Perform an SEO Audit for Your Website

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Search engines such as Google and Bing continue to evolve search algorithms at a frenetic pace. Your website should be able to adapt to these changes in order to maintain and improve its search rankings. A periodic site analysis or SEO audit can help you determine whether your site is appropriately optimized for search. Here are a few key steps that should be a part of your website SEO audit.

ACCESSIBILITY

The first step should be to ensure that the search engine crawlers or bots are able to access your website easily. It is not very uncommon that a website may get hidden from the bots, and it is very simple to check this point. Just type in the full website address followed by: /robots.txt. If you find that your site developer has disallowed any bots, files or folders, you can give them the necessary permission. Ideally, the only section that should be hidden from search engine bots is your private admin section.

VERIFICATION

It is important to verify your website with Google. First, check if the website has a sitemap to enable the web crawlers to locate your web pages easily. If not, you should build a sitemap page or use a plugin. Once this is done, you should submit the site to Google using the Google Webmaster Tools. Google will require you to add a meta-tag to the home page of your website into the HTML coding. This will enable the search engine to identify any errors or problems that could be having an adverse impact on your site's performance. It will also register your online presence with Google.

INBOUND LINKS

Inbound links to your website are important factors that help Google and Bing determine the search rankings for your site. To make a simple review of your current search rankings, type a few popular localized keywords that people may be using to search for a dermatology practice in your area. If you do not find your site among the top search results on Google's first page, you should work on link building. High quality inbound links are one of the most effective ways to improve your site's search rankings.

Engage with key industry influencers to boost inbound links to your website. Build an effective social media strategy to increase the visibility of your site. Write guest columns or blogs for eminent online publications. However, make sure that you do not generate dubious links to your website. If during your site audit, you find such links, remove them because they may be hurting your site rankings.

CONTENT AND SEO

Content has become the backbone of SEO over the last few years, with rapid improvisations in the search engine algorithms. It is important to create substantive, original, and relevant content. Make a detailed review of your existing content to determine whether it is entirely original and current. Wherever updating is required or changes are required in the content, these should be identified as a part of a comprehensive content audit.

From an SEO audit point of view, check the URLs of your website's various pages. They should be relevant to the subject of the web page, and should have words instead of numbers. Titles and Descriptions of each page should contain relevant localized keywords and should correctly represent the actual content of the page.

SITE DESIGN

During the site audit, it is important to evaluate whether the original site design still continues to serve the purpose effectively. Most sites will add web pages, sections, and various forms of content over time. Enhancements to site design may be necessary to accommodate such changes in order to ensure a seamless navigational experience for the visitors.

Ideally, the visitors should be able to move to their desired location from any web page. If the web design needs to be updated, it should be done with an aim to improving reader experience, providing better aesthetics and achieving better search engine optimization.

IMAGES, VIDEOS, AND GRAPHICS

The website audit should include an assessment of the quality and relevance of images, videos and graphics that may be a part of the site. A single web page should preferably not include several images or videos, which can clutter the page and reduce the download speed.

Relevant keywords and text should be included separately and not as a part of the image because the web crawlers will not be able to read it. Care should be taken remove outdated images, videos, and graphics, which contain stale information, or appropriate replacements should be made to keep the site fresh and relevant.

MOBILE COMPATIBILITY

There has been a phenomenal growth in the number of people using mobile phones to view websites. The site audit should consider the important question of whether the existing website is compatible with mobile devices. A responsive web design can provide an equally efficient website experience for mobile and other users. It is also possible to make changes to the current website to make it more mobile friendly.

TRACKING ONLINE TRENDS

The SEO audit exercise should also include a review of other websites within the dermatology space, and what kind of web design, content, and presentation trends they are following. It is always a good idea to learn from what another website may be doing right. If some of the local competitor websites rank higher in search results for the same keywords, it is important to analyze the causes and take corrective measures as a part of the site audit. ■

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