



TECHNICAL & PAID AUDIT TOOLS

We're surprised the word "audit" isn't classified as a dirty word given its negative connotations. But the truth is that marketing companies love this word. We love this word because audits are our way of proving that our marketing efforts are working. There are plenty of tools to perform an audit on the technical aspects of your company like paid ads and SEO. We've compiled some of our favorites that we use to find out how we're performing. Some of these tools require a little learning, but we assure you that you'll benefit from employing them in your current marketing campaign.

WordStream AdWords Account Grader

Requires filling out a lead generation form to access the audit data, and an AdWords account to audit. We would only use it if pitching a new client to take over their AdWords campaign internally. It measures several key metrics like Wasted Spend, Expanded Text Ad Optimization, Quality Score, Click through Rate, Account Activity, Impression Share, Landing Pages, and Best Practices.

HubSpot Website Grader

Great data, but surface level information. Requires more in-depth digging into each data point to bring any value from it.

Google Pagespeed Insights

Similar to the Website Grader. Separate grade for Mobile and Desktop performance. More technical in nature than Website Grader.

SEO Quake (Firefox & Chrome Extension)

- Onsite SEO Audits
- Examine Internal & External Links
- Compare Domains

Ahrefs

Explore domains, keywords, and track the SEO rank of any domain for a list of terms.

Ahrefs Site Audit

VERY detailed analysis of every page on a site from a technical and SEO perspective. It shows specific images on specific pages that are missing ALT Text, which pages have Meta Information that's missing, too long, too short, or just right, which pages have Social Open Graph Tags along with the data those tags are outputting, etc.

Can set up audit schedules to crawl the site on a regular basis. Can also verify site ownership for more advanced settings and faster crawl times.

SEM Rush

Essentially the same as Ahrefs, except for the SEO Content Template Tool. Login required, saved in PW manager.

Plug in a keyword or series of keywords, and it will generate a list of recommendations based on the Top 10 results for those queries. Useful for building out Topic Clusters. Also includes a list of "Semantically Related Words" that should be considered for the Spoke Pages.

SEOPTimizer

A more robust tool. Offers insight into keyword consistency and distribution based on the number of times a word is used on a page, and then looks at if it's included in the Page Title, Meta Descriptions, or Heading Tags. Provides an A-F grade for SEO, Usability, Performance, Social, and Security along with a chart that maps out the scores on a spider web graph. They have a White Label Plan to place our logo on their reports. This could make our D4D Audits super easy and we could charge for them too.

Unbounce Landing Page Analyzer

Detailed report of lead capture landing pages along with tips for improvement. Would work well for Contact Us pages, or existing landing pages we're trying to optimize.

Does require filling out a lead capture form to access the report, though.

The Hoth SEO Audit Tool

Enter a URL along with the keyword it's trying to rank for, and the tool will output recommendations from there for content, URL modifications, image alt text, headlines, and page copy.

Nibbler

Analyzes 5 sample pages from any site and outputs an overall grade, which is an average of several sub-grades for Accessibility, Experience, Marketing, and Technology.

BEST PRACTICES/INDUSTRY AVERAGES

Website Metrics

Bounce Rate

As a rule of thumb, a bounce rate in the range of 25 to 40 percent is excellent. 41 to 55 percent is roughly average. 56 to 70 percent is higher than average, but may not be cause for alarm depending on the website. Anything over 70 percent is disappointing for everything outside of blogs, news, events, etc.

(<http://www.gorocketfuel.com/the-rocket-blog/whats-the-average-bounce-rate-in-google-analytics/>)

High Bounce rates (over 70 percent) aren't necessarily bad. Blog posts, news, events, contact pages with inline thank you messages, all tend to have a high bounce rate because the user does what they're supposed to do and then leaves.

Paid Traffic also tends to have a high bounce rate.

Mobile and Tablet also tend to have a higher bounce rate simply due to the screen size and experience of a site on those devices. However, as mobile becomes more prevalent, we can expect to see mobile bounce rates get better.

Average Session Duration

This metric will show you how engaged users are with the site. While there is no "average" per say, a good target is more than 59 seconds ([The 59 Second Rule](#)). Also, this metric in

Analytics isn't very reliable because it's an average of an average of an average. To get the most accurate data, look into the session duration for each Channel (Organic, Social, Direct, Referral). Those numbers will give a more accurate representation of how long *those* users are spending on the site. Take this a step further by segmenting Channel by specific pages or by specific locations, languages, or devices depending on what you want to report on.

Something to keep in mind is that a Bounce will always return a 0 for average session duration because GA can only calculate the duration between events on the site, mostly these will be page views. *Google can't measure the time a user spent looking at the **last page** of their visit to a site.*

(<http://help.analyticsedge.com/googleanalytics/misunderstood-metrics-time-on-page-session-duration/>) Therefore, the higher the bounce rate on a page, the more inaccurate Average Session Duration will be.

The industry standard is 2-3 minute session duration. Again, this is based on several combined averages, so to get more accurate data, drill down into individual sources.

Average Time on Page

This metric shows how engaged users are with *specific* pages on the site. In this case, if a page has a high Exit Percentage, the Time on Page isn't very reliable. Google can only track time on page by calculating the duration between individual pageviews. Average Time on Page is a good indication of the time users spent looking at a page on your site **if** the page has a low % Exit.

Exit Percentage

This number shows the percentage of users who left the site from a certain page. A high exit percentage is okay on thank you pages, order confirmations, and other logical pages where users should end their journey.

(<http://digitalinsightsworld.com/digital-insights/exit-rate-metric-explained/#gref>). If you notice a high Exit Percentage (the same rules for Bounce Rate also apply for Exit

Percentage) on key pages, then focus on optimizing those pages for fewer drop-offs in the page funnel.

Pages Per Session

Websites are meant to keep users engaged, nurture interest and get them to take the next most logical step for their journey using CTAs, forms, links, or images. The unofficial industry standard is 2 pages per session

(<https://www.spinutech.com/blog/digital-marketing/7-website-analytics-that-matter-most/>)

PPC Metrics

Click-Through Rate (CTR)

The average CTR for AdWords is about 1.91% for all industries.

(<http://www.wordstream.com/average-ctr>)

Conversion Rate (CVR)

The average conversion rate for all industries is 2.7%.

(<http://www.wordstream.com/blog/ws/2016/02/29/google-adwords-industry-benchmarks>)

Cost per Click (CPC)

The average CPC for all industries is \$2.32.

(<http://www.wordstream.com/blog/ws/2016/02/29/google-adwords-industry-benchmarks>)

Cost Per Action (CPA)

The average cost per action for all industries is \$59.18.

(<http://www.wordstream.com/blog/ws/2016/02/29/google-adwords-industry-benchmarks>)

SEO Metrics

- **Page Titles** – this text shows up in the browser tab to indicate the name of the page. No longer than.
 - **Optimal:** 50-59 Characters
 - **Good:** 40-49 Characters
 - **Too Short:** Less than 40 Characters
 - **Too Long:** More than 70 Characters
- **Meta Descriptions** – this is the snippet that shows up in a Google search. While not directly a ranking factor these days, a well-written description here should entice users to click through to the site, which is a direct ranking factor.
 - **Optimal:** 135-159 characters
 - **Good:** 135-159 character
 - **Too Short:** Less than 110 characters
 - **Too Long:** More than 170 characters
- **Heading Tags** – Used in the code (H1 – H6) to denote a hierarchy of content and used by search engines to help index more detail of what a given page is about.
- **Image & Link Alt Text:** These serve dual purposes. First, they're used for accessibility to users with visual impairments using a screen reader. Second, they're used for SEO and should contain both keywords and descriptions of the image or link.
- **Sitemap File** – Is a map for search engines to easily index all pages of the site.
- **Load Time Benchmarks:**
 - **Fast:** Less than 500ms
 - **Medium:** 500-1,000ms
 - **Slow:** 1,000 – 2,000ms
 - **Too Slow:** Longer than 2,000ms
- **File Size Benchmarks:**
 - **Light:** Less than 100 KB
 - **Medium:** 100-500 KB
 - **Too Large:** Greater than 1 MB
- **Accessibility** – Image and Link alt text are the main ones. The text in those tags will display to visually impaired users with a screen reader. It will also display if an image

is broken or disable in the Browser. Also, color palate choice for color blind users (high contrast between text and background, for example), and tap size for mobile users are things to keep in mind.

Variables that can Impact Site Performance

Page Speed

Images, videos, JavaScript and CSS files will all impact the load time of a webpage. Images & videos are the most common culprits for a slow site. Complex scripts that execute on-page animations or behind the scenes data transfer (AJAX) can also have a big impact on site speed.

Bounce Rate

Pages without a clear next step or value proposition to the user will tend to have a higher than average bounce rate. Also, landing pages from emails or PPC campaigns that do not reinforce the message from the source (email or PPC ad) will be a poor user experience, resulting in a higher bounce rate.

Exit Percentage

Some pages on a site are natural "exit" pages where users should logically finish their journey. Pages that are not logical end points that have a high Exit % are areas to focus on if they are part of the conversion funnel. The same tips for reducing bounce rate also apply to lowering the exit rate: adding logical "next step" CTAs, ensuring the page content builds value for the user, the page is easy to navigate and loads quickly.

Time on Page

This metric shows how long a user spent on any given website page. It is an engagement metric to measure how engaged a user is with a page. Low time on page can indicate a few things:

- Poor user experience or confusing interface.
- Short or lacking content.

- Low value on the page and no reason to stick around.

There are some instances where a short time on page is desired, and they're all pages where a user would logically end their journey on a site: thank you pages, order confirmation pages, etc. **Note:** If a given page has a high Exit Percentage, then the Time on Page Metric is not reliable.

Average Session Duration

This is the total length of a user's visit across all pages. It's another engagement metric to measure how engaged a user is with the site as a whole. Poor user experience, slow load times, no logical "next step" are all elements that can impact Average Session Duration.

Note: The higher the bounce rate, the less reliable the Average Session Duration becomes.

Pages per Visit

The total number of pages a user visited on a site. Another engagement metric. The same variables that can impact the other metrics also apply here.

Visits

The total number of visits to a website over a given time frame. There is no industry standard or benchmark because every website is different and serves a different purpose. There are still several things that will have an impact on the amount of traffic a site receives:

Age of the Site — Generally speaking, older sites will get more traffic than new sites because they've been around longer and search engines know about them.

Size of the Site — The more pages a site has, the more likely it is that the site will see more traffic, specifically from Organic Sources.

Paid Efforts — If a site is doing any online advertising (Facebook, AdWords, Bing, and Display) they'll have more Paid Traffic. The amount of paid traffic is directly affected by the amount spent and the quality of the ads.

Traditional Marketing — A business with radio, television, outdoor, or direct mail campaigns will also see an increase of traffic from Direct Sources as a result.

Size of The Business (Revenue & Number of Employees) — Generally speaking, the larger a business is the more traffic their site should be receiving each month.