check on templated pages.
- ☐ **Thin content:** flag anything under ~300 words targeting a competitive term.
- ☐ **Outbound links:** no broken or low-quality external links.

A checklist tells you what is wrong; prioritising it by traffic and effort is the harder skill. If you would rather have the full crawl and a prioritised fix list done for you, that is what my SEO recovery and technical-audit engagements cover: leonardo.kairoxbuild.com/seo-recovery