



# SEO Checklist

This guide will lead you through the main SEO activities to help you efficiently organize your SEO process and achieve top rankings that will generate more sales.

The checklist is meant for WebMeUp users, so it tells where to find or enter data in the WebMeUp SEO software. However the SEO advice you get here will certainly help even if you're not using WebMeUp yet.

To start a WebMeUp free trial, just go to <http://webmeup.com>

After completing each step, you can tick the appropriate checkbox. This will help you see the overall optimization progress of your project. Please, take your time with every step, it's the quality of what you are doing that matters most!

# Contents:

<b><u>1. Get the Keywords</u></b>	<b>3</b>
<b><u>2. Website Accessibility</u></b>	<b>4</b>
<b><u>3. URLs and Links</u></b>	<b>6</b>
<b><u>4. Code/Performance</u></b>	<b>8</b>
<b><u>5. Landing Pages</u></b>	<b>10</b>
<b><u>6. Competitors</u></b>	<b>11</b>
<b><u>7. On-page/Content Factors</u></b>	<b>12</b>
<b><u>8. Off-page Factors</u></b>	<b>14</b>
<b><u>9. Social Media Popularity</u></b>	<b>16</b>
<b><u>10. Track Your Progress</u></b>	<b>18</b>
<b><u>Extras: Enhance Your Online Presence</u></b>	<b>19</b>

# 1. Get the Keywords

## 1.1. Specify "seed" keywords for your website

Let's start with keywords, as they determine all your SEO activities. In the **Keywords & Rankings module**, you can use the plus button to add keywords manually, or use the spyglass button to let the software suggest keyword ideas for you. Specify at least 5 seed key phrases that best describe your website topic.

For the length of your keyphrases, see hints below.

## 1.2. Search for keyword suggestions

After you've clicked the spyglass button and specified your seed keywords, let the software find keyword suggestions for you. In the keyword suggestions wizard, use the **Expert mode** to pick the keyword research methods that will be used to build up your keyword list.

### Length of keyphrases

The good practice is to make sure your keyword list includes 2-4 word phrases. A single keyword may be too generic (e.g., "cars"); a phrase too long may attract little or no traffic (e.g., "where to buy a red ford with white doors in Seattle").

### Keywords with higher KEI

When choosing the final keyword list, pay attention to KEI, the searches to competition ratio. Generally the higher KEI (marked green), the better, meaning that a lot of people are searching for this keyword, but there's no huge competition among websites. In the **Keywords & Rankings module**, choose the relevant key phrases with the highest KEI.

Please, note that KEI is a relative metric and you should look at the numbers as relative values inside a niche. There is no good or bad KEI - so you should only compare one keyword against another.

In some cases (e.g., with low search volume key phrases) KEI can be low (marked red) for all of your project keywords, so you will need to choose phrases with low KEI just because it's still a little bit higher than the KEI of other words in the group.

## 2. Website Accessibility

### 2.1. Check the number of indexed pages

Want to know how visible to search engines your site is? Go to Ranking factors, select the category "Indexing" and you will see how many pages are indexed in Google, Bing and Yahoo! Search engines. If the number of indexed pages is smaller than the actual number of pages, you may have an accessibility issue. Please, check the following tips:

- ✓ 2.2. *Revise Robots.txt*
- ✓ 3.7. *Create and upload an XML sitemap*

### 2.2. Revise robots.txt

Make sure that important content is not blocked by

- ✓ *the robots.txt file in the root directory*
- ✓ *the "noindex" tag in the <head> section of pages*
- ✓ *the X-Robots-Tag in the HTTP header*

In the same **Accessibility** workspace of **Pages/Site structure** check the **Robots restrictions** column. If content cannot be accessed by search engines, it will not appear in search results.

### 2.3. Fix HTTP server response codes

If some of your pages return errors (404 "not found" error, 500 "internal server" error, or any other 4xx and 5xx errors), you should fix these issues and have the server configured properly. In the **Accessibility** workspace of **Pages/Site structure** check the **HTTP Status code** column - in most cases your pages should return the 200 status code.

## 2.4. Set the redirect to the main domain version

Search engines see www and non-www versions of the same page as 2 different pages. To prevent the duplicate content issue, set the main domain version for your website using the redirect method that works best for your website (e.g. the Apache mod\_rewrite module). To get the best keyword ranking results from your campaign, choose the version that Google displays for your website in its search results.

## 2.5. Check content for Flash and Frames

As it's still hard for search engines to properly index the content in Flash and frames, you should use these elements carefully not to hinder website crawling. If you have a lot of content in Flash and frames, add text transcripts to the pages. In the **Accessibility** workspace of **Pages/Site structure** check the **Flash** and **Frames** columns. They will tell you if any of your pages use flash or frames.

## 2.6. Fix spam issues

If search engines detect any spam issues on your pages

- ✓ *Cloaking — the content presented to the search engine spider is different from that presented to the user's browser*
- ✓ *Viruses — any type of malware programs*
- ✓ *Doorway — a web page that is created with the only purpose of sending visitors to a different page*
- ✓ *Link farm — any group of web sites that all hyperlink to every other site in the group,*

they can penalize your website and you'll lose your rankings. Therefore, you need to fix them as soon as possible.

## 3. URLs and Links

### 3.1. Use 2-3 level hierarchy for site navigation

In **Pages/Site structure**, look at your website structure and pages' hierarchy. Ideally, all of your content should be not more than 2-3 clicks away from the homepage. Exceptions may be made for a website with tons of content.

### 3.2. Make URLs static

Review your site URLs. Dynamic URLs (e.g. <http://site.com/product.php?cid=1&pid=5>) are not user- and search engine-friendly, that is why you need to make URLs static (e.g. <http://site.com/product/guide.html>). Study the URLs in **Pages/Site Structure**.

### 3.3. Fix too long URLs

In **Pages/Site structure** pick the **Encoding and URLs** workspace. The **URL length** column will show you the number of symbols your URLs have. Optimize the length of the URLs that are too long making it around 75 symbols.

### 3.4. Make URLs descriptive

Use keywords in the URLs of the pages you are optimizing to make them more relevant and enhance rankings.

### 3.5. Create a custom 404 page

Customize a 404 page to make it useful for your website visitors. The custom 404 page may include links to the most important pages of your website. See an example on the WebMeUp site: <http://webmeup.com/404.html>

### 3.6. Fix broken links

Broken links hinder usability and can cause traffic losses. Fix all broken links by correcting the invalid link URLs and setting the 301 redirects. You can find the problematic URLs in the **Broken Links** column in **Pages/Site structure**.

### 3.7. Create and upload an XML sitemap

Create and submit a [Sitemap](#) to make sure that search engines know about all the pages on your site. You can submit your sitemap in Google Webmaster Tools and Bing Webmaster Tools (for Bing and Yahoo).

## 4. Code/Performance

### 4.1. Make your page code valid (W3C HTML/CSS errors)

Make sure your page's HTML and CSS code is error-free. Not all errors are critical for rankings, but it's hard to guess which one makes a site drag behind its competitors. The point here is, if there're code errors, this may prevent Google from indexing your pages and ranking your important content. Therefore it's best to check the site's code for errors.

The standards for webpage coding are defined by the organization called W3C (World Wide Web Consortium) and they provide free service to validate your pages. Please take a few minutes to go to W3C Validator at <http://validator.w3.org/> and check your HTML and CSS code for possible errors.

### 4.2. Specify doctype

Specify the page doctype (the HTML type used, e.g. HTML5, XHTML 1.0 Strict, etc.), as this information is required by some tools processing the document, such as markup validators. Your current site doctype can be found in the **DOCTYPE** column of the **Encoding and URLs** workspace in **Pages/Site structure**.

### 4.3. Specify character encoding

To make sure that your pages are properly rendered by browsers, specify after the opening <head> tag what character set your website uses (e.g. UTF-8, US-ASCII, etc.). To check what charsets are specified for your pages now, check the **Charset type** column in the **Encoding and URLs** workspace in **Pages/Site structure**.

### 4.4. Improve page load speed

Page load speed is one of the ranking factors used by Google. To improve the page load speed, you can:

- ✓ *apply the file compression (e.g. gzip)*
- ✓ *utilize browser caching*
- ✓ *use the externalized CSS/JavaScript code*

- ✓ *optimize graphics and video size*
- ✓ *put the scripts at the bottom*
- ✓ *minimize the number of iframes*
- ✓ *use a Content Delivery Network (CDN) to lighten the load on your server, and more.*

It may of course take different time for a page to load, depending on the speed of Internet connection and other factors. Therefore sometimes it makes sense to look at page size rather than load time. You can see the size of your web pages in **Pages/Site structure**. Choose the **Accessibility** workspace and check the **Page size** column.

On average, if it takes a page more than 3 seconds to load, the speed is considered slow and the page is heavy. Of course for certain niches (ex. gaming) heavy pages are almost unavoidable. In this case, it makes sense to compare your page's size to your competitors'.

## 5. Landing Pages

### 5.1. Select your landing pages \_\_\_\_\_

Select landing pages, the pages you are going to optimize in the first place to bring you more traffic, conversions, and sales. It's better to select these pages out of your best-ranking content. You can either select the pages in **Pages/Site structure** or add them manually in the **Pages/Landing pages** module. Add at least one landing page to proceed.

### 5.2. Assign keywords for each landing page \_\_\_\_\_

For each of your landing pages assign 1-3 keywords you'd like to optimize your pages for. Do not assign too many keywords for a single page, as the more focused your landing pages are, the better.

### 5.3. Select the top-priority search engine \_\_\_\_\_

Think about the search engine most of your target audience would come from: is it Google, Bing, or Yahoo? For each landing page, choose the top-priority search engine.

## 6. Competitors

### 6.1. Add your business niche competitors

Add your "real-world" business competitors in the **Competitor** module to analyze their Internet Marketing activities and results. Thus you'll see what activities and campaigns some of your industry leaders are making use of.

### 6.2. Analyze your search competitors

In **Pages/Landing pages** WebMeUp analyzes your top organic search competitors for each keyword and each landing page. To see who your top competitors are, in **Pages/Landing pages/Page elements** module you can click the i button in the **Keyword** field of any page element, and see your organic competitors and how their page elements are optimized. (However the main thing about the module **Pages/Landing pages/Page elements** is that it shows you how exactly to optimize your landing pages for keywords to outrank your competitors.)

## 7. On-page/Content Factors

### 7.1. Re-write duplicate/missing titles

In **Pages/Site Structure** pick the **On-page (Content)** workspace. Check the **Duplicate page title** column. If there are duplicate titles, they need to be rewritten. Also pay attention to the **Title length** column. The most effective page titles are about 65 characters long, including spaces. In the **Pages/Landing pages/Page elements** module you will find detailed advice on optimizing the title for each landing page. Keep your titles concise and make sure they contain your best keywords. Each page should have a unique title.

### 7.2. Revise meta descriptions

Meta descriptions are useful because they often dictate how your pages are shown in search results. For optimum effectiveness, meta descriptions should be about 150 characters long. To see the length of your page meta descriptions check the **M.Desc length** column of the **On-page (Content)** workspace in **Pages/Site Structure**. In the **Landing pages/Page elements** module you will find detailed advice on enhancing the description for each page. Your meta descriptions should be concise and contain your best keywords. Make sure each page of your website has its own meta description.

### 7.3. Add more content

The **Word count** column of the **On-page (Content)** workspace in **Pages/Site structure** shows how many words your pages' texts contain. Though there's no ideal word count for a page, consider adding more content if your current page word count is below 200 words. This will get you more "space" for your mid- and long-tail keywords.

### 7.4. Diversify text-only content

Use images to diversify your page content and get traffic from Google image search. In the **Pages/Landing pages/Page elements** module you'll get recommendations for the image ALT texts on your landing pages.

### 7.5. Insert keywords in document names (.pdf, .doc, .ppt, etc.)

Use your main keywords while naming the documents available for download on your website. This will increase your chances for getting found when one uses *filetype:* or *ext:* search operators in Google.

### 7.6. Mark up data using microformats

Microformat is a markup that is used to better structure the data that is being sent to search engines. The presentation of Google's search results is always improving due to Microformats.

### 7.7. Decrease the number of outgoing links (homepage) (less than 100)

In **Pages/Site structure** pick the **On-page (Content)** workspace and check the **Outgoing links total** column. You can see the number of outgoing links on your site's pages. Having too many links on your pages may cause your website to appear as a link farm or a spam site and can potentially hurt your site's SEO. For best results, try to moderate outgoing linking to 100 links per page or less, and link to relevant pages that are of value for your visitors. Btw, you can see more information about each link in the details panel at the bottom of **On-page (Content) workspace**.

### 7.8. Keyword-rich anchors for internal links

Add keywords to your internal links. A strong keyword-rich internal link structure adds up to your website relevance and can positively influence your search rankings. Go to the **Landing pages/Page elements** module to get internal link anchors recommendations for all your landing pages.

### 7.9. Optimize your landing pages

Go to the **Landing pages** module and follow all the recommendations for each page in the **Page element** section. You will get tips to optimize keyword use in page titles, meta descriptions, H-tag headings, link anchors, ALT attributes, and text paragraphs.

## 8. Off-page Factors

### 8.1. Analyze your backlink profile

Before you start a link building campaign, explore your site's existing backlinks in the **Backlinks** module (**Profile** submodule). Here you can analyze how strong your backlink profile is. This information is useful for:

- ✓ *Identifying the websites that discuss you or your organization*
- ✓ *Identifying your top content*
- ✓ *Discovering errors in the links that point to your site for correction and improvement*
- ✓ *Comparing link metrics between multiple sites to estimate the competition*
- ✓ *Analyzing anchor text*

### 8.2. Get more backlinks

Generally the more backlinks you have, the better. You can get natural links when people find your content useful and interesting and place links on their own websites and you can build up backlinks using such methods as:

- ✓ *Article marketing*
- ✓ *Getting listed in popular directories*
- ✓ *Guest Blogging*
- ✓ *Social media marketing, etc.*

Use the module **Backlinks/Management** for monitoring your important links. This will let you see at a glance if the most important links are in place and have the right anchor texts, point to the right pages etc. And if you're planning to get a link from some resource, you can enter it in **Backlinks/Management** to let the software see when it's added.

### 8.3. Improve the quality of backlinks

The backlinks are of great importance for your SEO, but you should remember that it's the quality not the quantity that matters first. Here are the things you should look at when building up your backlink profile:

✓ *The origin of the link*

Consider the Google PageRank, age, the number of outbound links, and the geo location of the linking page. You can analyze the linking pages of your existing backlinks in **Backlinks/Profile**. When you're looking for new places to get links from, you can analyze potential backlink pages in the **Competitors/Backlinks** module.

✓ *Anchor text should include your main keywords*

Anchor text (the visible clickable text in a hyperlink) should be optimized for your target keywords. Search engines use this text to help determine the relevancy of the linked-to document. To see the anchor text of the existing backlinks, go to the **Backlinks/Profile** module. To see what anchors your competitors are using, go to the **Competitors/Backlinks** module.

✓ *Focus more on "dofollow" links*

In **Backlinks/Profile** you can also see that some of your incoming links have a "nofollow" tag, which basically means that search engines are instructed to ignore this link when determining how to rank the page the link points to. That's why it is better to have "dofollow" links pointing to your site.

### 8.4. Study your search competitors' backlinks

In the **Competitors/Backlinks** module, you can investigate your competitors' links, find their best link sources, see what anchor texts they're using and analyze each link for a variety of factors including Google PR, Alexa rank, domain age and IP, link value and many more. Usually competitors backlink profile analysis helps you easily find new great link sources for your own site.

## 9. Social Media Popularity

### 9.1. Facebook

More Facebook likes will help spread the word and bring more visitors. Eventually, it may have a good impact on your rankings. Therefore it is recommended to add a Facebook Like button to your pages.

Additionally, you can create a Facebook page and engage your readers in sharing and discussing your posts, photos and videos.

You can see the overall number of Facebook "likes" in the **Project dashboard**. To check the number for a specific landing page, go to the **Pages/Landing pages** module, pick the page, and see the **Page dashboard**.

### 9.2. Twitter

Add a Twitter button to your website, so that visitors are able to tweet your content and share it with their followers.

Also you can create your own twitter account and notify your followers about interesting content, news, product updates, etc. In tweets use a hash tag with keywords to be easily found in Twitter search.

You can see the overall number of tweets associated with your website in the **Project dashboard**. To check the number for a specific landing page go to the **Pages/Landing pages** module, pick the page, and see the **Page dashboard**.

### 9.3. Google+

If you add a Google +1 button to your website, users with Google accounts will be able to share this content with their circles. It may also significantly influence personalized search results in Google.

Additionally, create a Google+ page and share some valuable content with your circles. Use a plus sign for your key phrases in posts when it makes sense.

You can see the overall number of Google plus shares in the **Project dashboard**. To check the number for a specific landing page go to the **Pages/Landing pages** module, pick the page, and see the **Page dashboard**.

#### 9.4. Other social accounts

You can also see more social activity statistics (via Digg, StumbleUpon, Diigo, Social Mention) in the **Project dashboard**, as well as the **Page dashboard** in the **Landing pages** module.

## 10. Track Your Progress

### 10.1. Check your rankings for keywords \_\_\_\_\_

Make sure you track your search engine rankings for keywords in the **Keywords & Rankings** module. You will be able to see your current rankings and history, and compare your rankings to competitors.

### 10.2. Check ranking factors of your site and landing pages \_\_\_\_\_

Is your PageRank growing? Has Alexa assigned you a higher traffic rank? How many Facebook likes have you got over the last month? Check your site's ranking factors, view history and see how you compare to competing sites in the **Ranking factors** module. You can also check ranking factors of individual pages in the **Pages/Landing pages** submodule.

Please remember that SEO only rarely brings immediate results and depending on a great variety of factors (keywords, competitors, business niche) it may take at least a couple of weeks to see any significant progress.

If you don't see any progress at all, it is strongly recommended to review this checklist one more time to make sure you haven't missed some critical steps.

# Extras: Enhance Your Online Presence

## 1. Create a Google Places listing

97% of consumers search for local businesses online, so if you run a local business (sell flowers in NY, provide consulting services in London, have a small grocery store in Barcelona, etc.) and have a physical address, you should sign up for a Google Places account. This will help you enhance your local search engine rankings.

By the way, you can customize your business listing with photos, videos, and special offers, which may become an additional sales venue for your company.

## 2. Produce some videos

Videos are an important marketing tool you can leverage to get more traffic and sales. If you offer media-related services, video marketing is simply a must for you. In all other cases, use videos to tell users about your brand, expertise, and success stories.

Apart from your website and blog, you can use the following video content platforms to promote your videos:

- ✓ *YouTube*
- ✓ *Vimeo*
- ✓ *Blip.tv*
- ✓ *Dailymotion*
- ✓ *Flickr Video*
- ✓ *Videojug*

## 3. Present your business

Another way to promote your products and services is to publish some presentations with useful information and links to your website. You can also distribute the presentations you've made at conferences and other events. By the way, presentations like videos can be embedded into pages, so other users might easily share them on their websites and blogs.

To start promoting presentations, take a look at:

- ✓ *Slideshare*
- ✓ *Scribd*
- ✓ *Authorstream*
- ✓ *Issuu*
- ✓ *FlexPaper*

#### 4. Create audio podcasts

Podcasting is engaging, creates a sense of trust and builds customer loyalty. Also it doesn't take much to record an audio compared to producing a high-quality video clip. Some content ideas for podcasts include:

- ✓ *Telling a story about your business*
- ✓ *Recording a roundtable or panel discussion on some trendy topics*
- ✓ *Answering the frequently asked questions related to your business*
- ✓ *Interviewing customers and employees*

To get your podcast to the widest possible audience:

1. *Send your podcast to all the major audio and video platforms, such as iTunes and YouTube*
2. *Include links to podcasts in your e-mail follow-ups and auto-responders*
3. *Use social media to spread your content across the Web.*

#### 5. Improve Usability

Sometimes website owners are getting a lot of traffic, but sales do not increase and the bounce rate is huge. If this sounds like your case, this section is for you. On the one hand, the problem might be in the wrong keywords, and then you have to get back to keyword research and review your current project key phrases. On the other hand,

the problem might be in the wrong keywords, and then you have to get back to keyword research and review your current project key phrases. Also, something may be wrong with your website and landing pages. In this case, you'll need to make your website and landing pages in particular more user-friendly.

Some of the common things to look into are:

1. *Case Studies*
2. *Testimonials*
3. *Strong call-to-actions "above the fold"*
4. *Grammatically correct texts*
5. *Emotion-based headlines*
6. *Offering some stuff for free*
7. *Re-design*



In the end, do not forget to return to this checklist on a regular basis to review, recheck, and enhance every SEO activity described.