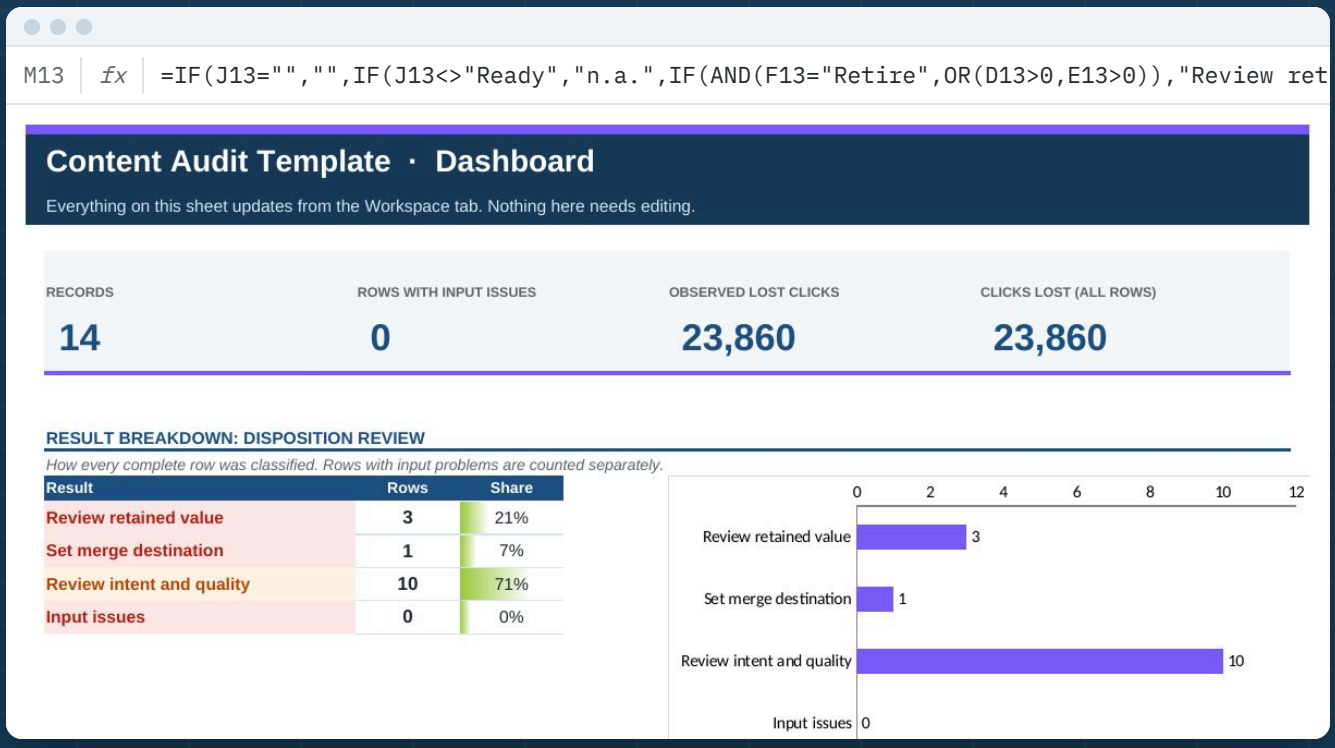
OptimizationTheory.com

Content SEO Toolkit, resource 20

Content Audit Template

Score every URL by lost clicks, conversions and links, choose keep, refresh, merge or retire, and catch the risky calls.

Built for the DataForSEO API: On-Page API



Field guide, v3.0, November 2026

Jourdan Rombough, optimizationtheory.com

What this template decides

What to do with each existing page (keep, refresh, merge or retire) and which decisions would throw away conversions, links or a merge destination.

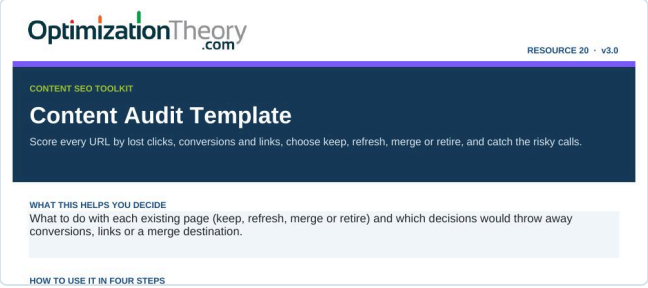
Content audits end in one of two places: a beautifully scored spreadsheet nobody acts on, or a mass deletion that takes good pages down with the bad. The difference is decision rules that protect value.

This content audit template records clicks before and now, conversions, referring domains, your chosen disposition and destination, and the hours to act. It calculates observed lost clicks and lost clicks per work hour, then reviews each decision: retiring a page with conversions or links is flagged Review retained value, a merge without a destination is flagged Set merge destination.

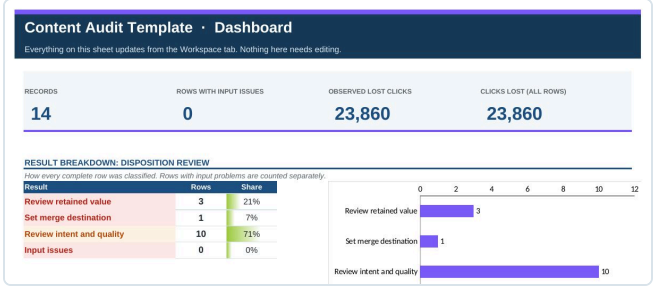
Who it's for

- Content teams pruning or refreshing a blog
- SEOs recovering from a helpful content or core update
- Ecommerce sites cleaning up old collections and guides
- Teams planning a migration who want to cut dead weight first

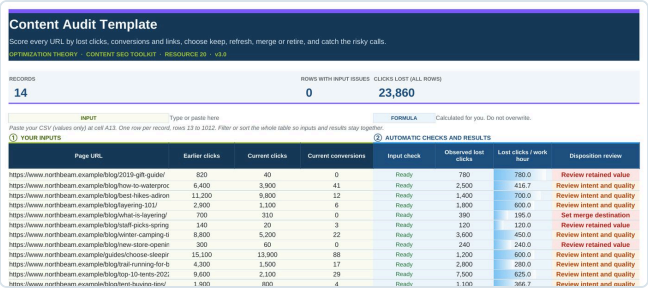
What's in the workbook



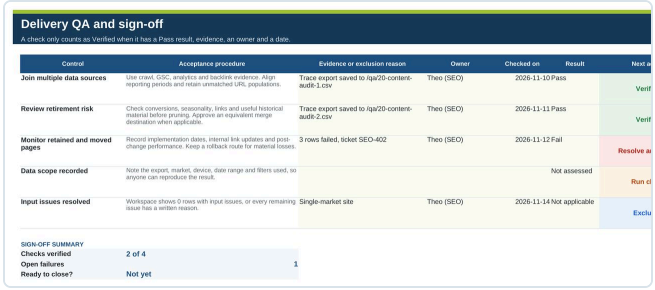
Start Here. Purpose, four-step setup and colour key.



Dashboard. KPIs, charts, Top 10 and an automatic action list.



Workspace. The working table, room for 1,000 rows.



Delivery QA. Evidence, owner and date for each validation step.

How the calculation works

Observed lost clicks = clicks before – clicks now (never negative). Lost clicks per hour = lost clicks ÷ effort. Disposition review flags Retire with conversions or links, and Merge with destination N/A.

The key formula, as written in the workbook

```
=IF(J13="","",IF(J13<>"Ready","n.a.",IF(AND(F13="Retire",OR(D13>0,E13>0)),"Review retained value",IF(AND(F13="Merge",G13="N/A"),"Set merge destination","Review intent and quality"))))
```

Result column	Plain-English formula	What it tells you
Observed lost clicks	MAX(0,Earlier clicks-Current clicks)	Positive loss only. Gains display zero lost clicks.
Lost clicks / work hour	Observed lost clicks ÷ Work hours	Triage of historical loss relative to estimated effort.
Disposition review	IF(AND(Disposition="Retire",OR(Current conversions>0,Referring domains>0)),"Review retained value",IF(AND(Disposition="Merge",Merge destination="N ÷ A"),"Set merge destination","Review intent and quality"))	Protects observed conversion/link value and requires a merge destination.

The results you'll see

Review retained value | Set merge destination | Review intent and quality

Green means the row meets the checks, red means fix it first, amber needs a human review and blue marks an opportunity. Rows with missing or out-of-range inputs show in the Input check column and are left out of the results until fixed.

How to use it, step by step

1

Build the inventory

Export every content URL with clicks for two comparable periods (e.g. this year vs last year), conversions and referring domains.

2

Pick a disposition

Keep, Refresh, Merge or Retire from the dropdown. Merges need a destination URL.

3

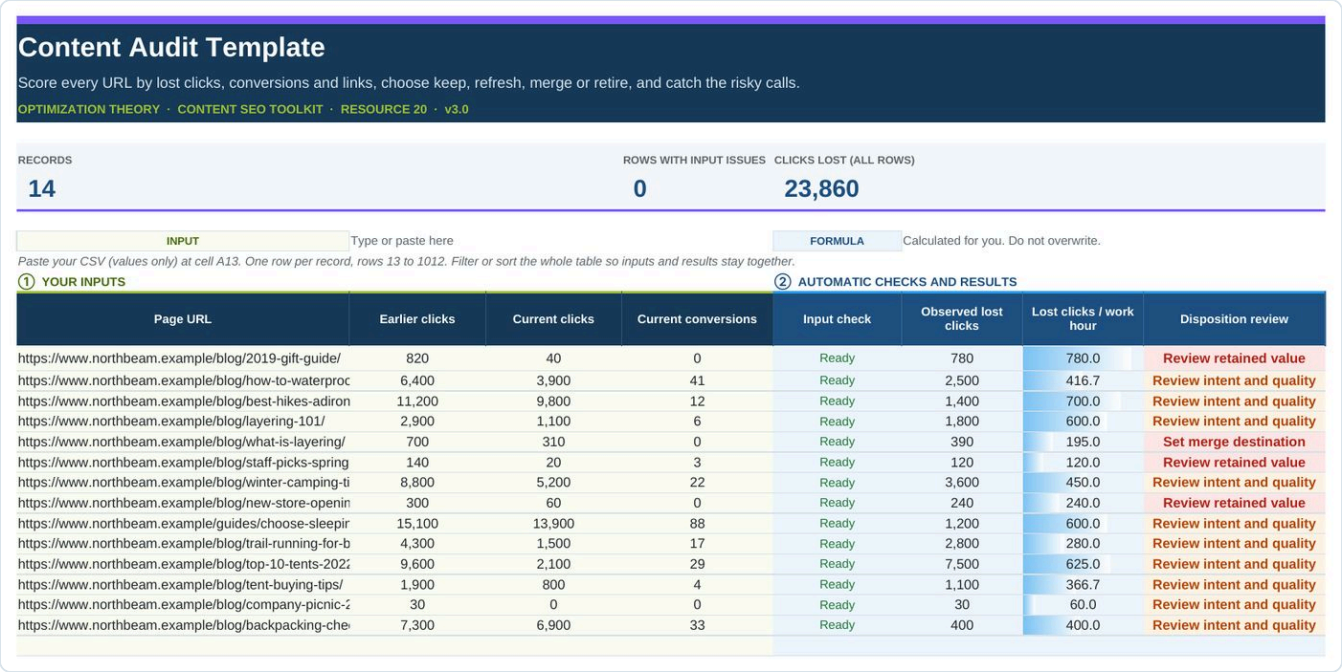
Estimate effort

Hours to refresh, merge or redirect. This ranks refresh work by lost clicks per hour.

4

Clear the review flags

Work the Dashboard action list before deleting anything. Then send merges and retirements to the redirect map.



Content Audit Template

Score every URL by lost clicks, conversions and links, choose keep, refresh, merge or retire, and catch the risky calls.

OPTIMIZATION THEORY · CONTENT SEO TOOLKIT · RESOURCE 20 · v3.0

RECORDS	ROWS WITH INPUT ISSUES	CLICKS LOST (ALL ROWS)
14	0	23,860

INPUT Type or paste here — FORMULA Calculated for you. Do not overwrite.

Paste your CSV (values only) at cell A13. One row per record, rows 13 to 1012. Filter or sort the whole table so inputs and results stay together.

① YOUR INPUTS — ② AUTOMATIC CHECKS AND RESULTS

Page URL	Earlier clicks	Current clicks	Current conversions	Input check	Observed lost clicks	Lost clicks / work hour	Disposition review
https://www.northbeam.example/blog/2019-gift-guide/	820	40	0	Ready	780	780.0	Review retained value
https://www.northbeam.example/blog/how-to-waterproc	6,400	3,900	41	Ready	2,500	416.7	Review intent and quality
https://www.northbeam.example/blog/best-hikes-adiron	11,200	9,800	12	Ready	1,400	700.0	Review intent and quality
https://www.northbeam.example/blog/layering-101/	2,900	1,100	6	Ready	1,800	600.0	Review intent and quality
https://www.northbeam.example/blog/what-is-layering/	700	310	0	Ready	390	195.0	Set merge destination
https://www.northbeam.example/blog/staff-picks-spring	140	20	3	Ready	120	120.0	Review retained value
https://www.northbeam.example/blog/winter-camping-ti	8,800	5,200	22	Ready	3,600	450.0	Review intent and quality
https://www.northbeam.example/blog/new-store-openin	300	60	0	Ready	240	240.0	Review retained value
https://www.northbeam.example/guides/choose-sleepir	15,100	13,900	88	Ready	1,200	600.0	Review intent and quality
https://www.northbeam.example/blog/trail-running-for-b	4,300	1,500	17	Ready	2,800	280.0	Review intent and quality
https://www.northbeam.example/blog/top-10-tents-202	9,600	2,100	29	Ready	7,500	625.0	Review intent and quality
https://www.northbeam.example/blog/tent-buying-tips/	1,900	800	4	Ready	1,100	366.7	Review intent and quality
https://www.northbeam.example/blog/company-picnic-2	30	0	0	Ready	30	60.0	Review intent and quality
https://www.northbeam.example/blog/backpacking-che	7,300	6,900	33	Ready	400	400.0	Review intent and quality

The Workspace tab with the worked example. Lime cells are inputs; blue cells are formulas.

Fill it with DataForSEO

This template is built to run on **DataForSEO On-Page API**: a crawl of your site: URLs, status codes, canonicals, inlinks and sitemap membership.

Most of the data columns fill automatically. Add the business inputs listed below, then paste.

1. Request the data

```
POST https://api.dataforseo.com/v3/on_page/task_post
[
  {
    "target": "yourdomain.com",
    "max_crawl_pages": 1000
  }
]
```

Post the crawl task, wait for it to finish, then request on_page/pages with {"id": "<task id>", "limit": 1000} and save that response.

2. Save the full JSON response

Save the complete response, not just the task ID, next to the template folder.

3. Convert it to the input CSV

The script in the Automation folder runs offline: no API call, no credentials.

```
python3 Automation/dataforseo_import.py import --template 20 --input response.json --output my-inputs.csv
```

Fills automatically	You add
Page URL	Earlier clicks, Current clicks, Current conversions, Referring domains, Disposition, Merge destination, Work hours

Source reference fills automatically with the task ID, endpoint, location, language, device and snapshot time, so every row is traceable. Paste the finished CSV at Workspace cell A13. Estimate the cost first with the DataForSEO Cost Calculator (template 38).

Input dictionary

Keep the CSV columns in this order and paste values at Workspace cell A13. A missing observation stays blank; use 0 only for a measured zero or a verified No.

CSV field	Column	Meaning and rule	Typical source
`url`	Page URL	Exact absolute URL. Keep case and query parameters unless a documented normalization rule applies.	DataForSEO: url
`clicks_before`	Earlier clicks	GSC clicks in a complete comparable window.	Your records or manual review
`clicks_now`	Current clicks	GSC clicks in the matching current window.	Your records or manual review
`conversions`	Current conversions	Observed conversions for the same current period.	Your records or manual review
`referring_domains`	Referring domains	Unique URL-level referring domains.	Your records or manual review
`disposition`	Disposition	Keep, Refresh, Merge or Retire after manual quality and relevance review.	Your records or manual review
`destination`	Merge destination	Required when merging. Otherwise enter N/A.	Your records or manual review
`effort_hours`	Work hours	Estimated implementation hours, greater than zero.	Your records or manual review
`source_ref`	Source reference	Task ID, export filename and observation scope. Retain the untouched source response separately. Optional.	DataForSEO: source_ref

The worked example

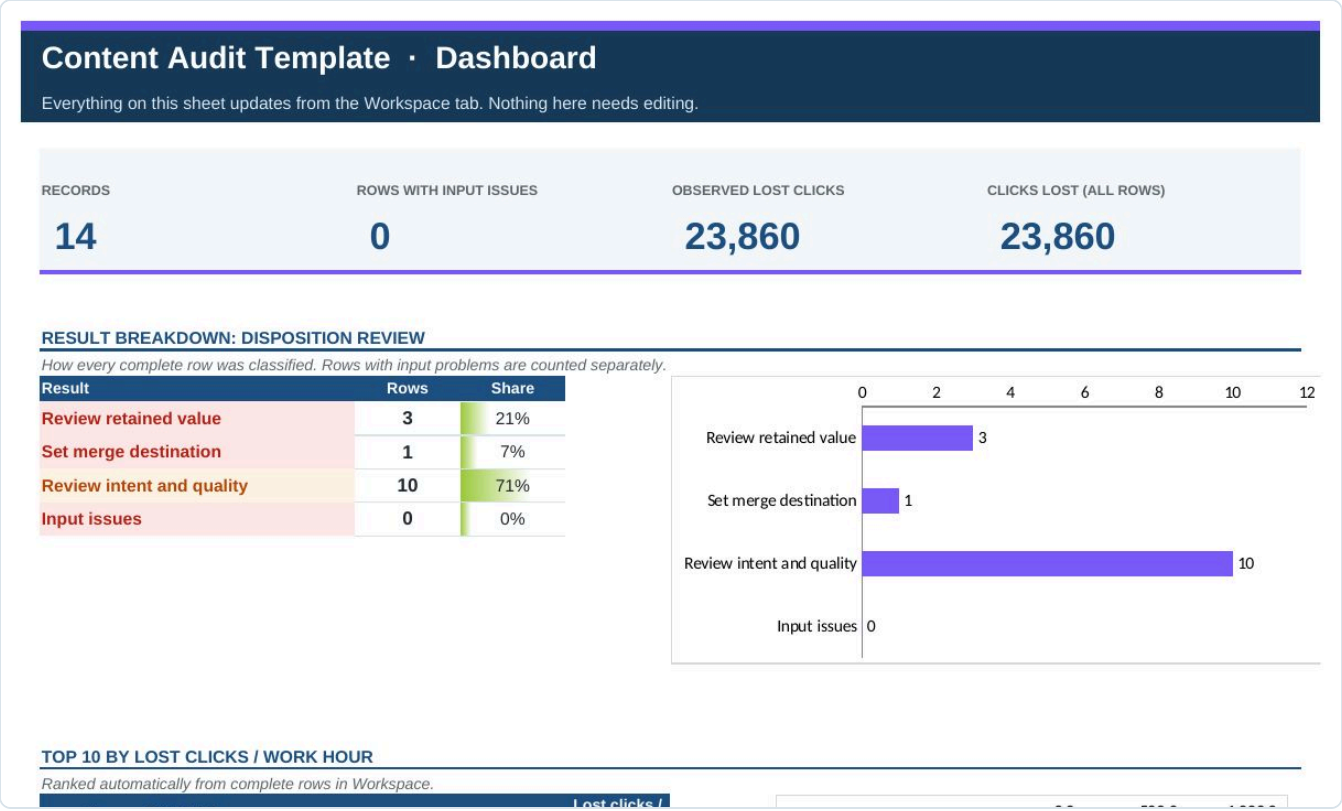
Every workbook ships filled with data from Northbeam Outdoor, a fictional outdoor-gear retailer. This one has 14 example rows.

14	0	23,860	23,860
Records	Rows with input issues	Observed lost clicks	Clicks lost (all rows)

The example's biggest loss is an old 'top tents of 2022' post that dropped 7,500 clicks and is a straightforward refresh. Three retirements are flagged because the pages still have conversions or links, and one merge has no destination yet.

Top 10 by lost clicks / work hour

#	Page URL	Lost clicks / work hour
1	https://www.northbeam.example/blog/2019-gift-guide/	780.0
2	https://www.northbeam.example/blog/best-hikes-adirondacks/	700.0
3	https://www.northbeam.example/blog/top-10-tents-2022/	625.0
4	https://www.northbeam.example/guides/choose-sleeping-bag/	600.0
5	https://www.northbeam.example/blog/layering-101/	600.0



The Dashboard updates automatically from the Workspace tab.

Reading the result honestly

Low traffic alone is insufficient evidence for deletion. Some pages serve conversions, support or legal needs.

Limits. Traffic changes can reflect demand or SERP shifts. Use resource 21 before attributing loss to content age.

Mistakes to avoid

Deleting low-traffic pages blindly. Low traffic doesn't mean low value. Pages with links or conversions should be merged or redirected.

Refreshing the date without the content. Changing the date without meaningful updates doesn't fix decay and can erode trust.

Merging without redirects. Every merged URL needs a 301 to the destination, or you lose its signals.

Tips from the field

Run the content decay template on Refresh candidates to understand why they declined.

Use the cannibalization checker to find merge pairs.

Schedule refreshes in the content calendar so the audit turns into work.

Questions people ask

What is a content audit?

A systematic review of existing content to decide what to keep, update, merge or remove, based on performance, quality and business value.

When should I delete content?

When a page has no traffic, no links, no conversions and no strategic purpose. Otherwise merge or redirect it.

How often should I run a content audit?

Annually for most sites, with quarterly checks on high-value pages.

What's the difference between refresh and merge?

Refresh improves a page in place. Merge combines overlapping pages into one stronger page and redirects the rest.

Templates that work well with this one

Content Decay Analysis Template

Separate lost impressions, lower CTR and falling demand, so you refresh the pages that really decayed.

Keyword Cannibalization Checker Template

Find queries splitting clicks across two URLs, check whether intent really overlaps and decide whether to consolidate.

Redirect Mapping Template

Map every old URL to its new home and verify each redirect: one permanent hop, a 200 page, no noindex, matching canonical.

SEO Content Calendar Template

Track owners, due dates and estimated vs completed hours, and flag overdue work automatically.

SEO Content Brief Template

A content brief built for Google and AI answers: real questions, original evidence, sources and a three-step approval workflow.

Site Migration URL Inventory Template

Inventory every legacy URL with its traffic, profit and links, assign a destination and catch risky retirements.

Read the full tutorial online: **optimizationtheory.com/download-view/content-audit-template/**
Get all six templates in the **Content SEO Toolkit**, or all 40 in the **Complete SEO & GEO Toolkit**.