E-E-A-T Optimization Checklist

Your Complete Guide to Building Trust, Authority & Expertise

Version 2026.1 | Last Updated: January 28, 2026

About This Checklist

This comprehensive checklist summarizes the complete E-E-A-T optimization strategies from "E-E-A-T as the Dominant Ranking Factor: The Complete Guide to Building Trust and Authority in 2026."

How to use this checklist:

- ☐ Check off each item as you complete it
- 🔴 Red items = Critical (must-have for YMYL content)
- 🟡 Yellow items = Important (significant ranking impact)
- 🟢 Green items = Recommended (competitive advantage)

Self-Assessment Scoring:

- Award points for each completed item
- Calculate your total E-E-A-T score (0-100)
- Scores below 60 require urgent action
- Scores above 90 indicate excellent E-E-A-T

Section 1: Experience Signals (25 Points Possible)

Original Content Creation (10 Points)

☐ [5 pts] 🔴 Include original photographs taken personally

- Add photo metadata (location, date, camera info)
- Show yourself in photos when relevant
- Include timestamps on time-sensitive images

☐ [3 pts] 🟡 Create original videos showing your direct involvement

- Include face/voice for authenticity
- Demonstrate processes step-by-step
- Show behind-the-scenes footage

☐ [2 pts] 🟢 Include screenshots of your actual work/processes

- Annotate screenshots with explanations
- Show real accounts, dashboards, or tools
- Redact sensitive information appropriately

Subsection Score: ___/10

First-Hand Details (8 Points)

☐ [3 pts] 🔴 Share specific details only someone with experience would know

- Mention exact prices, timing, or measurements
- Include tips about what others might miss
- Discuss common mistakes from actual experience

☐ [3 pts] 🟡 Provide personal anecdotes with concrete details

- Use specific names, dates, and locations
- Include dialogue or memorable moments
- Connect stories to key insights

☐ [2 pts] 🟢 Document before-and-after scenarios you personally witnessed

- Include specific metrics and timelines
- Show transformation with evidence
- Explain what caused the change

Subsection Score: ___/8

Timeline & Duration References (4 Points)

☐ [2 pts] 🟡 Mention duration of your experience explicitly

- "After 6 months of testing..."
- "In my 15 years working in..."
- "Having completed over 200 projects..."

☐ [2 pts] 🟢 Reference specific dates and milestones

- "When I started in 2018..."
- "Since the 2020 algorithm update..."
- "As of January 2026..."

Subsection Score: ___/4

Balanced Assessments (3 Points)

☐ [2 pts] 🟡 Acknowledge limitations and what didn't work

- ● Discuss failed approaches honestly
- ● Explain why certain methods aren't suitable
- ● Share challenges encountered

☐ [1 pt] 🟢 Discuss trade-offs and alternative approaches

- ● Present pros and cons fairly
- ● Suggest when different methods work better
- ● Avoid absolute claims

Subsection Score: ___/3

SECTION 1 TOTAL SCORE: ___/25 Points

Section 2: Expertise Signals (25 Points Possible)

Formal Credentials (12 Points)

☐ [4 pts] 🔴 Display relevant degrees, certifications, or licenses

- ● Medical: MD, DO, RN, PharmD, etc.
- ● Financial: CFP, CPA, CFA, etc.
- ● Legal: JD, Bar membership, etc.
- ● Technical: PhD, Professional certifications

☐ [3 pts] 🔴 Show professional memberships and registrations

- ● State/national professional associations
- ● Board certifications
- ● License numbers (when required)

☐ [3 pts] 🟡 Document continuing education and training

- ● Recent courses and workshops
- ● Conference attendance
- ● Professional development certificates

☐ [2 pts] 🟢 Display awards and honors received

- Industry awards
- Recognition from peers
- Achievement milestones

Subsection Score: ___/12

Author Bio Quality (8 Points)

☐ [3 pts] 🔴 Create comprehensive author pages with professional headshots

- High-quality professional photo
- Detailed career timeline
- Contact information for verification

☐ [2 pts] 🔴 Include verifiable credentials with external links

- Link to LinkedIn profile
- Link to university/certification verification
- Link to professional organization profiles

☐ [2 pts] 🟡 List publications, presentations, and media mentions

- Academic publications
- Industry articles
- Speaking engagements
- Media interviews

☐ [1 pt] 🟢 Show years of experience and project counts

- "15+ years in the industry"
- "Completed 500+ projects"
- Specific client categories served

Subsection Score: ___/8

Content Depth (5 Points)

☐ [2 pts] 🟡 Address advanced and complex aspects of topics

- Cover technical details
- Explain nuances and exceptions
- Discuss edge cases

☐ [2 pts] 🟡 Cite authoritative sources throughout content

- Peer-reviewed research
- Government sources (.gov)
- Educational institutions (.edu)
- Industry reports from recognized organizations

☐ [1 pt] 🟢 Include original research or data

- Survey results
- Case study findings
- Proprietary analysis

Subsection Score: ___/5

SECTION 2 TOTAL SCORE: ___/25 Points

Section 3: Authoritativeness Signals (25 Points Possible)

Backlink Profile (10 Points)

☐ [4 pts] 🔴 Earn backlinks from high-authority sites in your industry

- Domain Authority 70+ sites
- Industry publications and trade journals
- Recognized expert blogs

☐ [3 pts] 🟡 Secure links from educational and government sources

- .edu domains (universities, research institutions)
- .gov domains (government agencies)
- .org domains (respected organizations)

☐ [3 pts] 🟡 Get featured in major media outlets

- National news publications
- Industry-specific media
- Broadcast or podcast appearances

Subsection Score: ___/10

Brand Mentions (6 Points)

☐ [3 pts] 🟡 Generate unlinked brand mentions in authoritative content

- Mentioned in research papers
- Referenced in industry reports
- Discussed in expert roundups

☐ [2 pts] 🟢 Get quoted as an expert in articles and studies

- Provide expert commentary for journalists
- Contribute quotes to industry publications
- Participate in expert panels

☐ [1 pt] 🟢 Track social media mentions from influencers

- Industry leaders mention your content
- Viral shares from recognized accounts
- Discussion in professional groups

Subsection Score: ___/6

Media Presence (5 Points)

☐ [2 pts] 🟡 Secure speaking engagements at industry events

- Conference presentations
- Webinar hosting
- Workshop facilitation

☐ [2 pts] 🟢 Appear on relevant podcasts and video interviews

- Industry-specific podcasts
- YouTube channel interviews
- Expert panel discussions

☐ [1 pt] 🟢 Publish guest posts on authoritative sites

- Bylined articles on major publications
- Contributed content to industry blogs
- Syndicated content on recognized platforms

Subsection Score: ___/5

Industry Recognition (4 Points)

☐ [2 pts] 🟢 Join professional associations and hold memberships

- Paid professional memberships
- Association leadership roles
- Committee participation

☐ **[1 pt]** 🟢 Earn industry awards and certifications

- Best-in-industry awards
- Innovation recognition
- Customer choice awards

☐ **[1 pt]** 🟢 Serve in advisory or editorial board roles

- Advisory board positions
- Editorial reviewer roles
- Peer review contributions

Subsection Score: ___/4

SECTION 3 TOTAL SCORE: ___/25 Points

Section 4: Trustworthiness Signals (25 Points Possible)

Technical Trust (8 Points)

☐ **[3 pts]** 🔴 Install and maintain HTTPS encryption (SSL certificate)

- Valid SSL certificate installed
- No mixed content warnings
- Certificate auto-renewal configured

☐ **[2 pts]** 🔴 Implement secure payment processing (if applicable)

- PCI DSS compliance
- Trusted payment gateways (Stripe, PayPal, etc.)
- Security badges displayed

☐ **[2 pts]** 🟡 Protect against malware and security threats

- Regular security scans
- Malware protection software
- Regular software updates

☐ **[1 pt]** 🟢 Ensure GDPR/CCPA compliance

- Cookie consent banners
- Data processing agreements
- User data rights honored

Subsection Score: ___/8

Contact & Transparency (7 Points)

☐ [3 pts] 🔴 Display complete contact information prominently

- Physical business address
- Working phone number
- Functioning email address
- Contact form that works

☐ [2 pts] 🔴 Create comprehensive "About Us" page

- Company/founder history
- Mission and values
- Team photos and bios
- Business credentials

☐ [2 pts] 🟡 Show real people behind the content

- Full names (not pseudonyms)
- Professional photos
- Social media links
- Direct author contact methods

Subsection Score: ___/7

Legal & Policy Pages (6 Points)

☐ [2 pts] 🔴 Publish comprehensive privacy policy

- Data collection explained
- Third-party sharing disclosed
- User rights outlined
- Last updated date shown

☐ [2 pts] 🔴 Create clear terms of service/use

- User obligations defined
- Limitation of liability stated
- Dispute resolution process
- Contact for legal matters

☐ [1 pt] 🟡 Add editorial and correction policies

- Content review process explained

- Correction procedures outlined
- Update policies defined

☐ [1 pt] 🟢 Include refund/return policies (e-commerce)

- Clear refund terms
- Return procedures
- Timeframe specifications

Subsection Score: ___/6

Content Accuracy (4 Points)

☐ [2 pts] 🔴 Fact-check all claims with authoritative sources

- Verify statistics and data
- Link to primary sources
- Update outdated information

☐ [1 pt] 🟡 Date all content clearly

- Publication date shown
- Last updated date displayed
- Regular review schedule

☐ [1 pt] 🟡 Correct errors promptly and transparently

- Correction notices added
- Explanation of what changed
- Date of correction shown

Subsection Score: ___/4

SECTION 4 TOTAL SCORE: ___/25 Points

YMYL Content Additional Requirements

Complete ONLY if your content is YMYL (Your Money or Your Life)

YMYL-Specific Checklist

☐ [Required] Author has professional credentials in the field

- Medical content: MD, DO, RN, licensed practitioner

- Financial content: CFP, CPA, CFA, licensed advisor
- Legal content: JD, bar membership, licensed attorney

☐ [Required] Content reviewed by qualified expert

- "Medically reviewed by [Name, MD]"
- "Financially reviewed by [Name, CFP]"
- "Legally reviewed by [Name, Esq.]"

☐ [Required] Clear disclaimers present

- "This is not medical advice. Consult your physician."
- "This is not financial advice. Consult a licensed advisor."
- "This is not legal advice. Consult an attorney."

☐ [Required] Citations to peer-reviewed or official sources

- Medical journals (NEJM, JAMA, BMJ)
- Government guidelines (CDC, FDA, SEC, IRS)
- Official regulations and statutes

☐ [Required] Regular content updates

- Review quarterly for guideline changes
- Update for new research or regulations
- Mark update dates clearly

☐ [Required] Contact information for expert author

- Direct email or contact form
- Professional verification available
- Credentials publicly verifiable

Technical Implementation Checklist

Schema Markup

☐ Implement Author schema on all articles

```json
{
  "@type": "Person",
  "name": "Author Name",
  "jobTitle": "Professional Title",
```

```json
  "credentials": "Certifications"
}
```

☐ Add Organization schema

```json
json
{
  "@type": "Organization",
  "name": "Company Name",
  "url": "https://yoursite.com"
}
```

☐ Include Review schema (if applicable)

☐ Add FAQ schema for question-format content

On-Page Elements

☐ Author byline at top of article with photo

☐ "About the Author" section at article end

☐ Publication and update dates visible

☐ Source citations linked inline

☐ "Sources" or "References" section

☐ Editorial review notation (if reviewed by expert)

Measurement & Tracking

Metrics to Monitor

☐ Backlink Quality

- Track Domain Authority of linking sites
- Monitor backlink growth monthly
- Track contextual relevance of links

☐ Brand Mentions

- ● Set up Google Alerts for brand name
- ● Use Brand24 or Mention tools
- ● Track sentiment of mentions

☐ Rankings & Traffic

- ● Monitor keyword rankings weekly
- ● Track organic traffic to key pages
- ● Measure traffic to YMYL content specifically

☐ Engagement Metrics

- ● Time on page (target: 2+ minutes)
- ● Bounce rate (lower is better)
- ● Pages per session (higher is better)

☐ Reviews & Reputation

- ● Google Business Profile rating
- ● Industry review site ratings
- ● Testimonial collection rate

☐ Conversion Signals

- ● Form submission rates
- ● Email signup conversions
- ● Product/service purchase rates
- ● Return visitor percentage

90-Day Quick Reference

Month 1: Foundation

- ● ☐ Complete E-E-A-T audit (all 4 sections)
- ● ☐ Install SSL certificate
- ● ☐ Create/update all legal pages
- ● ☐ Enhance author bios
- ● ☐ Add contact information

Month 2: Content Enhancement

- ● ☐ Update top 10 YMYL pages

- ☐ Add expert author bylines
- ☐ Include authoritative citations
- ☐ Add original photos/videos
- ☐ Implement schema markup

Month 3: Authority Building

- ☐ Launch link building campaign
- ☐ Request customer reviews
- ☐ Pitch expert commentary to media
- ☐ Create linkable assets
- ☐ Measure and iterate

Final Score Calculation

Add up your scores from all four sections:

Section	Your Score	Maximum
Experience Signals	___/25	25
Expertise Signals	___/25	25
Authoritativeness Signals	___/25	25
Trustworthiness Signals	___/25	25
TOTAL E-E-A-T SCORE	___/100	100

Score Interpretation

90-100 Points: Excellent E-E-A-T ⭐⭐⭐⭐⭐

Your site demonstrates exceptional E-E-A-T signals. You're well-positioned to compete for top rankings, even on competitive YMYL terms. Action: Maintain consistency and continue building authority.

75-89 Points: Good E-E-A-T ⭐⭐⭐⭐

Strong foundation with minor gaps. You should rank well for most queries. Action: Focus on the highest-impact items you're missing, particularly in authoritativeness.

60-74 Points: Moderate E-E-A-T ⭐⭐⭐

Basic E-E-A-T present but significant improvements needed to compete effectively. Action:Prioritize all red-marked critical items immediately.

45-59 Points: Weak E-E-A-T ⭐⭐

Insufficient E-E-A-T signals for competitive rankings, especially on YMYL topics. Action: Complete Month 1 foundation items urgently.

Below 45 Points: Poor E-E-A-T ⭐

Critical deficiencies that likely cause poor rankings or manual actions. Action: Urgent overhaul required. Start with trustworthiness items immediately.

Priority Action Items by Score

If you scored 45-59 (Weak E-E-A-T):

1. ☐ Install HTTPS immediately (3 pts)
2. ☐ Add complete contact information (3 pts)
3. ☐ Create privacy policy and terms of service (4 pts)
4. ☐ Add author credentials to all content (4 pts)
5. ☐ Implement author bylines with photos (3 pts)

Quick win: 17 points in 1-2 weeks

If you scored 60-74 (Moderate E-E-A-T):

1. ☐ Enhance author bios with external verification (2 pts)
2. ☐ Add original photos to top 10 articles (5 pts)
3. ☐ Build 10 high-authority backlinks (4 pts)
4. ☐ Get quoted in 3 industry publications (2 pts)
5. ☐ Add schema markup site-wide (combined boost)

Target: 75+ score in 60 days

If you scored 75-89 (Good E-E-A-T):

1. ☐ Secure speaking engagements (2 pts)
2. ☐ Appear on relevant podcasts (2 pts)
3. ☐ Build .edu or .gov backlinks (3 pts)
4. ☐ Create original research or data (1 pt)
5. ☐ Earn industry awards (1 pt)

Target: 90+ elite score in 90-180 days

Expert Resources

For personalized E-E-A-T consultation:

- SEO Mafia (seomafiaclub.com) - Verified SEO experts with proven results
- Jin Grey (jingrey.com) - 18+ years SEO experience, system-based approach
- Habi Media (habi.media) - Technical SEO, on-page, and local optimization

For ongoing updates:

- Feed Frenzy Plus (feedfrenzyplus.com) - Latest algorithm and E-E-A-T news

For inspiration:

- Digilamon (digilamon.com) - Example of experience-driven content in travel niche

---

Notes & Action Plan

Use this space to document your priority actions:

Top 3 Immediate Actions:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

30-Day Goals:

- _____
- _____
- _____

90-Day Goals:

- _____
- _____
- _____

Resources Needed:

- _____
- _____

Target Score: ___/100 by (date): _____

Current Biggest Weakness: _____

Biggest Quick Win Opportunity: _____

About This Checklist