

TECHNICAL READINESS

Technical AI Search Readiness Manual

A production-focused guide to crawl policy, indexing, rendering, schema, sitemaps, authorship and release QA.

BUILT TO BE USED

Decision frameworks

Working registers

Implementation worksheets

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HOW TO USE THIS MANUAL

A working document, not a one-page checklist.

Use the explanation on each page to make a decision, then complete the adjacent register or worksheet. Assign owners and dates. Revisit the same pages after a launch, campaign or platform-policy change so the record becomes useful over time.

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Decide which crawlers should reach which pages.

ACCESS POLICY

02

Confirm healthy responses and consistent directives.

STATUS + INDEXING

03

Keep canonical signals and internal links aligned.

CANONICALS

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Make priority pages discoverable through two paths.

SITEMAPS + LINKS

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SOURCE NOTES + LIMITS

ACCESS POLICY

Decide which crawlers should reach which pages.

Document the business outcome, user agent, rule, owner and review date. robots.txt is an access policy for compliant crawlers, not a content-quality signal and not a substitute for authentication.

DECISION PRINCIPLES

- Search discovery and model training can use separate user agents.
- A wildcard rule may affect more systems than intended.
- CDN and firewall rules can override practical access.
- Test the production response after every change.

ACTION CHECK

- ☐ List user agents.
- ☐ Map desired outcome.
- ☐ Review robots rules.
- ☐ Review edge controls.
- ☐ Test live response.

WORKING REGISTER

Capture the evidence, owner and next decision. Use one row per page, prompt, source or issue.

AGENT	RULE	OUTCOME

DECISION / NOTES / NEXT REVIEW

Treat the completed page as a dated observation, not a permanent truth.

STATUS + INDEXING

Confirm healthy responses and consistent directives.

Important canonical pages should return healthy responses, avoid unnecessary redirect chains and present index directives that match the business intent. Check HTML and HTTP headers.

DECISION PRINCIPLES

- A 200 response is necessary but not sufficient.
- noindex must be crawlable to be observed by supporting crawlers.
- Soft errors can look healthy in status logs.
- Index eligibility is different from ranking.

ACTION CHECK

- ☐ Check final status.
- ☐ Review redirect chain.
- ☐ Inspect noindex.
- ☐ Check soft-error signs.
- ☐ Record index state.

WORKING REGISTER

Capture the evidence, owner and next decision. Use one row per page, prompt, source or issue.

URL	STATUS	DIRECTIVE

DECISION / NOTES / NEXT REVIEW

Treat the completed page as a dated observation, not a permanent truth.

CANONICALS

Keep canonical signals and internal links aligned.

The canonical tag, sitemap URL, internal links, redirects and preferred protocol should point toward the same public URL. Conflicting signals waste crawl effort and make reporting less reliable.

DECISION PRINCIPLES

- Canonical is a hint, not an absolute command.
- Self-referencing canonicals help define the preferred URL.
- Internal links should use the canonical form.
- Parameter pages need an explicit policy.

ACTION CHECK

- ☐ Inspect canonical tag.
- ☐ Check sitemap entry.
- ☐ Review internal links.
- ☐ Review redirects.
- ☐ Document parameters.

WORKING REGISTER

Capture the evidence, owner and next decision. Use one row per page, prompt, source or issue.

URL	CANONICAL	CONFLICT

DECISION / NOTES / NEXT REVIEW

Treat the completed page as a dated observation, not a permanent truth.

SITEMAPS + LINKS

Make priority pages discoverable through two paths.

Use clean XML sitemaps for canonical, indexable URLs and descriptive internal links from relevant pages. Sitemaps aid discovery but do not replace navigation or guarantee indexing.

DECISION PRINCIPLES

- Exclude redirects, errors and noindex URLs.
- Keep lastmod accurate when used.
- Link from contextually relevant pages.
- Monitor submitted versus indexed patterns.

ACTION CHECK

- ☐ Validate sitemap.
- ☐ Remove noncanonical URLs.
- ☐ Review lastmod.
- ☐ Add internal links.
- ☐ Submit and monitor.

WORKING REGISTER

Capture the evidence, owner and next decision. Use one row per page, prompt, source or issue.

URL	SITEMAP	INLINK

DECISION / NOTES / NEXT REVIEW

Treat the completed page as a dated observation, not a permanent truth.

RENDERING

Keep critical facts in stable, visible HTML.

Test rendered output for headings, body copy, links, author, dates and structured data. Content hidden behind fragile interactions, images or authentication is harder for readers and crawlers to use.

DECISION PRINCIPLES

- View source and rendered HTML answer different questions.
- Do not hide essential facts in canvas or image text.
- Progressive enhancement reduces retrieval risk.
- Mobile and desktop output should preserve the same facts.

ACTION CHECK

- ☐ Render the page.
- ☐ Inspect critical copy.
- ☐ Check links.
- ☐ Check mobile output.
- ☐ Record missing content.

WORKING REGISTER

Capture the evidence, owner and next decision. Use one row per page, prompt, source or issue.

ELEMENT	VISIBLE	ISSUE

DECISION / NOTES / NEXT REVIEW

Treat the completed page as a dated observation, not a permanent truth.

STRUCTURED DATA

Describe visible facts with supported schema.

Use Organization, Article, Product or other appropriate vocabulary only when it matches visible content. Validate syntax and eligibility, then read the page to confirm the claim is genuinely supported.

DECISION PRINCIPLES

- There is no special universal AI-ranking schema.
- Markup should not introduce invisible facts.
- Entity identifiers should be stable and consistent.
- Warnings deserve context; errors require action.

ACTION CHECK

- ☐ Choose supported type.
- ☐ Match visible facts.
- ☐ Validate JSON-LD.
- ☐ Check identifiers.
- ☐ Monitor errors.

WORKING REGISTER

Capture the evidence, owner and next decision. Use one row per page, prompt, source or issue.

PAGE	TYPE	VALIDATE

DECISION / NOTES / NEXT REVIEW

Treat the completed page as a dated observation, not a permanent truth.

AUTHORSHIP + FRESHNESS

Make accountability and update state visible.

Show an accountable author or organization, publication and modification dates where useful, and a clear update process. Do not change dates without a material revision.

DECISION PRINCIPLES

- Authorship should help a reader evaluate the claim.
- Dates need visible and structured-data consistency.
- Update triggers should be documented.
- Archived facts need context, not silent deletion.

ACTION CHECK

- ☐ Confirm author.
- ☐ Verify bio or organization.
- ☐ Check visible dates.
- ☐ Check schema dates.
- ☐ Set update trigger.

WORKING REGISTER

Capture the evidence, owner and next decision. Use one row per page, prompt, source or issue.

PAGE	OWNER	REVIEW

DECISION / NOTES / NEXT REVIEW

Treat the completed page as a dated observation, not a permanent truth.

ANALYTICS + LOGS

Measure crawler access and user outcomes separately.

Use server logs when available to confirm requests, analytics to identify referral traffic and search tools to inspect index state. A crawler hit, an indexed page and a referred visit are different events.

DECISION PRINCIPLES

- Bots can be spoofed; verify when decisions are sensitive.
- Referral data may be incomplete.
- Annotate robots and CDN changes.
- Preserve raw observations before summarizing.

ACTION CHECK

- ☐ Review crawler logs.
- ☐ Track AI referrals.
- ☐ Check Search Console.
- ☐ Annotate releases.
- ☐ Report separately.

WORKING REGISTER

Capture the evidence, owner and next decision. Use one row per page, prompt, source or issue.

SIGNAL	SOURCE	DATE

DECISION / NOTES / NEXT REVIEW

Treat the completed page as a dated observation, not a permanent truth.

LAUNCH QA

Treat discovery changes as a release.

Before launch, test staging assumptions against production URLs. After launch, fetch priority pages, validate metadata and schema, verify sitemaps, inspect robots responses and monitor errors for at least one complete crawl cycle.

DECISION PRINCIPLES

- Production edge behavior is the final truth.
- Rollback criteria should be defined before release.
- Sample highest-value templates first.
- Recheck after cache expiration.

ACTION CHECK

- ☐ Define test URLs.
- ☐ Capture prelaunch state.
- ☐ Run production fetch.
- ☐ Validate outputs.
- ☐ Set rollback trigger.

WORKING REGISTER

Capture the evidence, owner and next decision. Use one row per page, prompt, source or issue.

TEST	RESULT	OWNER

DECISION / NOTES / NEXT REVIEW

Treat the completed page as a dated observation, not a permanent truth.

SOURCE NOTES + LIMITS

Keep the claim attached to its source and its limit.

A field manual should make the work repeatable without turning research into certainty. Record the original source, publication date, exact claim, population or platform studied, and the boundary between a documented finding and your team's interpretation.

DECISION PRINCIPLES

- Link to original documentation or research whenever it is available.
- Separate a platform requirement from a community convention or agency recommendation.
- Do not convert correlation, a case example or an illustrative score into a guarantee.
- Recheck crawler, schema and search guidance before implementation because platforms change.

ACTION CHECK

- ☐ Record the source URL and access date.
- ☐ Copy the exact claim in your own words.
- ☐ Note the methodology or platform scope.
- ☐ Write the practical implication separately.
- ☐ Set a date to revalidate the guidance.

EVIDENCE LEDGER

Use one row per claim. The evidence column should name the original document, not a secondary summary.

CLAIM	SOURCE	LIMIT

DECISION / NOTES / NEXT REVIEW

Treat the completed page as a dated observation, not a permanent truth.