60 SEO checklists

dD

digiDomain

Introduction

This is indeed a mega guide.

Who is this SEO checklist for?
-*bloggers*
-*website owners*
-*ecommerce sites*
-*digital marketers*
-*seo practitioners*

Does this SEO checklist contain new points?
Yes.

It's 2020. Of course there would be fresh & additional processes to follow.

Does this SEO checklist contain old points?
Yes.

There are activities that are outdated now.

But there are major number of those that are not.

And there are updates to those.

We have a lot to cover.

Let's dive in...

1. Domain name

It is always better to choose a name that is relevant to its business.

But not mandatory.

Example:
Searchenginejournal.com

You don't have to open this site to know what it is about.

The name itself speaks that its topic is on Search Engines.

Exact Match Domain (EMD) may have its pros and cons.

But Partial Match Domain (PMD) is a good way to get started.

Search Engine-wise.

It becomes easier for Search Engines to crawl and grasp the website content if the domain is synonymously related to the content.

Hence, choose your domain name carefully.

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Checklist to arrive at the right domain name:

-it should be easy to pronounce

-not more than 8 characters

-avoid special characters

-preferably related to the industry, product or services the site will provide

-arrive at 3 to 5 names

-check for social media handles across platforms (for consistency & brand retention)

2. TLD extension

This is the Top Level Domain.

I'm referring to .com/.co.uk/.in etc.

Which extension should your domain have?

Technically there is no difference between the domains.

This is useful if you want to rank higher in a specific country or region.

It helps you boost your local search ranking.

But recently, the .com extension has been known to have a greater acceptance.

So choose the one depending on the kind of business your site will be.

3. www or non-www?

Again, technically this does not make any difference.

Searchengineland is non-www.

Digidomain is non-www.

I chose this version to stand out in the crowd. So, it's your call.

4. Responsive website

This goes without saying.

Do not create a website that is not responsive.

What is responsive website?

It is a design approach where the webpage renders fully without compromise on any device

on which it is viewed on.

Devices include desktop, mobile, tablet etc.

Almost all of the Wordpress themes are responsive today.

For other CMS, you need to make sure that the site is responsive.

5. Mobile friendly check

To make sure that your site is mobile friendly, use the Google mobile testing tool.

Enter your website link.

Depending on your site status, it will display the mobile-friendly update.

6. Google Search Console site submission

This is one of the fundamental activities to be done.

Check out my guide on submitting your site to Google Search Console.

This guide also covers how to use the Search Console to get more traffic.

7. Bing Webmaster submission

Google dominates, yes.

But Microsoft Bing is also an opportunity you should not miss.

Bing currently has about 3% market share in the US.

8. Yandex submission

Yandex, simply is the Google of Russia.

And since there is nothing stopping your site from getting global traffic, site submission here is recommended.

9. Google Analytics account and tag

Without knowing your website performance, you are heading towards oblivion.

Analytics is a must for any site/business.

There are various tools for it.

Google Analytics is highly used as it is free, easy to install and provides a boatload of data.

10. Google Tag Manager

Every marketing platform will usually have its own snippet that you need to add to your site.

Like Facebook pixel, Google Analytics snippet, Twitter snippet etc.

But adding all of them will affect your page load speed.

Enter Google Tag Manager (GTM).

This is a tag management system from Google.

Here you only add one snippet to your site.
And add the rest in GTM.

11. Google My Business
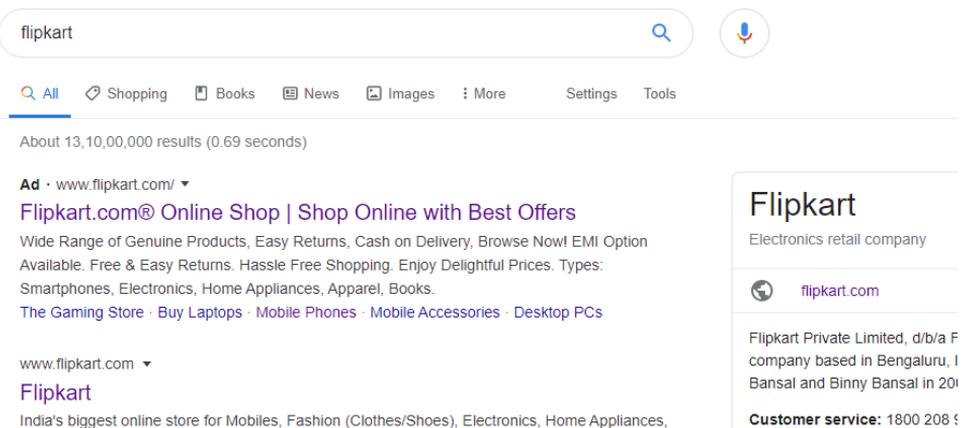
Specific and helpful for local listings.

Enter the site and fill in your business details.

Then verify your business using any of the options available.

There are a number of details you can fill in this tool.

Update them all including NAP (Name, Address, Phone number).

Your site info will appear in the search results as below:

flipkart		

Q All   ⊘ Shopping   📖 Books   📰 News   🖼 Images   ⋮ More   Settings   Tools

About 13,10,00,000 results (0.69 seconds)

Ad · www.flipkart.com/ ▾
Flipkart.com® Online Shop | Shop Online with Best Offers
Wide Range of Genuine Products, Easy Returns, Cash on Delivery, Browse Now! EMI Option
Available. Free & Easy Returns. Hassle Free Shopping. Enjoy Delightful Prices. Types:
Smartphones, Electronics, Home Appliances, Apparel, Books.
The Gaming Store · Buy Laptops · Mobile Phones · Mobile Accessories · Desktop PCs

www.flipkart.com ▾
Flipkart
India's biggest online store for Mobiles, Fashion (Clothes/Shoes), Electronics, Home Appliances,

Flipkart
Electronics retail company

🌐   flipkart.com

Flipkart Private Limited, d/b/a F
company based in Bengaluru, I
Bansal and Binny Bansal in 200

Customer service: 1800 208 9

12. Blog for your site

**If you are not an Ecommerce site,
then I highly recommend
that you create a blog page for your site.**

**Having a blog section
*-will bring in consistently more traffic***

-will provide an opportunity to promote information

-will help in acquiring new customers and followers

-increase the number of pages for your website making it more dynamic

If you are an Ecoomerce site, a blog is not mandatory but it doesn't hurt to have one.

Here you can have blogs like buying guides across categories, news, events coverage etc.

Like below:

13. SSL certificate

Security is one of the ranking signals of Google.

And among customers as well today.

Hence a SSL certified website is quite mandatory.

14. HTTP or HTTPS?

As I mentioned in the previous point, HTTPS is the one to choose.

Usually this is part of the web hosting package that you get.

15. Using CDN

A Content Delivery Network makes your site easier to load.

How does CDN work?

A CDN will load your site from the closest server available based on the distance.

Hence the load time will be reduced.

16. Google Trends

It is very important that
you know the "trend" of a topic.

Or keyword for that matter.

Using Google Trends will definitely help you in
assessing the topic volume.

Check out my complete guide to Google Trends.

This guide will explain all features you can work
on to get more insights.

17. Page Load test

Just like the mobile friendly test, page load too
should be on your radar.

Why?

Page speed is one of the top ranking factors.

You can use the below tools to check page speed

- *Google Page Speed tool*

- *GT Metrix*

- *Pingdom*

18. Google disavow

This is for low-quality links that hamper your site rankings.

Especially the ones you don't control.

You can **submit them here**.

COMING TO ON-PAGE SEO...

19. URL

Your site URL is the first thing Google Bots crawl.

Hence, it should be properly oprimized.

Checklist:
-use short URLs
-add keywords in it
-use hyphen

Get the full information on **creating the perfect SEO-friendly URL.**

20. Title tag

-should contain keywords
-words to be separated by pipe - |
-not more than 65 characters, else will get truncated

-should be consistent throughout the site
-create a format or a pattern like
Product name | category | website

21. Meta keywords & description

This is old school but still is crucial.

If you are using Yoast SEO for Wordpress then you won't have keywords – anymore.

As they have recently been demoted.

But not the description.

So you can still optimize description.

22. H1 tags

There are 6 HTML title tags.

<h1>,<h2>...<h6>.

H1 is the most important.

Followed by H2 and so on.

Every relevant page should have a H1 title.

In Ecommerce, this is usually the product title.

In blogs, it would be the blog post title.

There should be only one H1 title per page.

23. Links

One of the most important ranking factors.

There are two kinds of links.

Internal and external.

Internal links

These are links connecting to various pages within a single website.

These links provide a way for bots to navigate the site.

The easier you make it for them the better.

Checklist:

-use anchor text to link to another page
-add it in the content naturally
-the source and the destination pages should be related

Example:

In Ecommmerce, internal links on a product page would be

-recommended products
-similar products
-upselling (sometimes)
-breadcrumbs

For a blog,

-links to another topic in the same sub-category.
-links to ebook page
-links to a course page

External links

These are links that connect pages from one website to another.

Checklist:

-do not omit the presence of external links as they do add value
-link to high quality websites
-link to same genre websites
-add "no follow" tag to some of them to prevent passing of link juice

24. Keyword research

The bread and butter of SEO.

Two types: Primary keywords and long-tail keywords

Primary keywords

These are your core keywords which represents your business.

They contain one to two words.

Few tools for keyword research:

Google Autocomplete
Google Keyword planner
Ubersuggest
"People also ask" section on Google SERP

Long-tail keywords

These are the keywords that are conceptually related to your main keywords.

Their search volume will be lesser.

But conversion aspects will be on the higher side.

Few tools to get Long-tail keywords:

Answer the public
Amazon search
LSIgraph
Wikipedia
Reddit

You can also use a premium tool like SemRush, Ahrefs etc.

That will give you a complete view of keywords.

Including the ones that drive traffic to your competitors.

25. Search Intent

SEO, as you know, has evolved over the years.

And search intent is now gained prominence.

You cannot just blindly use keywords anymore.

Before creating content, you need to understand user intent.

What is Search Intent?

This refers to the primary goal or intention of the user.

While searching on Google.

**Say, you search for "buy mobiles online".
You get the below:**

**Now you cannot have a buying guide or a page on
the mobile brand history or news here.**

Why?

**Because the query is already related to purchase.
Hence you need to have a mobile sale page here.**

Example 2:

You want to create a recipe page.

**On Google, you see that most of the recipe pages
are created as a checklist and not regular
paragraphs.**

Hence you should also aim to create a checklist page.

Without optimizing for user intent your site will not rank.

26. Image optimization

Images have no doubt gained a momentum like no other.

Checklist:

-compress your images (Tools like TInyPNG can help)

-name them accordingly

-name them uniquely

-place them around the related text

-do not use flash

-use jpg or png

27. Alt tags

Name every image properly - twice.

First time while naming the image itself.

Second time, while filling the alt tags for that image.

Alt tags or alternate tags are texts that display in place of the image when the image cannot be rendered.

Hence it is crucial that you fill this every time.

28. Sitemaps

Sitemap is a list of all your website links.

There are two kinds:

XML and HTML.

XML sitemap Example:

URL of sub-sitemap	Last modified (GMT)
https://digidomain.in/sitemap-misc.xml	2020-02-12 07:17
https://digidomain.in/sitemap-pt-post-2020-02.xml	2020-02-12 07:17
https://digidomain.in/sitemap-pt-post-2020-01.xml	2020-01-21 10:27
https://digidomain.in/sitemap-pt-post-2019-12.xml	2020-01-03 10:30
https://digidomain.in/sitemap-pt-post-2019-11.xml	2019-11-26 08:16
https://digidomain.in/sitemap-pt-post-2019-10.xml	2019-12-19 10:10
https://digidomain.in/sitemap-pt-post-2019-09.xml	2019-09-24 11:44
https://digidomain.in/sitemap-pt-post-2019-08.xml	2019-12-03 09:35
https://digidomain.in/sitemap-pt-post-2019-07.xml	2019-11-18 10:13

HTML sitemap

Example:

You can use tools like Screaming Frog to generate Sitemaps.

Once created, you should submit this to Google search Console.

Checklist to create sitemap;

-*group your category links*
-*use the proper tags*
-*assign the right frequency*

Image Sitemap

Just like links, this will have all your site images You can also submit this to Search Console.

29. Yoast SEO

This is for those who use wordpress.

This is the best SEO plugin available.

You can work on a whole lot of activities with this plugin.

Like
-connect your accounts
-fill in meta tags
-get a status check of your page
-receive improvement suggestions

Check out my guide on **Complete Wordpress SEO**.

30. Robots.txt file

This is the file that Google checks for root domain instructions.

If you do not want Google to crawl any kind of pages from your website, you should list it here.

Typical pages to be blocked from crawling include:
-filtered or faceted pages
-privacy related pages
-internal search results page
-order related pages

Basic instructions include,

To block the entire site:

User-agent: *
Disallow: /

To block filtered pages:

User-agent: *
Disallow: /filter/
(if you have "/filter/" in the URL after the filter is applied).

A pattern in the URL is required to block is list of them.

To view the robots file of a site (if there is one), just type the following
www.website.com/robots.txt

Robots file of Digidomain:

```
User-Agent: *
Disallow: /cgi-bin
Disallow: /privacy-policy
Disallow: /terms-and-conditions/
Disallow: /2019/*
Disallow: /page/*
Disallow: /wp-
Disallow: *&s=
Disallow: /?s=*
Disallow: /author/*
Disallow: *?attachment_id=
Disallow: */feed
Disallow: */rss
Disallow: */embed
Allow: /wp-content/uploads/
Allow: /wp-content/themes/
Allow: /*/*.js
Allow: /*/*.css
Allow: /wp-*.png
Allow: /wp-*.jpg
Allow: /wp-*.jpeg
Allow: /wp-*.gif
Allow: /wp-*.svg
Allow: /wp-*.pdf

Sitemap: https://digidomain.in/sitemap.xml
```

31. Schema

Schema is a small piece of code you add to your site which provide extra information when your site is displayed on SERP.

Schema can be of three types:
-*microdata*
-*json-ld*
-*rdfa*

JSON-LD is the preferred one.

Checklist to add Schema:

-*decide on the parameters to be used in schema*
-*split it as per the type of page (homepage will have different schema than a product page)*

32. Canonical tag

This is basically to check and prevent duplication of pages.

If there are multiple pages, Google will split the page value between them.

If there are many such pages, your site rank will drop.

You may also get hit by a penalty.

Hence you need to add a code on all your pages to inform
Google if the page is original or not.

33. Pagination

As the name suggests, this helps in cases where a single huge page is split into multiple ones.

Say, you have a list off 50 products spread over 5 pages.

So, 10 products per page.

Pagination includes 3 HTML codes as below

```
<link href="https://website.com/previous-page" id="prev-page-link-tag" rel="prev">
```

```
<link href="https://website.com/next-page" id="prev-page-link-tag" rel="next">
```

```
<link canonical="current page">
```

On page 1,
Canonical and "next" tag will appear

On the last page,
Canonical and "prev" tag will appear

On the all in-between pages,
All three - "prev", "next"
and "canonical" tags will appear.

34. NOODP

This means No Open Directory Project.

It is a meta tag.

This tag informs Google that if any info about a specific page is found in the Directories, then it should be ignored.

And the respective data should be taken from the current page.

35. Hreflang

To inform Google that a page is also live in another language.

Code:
```
<link rel = "alternate" hraflang = "ar-sa" href="respective link">
```

The above code is if you have a page in the Arabic language targeted to Saudi Arabia

36. Breadcrumbs

Breadcrumbs are the navigational guides to your website.

It tells you exactly where in the website you are.

Example:

Homepage>category page> product age

While adding it makes sense, it is not mandatory.

You need to decide on the site architecture before implementing this.

There will be products which fit into multiple categories.

Hence you need to avoid duplication and product omission.

37. Connect your accounts

This is a simple and effective step that many ignore.

Connect all your accounts.
Let Search Engines know that you are consistent and present across various channels.

Major accounts to be linked to each other include:

-google search console to Google Analytics
-google adwords to Google Analytics
-google adwords to Google Merchant center
-google firebase to Google Anaytics (for apps)
-all your social media platforms accounts to your website (using Yoast for wordpress)

38. Use Social Sharing buttons

Having Social Sharing options on your site is an easy way to increase your presence.

People can easily share your content across different platforms.

The more they share, the better it will be for SEO. Cause Google checks the "shares" of a page.

39. Content

You cannot forget about the king himself can you?

Write awesome content for your blog and your product pages.

Do keyword research as explained earlier.

It'll take time. But it'll be worth it.

Set a process in place.

40. Videos

Content is ubiquitous.

It can take many forms.

And the exploding form right now is videos.

Creating a video with proper and special content will open your business to new customers.

Your presence and traffic will witness an upward trend.

41. Unlinked mentions

These are online mentions of your brands, but those which do not link back to your site.

It is like a backlink without the link – so just plain text.

This is an amazing opportunity for you to develop backlinks.

Why?

Your brand is already mentioned in the external page.

You just need to reach out to them to link it.

You will need a paid tool like SemRush or Ahrefs to do this.

They have features (Ahrefs has Content Explorer) that will help you get the list of all your brand mentions.

42. Outdated content

Content is dynamic.

You need to check for your static pages.

As pages where the content is old.

And traffic for those is dwindling.

Re-work on those.

It can be a replacemtent or an addition.

But constantly checking for this will get your site the boost you hope for.

43. Check for Index Bloating

Picking up from the previous point...

Index bloating is a process where a Search Engine indexes a lot of your pages that have thin content.

This results in wastage of crawl budget.

As all those pages will not get ranked.

And other relevant and important pages will miss out on a quick index.

Hence you should avoid Index Bloating.

44. Increase dwell time

Dwell time refers to the time the customer spends on your site when he clicks on your organic link on SERP.

Say, you are searching for a product and you click on a SERP link that on rank 5 of page 1.

Once you enter that site, you see that the information you seek is not on the site.

And you click back to Google search result page.

This process is also pogo-sticking.

So the dwell time for that site at this instance is less.

If enough people do this, then that site ranking drop.

And will continue to drop if not rectified.

So you need to make sure that you add the right keywords on every page.

You know what that page is about.

You know what it represents.

Create content around that.

So that there will be no ambiguity.

The SERP snippet should exactly represent the page.

This will help increase dwell time.

45. Content Strategy

Creating content is just one part of your marketing activity.

Promoting it should be the other.

Ideally, you should spend 30% of your time creating content.

And 70% promoting it.

Content works best with its strategy.

You know your top marketing channels that bring in conversions.

You can check the **Attribution Models in Google Analytics** to get that data.

46. Check for crawl errors

Search Console and Screaming Frog tool are the best combination to work on for this.

Search Console will provide you the list of crawl errors with solutions that you can work on.

So will Screaming Frog.

It's like double-checking.

You can re-submit your links once the errors are fixed.

47. Fix broken links

Following the previous point...

This is quite important.

As and when your site grows, the "monitoring" activity should also increase.

You will have hundreds, thousands of links.

Keeping track of them is vital.

Again a tool like Screaming Frog will help you with all the URLS that are broken.

Check out the list of **various HTTP status codes**.

48 Screaming Frog tool

This tool is free for up to 500 links.

You can use this to check all technical errors on your site.

You can also generate Sitemap here.

All your response code errors, display errors, meta tag errors among others can be checked.

49. HARO approach

HARO stands for Help A Reporter Out.

You first register on their <u>site</u>.

You'll start receiving emails from them on various categories.

Each email is for a publication contribution.

The data on the person/reporter in charge will be present.

They will be trying to answer questions on different topics.

And you help them out.

And they return the favour by adding your name/site on their publication.

50 Consider AMP

AMP has its pros and cons.

It will drastically increase your site speed on mobile.

But it comes with a price.

Many of your functionalities will be restricted.

Hence, even though AMP is recommended in many cases, test it out thoroughly.

And then check if you can implement it.

51. Readability

Content has its tactics.

The readability factor includes not just content.

But site structure as well.

Overall from top to bottom, you need to ensure the readability of your site is good.

The keywords you chose, fonts, content positioning, breadcrumbs etc all are part of your site readability.

52. Infographics

You can stand out among your competitors with this feature.

Infographics help you get more backlinks.

They make it easier for people to read.

An engaging visual like Infographics will be mind-retaining.

Create original infographics so that people can share and link to it.

53. Content update

I'm kinda repeating this, but that's how important your content is.

Content has 2 aspects

-creation
-update

Both should be planned out properly.

54. Guest blogging

This is an interesting opportunity to get backlinks and promote your site.

Search for the below on Google

"keyword" submit a guest post
"keyword" guest post

You will get a list of sites that
 accept guest blogging.

<u>Buzzblogger</u> is a good site to check for guest
blogging.

55. Skyscraper technique

Initiated by Brian Dean of Backlinko.

Like the name suggests, this method involves
creating not just a better, but a bigger article
than others.

Suppose you want to write on Linkbuilding
techniques.

You find that on SERP, majority of the sites have
posts like

-top 5 link building techniques
-7 converting link building activities

You then create an article titled

*-15 amazing link building strategies guaranteed to
work.*

56. Unblock JS/CSS files

When you create a website, inevitably you will have Javascript and CSS files.

It is best practice to not block them from Search Engines.

The more open your site is , the better will be your chances of ranking.

You should check with your developer if the required JS/CSS files are blocked or not.

57 Use exit intent

Exit Intent pop ups are know to increase conversions, practically in the range of 5 – 10%.

These are pop ups that get displayed as and when customers move the curser towards the closing of the page.

This pop up would serve as a gentle friendly reminder of why customers should not leave the site.
Pop ups can be
-free ebooks
-lead gen forms
-free webinar sign ups

58. EAT

EAT stands for

Expertise Authoritativeness Trustworthiness

Google checks for all three factors on your site.

Expertise – how good or knowledgeable you are on your topic at hand?

Authoritativeness – are other people citing you for reference?

Trustworthiness – are you having any negative sentiments in and around your business?

59 SEO Audit

A complete SEO audit is a must for any website.

It is better if you do it using a paid tool.

This way you can cover all aspects of the audit and leave out nothing.
Tools:
-screaming frog
-semrush
-ahrefs

60. Proofread – everything

Lastly, but not the least, doublecheck everything.

We are all humans; and will make mistakes.

Before going live with anything, read it, check it , test it properly.

Thoroughly.

Conclusion

We all know SEO is an ongoing process.

These SEO checklists should ensure not only a sustainable website but also a growing one.

The catch is to be ever vigilant.

And monitor all aspects.

follow digiDomain