

Lesson no. 15 – How to do SEO for E-Commerce Website

HOW TO DO SEO FOR AN ECOMMERCE WEBSITE

FCG

In this guide, you'll find a set of content and technical issues anyone doing e-commerce SEO will face, and actionable how-tos and time-saving tricks on tackling them.

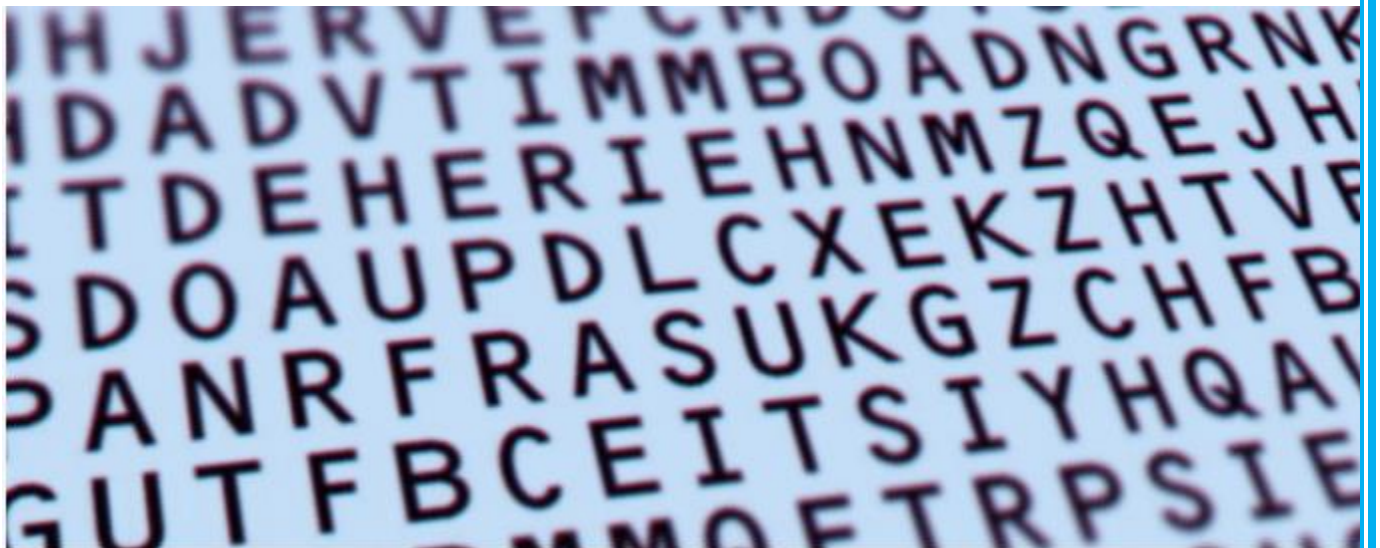
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STEP1

Keyword research

Forget generic keywords, think smart word combinations



Keyword research for e-commerce websites goes far beyond search volume and competition analysis. The reason for that is the complexity of the buying cycle — each step in it calls for different keywords you'd need to target.

Typically, customers of an online store go through 5 stages before making a purchase; different keywords and keyword phrases are used at each stage.



i. *Compile 3 separate keyword lists*

As you can see, keywords that customers use at the Research, Comparison, and Purchase stages offer the most value in terms of conversion potential. To get a comprehensive list of those, you'll need to come up with 3 groups of keywords that you'll later combine into long tail queries.

But before you start, remember to research search patterns typical of your target audience: consider gender, age, and social status. For example, if you are a male and you

are struggling to get the organic traffic for a skin care store, take care to talk to your female colleagues or friends to find out the jargon they use when they talk about this stuff. Spend some time on relevant social media resources to learn your audience's language.

Note

Internal website search is a valuable source of information about the search terms that your target audience will use to find the products and services. This data is particularly useful for an ecommerce website. On the one hand, you get "real" search terms, on the other hand, you get additional information on the demand for and popularity of certain products. Since the "non-provided" times, internal search is one of the few ways to have a look on the actual keyword queries. Internal search tracking is rather easy to implement. If you are using Google Analytics (and I am sure you do), have a look at this help article.

When you're positive you understand how your customers talk and which words they use, get down to putting up your keyword list.

- a) Prepare a list of action keywords that customers might use at the Comparison and Purchase stages as part of their query. Don't add the product or category names to these keywords yet.
E.g. "buy", "purchase", "price", "compare", "review".
- b) Get a full list of brands available at your store.
E.g. "Sony", "Samsung", "Apple".
- c) Compile a list of categories, product names, and their core properties, like size or color.
E.g. "TV", "laptop", "smartphone"; "Iphone", "Galaxy Note", "34-inch display".

ii. *Mix the keywords up*

Once you've got these three lists ready, it's time to move on to putting together search phrases. Combining generic keywords with product keywords and their properties should give you dozens of long tail keywords — like "buy 42-inch Samsung TV". It works like a slot machine: you turn the reels and get new keyword phrases.

You can do it manually if you need to mix up a dozen of keywords. However, given the size of the inventory in most online stores, you will likely need software tools to get things done quickly.

Try using Rank Tracker's Word Combination option to get a full list of possible long tail keywords instantly.

- a) Create or open a project in Rank Tracker.
- b) Click the Suggest Keywords button.

- c) Select Word Combination from the available keyword research methods, and hit Next.
- d) Select the number of parts to combine, enter your keywords in the columns, and click Next once more.

(By the way, it looks exactly like a slot machine!)

Step 2: Specify Keywords For Word Combination

Use the text areas below to enter keywords for creating various keyword combinations. Please specify how many parts will be combined in your suggestions (you'll have a corresponding number of text areas at your disposal). For example, if you choose 3 parts, Rank Tracker will build keyword suggestions from what stands in three different text areas. This is a great way to quickly create multiple keyword variations.

Enter your keywords (one entry per line):

buy order purchase	samsung sony toshiba sharp	tv tv set lcd tv led tv
--------------------------	-------------------------------------	----------------------------------

Select the number of parts to combine:

[Online Help](#) < Back **Next >** Cancel Finish

In an instant, you'll get plenty of long tail keyword phrases.

Step 4: Choose The Keywords You Need

Please select the keywords you want to work further on (enable the checkbox next to a respective keyword). When done, click "Next" to check KEI (Keyword Efficiency Index) for the selected keywords, or click "Finish" to just add them to the project without checking.

Select All Select None Quick Filter: contains ▼

#	Select...	Keyword	Length	Competition	# of Searches	KEI	Expected Visits
1	<input type="checkbox"/>	buy samsung tv	3	Not yet chec...	Not yet che...	Not yet check...	Not yet check...
2	<input type="checkbox"/>	buy sony tv	3	Not yet chec...	Not yet che...	Not yet check...	Not yet check...
3	<input type="checkbox"/>	buy toshiba tv	3	Not yet chec...	Not yet che...	Not yet check...	Not yet check...
4	<input type="checkbox"/>	buy sharp tv	3	Not yet chec...	Not yet che...	Not yet check...	Not yet check...
5	<input type="checkbox"/>	purchase samsung tv	3	Not yet chec...	Not yet che...	Not yet check...	Not yet check...
6	<input type="checkbox"/>	purchase sony tv	3	Not yet chec...	Not yet che...	Not yet check...	Not yet check...
7	<input type="checkbox"/>	purchase toshiba tv	3	Not yet chec...	Not yet che...	Not yet check...	Not yet check...
8	<input type="checkbox"/>	purchase sharp tv	3	Not yet chec...	Not yet che...	Not yet check...	Not yet check...

0 of 48 keyword(s) selected

[Online Help](#) < Back **Next >** Cancel Finish

Select the keywords to add to your project and hit Update KEI to get their search volume, competition, and Keyword Efficiency Index.

Voila — you've just saved yourself a couple of hours!

STEP 2

Keyword matrix

Do smart keyword targeting to avoid cannibalization



URLs	Keywords		
	Samsung tv	Toshiba tv	Sony tv
www.mystore.com/samsung-tv	x		
www.mystore.com/sony-tv			x
www.mystore.com/Toshiba-tv		x	

Have you heard about keyword cannibalization? To put it short, if several pages of your website contain a response to the same search query, these pages will compete with each other in SERPs for rankings. The search engines may rank the page that is less suitable or important from your standpoint.

In order to avoid keyword cannibalization, create a keyword matrix. Fill the rows in a spreadsheet with the URLs of your site's most important pages (most likely product category pages), and create columns for your keywords. Put a mark at the intersection of row/column to assign a certain keyword to a certain page. This method will help you make sure that you don't use the important keyword across multiple pages.

Alternatively, you can use Rank Tracker's Keyword Map dashboard that lets you map your keywords and entire keyword groups to landing pages by clicking Assign Keyword To Landing Page. Under the Landing Pages tab, you'll be able to easily navigate through your keyword map by landing pages' URLs to instantly see all keywords associated with any given page.

The screenshot shows the Rank Tracker Keyword Map dashboard. On the left, a sidebar lists landing pages under the 'Landing Pages' tab, including: /big-sky-real-estate-for-sale.html, /climate-in-montana.html, /montana-attractions.html, /montana-hotels.html, /montana-rentals.html, and /ranches-for-sale.html. The main area displays a table of keywords mapped to the URL 'http://montanarealestate.com/climate-in-mon...'. The table includes columns for #, Keyword, # of Searches, Competition, KEI, Expected Visits, Keyword Group, and Tags. Summary statistics at the top indicate 1,660 # of searches, Low competition, 1,494 KEI, and 635 expected visits.

#	Keyword	# of Searches	Competition	KEI	Expected Visits	Keyword Group	Tags
1	big sky montana weather	1,600	Low	1,440	612	big sky monta...	Informational
2	big sky montana weather forecast	50	Low	0,045	19	big sky monta...	Informational
3	big sky montana weather july	10	Low	0,009	4	big sky monta...	Informational
4	big sky montana extended weat...	0	N/A	No data	0	big sky monta...	Informational
5	big sky montana june weather	0	N/A	No data	0	big sky monta...	Informational
6	big sky montana july weather	0	N/A	No data	0	big sky monta...	Informational
7	big sky montana noaa weather	0	N/A	No data	0	big sky monta...	Informational
8	big sky montana october weather	0	N/A	No data	0	big sky monta...	Informational
9	big sky montana weather in may	0	N/A	No data	0	big sky monta...	Informational
10	big sky montana weather june	0	N/A	No data	0	big sky monta...	Informational
11	big sky montana yearly weather	0	N/A	No data	0	big sky monta...	Informational

Once your keywords are mapped to the landing pages, Rank Tracker will make sure that the right pages rank for the assigned keywords. You'll see a warning sign next to the page URL in the Rank Tracking workspace if a wrong page ranks for the keyword.

The screenshot shows the Rank Tracker workspace with a table of keywords and their Google URLs. The table includes columns for #, Keyword, Google R..., Google Difference, and Google URL Found. A warning sign (yellow triangle with an exclamation mark) is visible next to the URL 'http://www.link-assistant.com/' for the keyword 'seo software tool'.

#	Keyword	Google R...	Google Difference	Google URL Found
1	seo rank traker	1	0	http://www.link-assistant.com/rank-tracker/
2	seo rank tracking	1	0	http://www.link-assistant.com/rank-tracker/
3	seo software tool	1	0	⚠ http://www.link-assistant.com/
4	seo rank tracker tool	1	0	http://www.link-assistant.com/rank-tracker/
5	buy ranktracker	1	0	http://www.link-assistant.com/rank-tracker/buy.html
6	seo rank tracker	1	0	http://www.link-assistant.com/rank-tracker/
7	seo rank software	1	0	http://www.link-assistant.com/
8	seo powersuite enterprise	1	+1	http://www.link-assistant.com/seo-powersuite-enterpris...
9	seo software professional	1	0	http://www.link-assistant.com/
10	seo link software	1	0	http://www.link-assistant.com/
11	seo enterprise for mac	1	0	http://www.link-assistant.com/

You can read about the keyword mapping in more detail in the following article on advanced keyword research techniques.

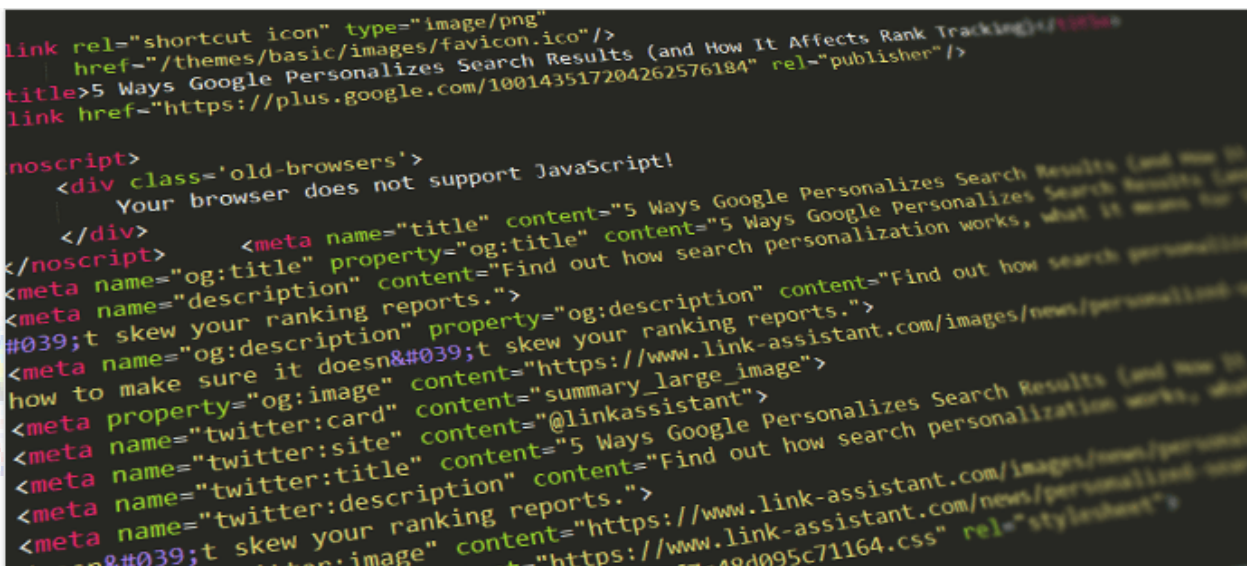
Note

If the CMS of your online store creates separate pages for such variations of a product as size and color, it makes sense to restrict such pages from indexing using robots.txt or <meta name="robots" content="noindex"> tag. Canonicalization is another solution (see Google's guidelines for detailed instructions).

STEP 3

On-page optimization

Save time on optimizing thousands of product pages



```
link rel="shortcut icon" type="image/png"
href="/themes/basic/images/favicon.ico"/>
title>5 Ways Google Personalizes Search Results (and How It Affects Rank Tracking)
link href="https://plus.google.com/100143517204262576184" rel="publisher"/>
</noscript>
<div class='old-browsers'>
  Your browser does not support JavaScript!
</div>
<meta name="og:title" property="og:title" content="5 Ways Google Personalizes Search Results (and How It Affects Rank Tracking)" />
<meta name="description" content="Find out how search personalization works, what it means for
#039;t skew your ranking reports." />
<meta name="og:description" property="og:description" content="Find out how search personalization
how to make sure it doesn#039;t skew your ranking reports." />
<meta property="og:image" content="summary_large_image" />
<meta name="twitter:card" content="summary_large_image" />
<meta name="twitter:site" content="@linkassistant" />
<meta name="twitter:title" content="5 Ways Google Personalizes Search Results (and How It Affects Rank Tracking)" />
<meta name="twitter:description" content="Find out how search personalization works, what it means for
#039;t skew your ranking reports." />
<meta name="twitter:image" content="https://www.link-assistant.com/images/news/personalized-search-results-5-ways-google-personalizes-search-results-and-how-it-affects-rank-tracking-148d095c71164.css" rel="stylesheet" />
```

An e-commerce website typically has a limited set of category pages and thousands of product pages. Everything is more or less clear with category pages (they are usually subject to the traditional on-page SEO approach; if you are new to SEO, check out the A to Z SEO Guide for the steps).

Things get trickier when it comes to product pages. You'll hardly have the time and resources to create unique titles, H1 tags, and descriptions for each product page.

Luckily, the slot machine approach (see the Keyword research section) can be used for meta tags just as well.

Create title, meta description and H1 templates for your product pages. For example, you may use this template for the title tag: Buy [ProductName] online | Your store name

[ProductName] is a variable that changes for every page depending on the product. If your CMS does not support variables, ask your development team for help.

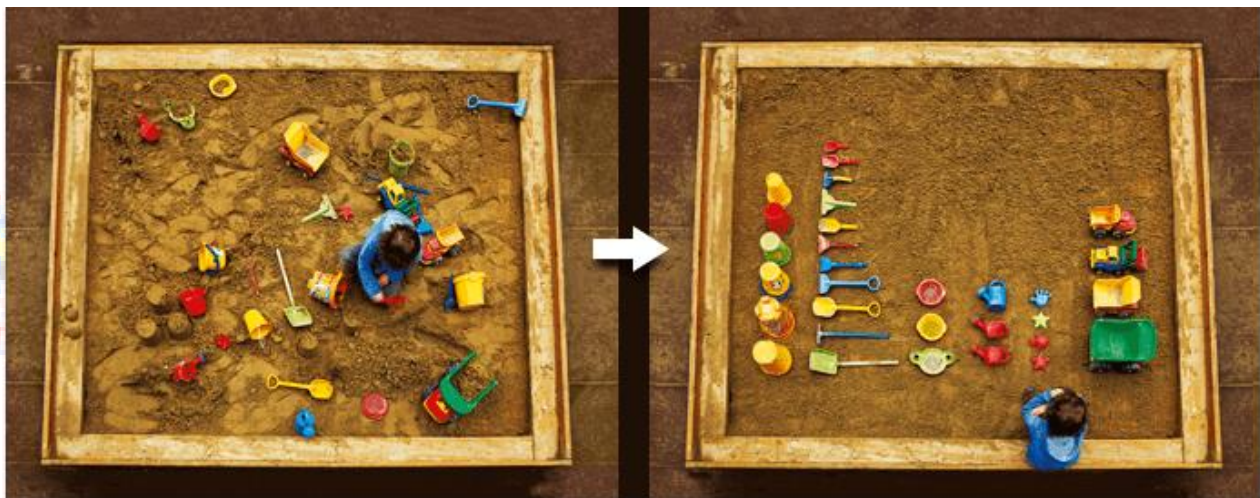
Do the same for your H1s and descriptions — and remember that titles and meta descriptions are displayed in your listing's snippet in SERPs, so make sure to use strong calls-to-action to entice clicks from search results.

If you need detailed information on how to create perfectly polished SEO-friendly pages, do not miss this comprehensive guide on landing page optimization.

STEP 4

Structured data

Highlight product details and user reviews



We stepped into the semantic search epoch, when Google understands entities and concepts behind the search queries. Although the search giant is already very good at it, we still need to help the search engine understand the content of our websites better. Schema markup is the code that you put on your website to help the search engines return more informative results for users.

There is over a dozen of markup schemas. But there are two of them that are really important for an e-commerce website. These are product schema and review schema.

After Schema markup implementation, the snippets of your website will get additional information such as rating, price, availability that will help your website stand out in the SERPs.

adidas NMD - Latest Release Details | SneakerNews.com

sneakernews.com/tag/adidas-nmd/ ▾

★★★★★ Rating: 7.9/10 - 589 votes

Read here for the latest **adidas NMD** colorways, release details, and price information.

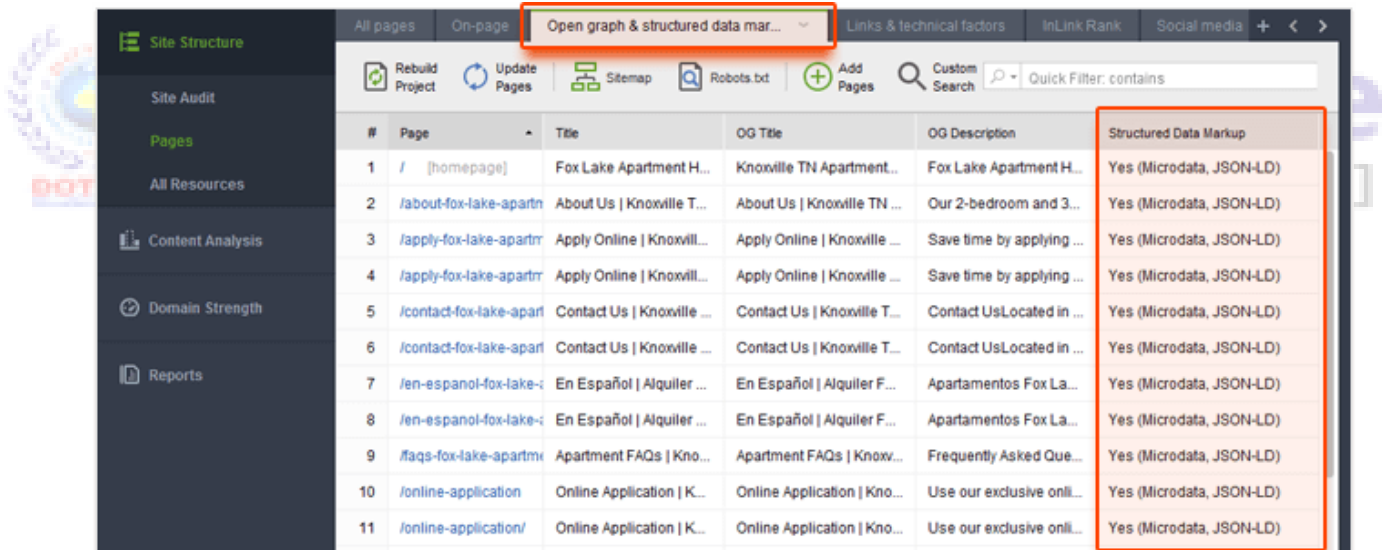
Nike LunarEpic Low Flyknit Men's Running Shoe. Nike.com

store.nike.com/us/en_us/pd/lunarepic-low-flyknit-mens...shoe/.../pgid-11140345 ▾

★★★★★ Rating: 4.4 - 16 reviews - \$160.00

Explore the full LunarEpic Low Flyknit collection here. ... The Nike LunarEpic Low Flyknit Men's Running Shoe is lightweight and breathable with targeted cushioning for a soft, effortless sensation underfoot. ... A flexible, breathable Flyknit upper wraps your foot for a second-skin fit.

You can use Website Auditor to verify what type of Schema markup was implemented and on which pages of your site. Simply open the Pages dashboard in the Site Audit module and switch to the Open graph & structured data tab.



#	Page	Title	OG Title	OG Description	Structured Data Markup
1	/ [homepage]	Fox Lake Apartment H...	Knoxville TN Apartment...	Fox Lake Apartment H...	Yes (Microdata, JSON-LD)
2	/about-fox-lake-apartm	About Us Knoxville T...	About Us Knoxville TN ...	Our 2-bedroom and 3...	Yes (Microdata, JSON-LD)
3	/apply-fox-lake-apartm	Apply Online Knowill...	Apply Online Knoxville ...	Save time by applying ...	Yes (Microdata, JSON-LD)
4	/apply-fox-lake-apartm	Apply Online Knowill...	Apply Online Knoxville ...	Save time by applying ...	Yes (Microdata, JSON-LD)
5	/contact-fox-lake-apart	Contact Us Knoxville ...	Contact Us Knoxville T...	Contact UsLocated in ...	Yes (Microdata, JSON-LD)
6	/contact-fox-lake-apart	Contact Us Knoxville ...	Contact Us Knoxville T...	Contact UsLocated in ...	Yes (Microdata, JSON-LD)
7	/en-espanol-fox-lake-	En Español Alquiler ...	En Español Alquiler F...	Apartamentos Fox La...	Yes (Microdata, JSON-LD)
8	/en-espanol-fox-lake-	En Español Alquiler ...	En Español Alquiler F...	Apartamentos Fox La...	Yes (Microdata, JSON-LD)
9	/faqs-fox-lake-apartm	Apartment FAQs Kno...	Apartment FAQs Know...	Frequently Asked Que...	Yes (Microdata, JSON-LD)
10	/online-application	Online Application K...	Online Application Kno...	Use our exclusive onli...	Yes (Microdata, JSON-LD)
11	/online-application/	Online Application K...	Online Application Kno...	Use our exclusive onli...	Yes (Microdata, JSON-LD)

STEP 5

Duplication

Make sure every page on your site is unique



Duplicate content issues for e-commerce sites fall into two categories:

- a) Off-site — the content appears on many websites across the web.
- b) On-site — many pages of the website feature the same content.

i. *Fix off-site duplication*

Off-site duplication is natural for e-commerce. Online stores often use product descriptions, images, and specifications provided by the manufactures. This is logical, since you cannot invent new specs for the latest iPhone. However, there are a number of solutions for the problem.

- a) Write unique descriptions for each item. If you have a team of copywriters to get the entire inventory covered — go for it. Just keep in mind that as the inventory scales up, you'll need to keep up with the copy as well.
- b) Leverage user-generated content. Create incentives for visitors to write reviews of the items they purchased. Send follow-up emails and ask for a review nicely, or offer discounts or bonuses to customers who leave a review. On the downside, there's no guarantee that you will have a steady flow of reviews for all the items being sold. Additionally, reviews should be moderated to avoid spam or obscene language, which requires additional resources.
- c) Add a Q&A section for each product. You can make your product descriptions unique by adding a FAQ section with questions customers often have about the product. Again, doing this will require additional human resources.
- d) Optimize product category pages only. If you don't have the time and resources to work on product pages, you can choose to create unique content for category pages only. In this case, it's necessary to prevent the indexation of the product pages (using robots.txt or meta tags) — this means that the product pages will not appear in the SERPs.

ii. *Fix on-site duplication*

On-site duplication is a frequent problem across the pages of online stores. It can be caused by the e-commerce content management system or an illogical website structure.

There are two typical scenarios. First, a product may belong to several categories, e.g. one Samsung TV set could be found in "Home", "TVs", and "Samsung". The CMS may generate different URLs for the very same product depending on the path a user takes in the product catalog. For example:

<http://mystore.com/tv-sets/samsung-un65hu9000-65-inch.html>
<http://mystore.com/samsung/samsung-un65hu9000-65-inch.html>

Second, the CMS could generate a separate URL and page for variations of one product (e.g. size, color or other specifications). This approach wasn't a problem before Google's Panda algorithm update; currently, Google can penalize websites for duplicated product pages across different URLs. For example:

<http://mystore.com/women-hoodies/juicy-couture-velour-hoodie-white.html>
<http://mystore.com/women-hoodies/juicy-couture-velour-hoodie-black.html>

There are several ways to get around on-site duplication:

- a) Master URLs. No matter what path a user takes in the catalogue, the CMS must always return only one URL for a particular product. All product variations should be represented on one page reachable via one URL, so that the user is not redirected to other pages. This approach eliminates content duplication and ensures that your site's Crawl Budget is used wisely.
- b) Canonicalization. This technique does solve the duplicate content problem, but it can have drawbacks in terms of user experience and crawl budget. See Google's Canonicalization guide for detailed info.

STEP 6

Out-of-stock items

Create search-engine-friendly pages for unavailable products



Clearly, there are times when your store runs out of a certain product — or even discontinues an item completely. These two cases should be handled differently.

i. Create smart pages for temporarily unavailable products

If an item is temporarily unavailable, removing the page is not an option. The page should clearly state that the product is out of stock, and provide all the relevant information the visitor may need to make sure they either wait until the item arrives or order an alternative from you.

- a) Include the item's planned arrival date. This will help the visitors decide whether they're ready to wait until the item is available, or if they should look for alternatives.
- b) Offer an opportunity to get a notification when the item arrives. Even if you don't know when the item is going to be available, it's a good idea to give your visitors an option to get notified via email when it's back in stock.
- c) Give visitors a preorder option. If you're positive the item is going to be available soon, let users preorder it. This will assure your customers that when the product is in stock, they will be the first to receive it.
- d) Add a list of similar products. Whenever you can, offer visitors alternative options to make sure they purchase from you and don't go to competitors instead.

ii. Choose how you'll handle permanently discontinued products

If the item is permanently removed from sale, you have several options to deal with its product page.

- a) Return a 404 page. 404 is a natural way to remove pages from the search engine index; the overall rankings of the website will not be affected. Make sure to remove 404 pages from your site's XML sitemap — this will send a strong signal to the search engines that the page should be removed from the index. This approach is suitable for pages that

don't have a lot of backlinks and don't serve as an entrance point to the website. If the page ranks well for some queries though, consider other options.

- b) Create a 301 redirect to a similar item or relevant product category. The redirect will help you save link juice; on the downside, 301 redirects can increase load time and confuse the visitor.
- c) Keep the product page, but state that the item is discontinued and offer an alternative. This way you will preserve the link juice and the page's rankings. However, this option is not recommended if the online store's inventory changes often — you don't want to end up with thousands of ghost products wasting your Crawl Budget.

iii. Be ready for seasonal demand and traffic

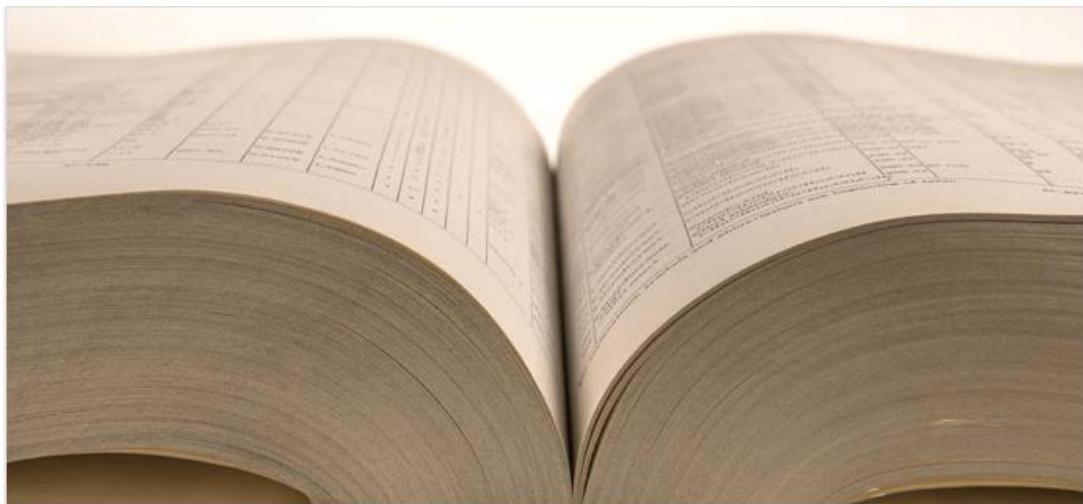
If you are planning to launch a new product, it is wise to get your website prepared in advance so that you will have a well-ranking page by the time the product is in stock. Create a page for the new product. Populate it with images, product descriptions or any other content that might lure the customers. Let the potential customers sign up for a newsletter so that they are notified when the product arrives.

As for seasonal traffic, for example Halloween items, you may keep an annual category at your website like /halloween-products-2016. Once the season is over, you may 301 redirect the old page to a new one /halloween-products-2017, when it becomes necessary. This way you will preserve the backlinks and at the same time the page will look "up-to-date".

STEP 7

Pagination

Use pagination properly to avoid duplication and indexing problems



Pagination is the practice of segmenting a piece of content into multiple pages. On an e-commerce website, pagination can create a series of very similar pages with overlapping content. If the pagination bar on your site only includes a few pages, and each number representing a subsequent page is visible and clickable, this will not usually pose a problem. Here's an example:




 Add to Compare

Bosch - 800 Series 24" Tall Tub Built-In Dishwasher with Stainless-Steel Tub - Stainless Steel
Model: SHXN8U55UC | SKU: 3511708

Hidden electronic touch controls; accommodates up to 16 place settings; 40 dBA operation; 6 wash cycles; 5 wash options; sound-reduction system

★★★★☆ 4.1 (7 Reviews)
[Check Delivery & Availability](#)

PRICE MATCH GUARANTEE
\$1,079.99
ON SALE
SAVE \$120 (Reg. \$1,199.99)

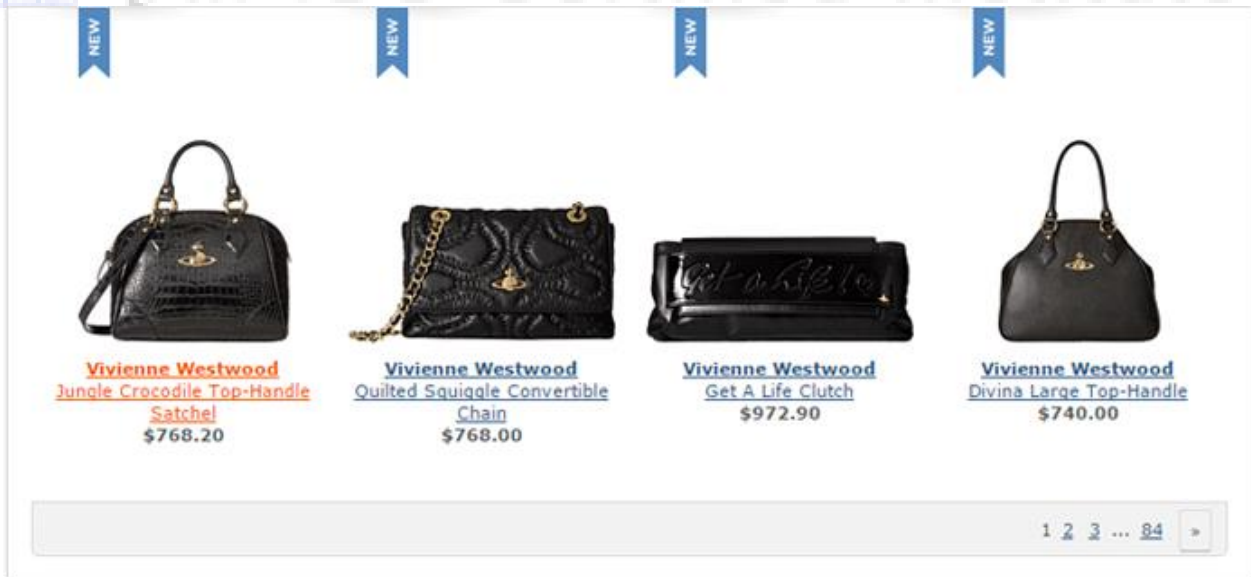
[Add to Cart](#)

- Free Delivery on Orders \$399 and Up
- Dishwasher Installation Sold Separately
- Flexible Financing: See Details


1 - 15 of 47 in Dishwashers

← 1 2 3 4 →

But if the number of pages exceeds a certain amount, the pagination bar will display only a couple of initial pages and a few final pages. The in-between pages won't be linked to from the main page — as a result, they will be crawled by search engines less often.



NEW **NEW** **NEW** **NEW**



Vivienne Westwood
Jungle Crocodile Top-Handle Satchel
\$768.20

Vivienne Westwood
Quilted Squiggle Convertible Chain
\$768.00

Vivienne Westwood
Get A Life Clutch
\$972.90

Vivienne Westwood
Divina Large Top-Handle
\$740.00

1 2 3 ... 84 >

This issue may be addressed in two ways:

- a) Add a View All option. Consider adding a page that contains the products from all pages. In this scenario, each split page should contain the rel="canonical" link pointing to the view all page. See Google's blog post for a detailed how-to.
- b) Add rel="next" and rel="prev" tags. These tags can be used inside the <head> tag of a page to indicate next and previous pages in a series. The first page will only have a rel="next" tag, and the last one — just a rel="prev" tag, while the pages in-between will contain both. These tags give Google a hint to treat the split pages as one. This approach will help you consolidate backlinks, and Google will likely display only the most relevant page (the first one) in SERPs. For more information on rel="next" and rel="prev" , see this post on Google Webmaster blog.

STEP 8

Site Speed

Optimize your pages' load time for better rankings and user experience






Site speed is a factor that has a double effect on e-commerce websites. A slow website is poor user experience; poor user experience often translates into lower sales. Site speed is a ranking factor, too; fast loading pages get an advantage over slower ones in search results.

First, you'll need to test your main landing pages to make sure there are no speed issues. You can do that quickly with WebSite Auditor.

- a) Create or open a WebSite Auditor project for your site.
- b) Go to the Content Analysis module.
- c) Select a page you want to test, enter your keywords, and proceed with the next steps as necessary.

Along with other content and technical info, the software will run a detailed page speed test. See the Page speed (Desktop) section and make sure your page is free from any issues that may be slowing it down.

Page speed (Desktop)	
 Page size	388.5 KB
 Server response time	0.2 sec
 Too many redirects	No
 Uncompressed resources	2
 Uncompressed images	2
 Uncached resources	7
 Unminified resources	4
 Render-blocking JavaScript/CSS	2
 Above-the-fold content prioritized	Yes

Here are the 5 top things that affect page speed and are often ignored by e-commerce sites.

- Eliminate unnecessary redirects.* Very often websites redirect visitors from the non-www version to the www version, and then to the mobile version or a user-friendly URL. Eliminate such intermediate redirects whenever you can safely do that.
- Optimize product images.* E-commerce websites usually have a lot of product images, which make up for the largest share of the traffic payload. Make sure that all the images are optimized and compressed in size. Consider using smaller images with an option to open a large version.



- Enable browser caching. E-commerce website visitors will typically view many pages per session. You do not want them to load the unchanged content again and again, do you?
- Prioritize the load of visible content for pages that have a scroll bar.

- c) Avoid JavaScript that blocks page rendering. It will cause the user's browser to wait for the script to load before loading the page itself.
- d) Leverage AMP technology for the blog and news pages. AMP is a new technology that lets static content pages render faster than ordinary pages.

STEP 9

Mobile

Deliver a great user experience across devices



50% of Google search traffic is mobile. About 60% of consumers use mobile devices to make purchase decisions. If you are promoting an e-commerce website, you can't neglect this huge audience.

Just like site speed, a poor user experience on mobile devices may result in lower sales and negatively influence your rankings.

i. Go mobile if you haven't already

If you haven't taken your site mobile yet, you'll need to start with choosing the right technology. There are three major options: dynamic serving, separate mobile pages, and responsive design.

For e-commerce sites, responsive design is perhaps the best way to go. Here are some benefits of this option:

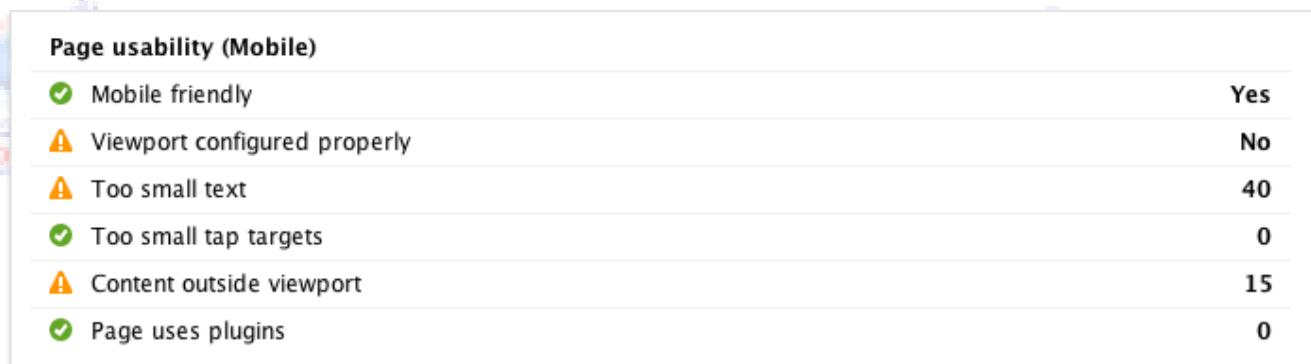
- a) Same URL for mobile and desktop versions of pages. Using a single URL for a piece of content makes it easier for users to interact with, share, and link to that content. Such pages are also easier for search engines to discover and index.
- b) Content presentation is customizable depending on the type of device it is viewed from.
- c) No redirects. Unlike with a separate mobile version of the site, responsive design requires no additional redirects. This makes for a better load time and user experience.

ii. Double-check pages of a mobile site

If you aren't sure if your page is completely mobile friendly, here's a quick way to check that:

- a) Open your WebSite Auditor project.
- b) Go to Content Analysis.
- c) Select the page to analyze against mobile-friendliness, and proceed with the next steps.

Once the analysis is complete, check the Page usability (Mobile) section to see if your page is fully optimized for mobile devices. Go through the factors under this section to see if you can make any improvements for your mobile visitors.



Page usability (Mobile)	
✓ Mobile friendly	Yes
⚠ Viewport configured properly	No
⚠ Too small text	40
✓ Too small tap targets	0
⚠ Content outside viewport	15
✓ Page uses plugins	0

STEP 10

HTTPS

Create a secure site to win customers' (and Google's) trust



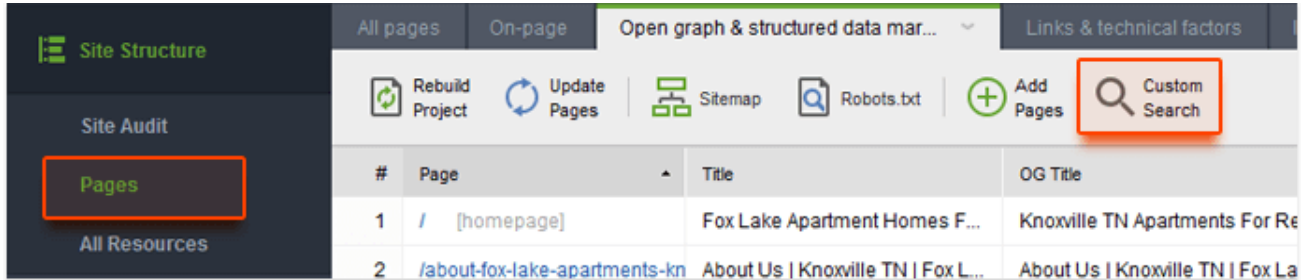
As of 2016, HTTPS does not seem to be a significant ranking factor. At least, most SEOs do not observe any significant positive ranking changes after the transfer to HTTPS. However, switching to HTTPS is critical for e-commerce websites to protect the customers' credit card details and other personal information.

You'll need 2 things to go HTTPS: a dedicated IP and an SSL certificate. To get a dedicated IP, contact your hosting provider. Getting a certificate is no big deal either — there are a lot of SSL certificate providers like Comodo or Geotrust to name a few. Once you've installed the certificate, remember to test whether it's configured correctly with this tool by SSL labs.

There are some common pitfalls to avoid when transferring to HTTPS.

- a) If your website uses a content distribution network, third party scripts and APIs, make sure they support HTTPS. Otherwise, visitors will get errors on page load or notifications that only part of the content is encrypted.
- b) Make sure all internal links point to the HTTPS version of the website. If your web developers use absolute links, you'll definitely have to fix those.
- c) Configure redirects from the HTTP to the HTTPS version properly. Poor redirects are a common issue with HTTPS — especially if only some parts of your website are encrypted.

Poking in the website's source code and looking for non-https links is no fun. However, WebSite Auditor's Custom Search option lets you find all the instances of any piece of content across a website — be it an HTML tag, a script, a plugin, or a piece of text. Custom Search will surely help you switch to HTTPS smoothly. Visit this Custom search how-to article for the detailed instructions.

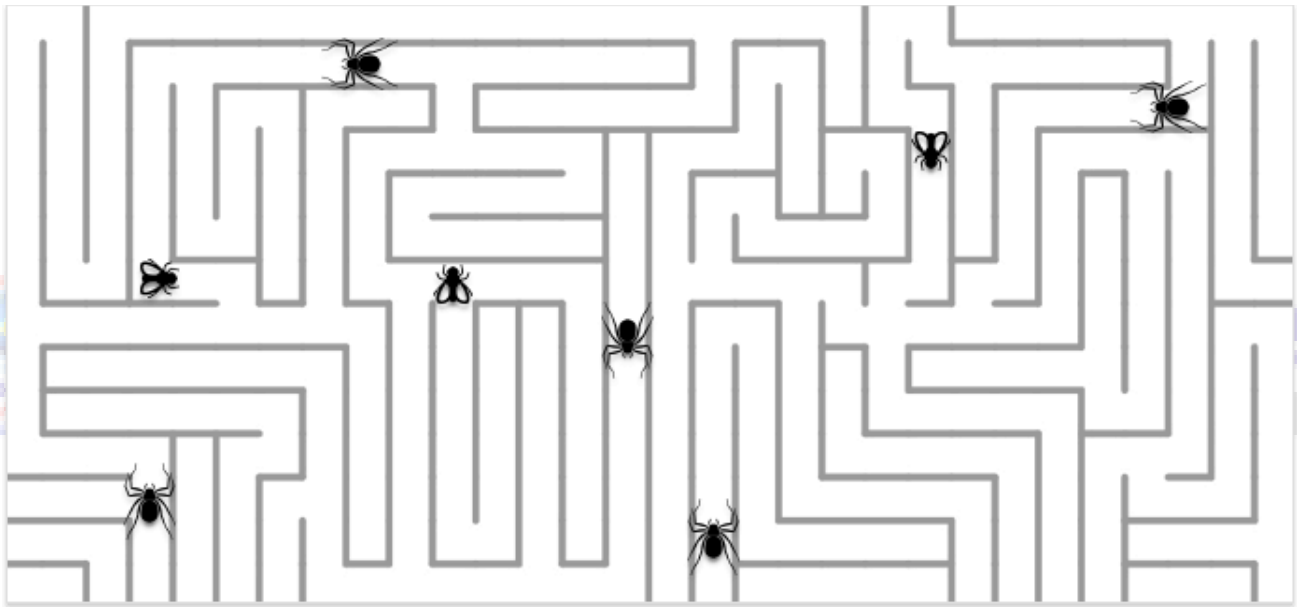


#	Page	Title	OG Title
1	/ [homepage]	Fox Lake Apartment Homes F...	Knoxville TN Apartments For Re
2	/about-fox-lake-apartments-kn	About Us Knoxville TN Fox L...	About Us Knoxville TN Fox La

STEP 11

Crawl Budget

Make sure search engines can crawl pages that matter for SEO



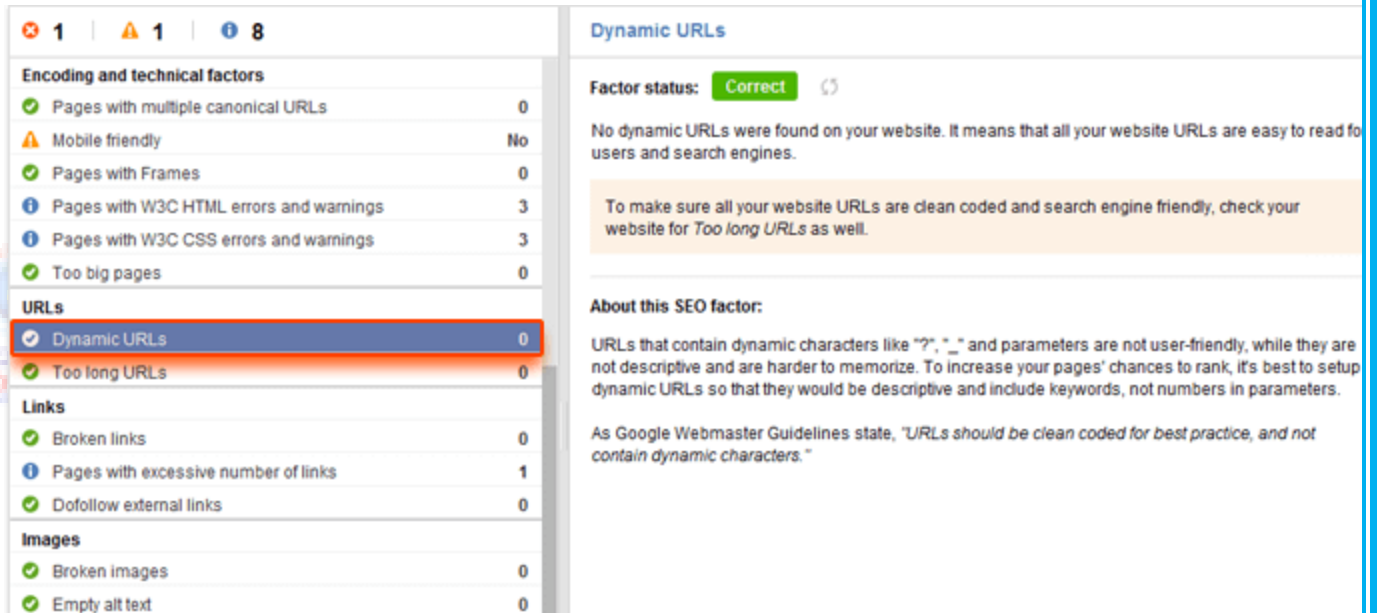
Crawl budget is the number of pages of a website that search engines can crawl per day. The value is different for every site, as crawl budget is closely related to the authority of the website. This metric is especially important for e-commerce websites with large inventories. While you cannot make search engines crawl more pages, you may facilitate their work by removing clutter on their way.

- Get rid of duplicate pages. Sure thing you may deal with duplicate content with `rel="canonical"`, but crawling duplicate content wastes your crawl budget and slows down the discovery of fresh content.
- Prevent indexation of useless (in terms of SEO) content. Privacy policy, terms and conditions, and expired promotions are good candidates for a Disallow rule in robots.txt.
- Avoid long redirect chains. If there's an unreasonable number of 301 redirects in a row on your site, the search spiders will stop following the redirects at some point, and the

destination page may not get crawled. More to that, each redirected URL is probably a waste of a "unit" of your crawl budget.

- d) Manage URL parameters. Your content management system may generate lots of dynamic URLs that in fact lead to one and the same page. It will take a while for the search engines to figure this out. Make sure you let search bots know about the parameters by adding them in your Google Search Console account.
- e) Fix broken links. Hitting broken links wastes your crawl budget — and doesn't take search engine bots anywhere useful.
- f) Keep your XML sitemap up to date, and make sure to register XML sitemaps in Google Search Console.

Website Auditor can check your website for all the issues related to the crawl budget optimization. Simply create a new project and click on Site Audit module left-side menu item.



The screenshot displays the Website Auditor interface. On the left, a sidebar lists various SEO factors with their counts: 1 error, 1 warning, and 8 info items. The 'Dynamic URLs' factor is highlighted in blue. The main content area shows the 'Dynamic URLs' factor status as 'Correct' with a refresh icon. Below this, a message states: 'No dynamic URLs were found on your website. It means that all your website URLs are easy to read for users and search engines.' A yellow callout box advises: 'To make sure all your website URLs are clean coded and search engine friendly, check your website for Too long URLs as well.' The 'About this SEO factor' section explains that dynamic URLs with characters like '?' and '_' are not user-friendly and harder to memorize, and that Google Webmaster Guidelines recommend clean-coded URLs.

Category	Factor	Count
Encoding and technical factors	Pages with multiple canonical URLs	0
	Mobile friendly	No
	Pages with Frames	0
	Pages with W3C HTML errors and warnings	3
	Pages with W3C CSS errors and warnings	3
URLs	Dynamic URLs	0
	Too long URLs	0
Links	Broken links	0
	Pages with excessive number of links	1
	Dofollow external links	0
Images	Broken images	0
	Empty alt text	0

These are the major things to remember when you are optimizing an e-commerce website.