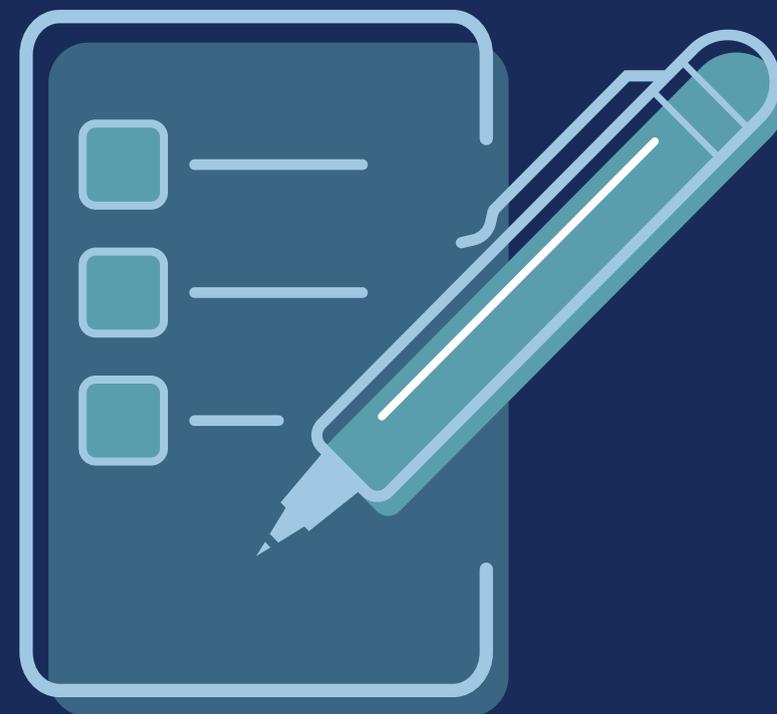# SEO Basics

The ultimate checklist to make sure your web page is up to scratch with the best SEO practices in 2021.

# Introduction

## SEO

*Noun*

*1. Short for Search Engine Optimization*

*2. The practice of increasing the quantity and quality of traffic to your website from organic search engine results.*

*"digital is now the company's main marketing channel with the majority of investment going on SEO"*

Follow along with the numbered tasks and treat this list as a very basic foundation to a successful S.E.O strategy.
If you haven't got the basics covered, your site will struggle to rank for competitive terms.

# Step One

## *Set up Google Search Console & Bing Webmaster Tools*

*Google Search Console is an essential tool that provides you with amazing insights into your site's performance as well as a wealth of data that you can use to grow your site's organic visibility and traffic.*
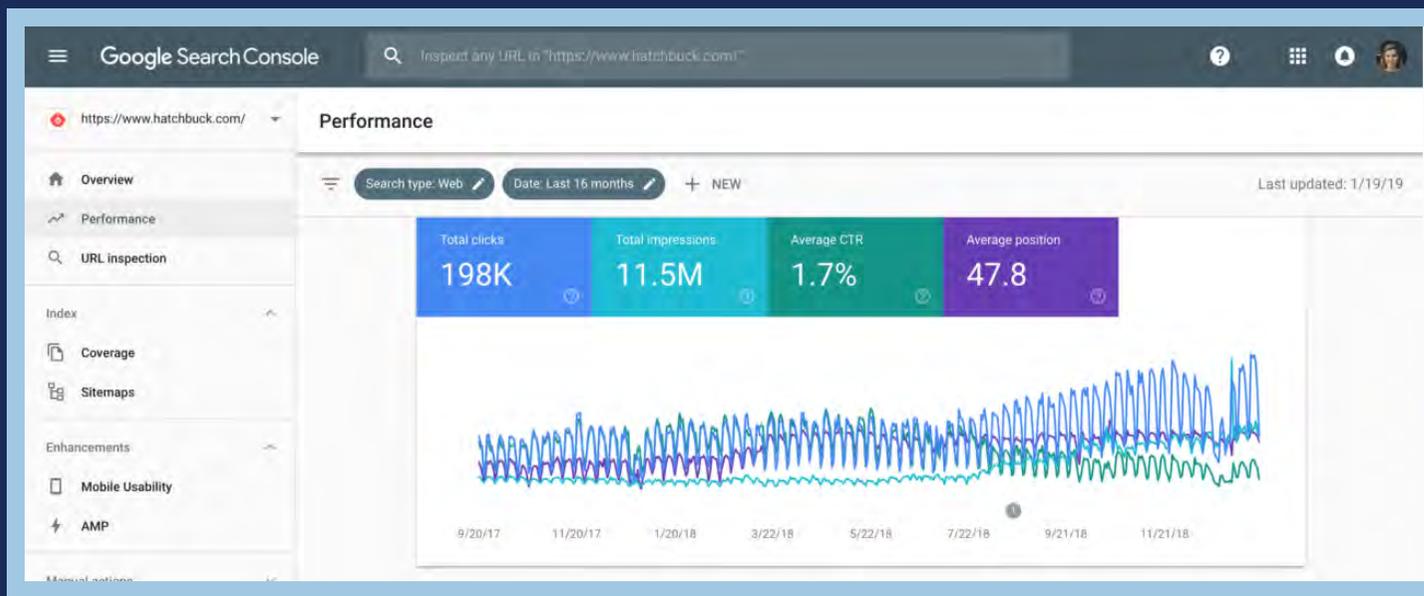
# Step One

## *Set up Google Search Console & Bing Webmaster Tools*

*Bing Webmaster Tools is the equivalent platform, just providing data and insights for their search engine.*

*These all-important tools allow you to view the search terms and keywords that users are finding your site on the SERPs for, submit sitemaps, identify crawl errors, and much more.*

*If you have not got these set up, do it now! and thank us later.*

Need Help Setting up?
These YouTube Tutorials explain this really clearly:
*1. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_mLTDwVQv1Y*
*2. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zcyEdPuotXM*

# Step Two

*Set Up Google Analytics*

*You have to know your analytics to make decisions around SEO Google Analytics is a free marketing analytics tool that allows you to view data and insights about how many people are visiting your site, who they are, and how they are engaging with it.*

Check out the YouTube link below to walk you through everything you need to know about the tool as a beginner, including how to set it up and the reports that you will find the most useful, but one this is for sure, and that is that you can't run a successful SEO strategy without it.

*https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qLr7SUhH5Y4*
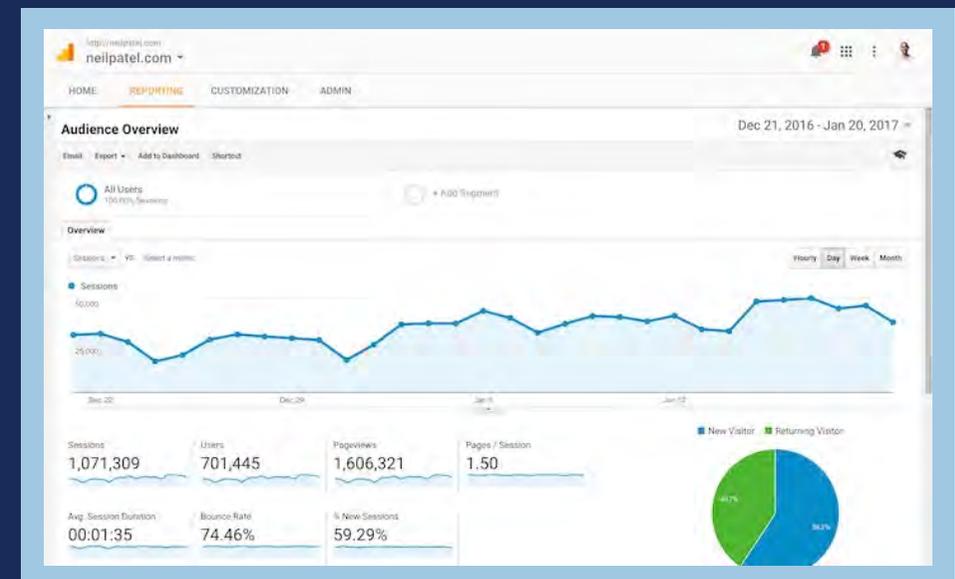
# Step Three

## *Generate and Submit A Sitemap*

*The purpose of a sitemap is to help search engines decide which pages should be crawled and which the canonical version of each is.*
*It is simply a list of URLs that specify your site's main content to make sure that it gets crawled and indexed.*

"A sitemap tells the crawler which files you think are important in your site, and also provides valuable information about these files: for example, for pages, when the page was last updated, how often the page is changed, and any alternate language versions of a page."

*Google supports a number of different sitemap formats, but XML is the most commonly used. You will usually find your site's sitemap at https://www.domain.com/sitemap.xml.*

*Once you have generated your sitemap, make sure that this is submitted to Google Search Console and Bing Webmaster Tools.*

Comprehensive Step-By-Step Guide: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pZ24HuiolDs

# Step Five

## *Create a Robots.txt File*

*Quite simply, your site's robots.txt file tells search engine crawlers the pages and files that web crawlers can or can't request from your site.*

*Most commonly, it is used to prevent certain sections of your site from being crawled and is not intended to be used as a way to de-index a webpage and stop it showing on Google.*
You can find your site's robots.txt file at https://www.domain.com/robots.txt.

**Check whether you already have one in place.**
*If you don't, you need to create one — even if you are not currently needing to prevent any web pages from being crawled.*

*Several WordPress SEO plugins allow users to create and edit their robots.txt file, but if you are using a different CMS, you might need to manually create the file using a text editor and upload it to the root of your domain.*

Comprehensive Step-By-Step Guide: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zmqhmwaUIps

# Step Six

## *Check Search Console For Manual Actions*

*In rare instances, you might find that your site has been negatively affected by having a manual action imposed upon it.*

*Manual actions are typically caused by a clear attempt to violate or manipulate Google's Webmaster Guidelines — this includes things like user-generated spam, structured data issues, unnatural links (both to and from your site), thin content, hidden text and even what is referred to as pure spam.*
*Most sites won't be affected by a manual action and never will be.*

*That said, you can check for these in the manual actions tab in Google Search Console.*
*You will be notified if your site received a manual action, but if you are working on a new project or taking over a site, it should always be one of the first things that you check.*

# Step Seven

## *Make Sure That Google Can Actually Index Your Website*

*It is not as uncommon as you may think that a website isn't actually able to be indexed by Google.*

*In fact, you'd be surprised at how often a sudden de-indexing of a site is caused by developers accidentally leaving noindex tags in place when moving code from a staging environment to a live one.*

*You can use the* Semrush site audit tool *to ensure that your website can actually be crawled and indexed.*

*Simply go ahead and start a crawl; if this is blocked, search engines won't be able to crawl or index your site either.*

*Double checking that your site's main pages that should be indexed are actually able to be indexed can save a lot of troubleshooting problems if you find issues later down the line.*

Comprehensive Step-By-Step Guide: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5JiBcXqPGJc&t=5s