



Technical SEO Checklist

How to Optimize a WordPress Site for Search Engine Crawlers

By @PamAnnMarketing

For #WCUS 2019

Agenda

- Why SEO is Important
- Why Technical SEO is Especially Important
- My Condensed Technical SEO Checklist, which includes my Favorite SEO Plugins, Resources, and Tools
- Download Link for The (Non-Condensed) Ultimate 50-Point Technical SEO Audit Template



Why SEO is Important

Search engines, unlike any other digital marketing channel, bring "high-intent-to-buy" users to your website.

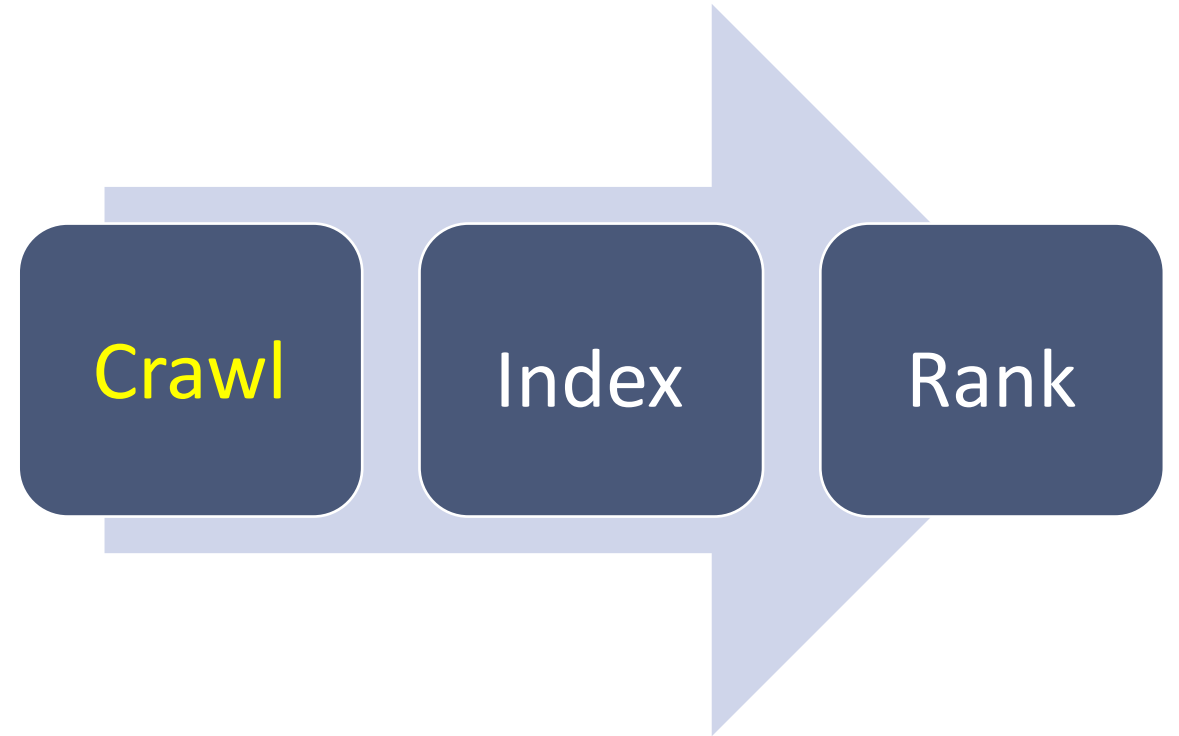
These users are **specifically searching for your company's products or services**, because they want or need them now or soon!



Why Technical SEO is SUPER Important

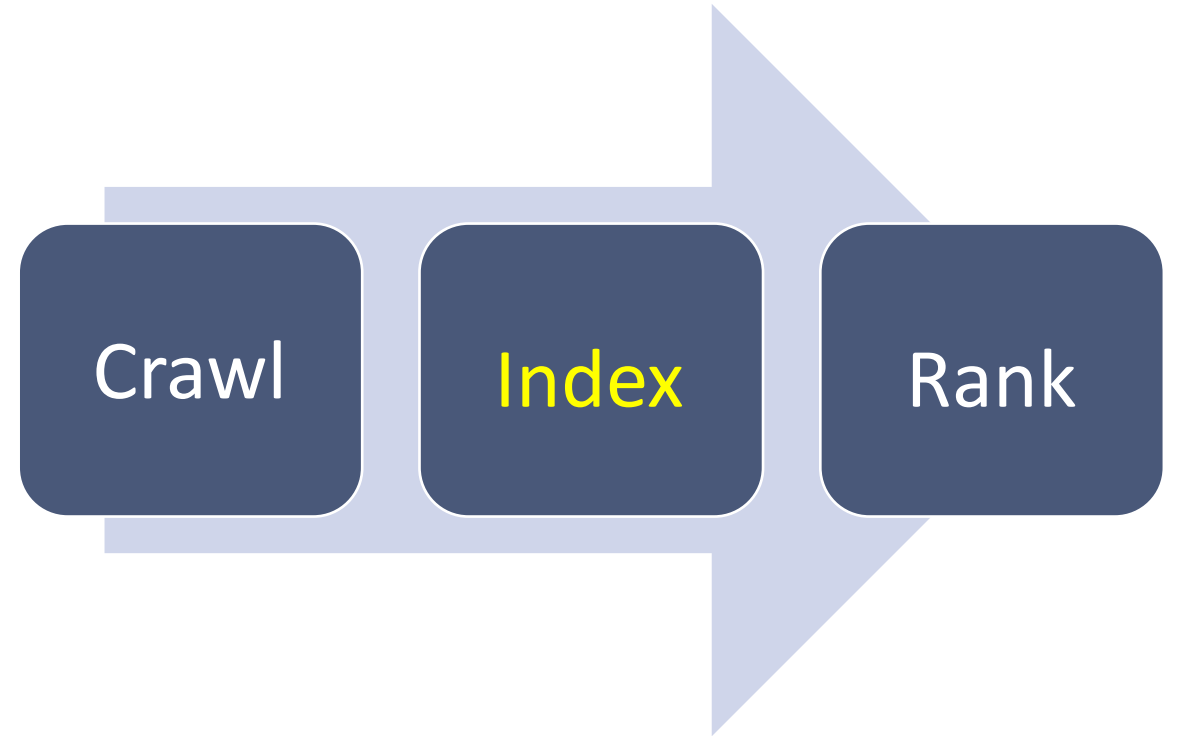
The process of discovering available website content is called “crawling.”

- Search engines use automated computer software, often referred to as a *bot*, *crawler*, *robot*, or *spider*, to find web pages on the internet.



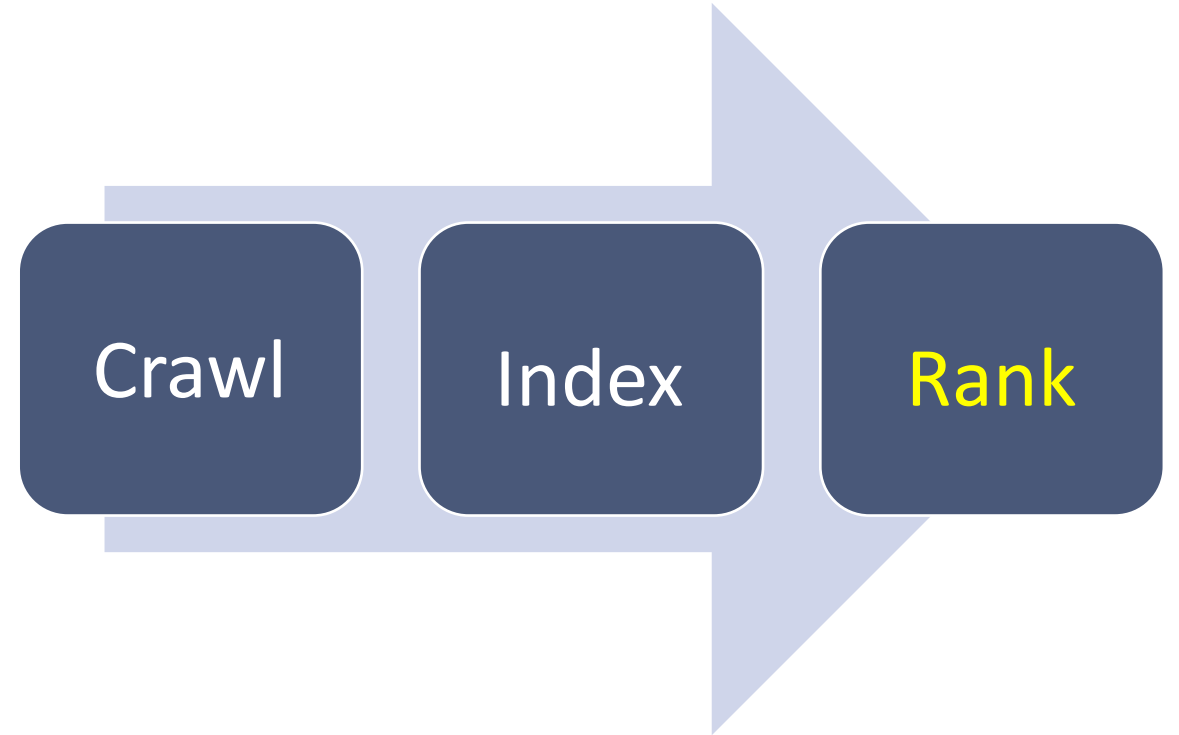
Why Technical SEO is SUPER Important

As the search engine crawler proceeds from page to page, it also collects a copy of the information on that page. This is called “indexing.”



Why Technical SEO is SUPER Important

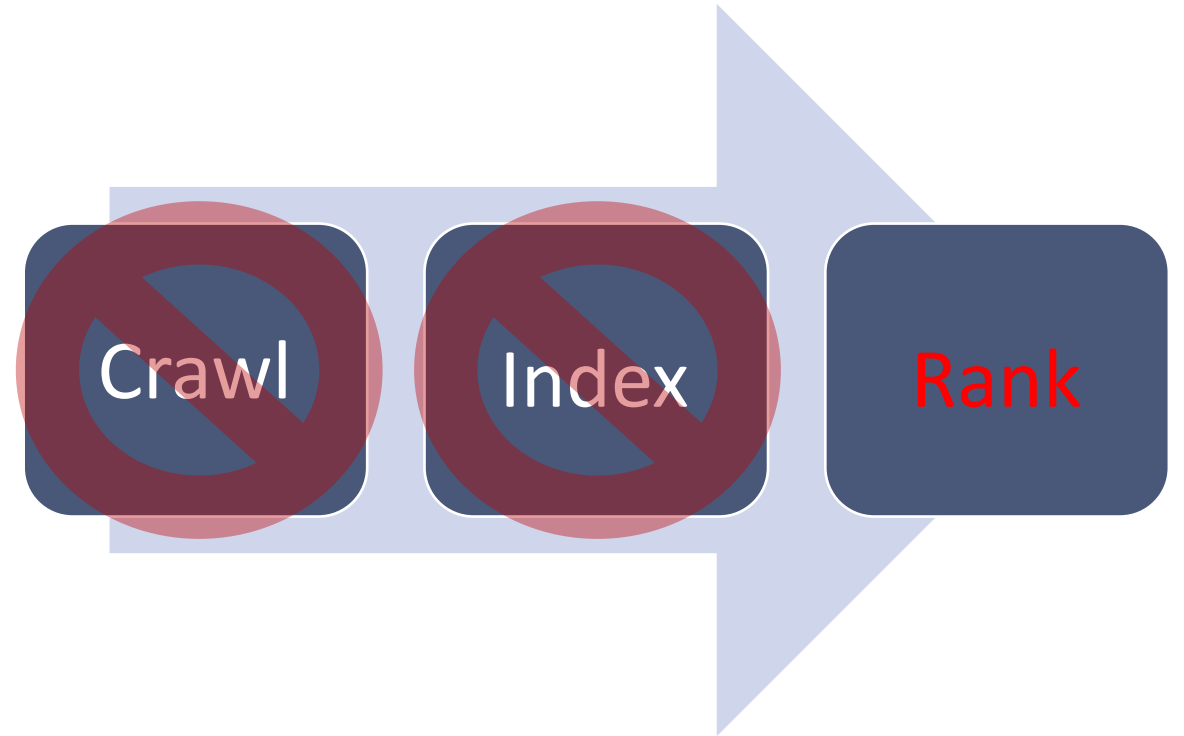
Once a search engine discovers (crawls) and collects (indexes) content, it can then sort (rank) the content for each search query performed by a user.



Why Technical SEO is SUPER Important

If your site cannot be crawled (discovered) or indexed (collected) properly, then it's impossible to rank!

You can have the best content in the world, but if search engines can't crawl and index it, it doesn't matter!



The Ultimate Technical SEO Checklist

Here we go!

**Let's start with the
basic/traditional
things...**



Domain & CMS

- ✓ The website should be run by a well-supported open-source CMS, preferably WordPress.
- See [here](#) for more details on why we require this.



Meta Robots



<https://crosscheckseo.com/>

Settings

General

Writing

Reading

Discussion

Permalinks

Login/logout redirects

Adminimize

Membership Capabilities

For each article in a feed, show

Full text

Summary

Search Engine Visibility

UNCHECK! Discourage search engines from indexing this site

It is up to search engines to honor this request.

Save Changes

- ✓ Ensure that the "Search Engine Visibility" checkbox is UNCHECKED on all live production sites.
- ✓ Implement the [Cross-Check plugin](#) to generate alerts for when this checkbox is checked.

Robots.txt

- ✓ Implement a Robots.txt file that excludes irrelevant directories and points crawlers to the sitemap location. [Yoast](#) can help with this.
- ✓ Implement Cross-Check's Search Engine Visibility Monitoring plugin to get email alerts if this file accidentally gets set to block the whole site from search engines.

```
← → ↻ 🏠 🔒 pamannmarketing.com/robots.txt

User-agent: *

Disallow: /wp-admin/
Disallow: /login/
Disallow: /demo/
Disallow: /thank-you/
Disallow: /downloads/

User-agent: All
Allow: /

Sitemap: https://pamannmarketing.com/sitemap_index.xml
```



<https://crosscheckseo.com/>



XML Sitemap

Generated by **YoastSEO**, this is an XML Sitemap, meant for consumption by search engines.

You can find more information about XML sitemaps on **sitemaps.org**.

This XML Sitemap Index file contains 10 sitemaps.

| Sitemap | Last Modified |
|---|-------------------------|
| https://pamannmarketing.com/post-sitemap.xml | 2019-09-16 23:17 +00:00 |
| https://pamannmarketing.com/page-sitemap.xml | 2019-10-11 17:25 +00:00 |

- ✓ Dynamic XML sitemap (can be generated by [Yoast](#))
- ✓ Submit XML sitemap index to [Search Console](#) and check for errors.

Sitemaps - HTML

Sitemap

Pages

- Bragging Rights
 - Awards
 - Internet Marketing Client List
 - PPC Case Studies
 - Press
 - SEO Case Studies
 - Testimonials

<https://wordpress.org/plugins/wp-sitemap-page/>



WP Sitemap Page

By Tony Archambeau

- ✓ HTML sitemap that is dynamically updated.
- ✓ Link to the HTML sitemap page from the footer of the website.

© Copyright 2019 Pam Ann Marketing · Privacy Policy · Terms of Use · [Sitemap](#) · Logout

Design

✓ Do not use “one page” designs.

Just don't.



Home » [SEO, PPC, and Analytics Services](#) » [Professional SEO Services](#) » [SEO Technical Audit](#)

- ✓ Implement a breadcrumb trail & add Schema markup to it.

[Yoast](#) can also help with this.

```
{
  "@type": "BreadcrumbList",
  "@id": "https://pamannmarketing.com/seo-ppc-analytics-services/professional-seo-services/seo-technical-audit/#breadcrumb",
  "itemListElement": [{
    "@type": "ListItem",
    "position": 1,
    "item": {
      "@type": "WebPage",
      "@id": "https://pamannmarketing.com/",
      "url": "https://pamannmarketing.com/",
      "name": "Home"
    }
  }, {
    "@type": "ListItem",
    "position": 2,
    "item": {
      "@type": "WebPage",
      "@id": "https://pamannmarketing.com/seo-ppc-analytics-services/",
      "url": "https://pamannmarketing.com/seo-ppc-analytics-services/",
      "name": "SEO, PPC, and Analytics Services"
    }
  }
}
```

Social

- ✓ Make it VERY easy for visitors to find and follow your presence on social media sites.
- ✓ Make it VERY easy for visitors to share your content on social media.
- ✓ Make it perfectly clear which buttons are for following vs. which ones are for sharing.

Share This!



Follow Us!



Dates

- ✓ Blog articles should have dates on the byline.
- ✓ If possible, in addition to the original post date, also include a “last updated” field to pull in the date the post was last modified. The plugin [WP Last Modified Info by Sayan Datta](#) may be able to help with this.



WP Last Modified Info
By Sayan Datta

- ✓ If there is a “Resource/Knowledge Center” or information library of some sort with more “evergreen” (timeless) content, those articles should have an author name on the byline, but not a date.


SEO-Friendly URLs

Post name

<https://pamannmarketing.com/sample-post/>

- ✓ Set "Permalinks" to "Post name" (WP Settings -> Permalinks)
- ✓ Avoid underscores
- ✓ Avoid use of parameters if you can help it

Title Tags

- ✓ Title tags should contain carefully-chosen often-searched keywords, but shouldn't sound "stuffed."
- ✓ Manage title tags with an SEO plugin like [Yoast](#). 
- ✓ No ancillary information such as site title or company name should be appended to the page title in the title tag.

(Remove "Site Title" from Yoast Search Appearance settings.)

Images

- ✓ Images should contain alt text.
- ✓ Image alt tags should be added to each image on the site, with a short and accurate description of what is represented in the image.
- ✓ One of the main images for the page/article should also use the primary key phrase(s) assigned to that page (if it is possible to incorporate it in an accurate description of the image.)

Meta Descriptions

- ✓ The meta description is displayed on Google search results and is extremely important in influencing the searcher's decision to click on your page.
- ✓ Make sure to write a short, yet compelling description that will entice searchers to visit your website. This should be a one-sentence summary of the content, 150 to 170 characters, that contains the page's primary key phrase.
- ✓ Manage meta description tags with an SEO plugin like [Yoast](#).



Broken Links

- ✓ Regularly check for broken links with a plugin, [Screaming Frog](#), and/or [Search Console](#).



- ✓ Use 301 redirects to correct broken links and preserve existing search engine rankings.
- ✓ In the case of a website redesign, if URLs change, be sure to redirect ALL old URLs to their new equivalent URLs.



Broken Links Plugin

Plugins

My Favorites

Beta Testing

Developers

Search plugins



Redirection

By John Godley

Download

<https://wordpress.org/plugins/redirection/>

Broken Links

Oops! Not Found, Error 404

The page you are looking for no longer exists. Perhaps you can return back to the site's [homepage](#) and see if you can find what you are looking for. Or, you can try finding it with the information below.

Pages

- [Bragging Rights](#)
 - [Awards](#)
 - [Internet Marketing Client List](#)
 - [PPC Case Studies](#)
 - [Press](#)
 - [SEO Case Studies](#)
 - [Testimonials](#)

- ✓ Custom 404 error pages with “human-friendly” language
- ✓ Include either a high-level sitemap or randomly/dynamically generated set of links so that this does not become a dead end for humans or search engines.

Security

- ✓ Follow best practices for implementation of website security measures such as not using “admin” as a user login name, implementation of a firewall, automatic malware monitoring, regularly scheduled core/plugin updates, backups, etc.
 - Google does not want to index sites with malware on them.
- ✓ Force the use of https sitewide with an SSL certificate.
 - SSL certificates must come from a third-party certificate authority (cannot be self-signed). Many hosts, as well as [LetsEncrypt](#), offer free SSL certificates.

The Ultimate Technical SEO Checklist

**And now, for some
more advanced &
recent stuff...**



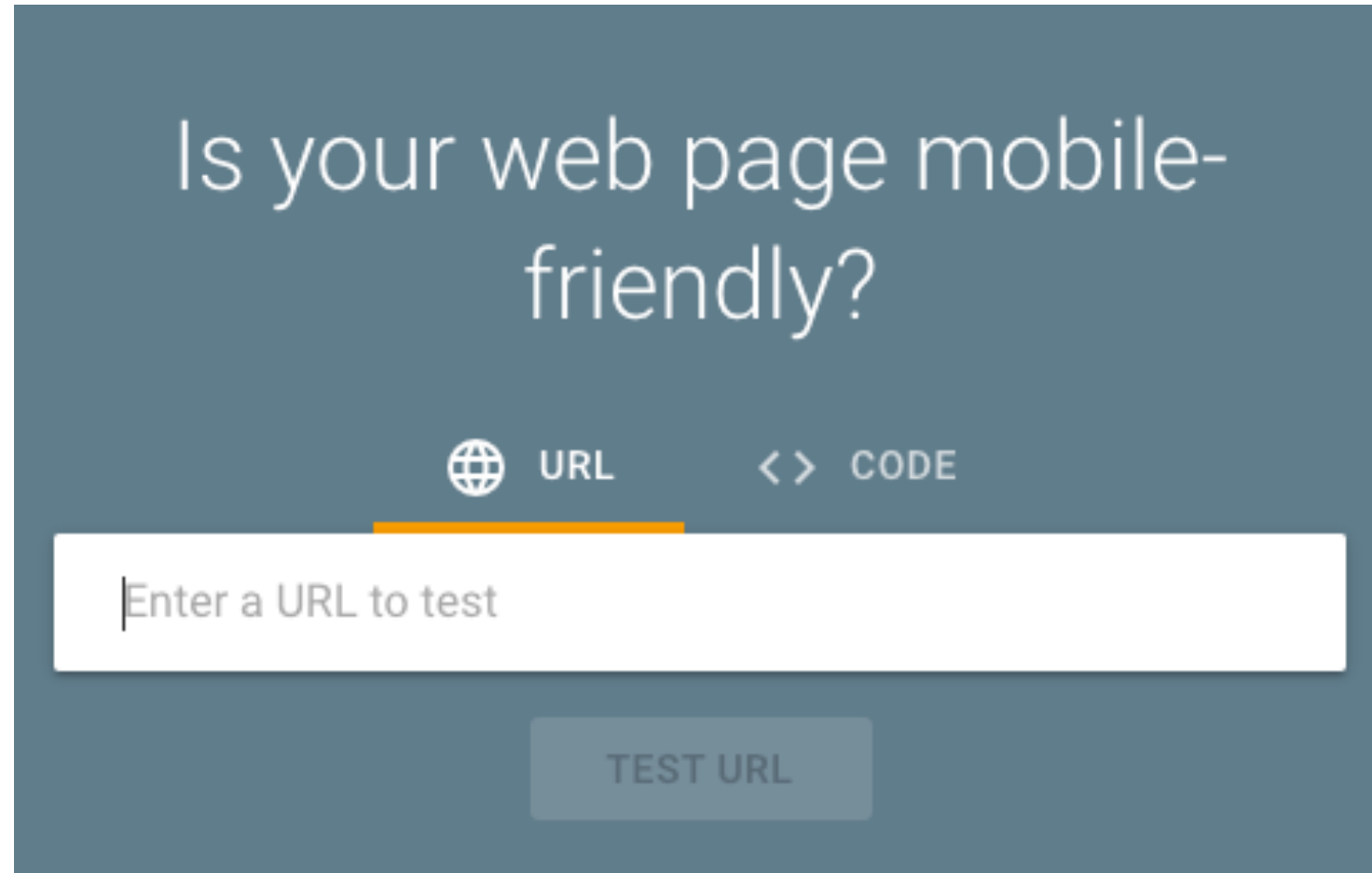
Mobile - Responsive

- ✓ A responsive design should be applied to the site, so that the site renders in a device-specific manner dependent upon the specific device accessing the site.
 - Separate mobile sites and/or separate mobile subdomains (i.e. "m.yoursite.com" should be avoided.



Mobile - Responsive

- ✓ Site should pass the [Google Mobile-Friendly Test](#).
 - Also check the “Mobile Usability” report in [Search Console](#).



Mobile - AMP

- ✓ Google indexes AMP pages to provide a fast, reliable web experience. More information can be found in the [“AMP on Google Search Guidelines”](#).
- Currently, because of the additional effort required to properly build out AMP pages, we are only recommending that AMP be implemented on blog posts.
- Implementing AMP on pages is great if you can do it, but we are only recommending blog posts as the bare minimum at this time.



Mobile - AMP

Specializing in Search Engine Optimization (SEO,) Pay-Per-Click Advertising (PPC,) and Google Analytics

973-664-7775



Responsive -->



AMP -->

16 Tips for Forensic SEO Audit Success [Checklist]

 Pam Aungst 1 month ago



If you experience an unexpected SEO traffic drop, it's crucial to know how to identify exactly what led to it. Many SEO professionals are quick to assign blame to an algorithm update, but it actually could have been caused by a technical issue, content change, loss of inbound link equity, a malware injection, a change in search volume, loss of a single high-volume keyword ranking, or a combination of several factors

AMP Plugin – Option 1




AMP

By AMP Project Contributors

Download

<https://wordpress.org/plugins/amp/>

AMP Plugin – Option 2



Get ready for Mobile-first
World with #1 AMP Plugin!

- ✓ 92% User Happiness
- ✓ Active Development
- ✓ Fast Support



AMP for WP – Accelerated Mobile Pages

By Ahmed Kaludi, Mohammed Kaludi

Download

<https://wordpress.org/plugins/accelerated-mobile-pages/>

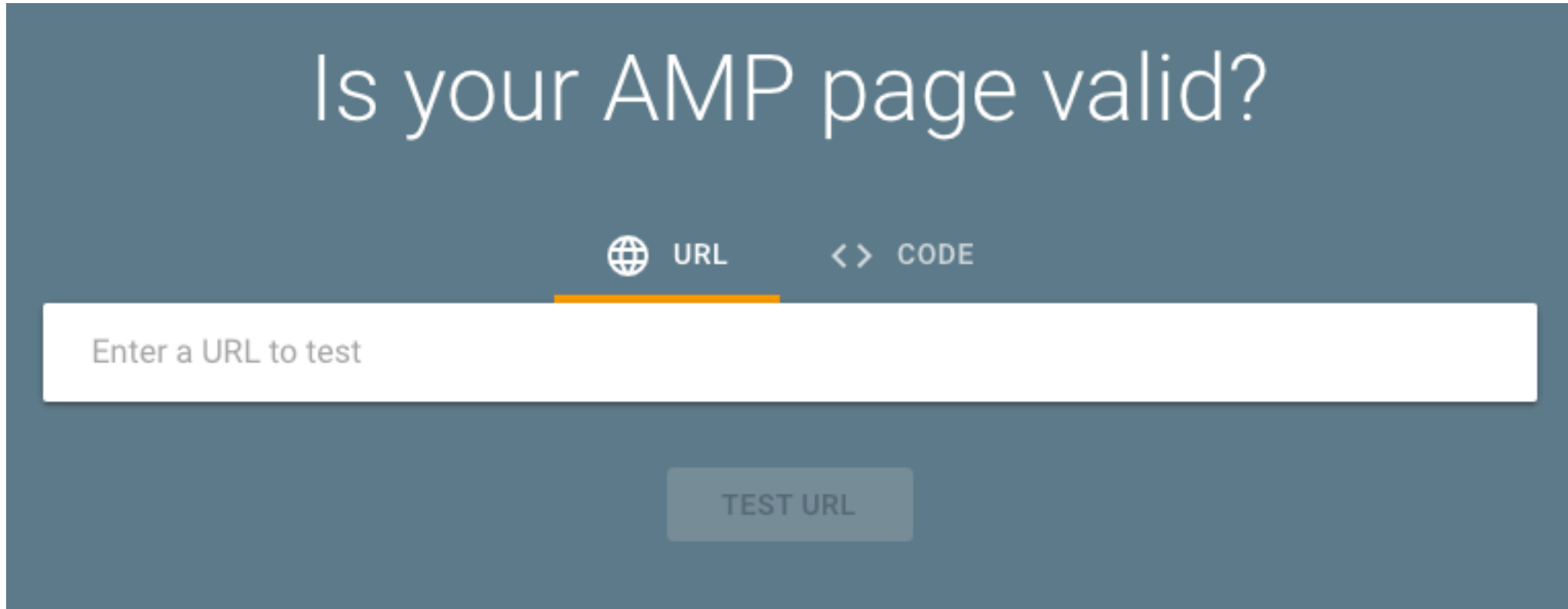
✓ **CRITICAL:** Implementing either of these plugins does NOT automatically carry over your Google Analytics tracking script to AMP pages.

- AMP-specific Google Analytics code has to be implemented in the plugin's "Analytics" settings or through Google Tag Manager.
- AMP-specific Google Analytics code needs to be formatted in JSON as follows:

Type:

JSON Configuration:

```
{
  "vars": {
    "account": "UA-XXXXXXX-
X"
  },
  "triggers": {
    "trackPageview": {
      "on": "visible",
      "request": "pageview"
    }
  }
}
```

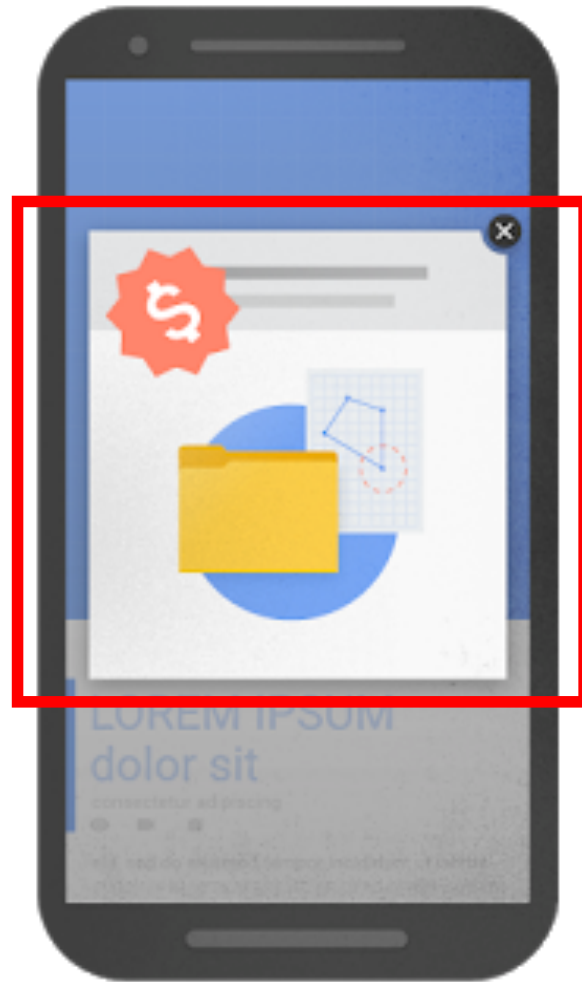


The image shows a screenshot of the AMP testing tool interface. At the top, the text "Is your AMP page valid?" is displayed in white on a dark blue background. Below this, there are two tabs: "URL" (selected, indicated by an orange underline) and "CODE". The "URL" tab contains a white input field with the placeholder text "Enter a URL to test". Below the input field is a grey button labeled "TEST URL".

- ✓ **IMPORTANT:** Ensure that there are no critical AMP errors in [Search Console](#) and that your AMP pages validate with the AMP testing tool.

Mobile

Google considers this "intrusive" ->



<- Google considers this "reasonable"

See [Google's documentation](#) for more information.

- ✓ Interstitial pop-ups should generally be avoided, especially on mobile. There is a specific penalty for pop-ups that "block the user from completing tasks."

Duplicate Content

- ✓ Duplicate content should be avoided, such as:
 - 2 different URLs displaying the same or very similar content
 - Different pages using the same Title Tags, Meta Descriptions, and/or H1s
- ✓ Read more about duplicate content [here](#).



Duplicate Content Tools



Checks for duplicate **meta tag content**.

<https://www.screamingfrog.co.uk>



Checks for duplicate content amongst **full page copy** on a single site.

<http://www.siteliner.com/>

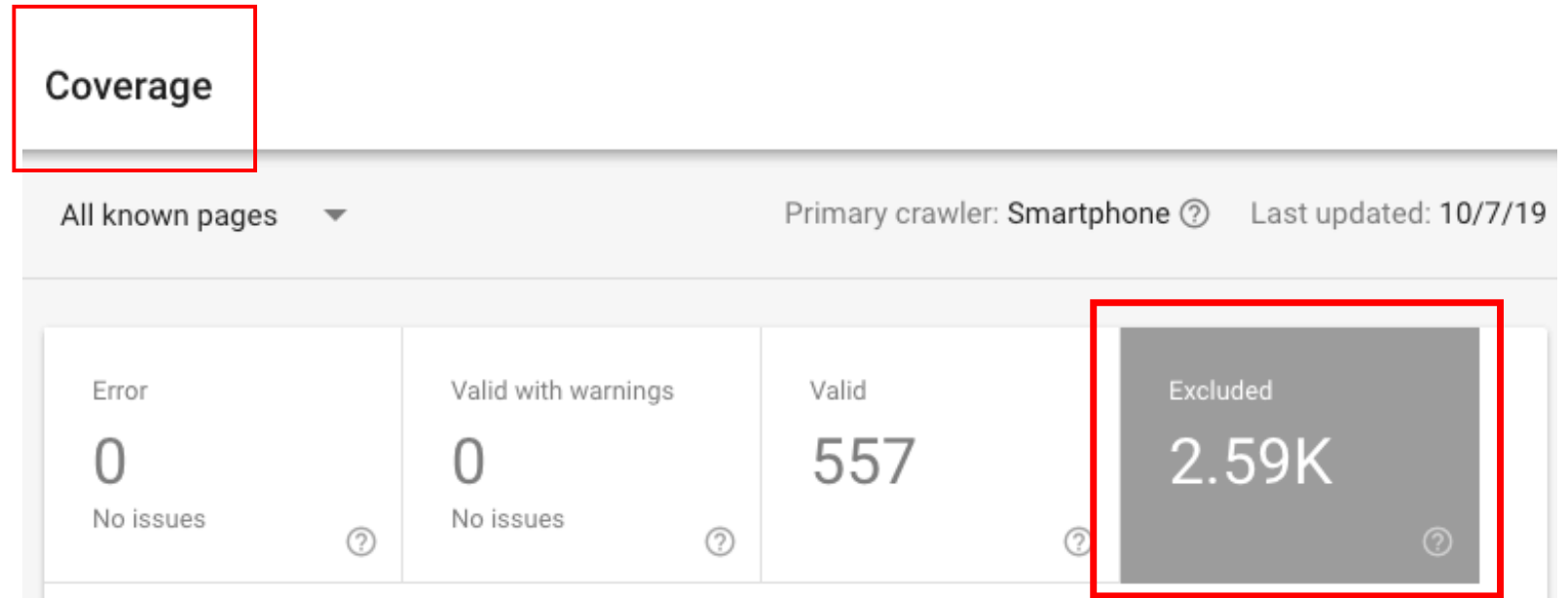


Checks for duplicate content between a single page and **the entire web**.

<https://www.copyscape.com/>

Duplicate Content Tools

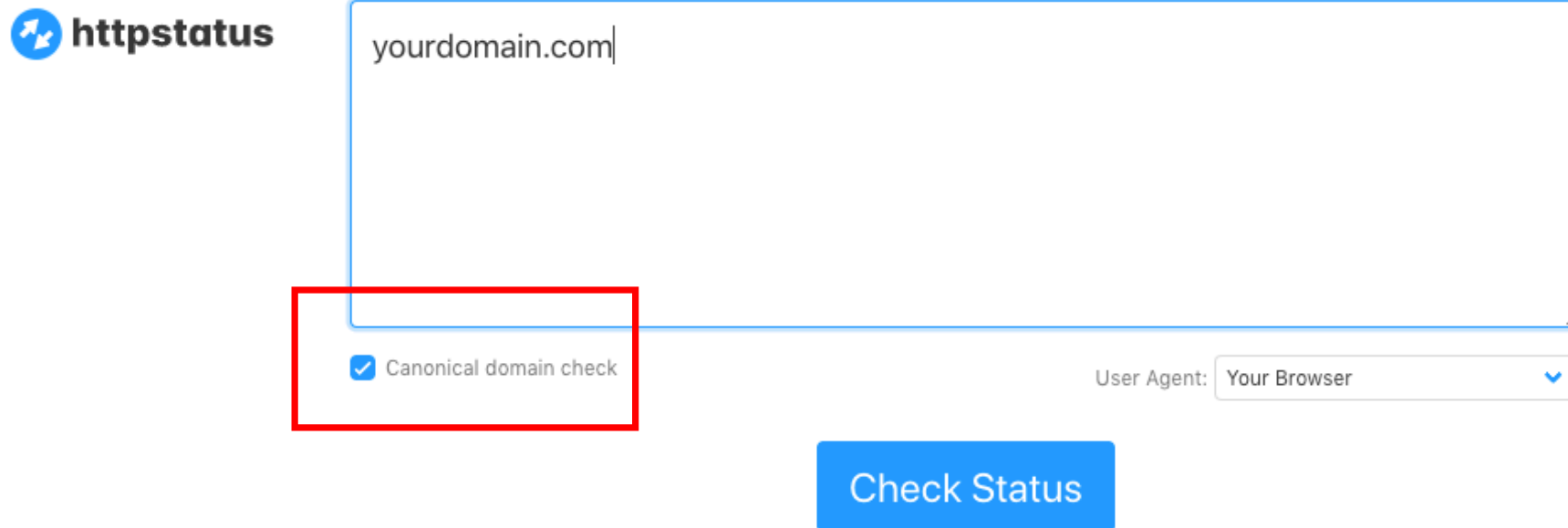
✓ Also check for duplicate content in [Search Console's](#) "Coverage" report, under "Excluded"



| | | | |
|----------|---|-----|---|
| Excluded | Duplicate, Google chose different canonical than user | N/A | 6 |
| Excluded | Duplicate, submitted URL not selected as canonical | N/A | 2 |
| Excluded | Duplicate without user-selected canonical | N/A | 1 |

Duplicate Content

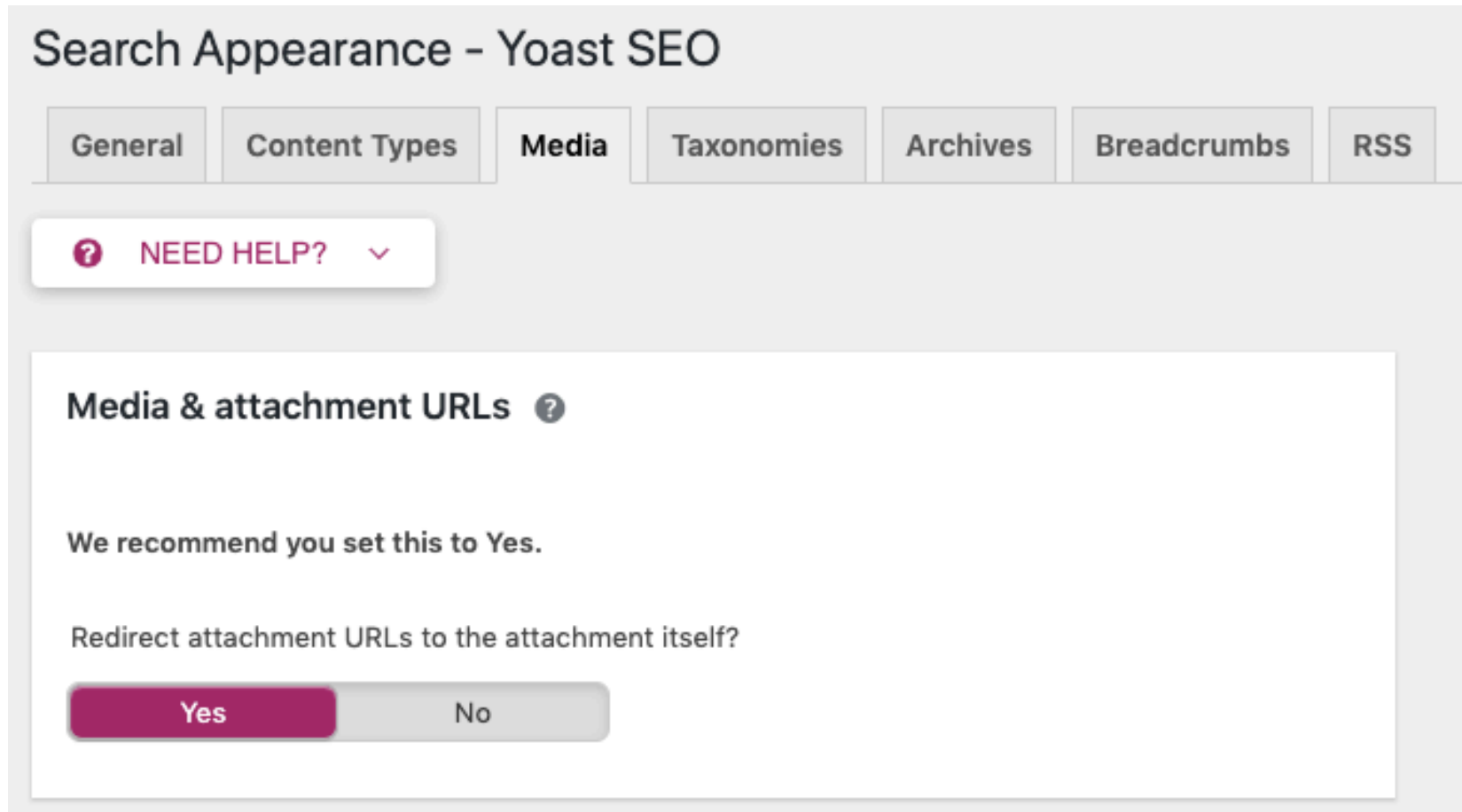
<https://httpstatus.io/>



The screenshot shows the httpstatus.io logo on the left. A large text input field contains the text "yourdomain.com". Below the input field, there is a checkbox labeled "Canonical domain check" which is checked, and a dropdown menu for "User Agent" set to "Your Browser". A blue "Check Status" button is positioned below the input field.

- ✓ Avoid duplicate content by properly canonicalizing your domain name.
 - Domain name without the “www” typed in should redirect to the version with the “www”, or vice versa

Duplicate Content



Search Appearance - Yoast SEO

General Content Types **Media** Taxonomies Archives Breadcrumbs RSS

[? NEED HELP?](#)

Media & attachment URLs ?

We recommend you set this to Yes.

Redirect attachment URLs to the attachment itself?

Yes No

✓ If using Yoast, make sure "Media & Attachment URLs" is set to "Yes"



Starbox – the Author Box for Humans
By Squirrly UK

<https://wordpress.org/plugins/starbox/>

16 Tips for Forensic SEO Audit Success

About Latest Posts



Pam Aungst

President & Chief Web Traffic Controller at [Pam Ann Marketing](#)

Pam Ann Aungst, M.B.A., President of Pam Ann Marketing, LLC, is widely recognized as an expert in search engine optimization (SEO). A self-proclaimed "geek", Pam began studying computer programming at 6 years old, started creating websites in 1997 and has been working professionally in the field of e-commerce since 2005. Referred to by Sprout Social as a "Twitter Success Story," she harnessed the power of social media to launch her own agency in 2011. Pam has been interviewed by publications such as Internet Retailer magazine, regularly publishes articles in top internet marketing news sources, and speaks on topics such as SEO and social media. [Click here](#) to read her full bio.

- ✓ Display author names on article content.
- ✓ Make it easy to read a bio about the credibility of that author.
 - For YMYL content ("Your Money or Your Life," i.e. medical, financial, and other life-impacting content), this is of utmost importance.

Authority

- ✓ Implement [Person Schema](#) markup on bio pages (as many fields as possible)

```
"familyName": "Aungst",  
"givenName": "Pam",  
"honorificSuffix": "MBA",  
"jobTitle": "President",  
"description": "Pam Ann Aungst, M.B.A.,  
President of Pam Ann Marketing, LLC and  
founder of Stealth™ Search and  
Analytics, is widely recognized as an  
expert in search engine optimization  
(SEO), pay-per-click advertising (PPC),  
and digital analytics."
```

```
{  
  "@context": "http://schema.org",  
  "@type": "Person",  
  "additionalName": [  
    "Pam Ann Aungst",  
    "Pamela A Aungst",  
    "Pam Aungst",  
    "Pamela Aungst",  
    "Pam A Aungst"  
  ],  
  "affiliation": {  
    "@type": "Organization",  
    "name": "Pam Ann Marketing"  
  },  
  "alumniOf": "Regis University",  
  "award": [  
    "Leader in Small Business Award",  
    "Changemakers & Champions Award",  
    "Jersey's Best Marketing & Communication Professionals Under 40"  
  ],  
  "familyName": "Aungst",  
  "givenName": "Pam",  
  "honorificSuffix": "MBA",  
  "jobTitle": "President",  
  "description": "Pam Ann Aungst, M.B.A., President of Pam Ann  
Marketing, LLC and founder of Stealth™ Search and Analytics, is  
widely recognized as an expert in search engine optimization (SEO),  
pay-per-click advertising (PPC), and digital analytics.",  
  "sameAs": [  
    "https://www.facebook.com/PamAnnMarketing/",  
    "https://www.instagram.com/pamannmarketing/",  
    "https://www.linkedin.com/in/pamaungst/",  
    "https://twitter.com/pamannmarketing"  
  ],  
  "image": {  
    "@type": "ImageObject",  
    "contentUrl": "https://pamannmarketing.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/  
09/pam-ann-aungst-mba.jpg"  
  }  
}
```

Speed

- ✓ Site speed optimizations should be in place for desktop and mobile. These optimizations are crucial, as page speed is a ranking factor (now on BOTH desktop and mobile) and dramatically affects bounce and conversion rates:



As page load time goes from:

1s to 3s the probability of bounce **increases 32%**



1s to 5s the probability of bounce **increases 90%**



1s to 6s the probability of bounce **increases 106%**



1s to 10s the probability of bounce **increases 123%**



Favorite Speed Plugin

WP ROCKET
Superior WordPress Performance

**The Best WordPress Caching Plugin,
Simple and affordable.**

Over 880,000+ websites load blazing fast with WP Rocket

✓ [WPRocket](#) is my favorite solution for speed optimizations, as it is the most comprehensive.

SINGLE

+

\$49

1 year of support and updates
for 1 website

PLUS

+++

\$99

1 year of support and updates
for 3 websites

INFINITE

∞

\$249

1 year of support and updates
for unlimited websites

Speed Testing Tools



PageSpeed Insights

Make your web pages fast on all devices

Enter a web page URL

ANALYZE

<https://developers.google.com/speed/pagespeed/insights/>



How fast does your website load? Find out with GTmetrix

See how your site performs, reveal why it's slow and discover optimization opportunities.

<https://gtmetrix.com/>

Speed Testing Tools



Test a website's performance

Advanced Testing | Simple Testing | Visual Comparison | Traceroute

Enter a Website URL

Test Location: Dulles, VA USA (Desktop, Android, iOS) Select from Map

Browser: Chrome 43 Pending Tests

<https://www.webpagetest.org>

Scripting

- ✓ When JavaScript is disabled, make sure key content is still visible.
- ✓ Allow all site assets, such as CSS and JavaScript files, to be crawled (don't block those with Robots.txt).
- ✓ iFramed text content should be avoided whenever possible.
- ✓ Do not use Flash. EVER. For ANYTHING.



✓ Schema.org markup plays a very important role in helping Google understand content via machine knowledge. Implement Schema on:

- Company names, addresses, and phone numbers
- Videos
- Articles
- Author bio pages (Person)
- Products on e-commerce sites.
 - *Also include Offer, Review, and AggregateRating properties for each product.*
- Implement as many other types of Schema markup as is applicable and feasible

Schema Plugins

- ✓ [Schema \(by Hesham\)](#) is a general Schema plugin that can implement many different types of Schema
- ✓ SchemaPro (WPSchema.com) is another (paid) general plugin option.
- ✓ [WP YouTube Lyte](#) is a plugin that will automatically generate Schema for embedded YouTube videos)



Schema
By Hesham



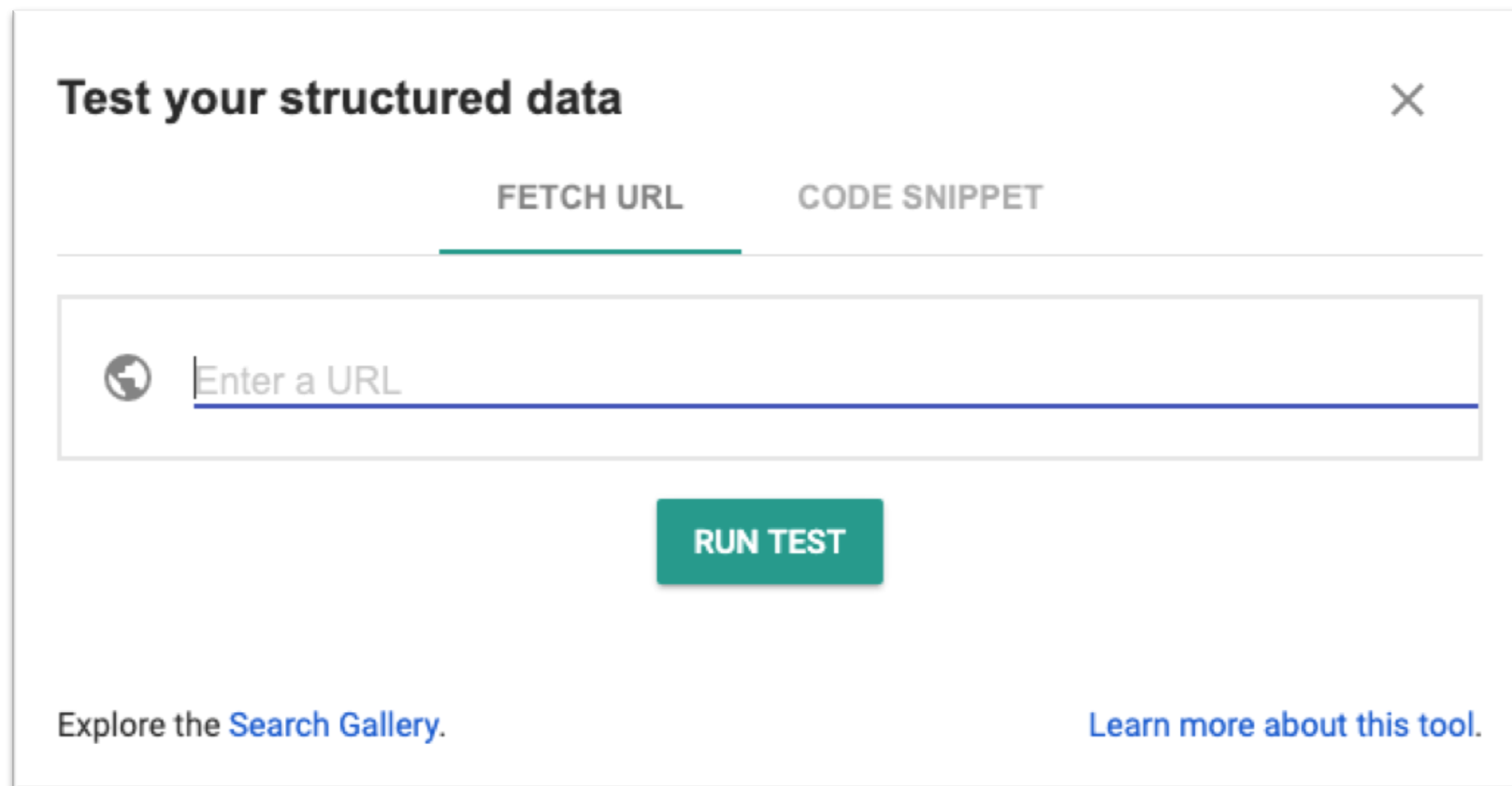
Plugins



WP YouTube Lyte
By Frank Goossens (futtta)

Schema

- ✓ Ensure that all Schema markup validates with Google's [Structured Data Testing Tool](#)



The screenshot shows the 'Test your structured data' interface. At the top, there are two tabs: 'FETCH URL' (which is active and highlighted with a green underline) and 'CODE SNIPPET'. Below the tabs is a large text input field with a globe icon on the left and the placeholder text 'Enter a URL'. A blue horizontal line is positioned below the input field. Below the input field is a green button with the text 'RUN TEST'. At the bottom of the interface, there are two links: 'Explore the Search Gallery.' on the left and 'Learn more about this tool.' on the right.

- ✓ IMPORTANT: Ensure that all contents shown in Schema markup match content visible to users on the page.

Bonus Tip for Local Businesses

- ✓ All physical office locations should have their own individual pages with unique content, as well as:
 - ✓ An embedded Google map, pointing to the company's verified Google My Business listing
 - ✓ Schema markup on the company name, address, and telephone number

```
<script type="application/ld+json">
{
  "@context": "http://schema.org",
  "@type": "Organization",
  "address": {
    "@type": "PostalAddress",
    "addressLocality": "Denville",
    "addressRegion": "NJ",
    "postalCode": "07834",
    "streetAddress": "5 E Main St, Suite
22B"
  },
  "email": "sales@pamannmarketing.com",
  "name": "Pam Ann Marketing",
  "telephone": "973-664-7775"
}
</script>
```

The End!



QUESTIONS?

Downloads!

Download these slides and The Ultimate 50-Point Technical SEO Audit Template at:

CrossCheckSEO.com/Download

Send heavy metal music suggestions to:

👉 pam@pamannmarketing.com 👉

🐦 @PamAnnMarketing