MetisGEO

GEO audit checklist

A working checklist for a generative engine optimization (GEO) audit. Tick each statement only when you have checked it, and note the evidence. Provider facts were taken from each provider's own documentation on 27 November 2026; recheck them before relying on them, because these features change often.

How to use it. Work through the sections in order: access problems make later checks meaningless. Record findings in the MetisGEO visibility baseline worksheet and report them with the GEO reporting template. This checklist does not predict or guarantee rankings, citations or traffic.

1. Access and crawling

	CHECK	HOW TO CHECK
☐	**robots.txt loads and parses without errors.**	Open /robots.txt in a browser. In Search Console, the robots.txt report shows fetch status and parsing errors (domain properties only).
☐	**Each search crawler you want is allowed: Googlebot, Bingbot, OAI-SearchBot, PerplexityBot, Claude-SearchBot.**	Read each user-agent group in robots.txt. OpenAI says sites opted out of OAI-SearchBot are not shown in ChatGPT search answers.
☐	**Training crawlers and tokens match a written decision: GPTBot, ClaudeBot, Google-Extended, Bing ai-training.**	Compare robots.txt and page meta tags with your decision record. These are separate from search crawlers in each provider's documentation.
☐	**The CDN, firewall or bot-protection layer does not block crawlers that robots.txt allows.**	Review bot rules with your host. OpenAI's help center says the host or CDN must allow its published OAI-SearchBot IP addresses.
☐	**Priority pages return a 200 status without a login, interstitial or geo-block.**	Run a URL Inspection live test in Search Console and check the Crawl allowed field.
☐	**You know which user-triggered fetchers may ignore robots.txt.**	OpenAI says robots.txt may not apply to ChatGPT-User; Perplexity says Perplexity-User generally ignores it. Check server logs for both.

2. Indexing and canonicals

☐	**Every priority page is indexed.**	URL Inspection should report "URL is on Google". Google says that means eligible to appear, not guaranteed to.
☐	**No priority page carries an unintended noindex.**	Check the robots meta tag and X-Robots-Tag header. Google says noindex also removes a page from Search generative AI features.
☐	**The Google-selected canonical matches the user-declared canonical.**	Compare both fields in URL Inspection for each template type.
☐	**Canonical signals agree with each other.**	Redirect targets, rel="canonical" and sitemap URLs should name the same preferred URL.
☐	**XML sitemaps list only canonical, indexable URLs.**	Sample 20 sitemap URLs and check status, canonical and robots directives.
☐	**Snippet controls are deliberate: nosnippet, max-snippet, data-nosnippet.**	Google says nosnippet and max-snippet can prevent content being used as a direct input for AI Overviews and AI Mode.
☐	**The Search Console Search generative AI setting is the one you intend.**	Settings > Search generative AI. Excluding a site removes its links and content from those features.
☐	**Any Bing page-level ai-grounding value is deliberate.**	Search templates for ai-grounding:disallow or disallowextended in meta tags or headers (announced by Microsoft on 30 October 2026).

3. Content and evidence quality

☐	**Each priority page states its main answer or offer near the top.**	Read the first paragraph only. Can a new reader say what the page is for?
☐	**Factual claims link to a primary source and carry a date where they can change.**	Highlight every number, price and platform claim on a sample of pages.
☐	**Published and updated dates are visible and accurate.**	Compare visible dates with the CMS revision history.
☐	**The author or responsible organization is identified.**	Check bylines, author pages and the about page for each content type.
☐	**Pages offer original information, not a rewrite of common sources.**	Google's AI optimization guidance asks for original content written from what you know about the topic.
☐	**Main content is present in the rendered HTML a crawler receives.**	Use the URL Inspection live test to view the rendered page; follow Google's JavaScript SEO basics.
☐	**Near-duplicate pages are merged or clearly differentiated.**	List pages that target the same question and pick one owner page each.

4. Business and entity information

☐	**Business name, address, phone and hours match everywhere you publish them.**	Compare the website, your Google Business Profile and the directories where you are listed.
☐	**Organization structured data sits on the home or about page.**	Google says it is optional and helps Google understand administrative details. Validate name, url, logo and sameAs.
☐	**sameAs links point to official profiles you control.**	Open each sameAs URL and confirm ownership.
☐	**Your ChatGPT business listing is claimed and reviewed, if your business type is eligible.**	OpenAI's Business Hub verifies by phone, email, DNS TXT record or Shopify store, then identity checks.
☐	**Product data in Merchant Center or any product feed is current.**	Spot-check prices and availability against the live site.

5. Native reports

☐	**Search Console generative AI performance report reviewed.**	Impressions count when links to your site are shown in a generative AI feature on Google Search (AI Overviews and AI Mode). The 1,000-row limit applies.
☐	**Bing Webmaster Tools AI Performance report reviewed and exported.**	Total citations, cited pages and grounding queries. Microsoft says the data is a sample and exports are CSV or Excel.
☐	**ChatGPT Business Hub insights recorded, if a listing is claimed.**	Mentions, website clicks and discovery topics cover the past 28 days. Blank values do not necessarily mean zero.
☐	**Each metric is recorded under the provider's own name and definition.**	Copy the definition and help URL into the worksheet's Native reports sheet.

6. Sampled visibility

☐	**A fixed question set is written before any answers are collected.**	Each question maps to a business question and a priority.
☐	**Every observation records date, surface, location, device and logged-in state.**	Answers vary by these conditions, so an unlabeled observation cannot be compared.
☐	**Brand mentions and linked citations are counted separately.**	A mention without a link to your site is not a citation of your site.

☐	**Failed or refused requests are logged, not dropped.**	Report the denominator: questions asked, answers received, answers excluded.
☐	**Sampled counts are never added to provider-reported metrics.**	Keep them in separate report sections with separate labels.

7. Measurement setup

☐	**A baseline date and change log exist before work starts.**	Every shipped change gets a date, URL list and owner.
☐	**Analytics shows which AI assistant referrals you can and cannot identify.**	Review referral sources for the last 90 days and note gaps.
☐	**Conversion events tied to business goals are defined and firing.**	Test each form and key action once and confirm it records.
☐	**A report owner, cadence and audience are agreed.**	Name who reads the report and which decision it supports.

Audit record

Website and property audited	
Audited by	
Dates of the audit	
Access used (for example, Search Console user access)	
Items not checked, and why	
Top three findings	

Sources

Google Search Central: AI features and your website; Control how your content is used for generative AI at Google; Optimizing your website for generative AI features on Google Search; How the Google-Extended product token works; Organization structured data; How to specify a canonical URL.

Search Console Help: Generative AI performance report; Search generative AI control; URL Inspection tool; robots.txt report.

Bing Webmaster Tools Help: AI Performance in Bing Webmaster Tools. Bing blog: Your content, your choice (30 October 2026).

OpenAI: Overview of OpenAI crawlers; Searching the web with ChatGPT; Setting up your business on ChatGPT.

Perplexity: Perplexity crawlers. Anthropic: Does Anthropic crawl data from the web.

All sources accessed 27 November 2026. Links to each source are on the checklist's page at metisgeo.com/resources/geo-audit-checklist/.