SEO guide

Last Modified on 10/09/2025 3:57 pm EDT

Follow these tips to improve your Search Engine Optimization (SEO).

Get started

It's important to optimize your knowledge base for SEO if you want it to be indexed by search engines.

This will help with discoverability of your site in case readers are googling for help. It can even have the impact of attracting new customers to your product.

Proper SEO can also help with overall usability of your site because content pages will be structured more clearly.

If your knowledge base is private, find out how to exclude your knowledge base from search engines.

Best practices

Refer to these best practices for your knowledge base SEO:

- Add a meta description for every page
- Add a title tag for every page
- Keyword optimize your pages
- Interlink as many articles as you can in your knowledge base
- Optimize your URLs with your target keyword
- Use SEO-friendly permalinks
- Don't allow articles to have trailing slashes
- Optimize page load times
- Use bullet point and numbered lists
- Include images with alt-text

Meta descriptions

The meta description is an HTML element that search engines use to display a short description for your page/site and can contain keywords to optimize for search. This is your chance to attract organic traffic to your content with compelling copy.

Find out how to customize your meta descriptions.

Title tags

The title tag is an HTML element that search engines use to display the topic and name of your page/site and can

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contain keywords to optimize for search. The aim is to summarize your content or site to tell visitors what it's about. It's indexed by search engines.

Find out how to customize your title tags.

Keyword optimization

Keyword optimization is a huge topic but it's the practice of targeting certain high or medium volume keywords that readers are actually searching for online. SEO marketers find keywords using software such as the keyword planner in Google Adwords.

Optimizing a page consists of ensuring it contains your target keyword (or keyword phrase) a few times, but no more than would be natural.

The keyword should be in the page title, page URL, first paragraph, in the alt-text of any images and scattered throughout the text.

Interlinking articles

It's SEO best practice to interlink your articles internally so search engines can crawl your site more effectively. It's a part of your internal or on-site SEO strategy, like meta descriptions and title tags.

It also enhances discoverability of your content, readers spend more time on your site, and this improves your SEO.

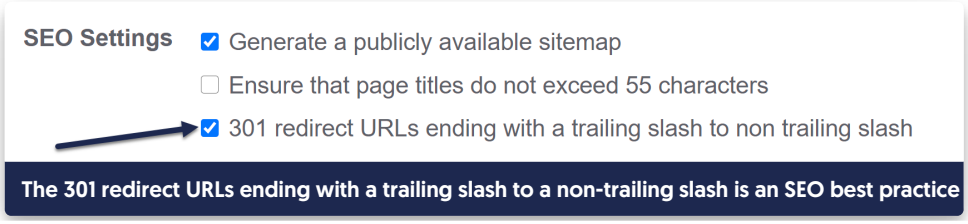
Optimizing URLs

URLs are an important part of your SEO strategy. They should be reasonably short and contain your targeted keywords. If you're not targeting any specific keywords (although you should be) make sure the URL contains keywords that define the topic of your content.

Don't allow articles to have trailing slashes

In the land of search engine indexing, a trailing slash (such as https://support.knowledgeowl.com/help/seo-guide#best-practices/) is treated as a directory. The same URL without a trailing slash is treated as a file or page. Those two URLs are indexed and tracked separately, though, so if you have readers who have somehow bookmarked or typed in an article URL with a "/" at the end, it won't factor into SEO in the same way. Forcing these trailing slash URLs to redirect to the normal article permalink maximizes your SEO.

We have a setting to control this in **Settings > Basic**. Scroll to the SEO Settings section, check the box next to "301 redirect URLs ending with a trailing slash to non trailing slash", and Save.



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Lists

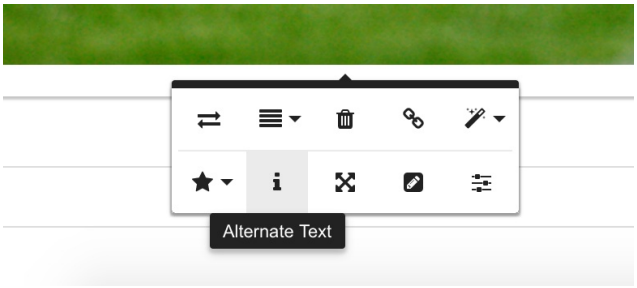
Using ordered and unordered lists is a great way to structure your knowledge base content. Also known as a semantic structure, bullet points and numbered lists make your content more readable.

Within your articles, try to break down the information in such a way that you can present it in lists. Add in lists using the WYSIWYG editor for your articles.

Optimizing images

If you include an image in your knowledge base content, a good rule of thumb is to also include an alt text. The alt text is an HTML tag that displays if your image doesn't load, or appears if you hover the cursor above the image. It also gets indexed by search engines.

To add an alt text to your image, edit the page in your your knowledge base and click on the image.



Select the 'i' option to type in your text. This should be a short description of your image that contains your target keyword or keyword phrase.

Page load times

Google uses page load times as a key ranking signal. If your site loads too slowly this will negatively impact the overall SEO ranking of your site. KnowledgeOwl is already optimized for loading speed but you can avoid doing things that slow your site.

For example, it's important to compress your images before you upload them to keep page load times low. Resize them in an editor so that they're no more than around 1000 x 1000 pixels maximum.

Remember, if you're pasting in code from another editor such as Microsoft Word, doing so will add in lots of unnecessary code in the background. Copy and paste into a plain text source like Notepad, or select 'paste without formatting' when you right click.

KnowledgeOwl SEO features

KnowledgeOwl has several features to help you optimize your knowledge base for SEO.

These are:

- Title tags

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- Meta descriptions
- Sitemaps

Title tags

The title tag is an HTML element that search engines use to display the topic and name of your page/site and can contain keywords to optimize for search. Find out how to customize your title tags.

Meta Descriptions

The meta description is an HTML element that search engines use to display a short description for your page/site and can contain keywords to optimize for search. Find out how to customize your meta descriptions.

Sitemaps

You use a sitemap to tell Google to index your website and how to structure the information it contains. Find out how to generate your sitemap.

Promote your knowledge base

The saddest knowledge base is one with no traffic. While heavy traffic to certain types of content may indicate a problem or an opportunity to make things easier, there will always be customers who need self-service.

Promote your knowledge base to your customer base and beyond by:

- Sending out weekly content highlights in your subscriber newsletter
- Promoting your content on social media
- Linking to your knowledge base from your main website
- Linking to your knowledge base in customer support emails

It's also good for SEO. Successfully promoting your knowledge base on social media and in your newsletter sends positive signals to search engines about how to rank your content.

Make your knowledge base public

Your knowledge base is already optimized for search engine indexing. This means search engines can already find your site and display it to readers in search.

If for any reason your knowledge base is not public already, you can change that in the site settings. For more information on how to do this see here.

When you are ready to launch your knowledge base, you should generate a sitemap. The sitemap is what you submit to Google to tell its search engines to index your site.

Generate your sitemap

Sitemaps help search engines crawl and index your website.

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A sitemap is an XML file representing the structure of your website.

When you generate your sitemap, each page on your site is given a unique title. This title includes your knowledge base name and the name of the article, category, or page.

Article titles are automatically shortened to meet best practice guidelines for title length (55 characters). Articles that contain similar content are given a canonical link tag (an HTML link tag with attribute rel=canonical) to avoid duplicate content issues that would harm your SEO rankings.

When to generate a sitemap

Generate a sitemap:

- If any or all of your knowledge base is publicly accessible and you want to ensure search engines index it fully
- If you have an existing knowledge base with over 500 pages

Refer to the Google Search developer page to Learn about sitemaps for more guidance on when and how to use sitemaps.

To generate your public sitemap:

1. Go to **KB settings > Domain.**
2. Under **SEO settings**, check the box to **Generate a publicly available sitemap.**
3. Be sure to **Save** your changes.

Your sitemap is now available. If needed, add it to Google Search Console to update your site.

Access your sitemap

Your sitemap is accessible at /sitemap.xml on your knowledge base. For example, the sitemap for this knowledge base is accessible here: https://support.knowledgeowl.com/help/sitemap.xml

Optimize your homepage

Your homepage is the most important page to optimize for SEO. This is what people will see first coming up in the search results page. Here's a sample for our Support KB:

Notice how Google displays our top-level categories directly under the page title, and then includes page titles and meta descriptions of the most frequently access pages below that. These results help a searcher get an idea of content contained deeper within our knowledge base.

This is one of the reasons that you need to submit your sitemap to Google. It helps Google understand your site and better index your content.

Update title tag and meta description

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You want to set up a great title tag and meta description for your homepage.

This is where great copywriting skills come into play. Keep it brief and only include the most necessary information. Don't repeat yourself.

To update your homepage title tag and meta description:

1. Go to **Customize > Homepage**.
2. Scroll to the **SEO settings** section.
3. Enter a **Meta title**. This sets the title tag for the homepage. Title tags are usually displayed in search engine results. For example, we set ours to "KnowledgeOwl Support Knowledge Base."
    a. Some search engines, like Google, may change your meta title. This most commonly happens if the title is too long or too full of keywords. We recommend keeping your Meta title shorter than 60 characters for best results.
4. Enter a **Meta description**. The meta description is the preview or description of your knowledge base you want to pass to search results. Search engines can--and often do--choose not to display your meta description. But it's important to use it because it helps Google understand what *you* think your page is about. Ours is currently set to "Self-service support and documentation for the KnowledgeOwl application." You'll notice Google didn't choose to display that in the screenshot above. ☺
    a. We recommend keeping your Meta description shorter than 160 characters.
5. Once you've finished making changes, be sure to **Save** them.

Once you've updated either of these fields, it will take some time for Google to reflect these changes. It could take up to a week but is often as quick as 30 minutes. If you want to expedite the process, ask Google to recrawl your site or individual URLs.

Custom title tags and meta descriptions

The Title Tag and Meta Description are two fields hugely useful for SEO.

Create and edit custom title tags and meta descriptions on individual categories and articles in the editor, at the bottom of the editor page:

To learn more about these fields, including tips and best practices for using them, refer to Title tags and Meta descriptions.

Public Sitemaps and SEO

Your knowledge base is already optimized for search engine indexing and optimization:

- Each page is given a unique title that include the name of the article or page and your knowledge base name.

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- Article titles are truncated in your page title to meet best practice guidelines for length (55 characters).
- Shared content articles use a canonical link tag to avoid duplicate content issues.

You can also generate a publicly available sitemap in **Customize > Website**. Refer to Generate your sitemap for full instructions.

If your knowledge base **Security and access > Security settings > Authentication settings > Content authentication** is set to any option other than **Public**, its content can't be indexed by search engines.

If **Content authentication** is set to public and you don't want search engines indexing your site:

1. Go to **Customize > Style (HTML & CSS)**.
2. In the **Customize HTML, CSS, and JS** section, select **Custom <Head>**.
3. Copy the code below and paste it anywhere into the Custom Head:

```
<meta name="robots" content="noindex">
```

4. Be sure to **Save** your changes.

Duplicate content

Duplicate content is bad for SEO. This is any page that contains the same content as another page because it will reduce traffic to both pages if the search engine doesn't know which one to index.

Avoid duplicate content on private domains

If you use a private domain like `docs.mycompany.com`, you also still have your KO subdomain, like `mycompany.knowledgeowl.com`. If Google crawls both sites, it will be flagged as duplicate content.

To redirect all your KO subdomain traffic to your private domain and avoid duplicate content problems:

1. Go to **KB settings > Domain**.
2. Under **Private domain settings**, check the box to **Use the private domain for application links or actions that open your knowledge base, e.g. View KB**.
3. In the same section, check the box to **301 redirect all KnowledgeOwl sub-domain traffic to your private domain**.
4. Be sure to **Save** your changes.

This will ensure that your KO links always use your private domain, and you can avoid any duplicate content problems with Google.

Refer to How to use your own domain for more information on settings in this section.

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Hide from search engines

Private sites cannot be indexed by search engines. But if your knowledge base is public, you may want to prevent Google and other search engines from indexing either:

- Your entire site
- Individual pages

Below, we walk through instructions for each approach.

Block entire site from search indexing

To ensure that your entire public knowledge base isn't indexed for search:

1. Go to **Settings > Style.**
2. Below the preview pane, be sure **Custom <Head>** is selected.
3. Copy the code below and paste it into that pane:

```
<meta name="robots" content="noindex">
```

4. Be sure to **Save** your changes.

Block individual pages from search indexing

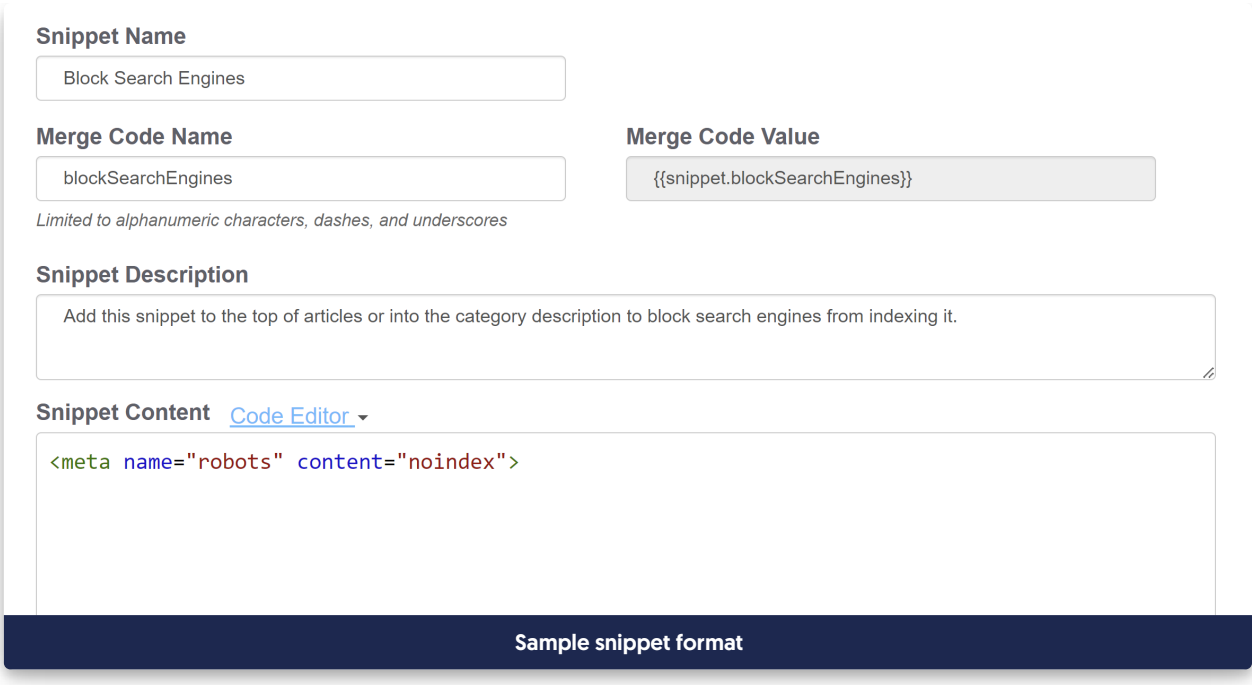
If, on the other hand, you only want to block individual pages (like articles or categories) from search engines' indexing:

1. Go to **Library > Snippets.**
2. Click the **+ Create New Snippet** button to begin creating a new snippet.
3. Use any **Snippet Name** you'd like. Here, we use "Block Search Engines."
4. *Optional:* Add a **Snippet Description.** Here, we use "Add this snippet to the top of articles or into the category description to block search engines from indexing it."
5. In the **Snippet Content** dropdown, select **Code Editor.** (It usually defaults to WYSIWYG Editor.)
6. Copy the code below and paste it into the Code Editor.

```
<meta name="robots" content="noindex">
```

7. Your snippet should look something like this:

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8. Once you're done, be sure to click the **Create** button to finish creating your snippet.

With your snippet created, you can add it into the start of articles or custom content categories above all other text using the **Insert Snippet** control in the editor. See Using snippets for more information.

To add the snippet to any other category type:

1. Open the snippet from **Library > Snippets**.
2. Copy the Merge Code Value.
3. Paste that into the **Description** of the category you want hidden from search.
4. **Save** the category.
5. If the category contains articles, you'll want to add the snippet into each article in the category, too.

Measure SEO performance

Google Analytics is the top free tool to measure the performance of your knowledge base.

Make sure you set up an account and then create a property for your knowledge base. Select the option for tracking a 'dynamic website' when you create your property.

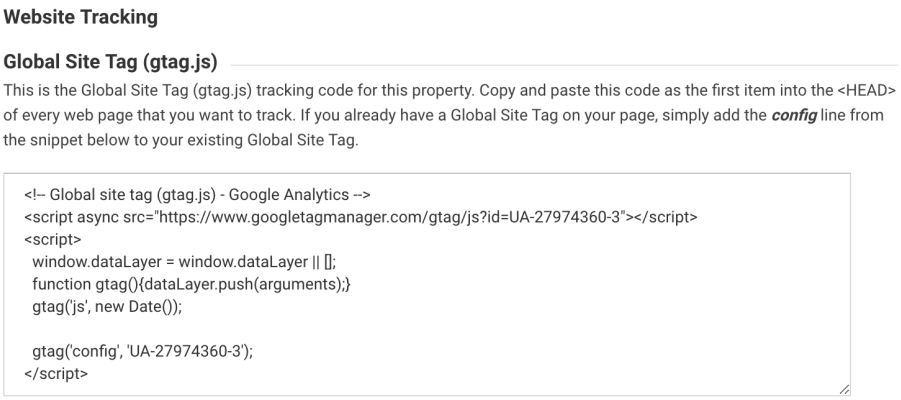
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Once you've opened your account and set up your property, generate the code you need in your Google Analytics account.

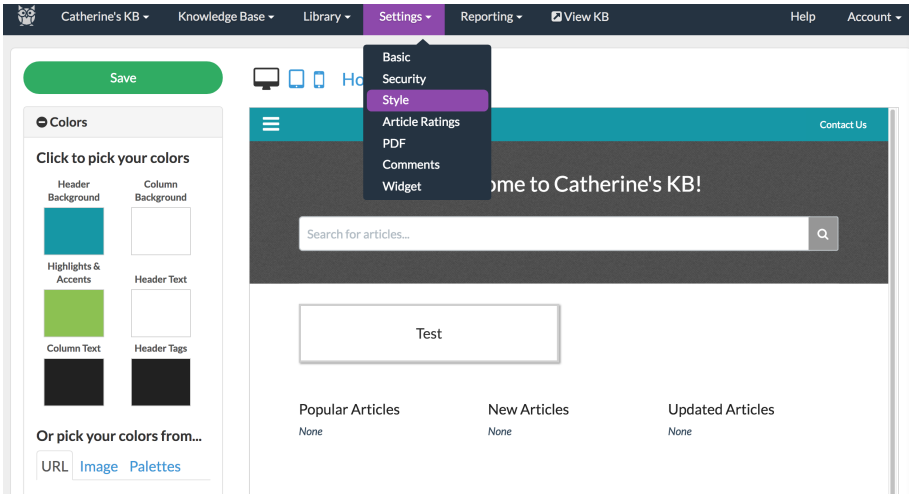
If you don't know how to do this, open your Google Analytics account.

- Click on your chosen property (website) in the home screen.
- Click on the 'Admin' button symbolized by the cog on the bottom left of the screen.
- Navigate to **Tracking info > Tracking code.**
- Highlight the tracking code snippet in the next screen that opens.

It should look like this:

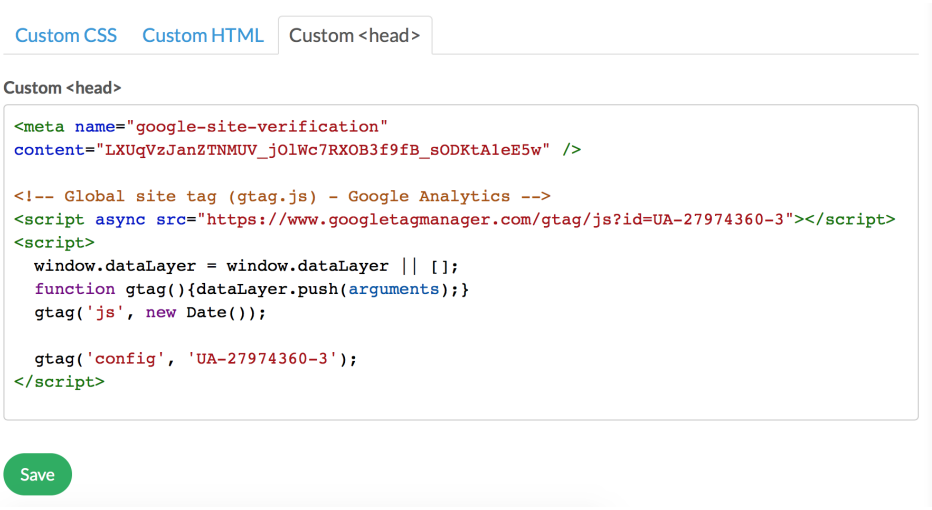


Copy and paste this code snippet into the **<head>** tag of your knowledge base. To reach the **<head>** tag, navigate to **Settings > Style.**



Scroll down to the **Custom <head>** tab and paste in your tracking code. It should look something like this:

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Hit save and you'll be good to go.

Metrics

Start measuring these metrics using Google Analytics:

- **Organic search traffic**
- **Page views**
- **Bounce rate**

Organic search traffic

This is probably the most important way to measure the performance of your knowledge base. Organic traffic is the number of people who are naturally discovering your website in the search engine results pages.

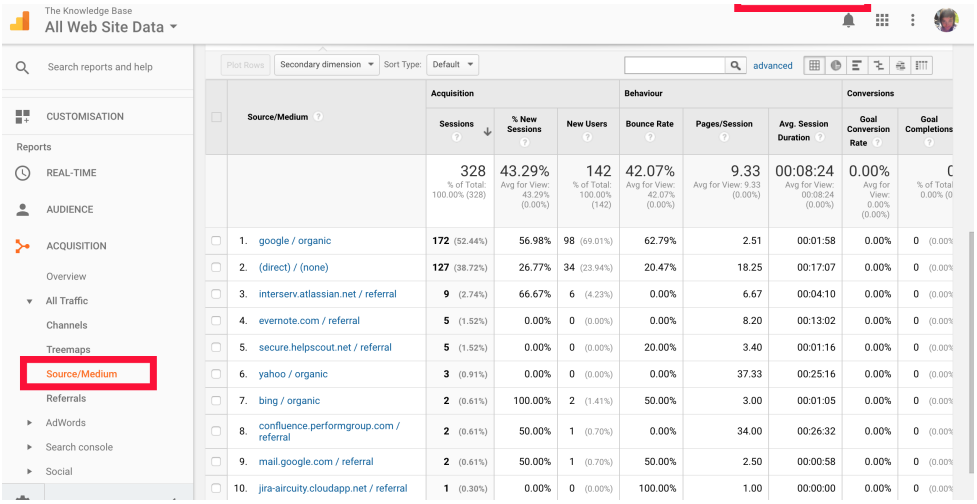
You can look at your numbers over time to see if your performance has improved. You can see the landing pages that most of your traffic is coming to. Increasing your knowledge base traffic can be a mixed bag.

On the one hand, it can mean more people are finding your content and it's helping them solve their problems. On the other hand, more knowledge base searches can indicate more problems.

The key is to see it all in context.

Navigate to **Acquisition > Source/Medium.**

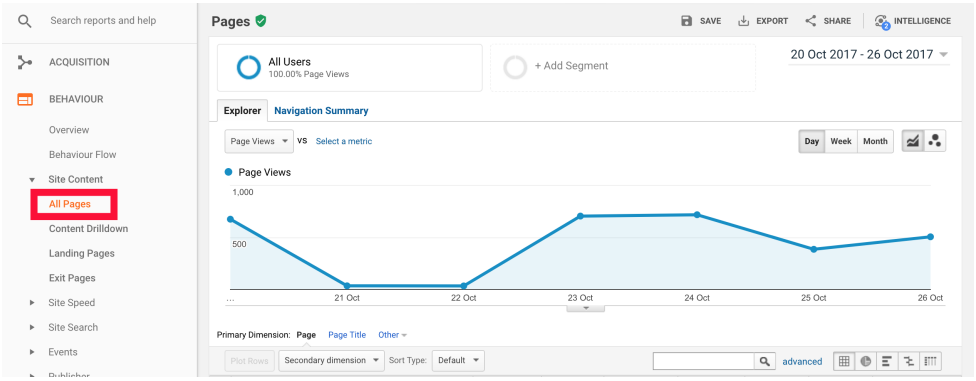
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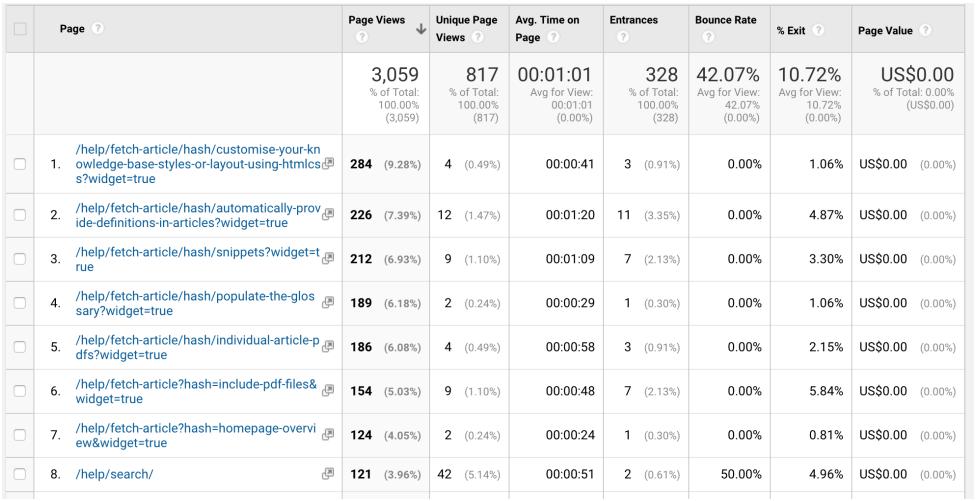
This enables you to see the proportion of your traffic that comes from different types of sources. In our case, we're interested in organic traffic from Google, which is the number one result.

Page views

Navigate to **Behaviour > All pages.**



Scroll down the same screen to get to a breakdown of all your page traffic to see your most popular pages:



Page	Page Views	Unique Page Views	Avg. Time on Page	Entrances	Bounce Rate	% Exit	Page Value
	3,059 % of Total: 100.00% (3,059)	817 % of Total: 100.00% (817)	00:01:01 Avg for View: 00:01:01 (0.00%)	328 % of Total: 100.00% (328)	42.07% Avg for View: 42.07% (0.00%)	10.72% Avg for View: 10.72% (0.00%)	US$0.00 % of Total: 0.00% (US$0.00)
1. /help/fetch-article/hash/customise-your-knowledge-base-styles-or-layout-using-htmlcss?widget=true	284 (9.28%)	4 (0.49%)	00:00:41	3 (0.91%)	0.00%	1.06%	US$0.00 (0.00%)
2. /help/fetch-article/hash/automatically-provide-definitions-in-articles?widget=true	226 (7.39%)	12 (1.47%)	00:01:20	11 (3.35%)	0.00%	4.87%	US$0.00 (0.00%)
3. /help/fetch-article/hash/snippets?widget=true	212 (6.93%)	9 (1.10%)	00:01:09	7 (2.13%)	0.00%	3.30%	US$0.00 (0.00%)
4. /help/fetch-article/hash/populate-the-glossary?widget=true	189 (6.18%)	2 (0.24%)	00:00:29	1 (0.30%)	0.00%	1.06%	US$0.00 (0.00%)
5. /help/fetch-article/hash/individual-article-pdfs?widget=true	186 (6.08%)	4 (0.49%)	00:00:58	3 (0.91%)	0.00%	2.15%	US$0.00 (0.00%)
6. /help/fetch-article?hash=include-pdf-files&widget=true	154 (5.03%)	9 (1.10%)	00:00:48	7 (2.13%)	0.00%	5.84%	US$0.00 (0.00%)
7. /help/fetch-article?hash=homepage-overview&widget=true	124 (4.05%)	2 (0.24%)	00:00:24	1 (0.30%)	0.00%	0.81%	US$0.00 (0.00%)
8. /help/search/	121 (3.96%)	42 (5.14%)	00:00:51	2 (0.61%)	50.00%	4.96%	US$0.00 (0.00%)

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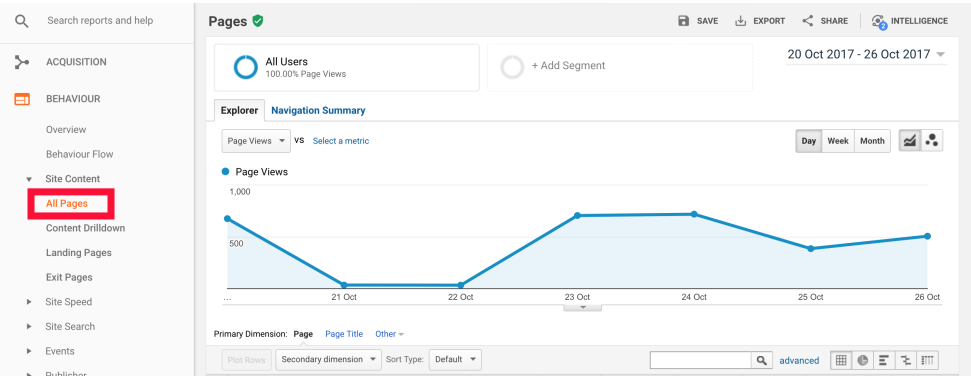
Change the time frame in the top right hand corner to view your traffic over different lengths of time.

Bounce rate

Your bounce rate is calculated by the number of readers that leave your site after viewing only a single page for 0 seconds. This indicates to the search engine that your content was not relevant, and has a negative impact on your ranking.

Your aim is to lower your bounce rate as much as possible. If you identify any pages with a high bounce rate, you need to analyse why that is and take steps to fix it.

To see your bounce rate, head over to Google Analytics. Navigate to **Behavior > All pages**.



Scroll down the same screen to get to a breakdown of all your page traffic to see your pages:

	Page	Page Views	Unique Page Views	Avg. Time on Page	Entrances	Bounce Rate	% Exit	Page Value
		3,059 % of Total: 100.00% (3,059)	817 % of Total: 100.00% (817)	00:01:01 Avg for View: 00:01:01 (0.00%)	328 % of Total: 100.00% (328)	42.07% Avg for View: 42.07% (0.00%)	10.72% Avg for View: 10.72% (0.00%)	US$0.00 % of Total: 0.00% (US$0.00)
1.	/help/fetch-article/hash/customise-your-knowledge-base-styles-or-layout-using-htmlcss?widget=true	284 (9.28%)	4 (0.49%)	00:00:41	3 (0.91%)	0.00%	1.06%	US$0.00 (0.00%)
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4.	/help/fetch-article/hash/populate-the-glossary?widget=true	189 (6.18%)	2 (0.24%)	00:00:29	1 (0.30%)	0.00%	1.06%	US$0.00 (0.00%)
5.	/help/fetch-article/hash/individual-article-pdfs?widget=true	186 (6.08%)	4 (0.49%)	00:00:58	3 (0.91%)	0.00%	2.15%	US$0.00 (0.00%)
6.	/help/fetch-article?hash=include-pdf-files&widget=true	154 (5.03%)	9 (1.10%)	00:00:48	7 (2.13%)	0.00%	5.84%	US$0.00 (0.00%)
7.	/help/fetch-article?hash=homepage-overview&widget=true	124 (4.05%)	2 (0.24%)	00:00:24	1 (0.30%)	0.00%	0.81%	US$0.00 (0.00%)
8.	/help/search/	121 (3.96%)	42 (5.14%)	00:00:51	2 (0.61%)	50.00%	4.96%	US$0.00 (0.00%)

Your bounce rate is the third column from the right.

Google Search Console

Google Search Console is a popular tool used in SEO to track a website's search performance. Since your knowledge base is a website, you can use it to track your knowledge base's search performance too!

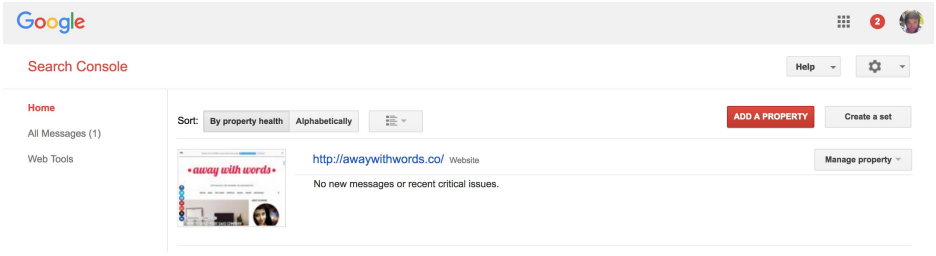
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Search Console can tell you which pages of your kb are indexed by Google for search. While the primary use case is to make sure that your pages are being successfully indexed, you can also use it to make sure your site is not being indexed. If you have a kb or pages you want removed from Google, you can also request removal.

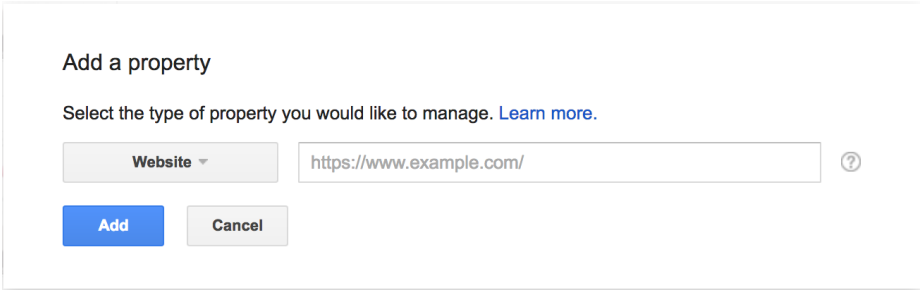
The search console can also tell you what keywords your knowledge base is ranking for and in what position. This means set keywords that are bringing your site's pages up in the search engine results page, and resulting in people clicking on those links.

To set up your knowledge base on the console, head over to the console and make an account if you haven't already.

In the homepage, click on 'Add Property'.



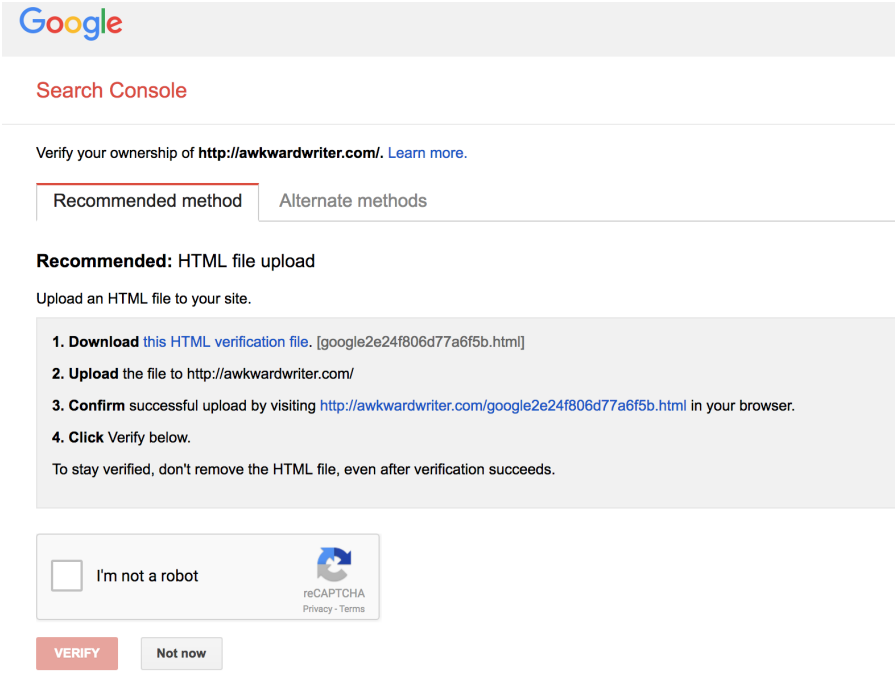
In the next screen, make sure you're adding a website and type in the preferred URL for your knowledge base:



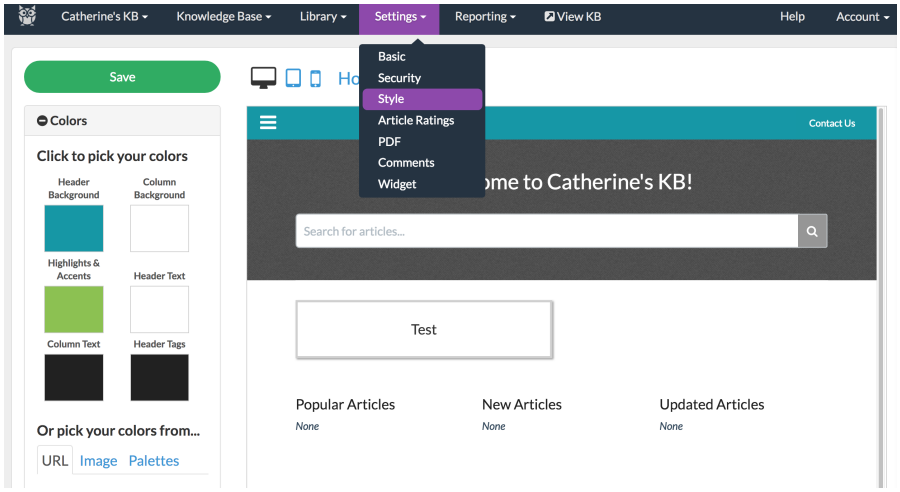
You will then need to verify you are the owner of the knowledge base by adding some HTML to your website header tag.

When the search console asks you to verify, switch to the 'alternate methods' tab. Select 'HTML tag' and copy the unique HTML code it generates to your clipboard.

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Head back over to the KnowledgeOwl CMS and select Settings > Style from the top menu.



Scroll down to the custom CSS and HTML editor, and toggle to Custom <head>. Paste your code into this field and click save. It should look something like this:

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You're all set up! You should see this screen after clicking 'verify' in the Google Search Console.

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