



**Yellow!**

# **A small business guide to technical SEO.**

eBook

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# Introduction.



**If you've dipped your toes into the waters of digital marketing, you've more than likely seen the term 'SEO' floating around.**

SEO stands for search engine optimisation and it's the practice of improving your website so it appears higher in Google search results. It also covers anything you do outside of your website to improve your brand's visibility in search engines (for example, getting a **Yellow Pages Online listing**).

Beyond that, there are two main types of SEO to be aware of: on-site SEO and technical SEO. While on-site SEO involves optimising the content on your webpages, technical SEO is related to the behind-the-scenes structure of your website.

Both types of SEO go hand-in-hand to make it easier for Google's search bots, and humans, to understand and navigate your website – and ultimately find you online. In fact, **61% of marketers** say that SEO is the key to online success.

In this eBook, we're walking through the basics of technical SEO: what it is, why it's important and the core elements of technical SEO.

**Let's get started.**

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# Technical SEO fundamentals.

Before we get into the nitty-gritty, let's cover some of the fundamentals.

## ■ What is technical SEO?

Technical SEO is the process of optimising your website's structure and setup so that search engines can easily find, organise and display your webpages in search results. This is known as crawling and indexing (which we'll cover in more detail below).

As the name suggests, technical SEO requires a little more technical know-how than on-site SEO as it generally involves activities in the back-end code of your website.

That said, it's useful to understand the basics, because there are tweaks and improvements you can make yourself if you're comfortable in managing your own website.

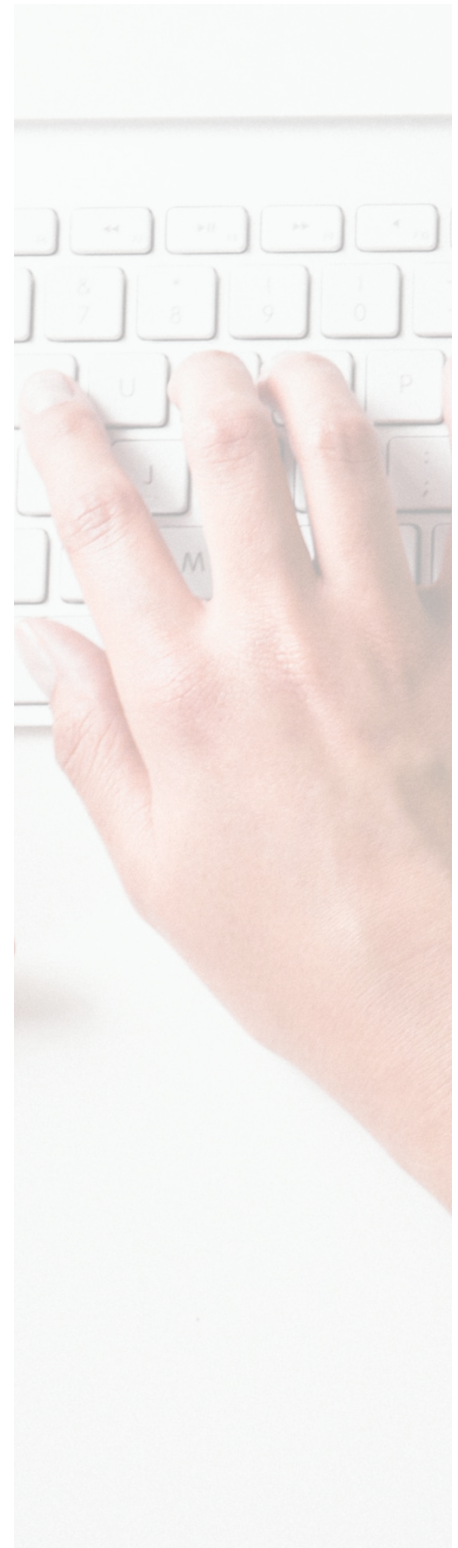
Even if that's something you'd prefer to leave to the experts, you'll know the red flags to look out for and questions to ask when it comes to building and maintaining an SEO-friendly website.

## ■ Why is technical SEO important?

Google and other search engines need to be able to find, crawl and index the pages on your website. You can have **amazing content**, but if it's difficult for Google's algorithm to discover or understand, your webpages aren't going to rank in search results.

Not only that, but a poorly structured website leads to a poor user experience – which can turn away potential customers and further harm your website ranking.

Simple put, technical SEO makes it as easy as possible for both search engines and humans to find and navigate your website. And the easier it is for people to find you through a Google search, the more likely it is that they'll get to know your brand and even become a customer.





# What are the elements of technical SEO?



**There are many elements of technical SEO that work together to ensure search engines can easily browse your website and index it.**

The following sections will dive into some of the most important elements to keep an eye on.

# Site structure and navigation.

Site structure refers to how all of the pages on your website are organised, and it's the backbone of any technical **SEO strategy**.

In many cases, if Google has trouble finding or displaying your website's pages, it's likely due to a poorly-designed site structure. So if you get this right from the beginning, you can be fairly confident that all of your core webpages – and any subsequent pages you add – will be found by Google.

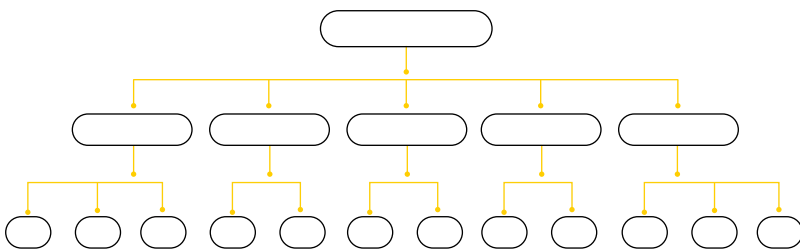
## Site structure and navigation best practices.

To nail your site structure, follow these tips:

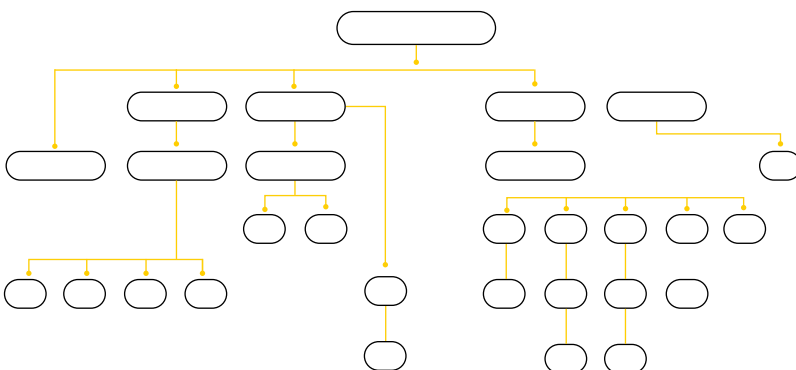
### 1. Use a flat, well-organized architecture.

Your site's structure should be flat so that all pages are only a few links away from one another.

In other words, you want a site architecture that looks like this:



And not this:





## 2. Have a consistent URL structure.

Your URLs should follow a logical structure that helps Google and users understand where they are on your site. As a general rule, URLs should follow the format:

[www.homepage.com.au/page/sub-page](http://www.homepage.com.au/page/sub-page)

For example:

[www.eastsideplumbing.com.au/blog/how-to-fix-a-leaking-tap](http://www.eastsideplumbing.com.au/blog/how-to-fix-a-leaking-tap)

[www.eastsideplumbing.com.au/services/emergency-plumbing](http://www.eastsideplumbing.com.au/services/emergency-plumbing)

[www.eastsideplumbing.com.au/contact](http://www.eastsideplumbing.com.au/contact)

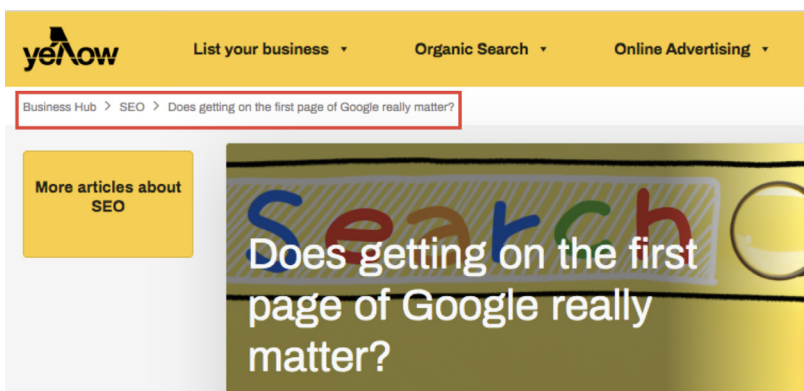
Use words and hyphens (no numbers or symbols) that help the user and search engines understand the content that will appear on the page.

## 3. Use breadcrumbs.

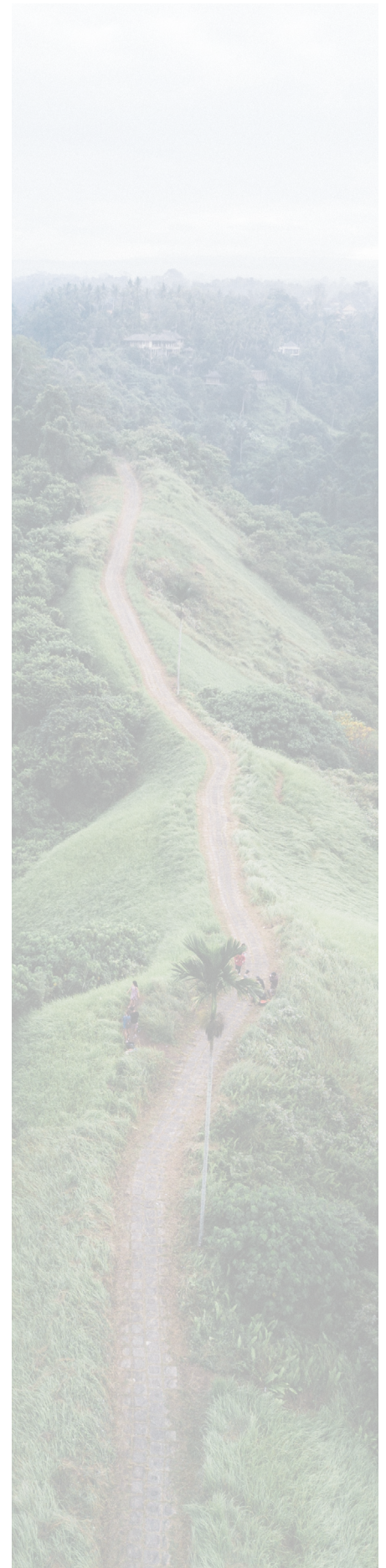
Breadcrumbs are links that enable a user to track their path back from the page they are on to the homepage of your website. They usually appear close to the top of the page and show the structure of your site.

Breadcrumbs are important not only for helping users navigate your site, but also for helping Google determine how your website is structured.

Here's an example of a breadcrumb trail in action:



The way to add breadcrumbs to your website depends on the website builder you use. For example, if you use a website builder like [Wix](#), you can add breadcrumbs to your navigation from your website editor dashboard.



# Crawling and indexing.

Google and other search engines follow two main steps before they rank your webpages in search results:



## Crawling.

Google's search bots scour the internet for content, analysing the code/content for each URL they find.



## Indexing.

After crawling, the content found is stored and organised by Google. Once a webpage is in the index, it can be displayed as a result for relevant search queries.

You can spot any crawling or indexing issues with your site by using the [Index Coverage Report](#) in [Google Search Console](#), which is a free tool that helps you measure your site's search traffic and performance, and fix issues. The Index Coverage Report will tell you which pages Google has found on your site, which pages have been indexed and any indexing problems found.

## Crawlability and indexability checklist.

As well as keeping an eye out for potential issues, these best practices will help ensure your webpages are easy to crawl and index:



### 1. Create an XML sitemap.

This is a file that lists all the pages on your website. Once it's built you can [submit your XML sitemap to Google](#) and update it as you add and remove pages on your website.



### 2. Add a robots.txt file.

This is a file you upload to your website that tells search engines which pages on your website to index and which not to. Some website builders will allow you to create or edit your robots.txt file yourself, or you may need to get in touch with your hosting company or developer.



### 3. Remove duplicate content.

Duplicate pages and content confuse search bots and negatively impact your indexability, as well as your ranking. Check for any repetition and either remove duplicates, or update the content so it's clearly differentiated.



### 4. Add 301 redirects.

If a page on your website moves (for example, to a new section), a 301 redirect permanently redirects users and Google from the old URL to the new URL.



### 5. Check your site's mobile responsiveness.

[More than half](#) of all web traffic happens on mobile and Google predominantly uses the [mobile version of webpages](#) for indexing and ranking. With this in mind, it's essential to make sure your site is easy to view and navigate on mobile devices.



# Page speed.

Page speed is the time it takes for a webpage to load, and it plays an essential role in both technical SEO and providing a good user experience.

In fact, a **jump in page loading time** from one second to just three seconds increases the probability that the user will leave the website by 32%. At five seconds this number rises by 90%.

You don't have even a second to waste when it comes to page speed, so **improving your website's load time** should be a priority.

## Tips to improve page speed.

Here are some tips to get started:



### 1. Run a website speed test.

**PageSpeed Insights** is a free Google tool that you can use to check the speed and performance of any webpage. It will show you how well your site works on both desktop and mobile devices, and even give suggestions about what could be slowing down your page speed.



### 2. Optimise your image file sizes.

Any time a user visits your website, their device has to load all of the images that appear on the webpage they're landing on. This can cause issues with page speed if your image file sizes are very big.

The optimal file size for website images is around 200KB. For full-screen header and background images, stick to images between 1500 pixels to 2500 pixels wide, and for other images a max width of 800 pixels.



### 3. Enable caching.

Caching creates a static version of your webpage that it stores and shows to your returning visitors, decreasing the time to load the site during repeat visits. Some website builders automatically cache website pages, whereas others will require you to add a caching plugin to your site.



### 4. Choose a reliable host.

When a person visits your site and loads a page, they're accessing files from your host's web server (a remote computer).

Choosing a reliable host, or even upgrading your website hosting plan, can have a big impact on your website's page speed. We recommend doing some research to compare the speed and reviews for your current host against other hosts and see if you should make the switch.

# Wrapping up.



**Technical SEO plays a big role in enabling Google's search bots, and humans, to discover your website. Ultimately, finding your business through Google search is the first step a person takes on their journey to becoming a customer.**

Now that you have an overview of the basics of technical SEO, you can make improvements to your website yourself, keep an eye out for any potential issues and lean on the experts to take care of the more technical stuff for you.

The team at Yellow Pages provides expert digital marketing advice and products that boost your business' online presence. From an online listing to digital display or social media ads, we'll tailor a digital marketing solution that's right for your business. [Find out more.](#)