



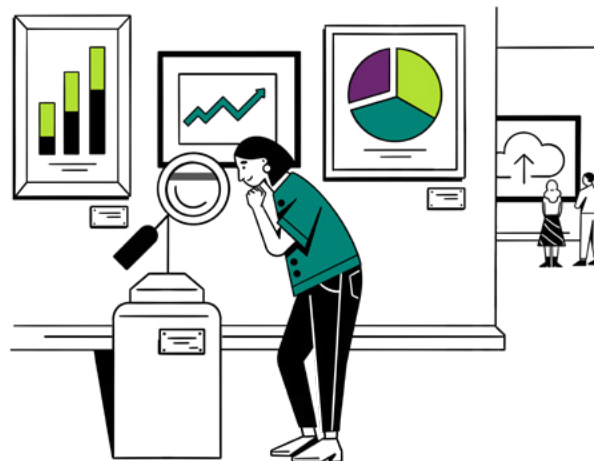
How to increase organic traffic with technical SEO:

11 strategies

Introduction

What is technical SEO?

Technical SEO refers to any technical website optimizations that make it easier for search engines to crawl, index, and render your site more effectively. Technical SEO optimizations help improve your organic rankings. Implementing technical SEO optimizations on your website occurs on the back-end but has a tremendous impact on user experience and website performance. Where your content shines at center stage, technical SEO is all about the critical behind-the-scenes structural elements that define your website's health and performance. This includes things like website architecture, page speed and size, structured data, schema, and more.



Technical SEO Fundamentals

Before diving into our technical SEO hacks, let's start with the technical SEO fundamentals you need to know.

Why is technical SEO important?

If your technical SEO isn't implemented properly, your website will never rank high on SERPS—no matter how valuable your content is because poor technical site health most often equates to a poor user experience. This is why technical SEO should be a critical part of your website's foundation. Without the right foundation, your content can't be found, crawled, or indexed by search engines and your users won't find it valuable. Your technical SEO doesn't have to be perfect to rank, but the more you prioritize these technical elements, the easier you make it for search engines to access your content, increasing your chance to rank and drive organic traffic to your website.

While technical SEO focuses on making it easier for search engines to crawl your site, a technically-sound website also provides a better UX for your visitors, leading to increased traffic, more time spent on your website, and increased conversion rates.

Prioritizing and monitoring technical SEO also prevents critical website issues from impacting your bottom line. Nearly **44% of enterprise organizations reported over three high-impact SEO incidents** on the most important pages on their site in the last year, according to a recent study from ContentKing. The study found that 35% of these critical SEO incidents went unresolved for at least four weeks, and 79% of respondents reported an incident as costing more than \$10K in revenue.

Making technical SEO a top priority—and monitoring the technical performance of your site in real-time—is the only way to consistently rank high in SERPs. It allows you to identify and resolve major site issues **before** revenue is impacted and provide the best possible UX for your customers.

What's the difference between on-page SEO, off-page SEO, and technical SEO?

Search engine optimization (SEO) is often grouped into three core buckets: on-page SEO, off-page SEO, and technical SEO. Here's a quick breakdown of the differences between these groups.



On-Page SEO

On-page SEO, or on-site SEO, refers to optimizing the different parts of your website that you have control over (which includes technical SEO, but more on that below) to more clearly tell search engines and users what your pages are about. It's called on-page SEO because it's visible on the front end of your site. Think: URL structure, keyword usage, anchor text, and heading formatting.



Off-Page SEO

Off-page SEO, or off-site SEO, refers to anything outside of your website used to impact your rankings in SERPs. Primarily this focuses on backlinks but also includes things like your connected social media pages and Google My Business listings. The quality and quantity of backlinks to your website boost a page's PageRank.



Technical SEO

And then there's technical SEO. Although grouped separately, it's easier to think of technical SEO as a subset of on-page SEO. On-page SEO focuses on the more visible elements, but it should start with technical improvements on the back-end. The primary differences between the two are that technical SEO focuses on the back-end elements of your site and it often requires more web development support and/or a CMS with an interface that anyone can update to implement correctly.

How technical is technical SEO?

Technical SEO doesn't require in-depth programming knowledge, however, there are some aspects that require the support of your web development team. Proper alignment between your SEO and web development teams on technical SEO priorities is key to ensuring optimizations are actioned correctly and completed in a timely manner. Also, consider using an SEO platform to make identifying and implementing technical fixes easier. The following guide provides the core technical SEO expertise you need to get started—with more resources coming soon.

11 technical SEO strategies to increase organic traffic

Consider this your in-depth guide on 11 key technical SEO strategies to improve your page 1 rankings and increase organic traffic.

Site structure & navigation best practices

The first step of any technical SEO initiative should start with your site structure and navigation. Why? A key source for a variety of crawling and indexing issues is a poorly-designed site structure, and your overall site structure influences all of the other optimizations you plan to make. Translation: A strong site structure and navigation makes your other technical SEO strategies much easier to implement. Let's dive in.

01. Optimize your XML sitemap and implement monthly sitemap audits.

Yes, Google still needs an XML sitemap to find your site's URLs. Back in 2019, Google confirmed that XML sitemaps are still an important source for finding URLs. [Search Engine Land](#) also reiterated that you can't trust search engine bots to find all of your URLs. Create a clean and optimized sitemap using [ContentKing in Conductor](#), and then implement monthly sitemap audits to ensure your new pages are getting indexed.

Monitor the status of your sitemap(s) at a more frequent rate with ContentKing's Sitemap Monitoring functionality to boost efficiency, save time, and identify issues sooner. ContentKing audits all of your XML sitemaps and sitemap indexes every hour, showing you key data points, including how many minutes ago each sitemap was checked.

As a part of your audits, ContentKing's Changelog provides a full stateful index on every optimization made at the page level and tracks how issues have changed over time across any date range. That way you can track the impact of the optimizations recommended throughout this guide against overall site performance.

02. Optimize your site architecture.

Your site structure, or your website's information architecture, is what helps search engine bots understand the most essential content on your site. Related pages should be grouped together via subdomains to help bots understand the relationship between your pages.

Additional optimization strategies to implement:

Address hierarchy issues within your site structure. Your overall structure should be shaped by the importance of individual pages. When optimizing, make sure the most important pages for your business are at the top of the hierarchy with the greatest number of relevant, internal links. This should increase the amount this page is crawled.

Easily identify how many internal links there are on any given page to see if changes are needed with [Conductor's Chrome Extension](#). Robots.txt directives can be set via ContentKing's Sitemap Monitoring to point bots to your XML sitemap as well, so the real-time monitoring and alerting you've set up will instantly catch any issues related to their ability to understand your site structure. ContentKing's four different canonical reports also detect the moment authority is not being passed correctly across your site structure so you can resolve **before** rankings are impacted.

Implement a standard URL structure (if you haven't already). Your URLs should follow a consistent, logical structure to help users and bots understand where they are on your site. Whether you use subdomains or subdirectories is up to you, but providing clear categories within the URL, and standardizing across your site, helps give Google added context about each page in that category. This enables Google to add sitelinks to your website's listing in search results, improving the UX and providing direct access to specific areas on your site.

Add breadcrumb menus for improved navigation. Breadcrumbs are the trail that guides users back to the start of their journey on your site. It's a menu of pages that tell users (and bots) how their current page relates to the rest of the site. Breadcrumbs should be visible to users so they can access for navigation purposes and should have structured markup language to give the necessary context to bots crawling your site.

Crawling & indexing strategies

These SEO techniques are focused on making it as easy as possible for search engines to find and index your entire site, or at least everything you want them to find and index. Increasing the crawlability and indexability of your site increases your chances of winning at specific SERP Result Types and improves the rankings of your current pages, which boosts organic traffic.

03. Maximize your crawl budget.

Your crawl budget refers to how many pages are crawled by search engines in a set period of time. For smaller sites, this isn't a major concern. For larger sites, maximizing your crawl budget is key as search engines only crawl your site for a set timeframe, so you want to provide them with the most efficient and issue-free pages.

Track the real-time activity of search engine bots on your website to understand where and how to improve indexability with [ContentKing's Log File Analysis](#). This can help you find crawl budget waste and eliminate it.

Two effective strategies to make the most of your budget:

Use pagination. Pagination is like numbering the pages on a paper. It uses code to tell search engines when pages with distinct URLs are related to each other. Pagination can improve a site's usability and loading speed.

Canonicalize duplicate pages. Canonical tags are tags in the HTML of your page that help search engines understand which page should be shown in its index. These tags do this by indicating which URL is the preferred version of a page you want a search engine to show to people in search results. You should use canonical tags to help avoid duplicate content issues or to help prevent search engines from indexing pages that have very similar content to other pages.

Canonical tags are one of the most helpful tools to control duplicate content, and it's a best practice to have a canonical tag on every single page (either self-referencing or pointing to your preferred page). Just keep in mind that Google can technically ignore your canonical tags. They are hints you give search engines—not directives.

Identify issues with your canonical tags using ContentKing. Analyze which of your pages search engines are likely considering duplicates with ContentKing's issues report. Based on the duplication identified by the report, you can consider either re-optimizing the content for unique keywords or using a canonical tag to reference another similar page. These solutions will help mitigate duplicate content and increase your keyword ranking potential and SEO authority.

04. Implement 24/7 auditing and monitor your site in real-time.

One of the biggest challenges for SEOs is how long it can take to become aware of an SEO issue on your site. Over one-third of critical SEO incidents went unresolved for **at least four weeks**, according to respondents to ContentKing's recent survey. The negative impact this can have not only on your rankings but also on your bottom line can be disastrous. This is why implementing 24/7 auditing to monitor your site in real-time should be a top priority.

ContentKing is the only real-time SEO auditing and monitoring platform designed to help you keep track of everything happening on your site—as it happens—so you can tackle SEO issues **before** your rankings are impacted. Utilize ContentKing's functionality to:

Identify and fix all HTTP errors. HTTP errors block bots (and anyone else) from accessing important pages on your site. Familiarize yourself with **all HTTP response status codes**, and what they mean so you know which ones require immediate action.

Set up issue alerts in real-time to resolve issues before the next crawl. **ContentKing's real-time alerting** provides near-instant alerts as issues are identified so you can respond quickly before the next crawl. With ContentKing's smart algorithms that automatically prioritize the most important pages to monitor and the option to integrate analytics data for traffic-based prioritization, your team can focus on what's most important to them. Collaborate and move faster without needing to wait for a crawl or implement an SEO audit to let you know when issues arise. And, as an added layer of protection, ContentKing's Custom Crawl Configurations provide SEOs with the flexibility needed to customize and tailor your crawls while also automatically adjusting the crawling speed based on time of day to align with your business and maintain site performance.

05. Optimize your structured data.

By definition, structured data refers to data that resides in a fixed field within a file or record. **In an SEO context, structured data refers to the markup on a page that provides additional details around the content on that page.** Effective implementation of structured data is known to lead to higher CTRs, search visibility, faster indexing, and more by helping search bots better understand the information on your website.

Making sure you're [correctly implementing schema](#) is essential to boosting your organic results and, in turn, your organic traffic. Optimizing your structured data can increase your odds of winning when it comes to Rich Snippets and different SERP Result Types. Because Rich Snippets and Result Types appear at the top of page 1 in Google, winning one or more of these results drastically improves the organic CTR for the featured page.

Audit your structured data types using **ContentKing in Conductor** to identify opportunities where optimization is needed and get visibility into the schema markup across your entire site.

06. Implement hreflang tags if you target international audiences.

Hreflang tags are just one component of an [effective international SEO strategy](#). Still, they are the best solution for when you have multiple versions of a page that target different languages or countries and you want to avoid cannibalization.

When correctly implemented, hreflang tags tell search engines to recognize different versions of a page as “alternates,” meaning they will be swapped out depending on where the searcher is located. Proper implementation of hreflang is challenging, but it improves UX considerably; visitors to your site will now only see relevant content and currencies. And most importantly, your hard-earned ranks will be less likely to be affected by cannibalization.

ContentKing is the only technology that offers 24/7, real-time hreflang monitoring. It also prioritizes auditing the international pages that matter most, intelligently focusing on pages that drive the most authority and traffic to your site. It crawls those pages most frequently to make sure nothing stands in the way of your content's success.

Content-focused strategies

Like we mentioned, technical SEO is best thought of as a subset of on-page SEO. While it does focus primarily on back-end elements, there are technical content-focused SEO strategies you can implement to increase organic traffic. Here's what we recommend.

07. Identify and address thin or duplicate content pages.

We already covered the effectiveness of using canonical tags to resolve duplicate pages in the Crawling & indexing strategies section, but you should also be analyzing your site to ensure the content is unique. Measure if a keyword ends up ranking for more than 1 page on the site so you can easily see where duplicate content may be occurring (and avoid cannibalization) with Conductor's [Keyword Performance](#). Set up noindex tags for less important pages with duplicate content that don't need to be indexed but also don't necessitate net new content creation.

Thin content—pages with very little or relatively no content—is also an issue to stay on top of. It's not usually a large issue for most sites, but even a small amount of pages with thin content can hurt your overall site's rankings, so it's worth finding and fixing. The goal should always be to include enough valuable content on a given page, so it's not dinged by search engines as too thin. Measure page performance and identify thin (or duplicate) content using Conductor's Page Groupings and then implement a strategy to expand the content on that page.

08. Optimize your headings, titles, descriptions, and image alt text.

There's a reason optimizing everything from your headings to meta descriptions and image alt text is a key SEO technique and overall best practice. An enticing title tag and meta description can improve your organic CTR as it attracts users to click on your content in SERPs. Adding image alt text to all of the images on your site helps improve accessibility for blind or low vision users and also provides helpful context for bots that otherwise would have no way of understanding what the image includes. Including image alt text on images within your content provides greater relevance to search engines about your content, which can lead to increased rankings and higher organic traffic.

Another thing to keep in mind is that Google now rewrites title tags with no warning. Over 58% of the title tags tracked in Moz's 2021 study were [rewritten by Google](#). Length, keyword-stuffed, and “boilerplate” language are the primary elements that dictate whether your tag gets rewritten, so following character count best practices and focusing on providing value are your best strategies.

Easily uncover [meta tag optimization opportunities](#) and optimize content health by downloading Conductor's free Chrome Extension. Find out if any of your pages are missing H1 tags, whether your title tag is too long, or if your meta description needs improvement directly in your browser with Conductor for Chrome. Track and measure the impact of changes to titles, meta descriptions, H1s, and more in [Conductor's Content Activity Reporting](#) to identify which changes led to increased traffic so you can implement similar updates across other pages. Additionally, learn how to optimize your content to ensure it's successful within your sitemap and site structure, based on a variety of Health Check factors, including canonical, H1s, hreflang, HTTPS, image alt text, URL, and more with [Conductor's Content Guidance](#).



Page speed & performance strategies

Improving your page speed and page performance are two of the only technical SEO strategies that directly impact your site's rankings, as these are key ranking signal factors for Google following the page experience and [Core Web Vitals algorithm updates](#). A fast-loading site won't guarantee you a top spot on page 1 of SERPs, but it will help you climb the ranks and have a significant impact on your organic traffic.

09. Reduce page size by compressing your files.

Page size is the factor that impacts overall page speed the most, and images are one of the largest contributors to page size, thus increasing overall page speed. Unminified, uncached, and uncompressed JavaScript and CSS files are also significant contributors to page size. Reducing the size of these files results in faster loading times, improved UX, and improved Core Web Vitals scores.

Compress your image, JavaScript, and CSS files where possible, so they take up less space (reducing the overall page size) and load faster. The important thing to prioritize when compressing images specifically is image quality. Getting your image file size down is paramount, but you don't want to provide hyper pixelated images on your site. Balancing the two is critical. Add custom Annotations in Conductor to pages where images have been compressed to measure traffic changes and see the impact this technical SEO strategy has.

10. Minimize 3rd party scripts and plugins.

Each 3rd party script that a page has adds an average of 34ms to the Largest Contentful Paint (LCP)—one of the [Core Web Vitals for Google](#). Some of these scripts you need, but look to see if there are any you can eliminate to improve overall page speed. You can minify CSS, HTML, and JavaScript files by:

- **Removing white spaces, line breaks, and comments**
- **Removing unused CSS and deferring the loading of non-critical JS**
- **Using caching plugins to eliminate render-blocking CSS**
- **Adding new UI elements below the fold**

A high number of plugins can also slow down your site and make it more susceptible to hackers who can harm your website's authority and rankings. Make sure to keep plugins updated and use only the ones you need.

11. Use async loading.

Speaking of scripts, they are usually placed in the <head> of a website where they get prioritized over the content on the rest of the page. Using asynchronous (async) loading means the server can process the HTML and script at the same time, decreasing the delay and improving page load time. Measure a page's speed across desktop and mobile directly in your browser with [Conductor for Chrome](#) and easily check in on any page's performance across your site.

The only technical SEO checklist you need

Now that you have the technical SEO strategies to help increase organic traffic to your site, it's time to share the knowledge with your team and have an easy way to keep track of your go-to technical SEO hit list.

[Download the checklist below](#) and share it with your team. Print it, add it to your shared team resources, or tape it to your desk for easy access to winning technical SEO strategies.

The Technical SEO Checklist

Consider this your go-to technical SEO hit list with the related Conductor features to use when implementing.

Site structure & navigation

- ☐ Optimize your XML sitemap and implement monthly sitemap audits.
- ☐ Optimize your site architecture.
- ☐ Address hierarchy issues within your site structure.
- ☐ Implement a standard URL structure.
- ☐ Add breadcrumb menus for improved navigation.

Crawling & indexing

- ☐ Maximize your crawl budget.
- ☐ Use pagination.
- ☐ Canonicalize duplicate pages.
- ☐ Implement 24/7 auditing and monitor your site in real-time.
- ☐ Identify and fix all HTTP errors.
- ☐ Set up issue alerts in real-time to resolve issues before the next crawl.
- ☐ Optimize your structured data.
- ☐ Implement hreflang tags (*if you target international audiences).

Content

- ☐ Identify and address thin or duplicate content pages.
- ☐ Optimize your headings, titles, descriptions, and image alt text.

Page speed & performance

- ☐ Reduce page size by compressing files (images, JavaScript, CSS).
- ☐ Minimize 3rd party scripts and plugins.
- ☐ Use async loading.



Site structure & navigation tools

Conductor for Chrome

ContentKing's:

- Canonical Reporting
- Sitemap Monitoring
- Changelog

Crawling & indexing tools

ContentKing's:

- Custom Crawl Configurations
- Real-Time Alerting
- Log File Analysis
- Smart Algorithms
- Real-Time Hreflang Monitoring

Content tools:

Conductor for Chrome

Conductor's:

- Keyword Performance
- Page Groupings
- Content Activity Reporting
- Content Guidance

Page speed & performance tools:

Conductor's Annotations

Conductor for Chrome

It's time to get technical

That's a wrap on the top 11 technical SEO strategies we recommend to boost organic traffic. Now, it's time for you to take these insights back to your team and implement them across your site.

[Schedule a free demo](#) with Conductor's top SEO and organic marketing experts for a detailed rundown on why it's the best enterprise platform for technical SEO on the market.