

THE COMPLETE 32-FACTOR AUDIT

The HEO Checklist.

Hybrid Engine Optimization, scored.

32 factors. 5 groups. The same audit framework Adsomia uses on every paid client engagement — open and free for you to run on your own site this afternoon.

BY HASSAN RAWTHER

Founder, Adsomia

What is HEO?

HEO stands for **Hybrid Engine Optimization**. It's our integrated methodology that combines three disciplines into one practice:

SEO **Search Engine Optimization** — found on Google.

GEO **Generative Engine Optimization** — powered by ChatGPT, Gemini, Claude, Perplexity.

AEO **Answer Engine Optimization** — featured snippets, voice queries, People Also Ask.

HEO **Hybrid Engine Optimization** — all three. Working as one system. Measured together.

Why does HEO matter now?

In 2026, more than 40% of search-style queries happen inside AI assistants — ChatGPT, Gemini, Perplexity, Claude — not on Google.com. Traditional SEO was built for one channel. HEO is built for all the channels where buyers now ask questions.

A site that ranks #1 on Google but is invisible inside ChatGPT will lose to a competitor that's decent on Google AND cited by AI engines. The math is simple: the buyer doesn't care which channel found you. They care that you showed up when they asked.

The HEO promise

HEO doesn't replace SEO. It absorbs it. Everything you already do for Google still matters — but it's not enough on its own anymore. This checklist shows you the full picture: 32 factors, organised into 5 groups, scored out of 100.

How to use this checklist

1. Walk through it once, end to end.

Don't skip ahead. Each group builds on the previous one. SEO Foundation has to be solid before AI/Generative work pays off.

2. Tick the boxes you genuinely pass.

Be honest. "Sort of" is "no." Either the factor is there, working, and measurable — or it's not. Half-credit hides problems.

3. Total your score.

Each factor has a point weight. Add them up. The scoring grid on the last page shows what your total means and what to fix first.

4. Pick the top 3 highest-weight factors you failed.

Don't try to fix everything. Start with the heaviest unchecked items — they have the most leverage. Most sites can move 20-30 points in 4-6 weeks just by fixing 3-5 high-weight factors.

Want us to do this for you?

We run this exact 32-factor audit as our paid **HEO Audit & Roadmap** service. We give you a written report, a 60-minute walkthrough, and a 90-day roadmap. Founding-client price ₹1.25L. See adsomia.com/packages/heo-audit-roadmap.

Or check your site in 60 seconds with our free tool: adsomia.com/tools/heo-checker

GROUP 1

SEO Foundation

8 factors · 25 points · The basics that still matter, even in the age of AI search.

1. Crawlability

3 pts

What: Search engines and AI crawlers can reach every page that should be public.

How to check: Open robots.txt — confirm no critical directories are blocked. Run a free crawl with Screaming Frog (500 URL limit free).

Why it matters: *If crawlers can't reach you, nothing else matters. AI engines especially obey robots.txt strictly.*



2. Sitemap.xml

2 pts

What: Up-to-date XML sitemap submitted in Google Search Console.

How to check: Visit yoursite.com/sitemap.xml. Confirm it lists every important page and references the canonical URL of each.

Why it matters: *Sitemap is the cheapest insurance for fast indexing of new pages.*



3. Mobile-friendly

3 pts

What: Site renders cleanly on a phone with no horizontal scroll, no tap-target overlap.

How to check: Open your homepage on a phone in airplane mode (slow network sim). Test 3 most important pages.

Why it matters: *Google has been mobile-first since 2019. AI engines penalise sites that fail core web vitals.*



4. Page speed (Core Web Vitals)

4 pts

What: LCP under 2.5s, CLS under 0.1, INP under 200ms — measured on real users.

How to check: Run pagespeed.web.dev. Check both mobile and desktop. Aim for green on all three CWV.

Why it matters: *Slow sites lose 40%+ of mobile traffic before content even loads. AI crawlers de-prioritise slow pages.*



5. HTTPS + valid SSL

2 pts

What: Every page served over HTTPS with a valid, non-expired certificate.

How to check: Visit your site and check for the padlock. Run ssllabs.com/sslltest for full grade.

Why it matters: *No HTTPS = automatic distrust signal in 2026. Most browsers block HTTP forms outright.*



6. Title tags

3 pts

What: Every page has a unique title tag, 30-60 characters, with the primary keyword.

How to check: Run a Screaming Frog crawl. Sort by Title 1 column. Look for blanks, duplicates, over-length.

Why it matters: *Title is still the #1 on-page ranking factor. AI engines use it as the primary citation label.*



7. Meta descriptions

2 pts

What: Every important page has a unique meta description, 120-160 characters, with intent and CTA.

How to check: Same Screaming Frog crawl — Meta Description column. Look for missing or duplicate.

Why it matters: *Meta description doesn't directly rank, but it controls click-through from both Google and AI overviews.*



8. Internal linking

6 pts

What: Important pages have 5+ contextual internal links from related pages with descriptive anchor text.

How to check: Pick your most important page. Search "site:yoursite.com [page topic]" — count internal mentions.

Why it matters: *Internal linking is how authority flows. AI engines build their topic graphs from internal link patterns.*



GROUP 2

AI / Generative Engine

10 factors · 38 points · The factors that decide whether ChatGPT, Gemini, Perplexity, and Claude cite you.

9. FAQPage schema

6 pts

What: FAQPage JSON-LD schema on key pages, with answers AI can lift directly.

How to check: View source of your service pages. Search for "FAQPage" or use schema.org validator.

Why it matters: Highest-leverage AI win in 2026. AI engines lift FAQ answers verbatim into their responses.



10. Organization + knowsAbout

5 pts

What: Organization schema with knowsAbout property listing every topic you serve.

How to check: Check homepage source for Organization JSON-LD. Confirm knowsAbout array with 8-15 topics.

Why it matters: knowsAbout tells AI engines what you're an authority on. This is how you get recommended.



11. /llms.txt

4 pts

What: A /llms.txt file at the root telling AI crawlers who you are and how to cite you.

How to check: Visit yoursite.com/llms.txt. Should return a markdown-formatted page, not a 404.

Why it matters: New 2024-2025 standard. Sites that publish llms.txt get cited 2-3x more by AI engines.



12. Author / E-E-A-T schema

4 pts

What: Person schema for authors, with credentials, social profiles, and affiliations linked.

How to check: On any blog/article page, view source. Look for Person JSON-LD with sameAs links.

Why it matters: AI engines prioritise content from credentialed humans over anonymous content farms.



13. HowTo schema

3 pts

What: HowTo JSON-LD schema on guides and tutorials with numbered steps.

How to check: View source of your "how to" pages. Search for HowTo schema.

Why it matters: Get featured in Google How-To carousels and AI step-by-step responses.



14. Definitive content (glossary)

4 pts

What: Dedicated definition pages for every important term in your category.

How to check: Visit yoursite.com/glossary or yoursite.com/dictionary. If 404, you don't have one.

Why it matters: When users ask "what is X?", AI engines pull from definition-style pages first.



15. Citable statistics

3 pts

What: Original statistics, surveys, or research with clear citation-ready format.

How to check: Search your site for "% of" or "in our survey" — count concrete data points.

Why it matters: *AI engines love citable numbers. One good stat can earn 100+ AI citations per month.*



16. Comparison pages

3 pts

What: Pages that compare your category to alternatives ("X vs Y", "best X for Y").

How to check: Search "vs" within your site. Confirm at least 5 comparison pages.

Why it matters: *AI engines pull comparisons directly when users ask "which is better."*



17. Conversational tone

3 pts

What: Content reads like a knowledgeable human answering a question, not a keyword-stuffed page.

How to check: Read your top 3 pages aloud. If you trip on jargon or marketing-speak, AI engines do too.

Why it matters: *AI engines are trained on conversation. Pages that match conversational tone get cited more.*



18. Long-tail question pages

3 pts

What: Standalone pages targeting specific question queries ("how to X for Y in Z").

How to check: Run AlsoAsked.com on your top topic. Count how many of those questions you answer with a dedicated page.

Why it matters: *Long-tail questions are where AI search dominates. Capture them or competitors will.*



GROUP 3

Local

4 factors · 12 points · For any business with a physical location or service area.

19. Google Business Profile

4 pts

What: Verified, fully-completed Google Business Profile with services, hours, photos, and Q&A.;

How to check: Search your business name. Confirm you appear in the right-side knowledge panel with all sections filled.

Why it matters: *GBP is the #1 driver of local visibility. 70% of local mobile searches end in a call within 1 hour.*



20. Reviews velocity

3 pts

What: 15+ reviews in the last 12 months, with replies to every one.

How to check: Open your GBP. Count reviews from last 12 months. Confirm 90%+ have owner replies.

Why it matters: *Velocity matters more than total count. AI engines use recent review patterns to gauge active businesses.*



21. NAP consistency

3 pts

What: Name, Address, Phone identical across GBP, website, and top 10 directory citations.

How to check: Search "yourbrand+phone" — check first 5 results match exactly (no variations).

Why it matters: *Inconsistency confuses both search engines and AI. One wrong phone number can kill local rankings.*



22. Location pages

2 pts

What: Dedicated location pages for each city/area you serve, with unique content and local references.

How to check: Visit [yoursite.com/locations](#) or [yoursite.com/\[city\]](#). Each page should have 400+ unique words.

Why it matters: *Location pages are how you rank in cities you don't physically operate in.*



GROUP 4

Content

6 factors · 19 points · The depth and freshness signals that build topical authority.

23. Topical clustering

5 pts

What: Content organised into pillar pages with 8-15 supporting sub-pages, all interlinked.

How to check: Pick your most important topic. Count pages on your site that cover it from different angles.

Why it matters: *AI engines reward sites that demonstrate full topic coverage, not isolated pages.*



24. Original research / data

4 pts

What: At least 2-3 pieces of original research, surveys, or data analysis published in last 12 months.

How to check: Open your blog. Count posts that contain "we surveyed", "our analysis of", or "we found that" with original numbers.

Why it matters: *Original research earns 4x more backlinks and AI citations than opinion content.*



25. Content freshness

3 pts

What: Important pages reviewed and updated at least once per year.

How to check: Check the "last updated" dates on your top 10 pages. If most are >12 months old, you're losing rankings.

Why it matters: *Stale content slowly loses both Google rankings and AI citation rates.*



26. Image optimization

2 pts

What: Every image has descriptive alt text, compressed file size, and modern format (WebP/AVIF).

How to check: View source of any page. Check 5 random img tags — alt should describe the image, not be empty or "image1".

Why it matters: *Alt text is how blind users and AI crawlers understand your images. Also critical for image search.*



27. Video transcripts

2 pts

What: Every embedded video has a published transcript on the page.

How to check: On any video page, scroll below the video. If you see "[Music]" auto-transcript, you're missing the manual cleanup.

Why it matters: *AI engines can't parse video — they read transcripts. No transcript = invisible content.*



28. Content depth (1500+ words)**3 pts**

What: Top pages answer the topic in depth — typically 1500-3000 words for pillar pages.

How to check: Use a word counter on your top 5 pages. If under 800 words, you're likely under-ranking.

Why it matters: *AI engines pull from comprehensive sources, not thin pages. Depth beats frequency.*



GROUP 5

Off-site

4 factors · 12 points · External signals that prove authority outside your own site.

29. Domain authority (referring domains)

4 pts

What: 50+ referring domains from relevant sites in your industry.

How to check: Free check at ahrefs.com/website-authority-checker. Look at "Referring Domains" not just "Backlinks".

Why it matters: *Referring domain count is the strongest single ranking factor outside on-page content.*



30. Brand mentions

3 pts

What: Your brand name mentioned on 100+ external sites (linked or unlinked).

How to check: Search Google for "yourbrand" -site:yoursite.com — note total result count.

Why it matters: *AI engines weight unlinked brand mentions almost as much as backlinks since 2024.*



31. Wikipedia / Wikidata

3 pts

What: Brand has a Wikidata entry (free) and ideally a Wikipedia article (harder).

How to check: Search wikidata.org for your brand. If no entry, create one — it's free and AI engines crawl it heavily.

Why it matters: *Wikidata is the structured-data backbone of nearly every AI engine. Major leverage for visibility.*



32. Industry citations

2 pts

What: Listed in 5+ industry directories, association sites, or trade publications.

How to check: Open Google. Search "[your industry] directory" or "[your category] companies in [region]". Count where you appear.

Why it matters: *Industry citations build topical authority signals AI engines specifically look for.*



Your score

Add up the weights of every factor you ticked. Total out of 100.

Score	What it means	What to do next
85-100	Top 5%. You're ahead of nearly every competitor.	Maintain. Add original research quarterly.
70-84	Strong. Most boxes ticked, a few high-leverage gaps.	Fix the 3 highest-weight unchecked factors.
50-69	Average for SMBs. Foundation OK, AI/Generative weak.	Focus all energy on Group 2 (AI / Generative).
30-49	Below average. Real visibility problems.	Get the HEO Audit. DIY fixing alone will take 6+ months.
0-29	Critical. Site is essentially invisible to AI engines.	Talk to us. This is what we fix every day.

Group totals

Use this to spot which group is dragging you down.

Group	Max	Your score
1. SEO Foundation	25	___ / 25
2. AI / Generative Engine	38	___ / 38
3. Local	12	___ / 12
4. Content	19	___ / 19
5. Off-site	12	___ / 12
Total	106	___ / 106

Note: max score is 106 — we've added 6 bonus points across high-leverage factors. Score is reported as percentage of 100 in our online tool.

What next?

Three ways to use what you just learned, depending on where you are.

1. DIY

Pick the 3 highest-weight unchecked factors. Fix them this month. Re-audit in 6 weeks.

Free · Time: 4-12 weeks of focused work

2. Use our free tools

Run our online HEO Checker and AI Visibility Checker for instant, automated scoring.

adsomia.com/tools · 60 seconds · Free

3. Have us do it

Get a written audit, 60-min walkthrough, and 90-day roadmap. We tell you exactly what to fix and in what order.

HEO Audit & Roadmap · ₹1.25L (founding price) · 2-week turnaround

A note from Hassan

I built Adsomia because I saw too many genuinely good businesses getting beaten by noisier, slicker competitors. HEO is how we close that gap. If anything in this checklist confused you — or you want a second opinion on your score — message me directly. **+91 9447 XXX XXX** on WhatsApp. I read every message myself.

Adsomia · Marketing from Kerala · Trivandrum, India

adsomia.com · hello@adsomia.com · WhatsApp **+91 9447 XXX XXX**