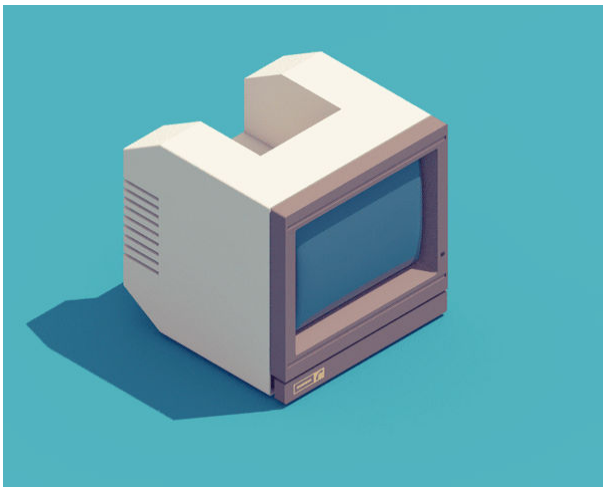
# Perform an on-page SEO audit on a page

**Last Updated / Reviewed:** Jan 10th, 2023
**Execution Time:** *~1-2 hours*



**Goal:** To execute a comprehensive SEO audit on any webpage within any site that clearly defines what's working, what's not, and action steps on what to work on first.

**Ideal Outcome:** The end-user receives a comprehensive audit that lets them know the state of a specific webpage is in, along with specific action steps on what to do next.

**Why this is important:** In order to fully optimize a web page for more organic traffic from search engines.

**Where this is done:** In your browser, Google docs, Google sheets, along with a handful of additional 3rd party tools.

**When this is done:** Anytime you need to audit a webpage to increase organic traffic.

**Who does this:** The person responsible for SEO, or client relationships, at your company. A freelancer or VA.

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## ☐ Environment Setup

### Get access to and download the tools you'll need for the audit.

1. Download or get access to the tools you'll need to perform the audit
    - Redirect Path Chrome Extension - Free
    - Google Tag Assistant Chrome Extension - Free
    - Ahrefs - Paid (can also use SEMRush, Open Site Explorer, or Majestic)

## ☐ Learn How This SOP Works

This audit assumes that you already know your keyword target and that the page should be optimized for.

For the example in this SOP, the primary keyword is "create an online course".

1. For all of the questions below, you will need to record your answer in the SEO Audit Worksheet:
    a. Make a copy of the spreadsheet by clicking "Export as Google Doc".
    b. Fill out the information at the top of the spreadsheet

| | |
|---|---|
| **Website name:** | CourseMinded |
| **Webpage URL:** | www.courseminded.com/how-to-create-an-online-course/ |
| **Prepared by:** | Tommy Griffith |
| **Date:** | 43009 |
| **Primary keyword:** | create an online course |

    c. This SOP includes a number of questions. For each of those questions, there is a matching row with the same question in the spreadsheet. You will need to go through each question and select the right item from the "Score" column.
        i. If the answer to the question is "Yes", then select the answer "Passed" from the "Score" column

| Category | Task | Score |
|---|---|---|
| On-Page Optimization | Is the primary keyword in the URL? | Not yet tested |
| | Is the URL short and user-friendly (human readable)? | Not yet tested |
| | Is the URL located in a subfolder and not subdomain? | Not yet tested |
| | Does the URL use hyphens and not underscores? | Not yet tested |
| | Is the page title optimized? | Not yet tested |
| | Is the meta description optimized? | Not yet tested |
| | Is the H1 tag optimized? | Not yet tested |
| | Are the images optimized? | Not yet tested |
| | Is the primary keyword mentioned at least 2-3 times in the page? | Not yet tested |
| | Is the page not over-optimized? | Not yet tested |
| | Does the page include Latent Semantic Index keywords? | Not yet tested |
| | Is the page free of broken links? | Not yet tested |

ii. If the answer to the question is “No”, then select the answer “Needs work” from the “Score” column

| Category | Task | Score |
|---|---|---|
| On-Page Optimization | Is the primary keyword in the URL? | Not yet tested |
| | Is the URL short and user-friendly (human readable)? | Not yet tested |
| | Is the URL located in a subfolder and not subdomain? | Not yet tested |
| | Does the URL use hyphens and not underscores? | Not yet tested |
| | Is the page title optimized? | Not yet tested |
| | Is the meta description optimized? | Not yet tested |
| | Is the H1 tag optimized? | Not yet tested |
| | Are the images optimized? | Not yet tested |
| | Is the primary keyword mentioned at least 2-3 times in the page? | Not yet tested |
| | Is the page not over-optimized? | Not yet tested |
| | Does the page include Latent Semantic Index keywords? | Not yet tested |
| | Is the page free of broken links? | Not yet tested |

iii. If, for some reason, the question does not apply to the page being audited, select the answer “N/A” from the “Score” column

| Category | Task | Score |
|---|---|---|
| On-Page Optimization | Is the primary keyword in the URL? | Not yet tested |
| | Is the URL short and user-friendly (human readable)? | Not yet tested |
| | Is the URL located in a subfolder and not subdomain? | Not yet tested |
| | Does the URL use hyphens and not underscores? | Not yet tested |
| | Is the page title optimized? | Not yet tested |
| | Is the meta description optimized? | Not yet tested |
| | Is the H1 tag optimized? | Not yet tested |
| | Are the images optimized? | Not yet tested |
| | Is the primary keyword mentioned at least 2-3 times in the page? | Not yet tested |
| | Is the page not over-optimized? | Not yet tested |
| | Does the page include Latent Semantic Index keywords? | Not yet tested |
| | Is the page free of broken links? | Not yet tested |

2. Each question in this SOP includes a detailed description of how to test and answer.

3. The audit will be complete when all the questions in the spreadsheet are answered.

# ☐ On-Page Optimization Audit

## Check the page URL

**Important**: If the URL being audited is the root domain (like the homepage), then this does not apply. You can skip these question and write down N/A in the spreadsheet.

1. Is the primary keyword in the URL?
    a. Look at the URL and check if the primary keyword is included (this does not include keywords in the domain name)
        - This is an example of a page that includes the primary keyword in the URL

          www.courseminded.com/how-to-create-an-online-course/
        - This is an example of a page that does not include the primary keyword in the URL

          www.courseminded.com/six-figure-business/

2. Is the URL short and user-friendly (human readable)?
    a. Look at the URL and check if it's short (under 6-7 words) and easy to read and understand
        - This is an example of a short and user-friendly URL. A good rule of thumb for this is to ask yourself "*would I be able to remember this 5 minutes from now?*"

          www.courseminded.com/how-to-create-an-online-course/
        - This is an example of a long and user-unfriendly URL

          www.courseminded.com/blog-post-dwenwejnd323uy2guy4g71233wbhjd/

3. Is the URL located in a subfolder and **not** subdomain?
    a. Look at the URL and check if it's a subdomain or not
        - These are examples of URLs that are **not** in subdomains

          www.courseminded.com/how-to-create-an-online-course/

          www.courseminded.com/blog/how-to-create-an-online-course/

- This is an example of a URL that **is** using a subdomain

  blog.courseminded.com/how-to-create-an-online-course/

4. Does the URL use hyphens and **not** underscores?
   a. Look at the URL and check if it uses hyphens instead of underscores
      - This is an example of a URL that uses hyphens

        www.courseminded.com/how-to-create-an-online-course/
      - This is an example of a URL that uses underscores

        www.courseminded.com/how_to_create_an_online_course/

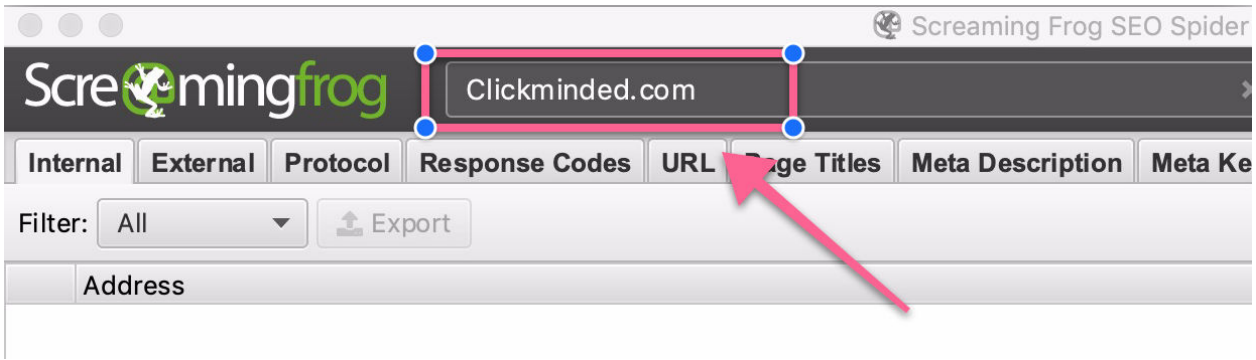
## Check on-page elements

To test on-page elements we will use a free onsite SEO tool called Screaming Frog. You can download it for Windows or Mac here.

Screaming Frog is a website crawler that helps you improve onsite SEO, by extracting data & auditing for common SEO issues.

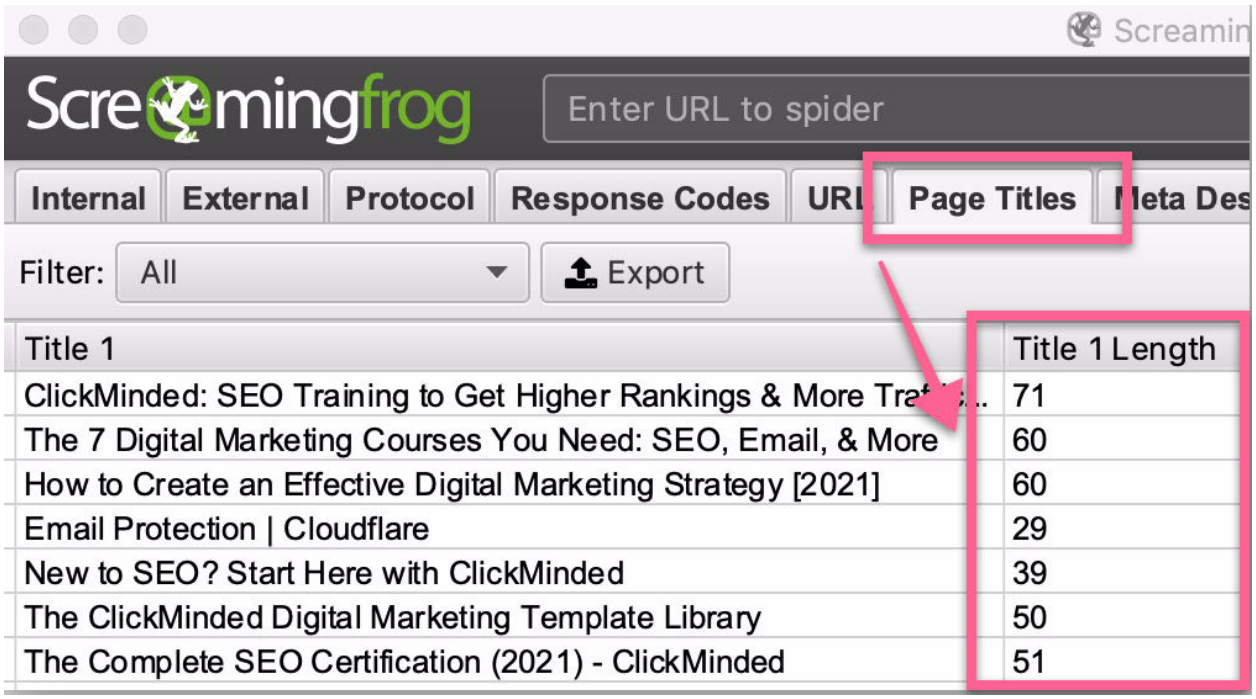
**Note:** The free version will allow you to crawl a maximum of 500 pages of your website. You can upgrade to a paid license if you want to remove the limit.

Once you've downloaded the tool. Open it and add your website URL to the search field.

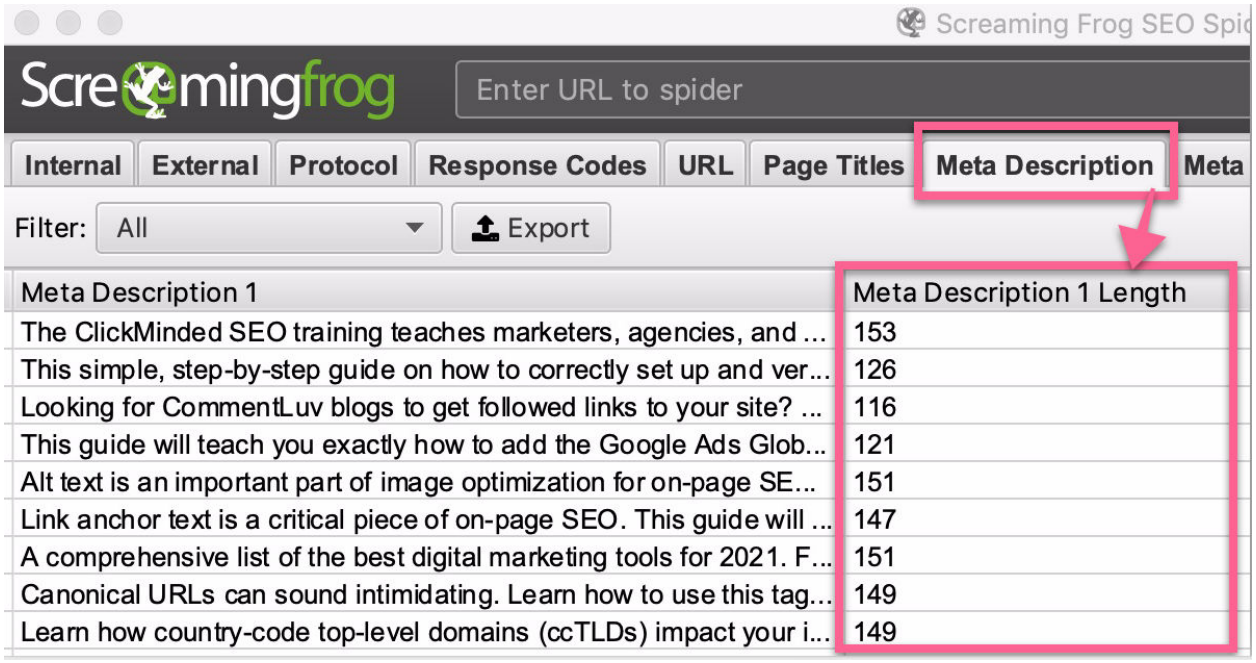



1. Is the page title optimized?

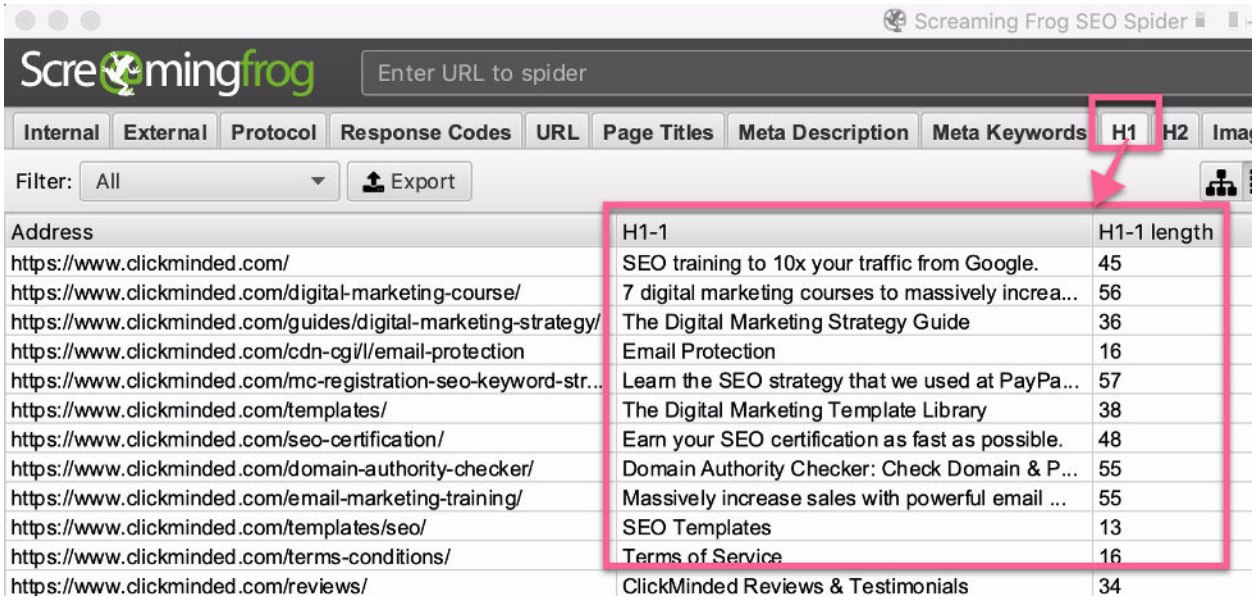
a. Click the “Page Titles” tab and look for the “Title 1” columns, this is the title that shows up on Google search results.
   - Check that the title is under 70 characters
   - Check that the primary keyword is included in the title



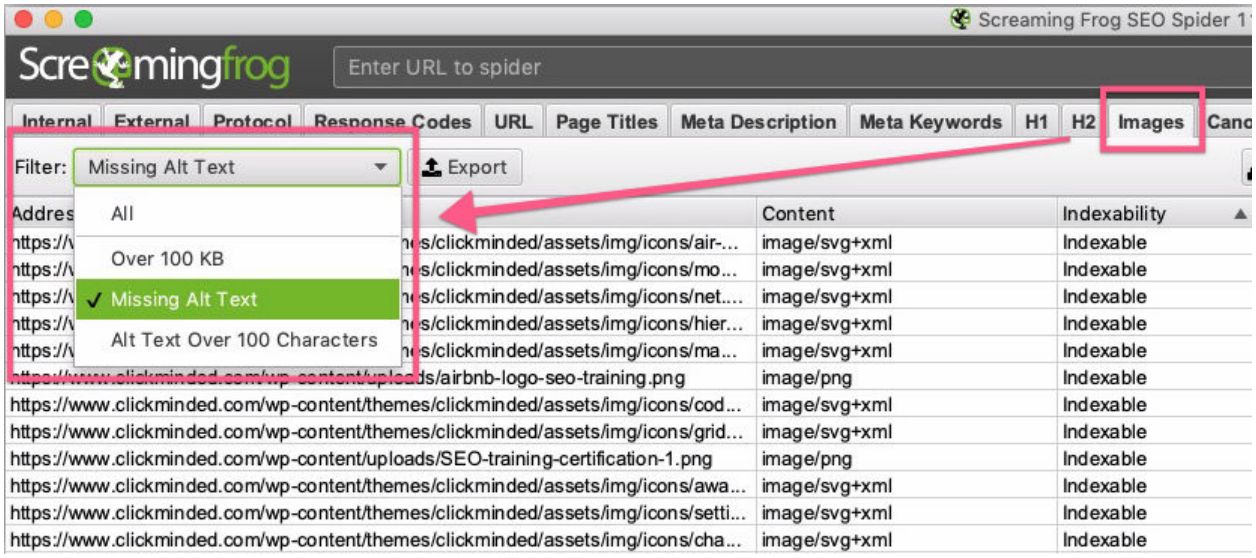

2. Is the meta description optimized?
   a. Click on the “Meta Description” tab. “Meta Description” is the description that goes with your page title in the Google search result. Check for **both** length and keyword
      - Check that the meta description is under 160 characters
      - Check that the primary keyword is included in the meta description




3. Is the H1 tag optimized?
    a. Click on the “H1” tab. Look for the “H1-1” column result and check for **both** number of H1 tags and keyword
        - Check that there is only ONE H1 tag in the page
        - Check that the primary keyword is included in the H1 tag



4. Are the images optimized?
    a. Make sure all your images have an alt text so that Google and other search engines can identify what these images are about. Click on the "Images" tab and select from the filter "Missing Alt Test" and you will find a list of images that do not have an alt text. Make




    b. Check that all the images have descriptive and user-friendly filenames. A good rule of thumb is to ask yourself "*can I guess what this image is if I just read the filename?*"

        - This is an example of a user-friendly filename

http://www.clickminded.com/wp-content/uploads/clickminded-udemy-reviews.png

        - This is an example of a user-UNFRIENDLY filename

http://www.clickminded.com/wp-content/uploads/Screen-Shot-2014-12-23-at-8.04.30-PM.png

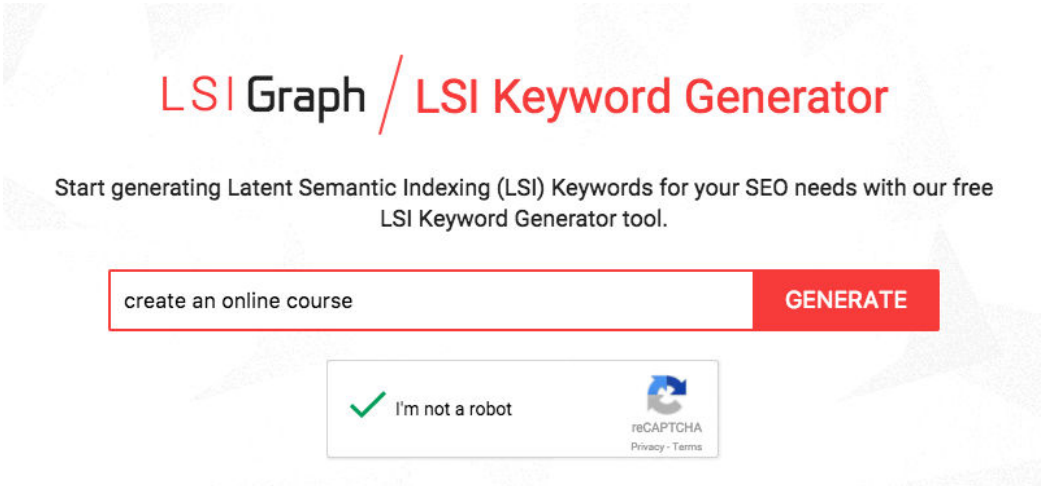
## Check keywords in the body copy

5. Is the primary keyword mentioned at least 2-3 times in the page?
    a. Open the page in your browser and hit command+F in your keyboard if you're using a Mac, or control+F if you're using a Windows computer. This will open the browser's "find" search box.

    b. Type in the primary keyword and check that it's included at least 2 or 3 times.

6. Is the page **not** over-optimized?
    a. Follow the same process described in the previous step. The primary keyword should not be included more than 8-9 times.

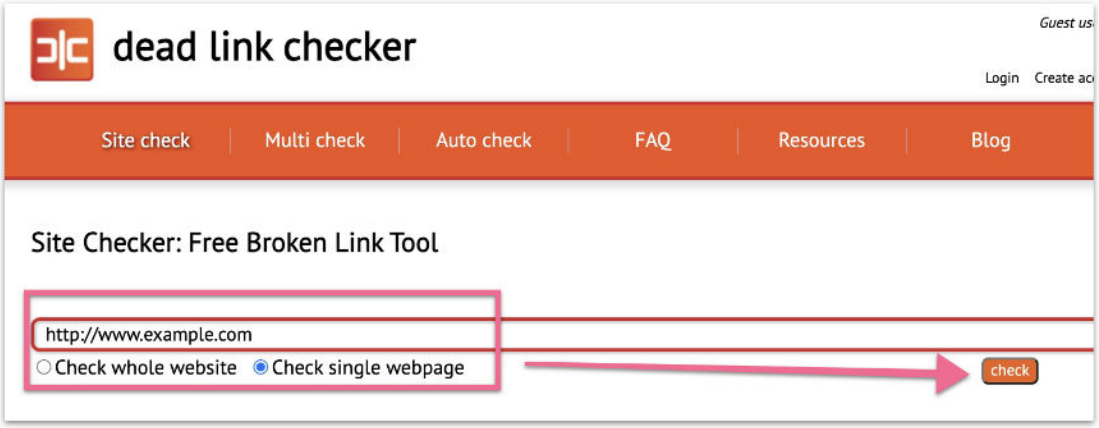
7. Does the page include Latent Semantic Index keywords?
    a. Open LSIGraph and input the primary keyword




    b. Look for the 2-3 keywords that are most relevant to the topic of the page
    c. Use the "find" search box in your browser to check if the page includes those keywords

## Check links on the page

8. Is the page free of broken links?
    a. Use the *Broken Link Checker* to check for broken links on the page.

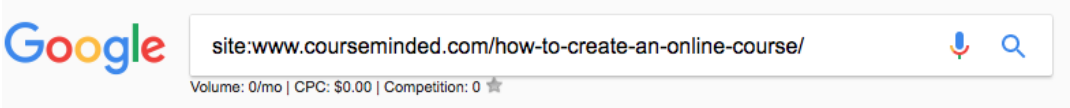



    b. If there are broken links in the page, it'll show the error report underneath the page.

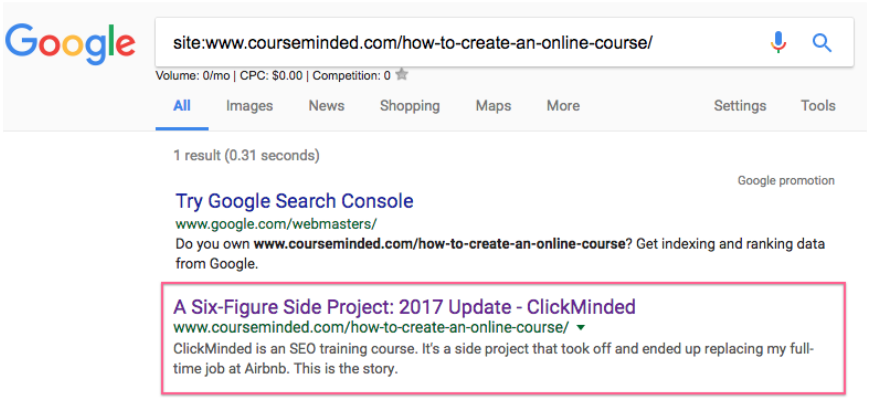
[Audit continues below]

## ☐ Technical Optimization Audit

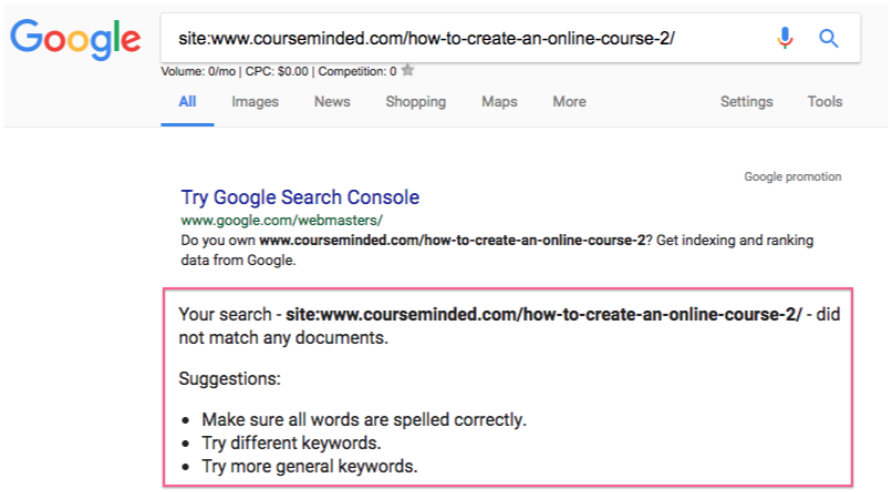
1. Is the page indexed?
    a. Open Google.com
    b. Type 'site:' followed by the page URL in the search box



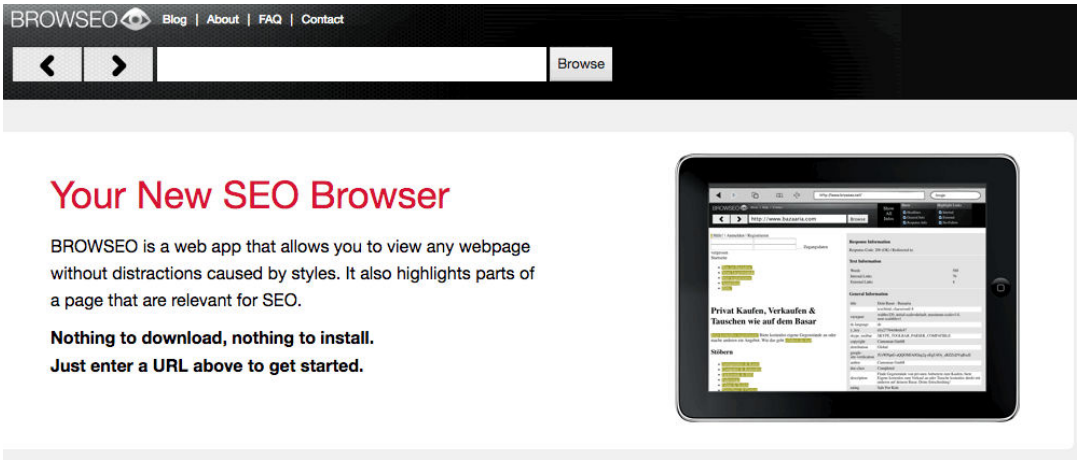

    c. Hit "enter" and check the search results.
        - If the page is indexed, it will show up in the results




        - If the page is NOT indexed, it will not show up in the search results



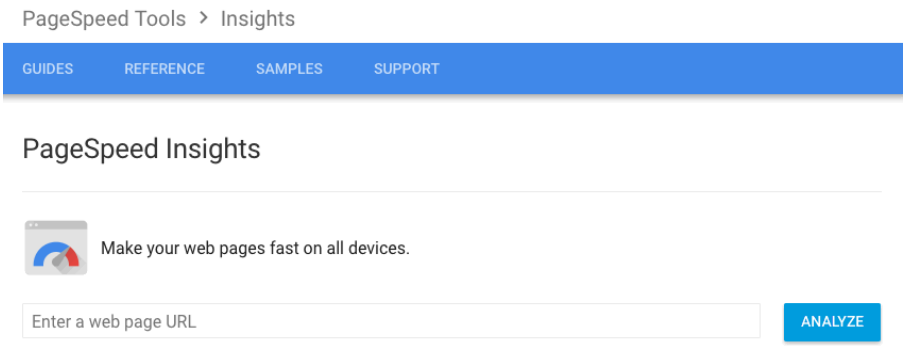
2. Does the page have enough crawlable content and is all of if accessible to search engines?
    a. Open Browseo and input the page URL



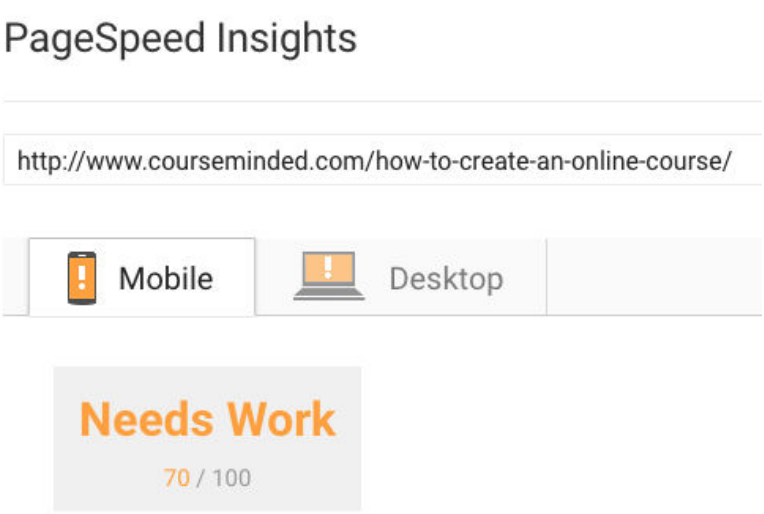

    b. Under “Text Information”, check that there are at least 100 words on the page

    c. Check that all of the content that you can see on the page is also visible to search engines (i.e. everything on the page also shows up on Browseo’s results)—it doesn’t matter if it doesn’t look the same or if it isn’t in the same order, Browseo doesn’t load the page styles.

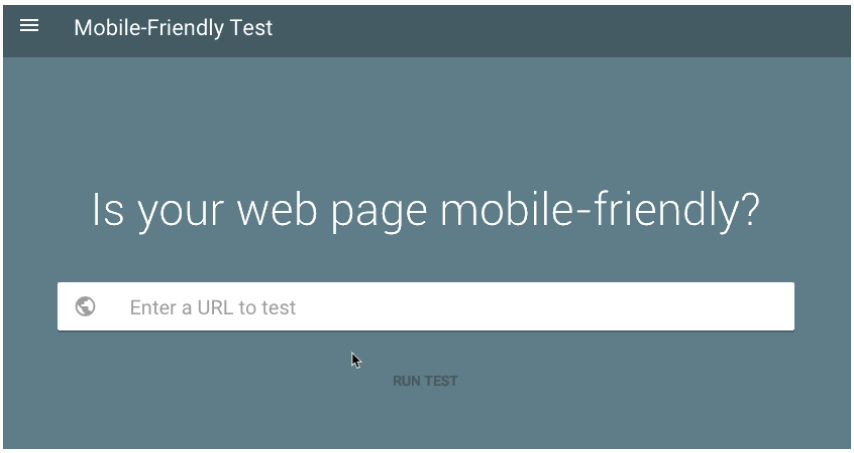
3. Does the page load fast?
    a. Open [Google's PageSpeed Insights](#) tool and input the page URL



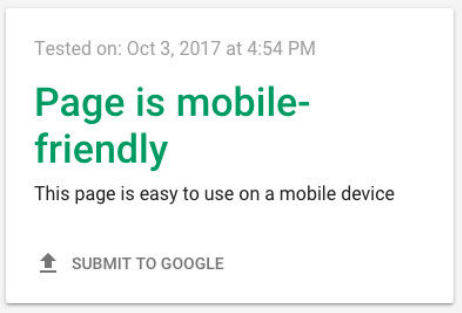

    b. Check that the page scores 70 or above for mobile devices. **Don't mind Google's classification for "Good", "Needs work", and "Poor."**




4. Is the page mobile-friendly/responsive?
    a. Open Google's Mobile-Friendly Test and input the page URL

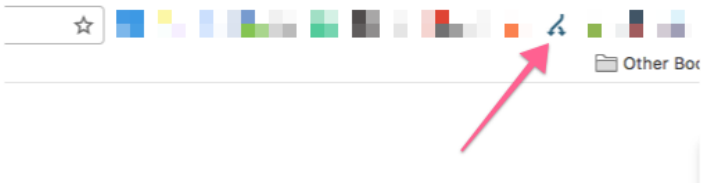



    b. Check if the page is mobile-friendly in the results

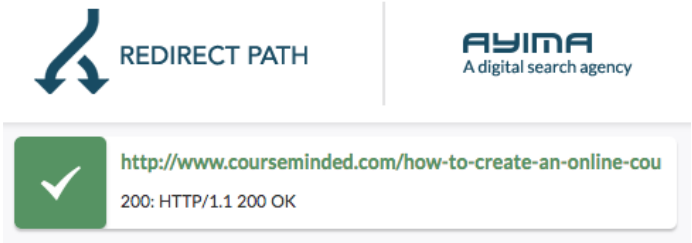



5. If the page URL free of redirect issues?

a. Type the **exact** URL of the page in Chrome and load it
b. Click on the Redirect Path Chrome Extension




- Check that the page loads **without** 302 redirects or redirect chains



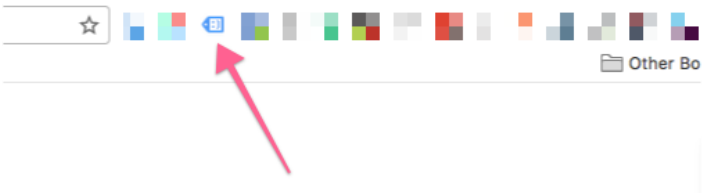

- This is an example of a 302 redirect (not optimal)

- This is an example of a redirect chain (more than 1 redirect - not optimal)

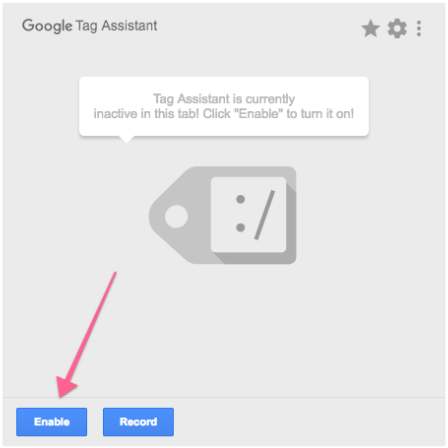
- Any other type of redirect that is not a 301 is also not optimal

6. Is Google Analytics properly tracking sessions on the page?

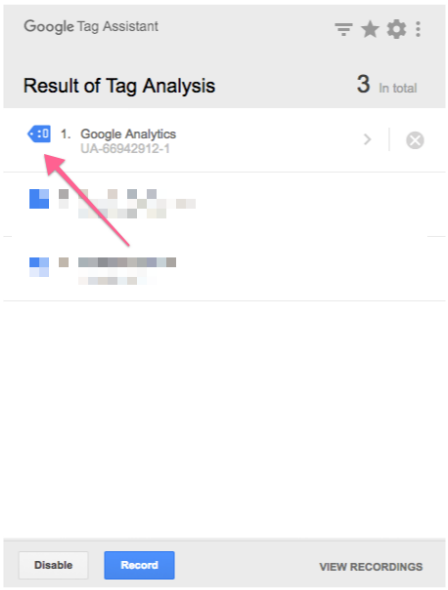
a. Open the page URL using Google Chrome
b. Click on the Google Tag Assistant Chrome Extension



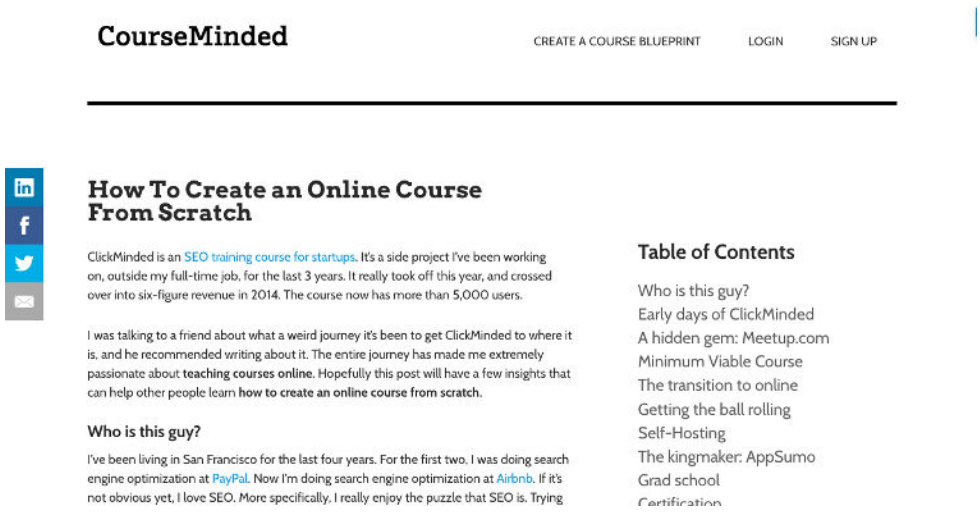

c. Click on “Enable”



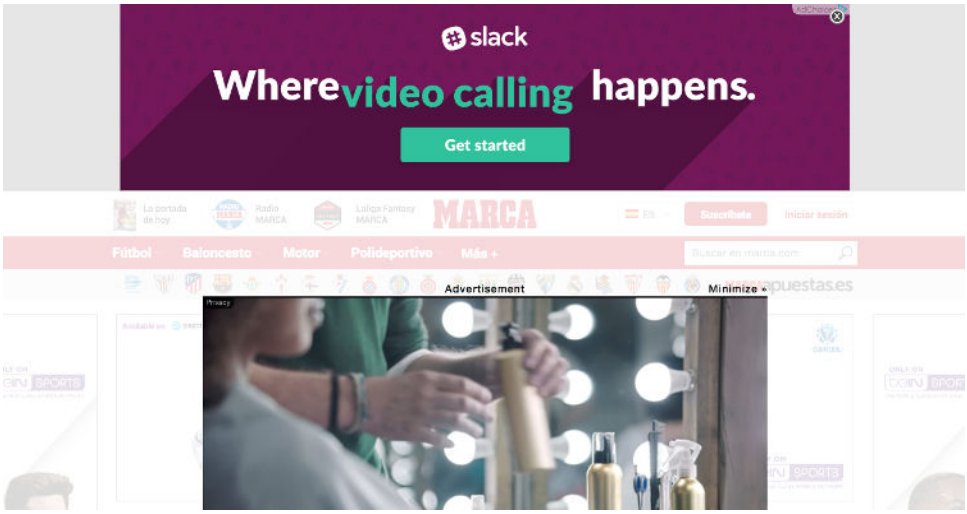

d. Refresh the page and click on the Google Tag Assistant Chrome Extension again
e. Check that Google Analytics is installed on the page and the icon next to it is either green or blue




7. If there are ads in the page, are they user friendly?
    a. Check that any ads are **not** above the fold (i.e. the top area of the page that's visible when the page loads) and do not obstruct viewing the content of the page
        - Here's an example of a page without ads above the fold




        - Here's an example of a page with a ton of ads above the fold and that obstruct viewing the content of the page

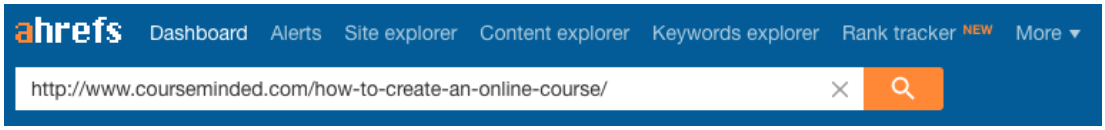



[Audit continues below]

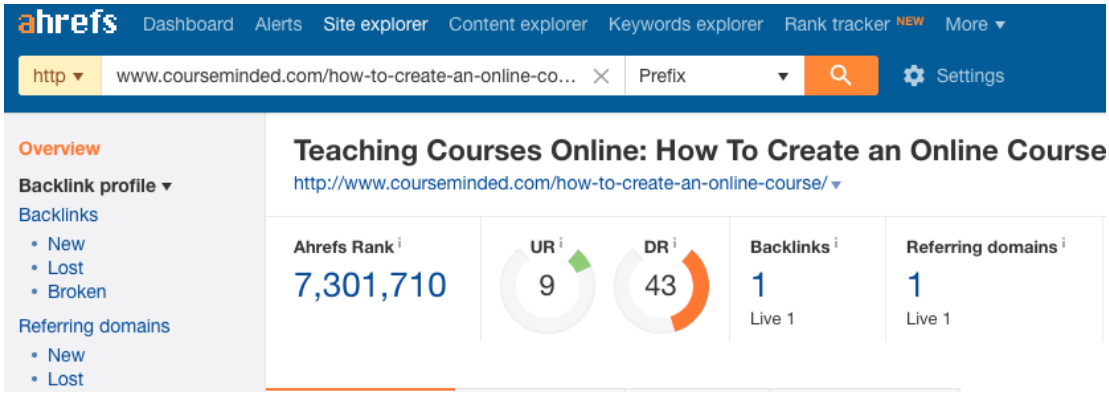
## ☐ Off-Page Optimization Audit

For the off-page optimization audit we will use ahrefs to find and analyze backlinks, but the same can be accomplished using tools like SEMRush, Open Site Explorer, or Majestic.

To start, open ahrefs and enter the page URL in the search box

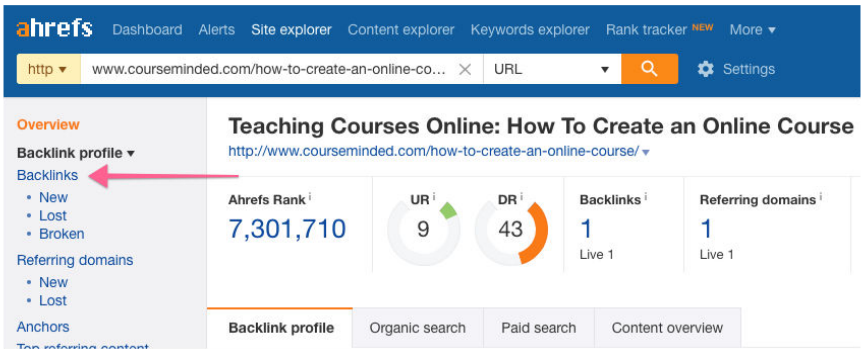



After searching, make sure that the selector next to the search box is set to “Exact URL”

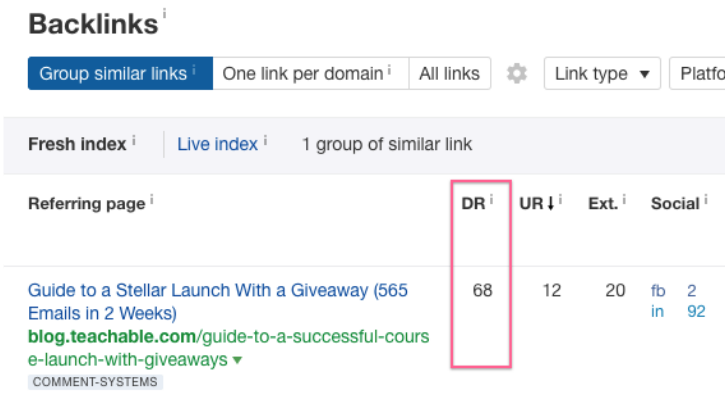



**Important**: If there are no links to the page URL you are auditing, you can skip all of the following questions, mark them all as “Needs work” on the spreadsheet, and add a note mentioning “No backlinks.”

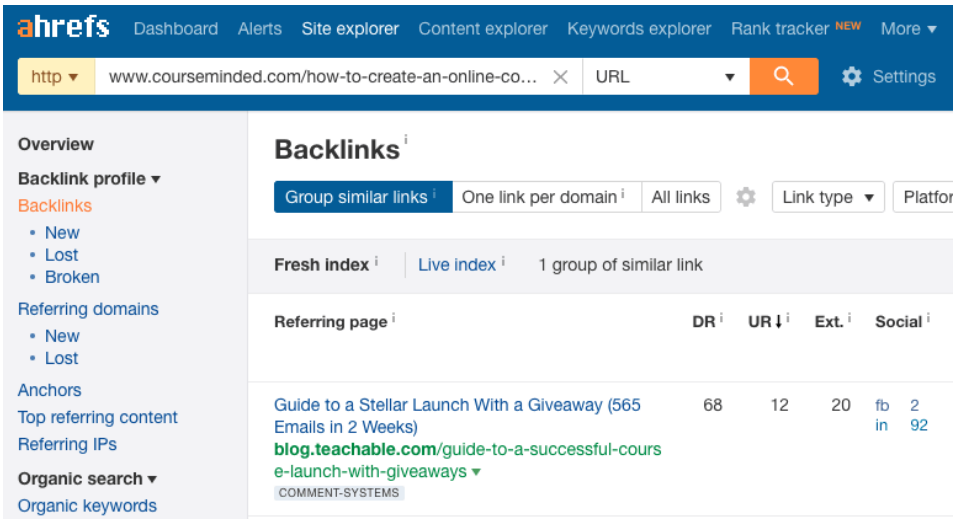
1. Do the backlinks come from trustworthy sites?
    a. Click on the “Backlinks” option on the left sidebar




b. Check that at least half of the backlinks come from sites with DR (domain ratings) above 30

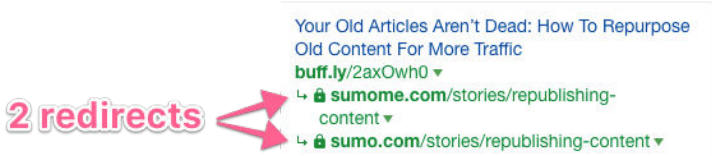



2. Are the backlinks from contextually relevant sites?
    a. Stay in the “Backlinks” section and click on the top 10 links listed on the page to open those URLs

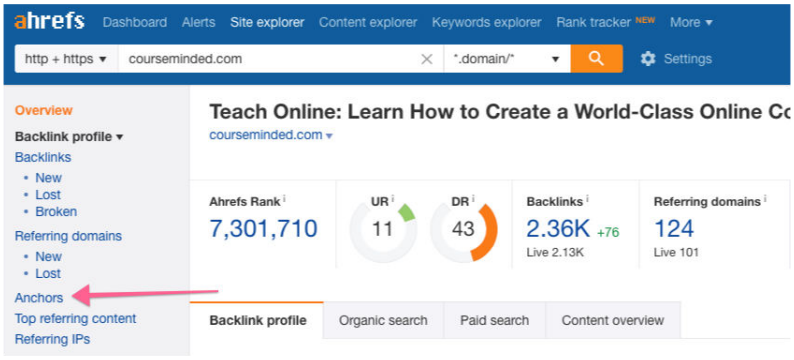



b. Check that the site linking back has a somewhat similar or relevant topic to the topic on the page you are auditing
    - Example of an contextually relevant site: A site about start a business or entrepreneurship or education linking to a page about creating an online course.
    - Example of a non-contextually relevant site: A site that sells construction equipment linking to a page about creating an online course.
c. At least 50% of the top 10 links should come from contextually relevant sites.

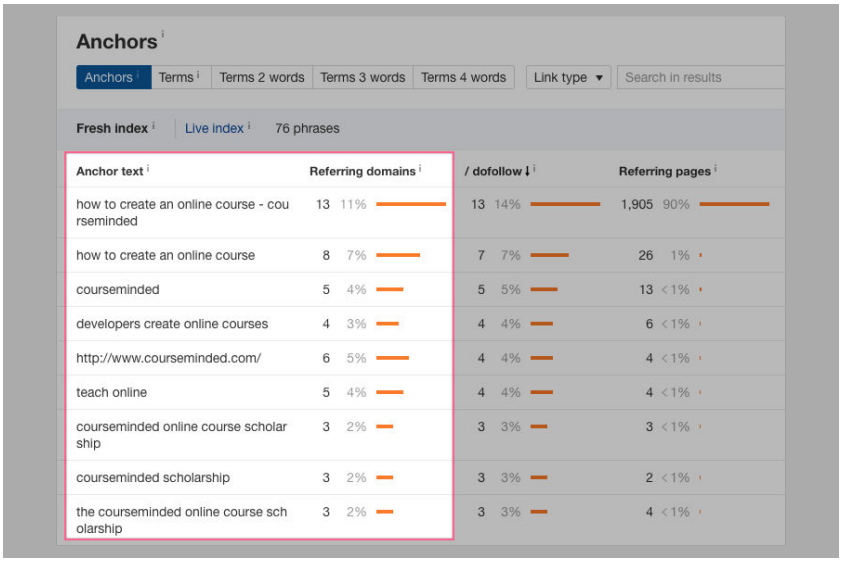
3. Are the backlinks NOT going through redirect chains?
    a. Stay in the “Backlinks” tab and check that no more than 20% of all backlinks pointing to the page go through more than 1 redirect (i.e. if there are 10 backlinks, only up to 2 links can go through more than 1 redirect)
        - This is how a redirect chain (more than 1 redirect) looks like under the “Anchor and backlink” column




4. Is anchor text distribution natural?
    a. Click on the “Anchors” link in the left sidebar

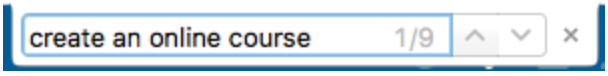



b. We will focus only on the “Anchor text” and the “Referring domains” columns




c. Use cmd+F in a Mac or control+F on a Windows computer, to open the “Find” search box.

d. Type the primary target keyword in the search box




e. Add up the percentages of the “Referring domains” column for Anchor texts that contain the exact primary target keyword (the find function should’ve highlighted them)

| Anchor text | Referring domains | |
|---|---|---|
| how to create an online course - courseminded | 13 | 11% |
| how to create an online course | 8 | 7% |
| courseminded | 5 | 4% |
| developers create online courses | 4 | 3% |
| http://www.courseminded.com/ | 6 | 5% |
| teach online | 5 | 4% |
| courseminded online course scholarship | 3 | 2% |
| courseminded scholarship | 3 | 2% |
| the courseminded online course scholarship | 3 | 2% |
| www.courseminded.com | 3 | 2% |

f. The total percentage of referring domains linking with the exact primary target keyword should be lower than 50%.