

# Google Search Console Setup SOP

Material M9.2 · Companion Resource · *Strategic Web Management: First Steps for the Accidental Web Manager* by Bryan C. Mills · Chapter 9 companion · One record, two owners, three reports

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**Use this page when:** your organization has a website and nobody can say whether Google Search Console is connected, who owns it, or how to get in; or you have been handed the keys and want the twenty-minute setup done once, correctly, and written down.

## WRONG PAGE?

The site has vanished from Google results: WEP-09 takes over. Traffic fell suddenly: WEP-13A diagnoses first. You want the full findability audit rather than one tool: M9.1. Already connected: skip to the Existing-User Checklist at the end.

### 1 VERIFY AT THE DOMAIN

A Domain property covers every version of the site in one record. Verification is one TXT record in DNS, the Chapter 3 skill.

### 2 OWNERSHIP IS ORGANIZATIONAL

An organizational Google account, two current owners, a line in the account inventory (M2.1). A developer's login is a courtesy, not a system of record.

### 3 THREE REPORTS, WEEKLY

Performance, Pages, and Security earn their time; the rest can wait for a specific question.

PREPARE

ADD  
PROPERTY

VERIFY

SITEMAP

ACCESS

WEEKLY  
READ

EXISTING  
CHECK

## STEP 1

### Prepare

GATHER FIRST

Ten minutes, before you open Search Console.

- ☐ An organizational Google account identified (a role-based account the organization controls, not a personal Gmail or a departed employee's login); created if none exists, with two-step verification on
- ☐ Domain Name System (DNS) access confirmed: you can sign in where your DNS records are edited (registrar or a DNS service such as Cloudflare; M3.1 records which one)
- ☐ The sitemap address found: usually `yoursite.com/sitemap.xml` or `yoursite.com/sitemap_index.xml`; WordPress with Yoast or Rank Math generates one automatically
- ☐ The access list drafted: who needs Owner, Full, or Restricted access (defined in Step 5)

SITE

DNS EDITED AT

SITEMAP ADDRESS

## STEP 2

### Add the Property

DOMAIN PROPERTY

Domain type, bare domain, organizational account.

- ☐ Sign in at `search.google.com/search-console` with the organizational account
- ☐ Add property; choose **Domain** and enter the bare domain (`yoursite.com`, no `https`, no `www`)
- ☐ URL-prefix property chosen only if DNS is unreachable this week; note the reason and plan to convert to a Domain property when DNS access is restored

PROPERTY TYPE

ADDED ON

## STEP 3

## Verify Ownership by DNS Record

CHAPTER 3 SKILL

One TXT record; leave it in place forever.

- 1 Copy the TXT record Search Console displays (it begins google-site-verification=)
- 2 At your DNS host, add a TXT record: host or name set to @ (or the bare domain, depending on the host's form), value pasted exactly as shown, default time-to-live (TTL)
- 3 Save, wait (minutes on most hosts, occasionally up to a day), then return to Search Console and select Verify
- 4 Leave the record in place permanently; removing it later silently revokes ownership

## IF VERIFICATION FAILS

Confirm you edited DNS at the host that actually serves the domain (the registrar's panel is not the DNS host when nameservers point elsewhere; M3.1 settles it). Check the value for added quotation marks or a trailing space. Wait an hour and try again before changing anything else.

- ☐ Verification succeeded; the record and its location noted in the domain record (M3.1) and the account inventory (M2.1)

VERIFIED ON \_\_\_\_\_

TXT RECORD LIVES AT \_\_\_\_\_

## STEP 4

## Submit the Sitemap

COMPARE COUNTS

Status should read Success within a day.

- ☐ Sitemaps (left menu): enter the path from Step 1 and submit
- ☐ Status reads **Success** within a day; a "Couldn't fetch" status means the address is wrong or the site blocks crawlers, and the content management system (CMS) sitemap setting is the first place to look
- ☐ The discovered page count compared against the site's real page count; a large gap is a question for the Pages report in Step 6

SUBMITTED ON \_\_\_\_\_

PAGES DISCOVERED \_\_\_\_\_

## STEP 5

## Set Ownership and Access

SURVIVES A DEPARTURE

Two owners; vendors never own; everyone in the inventory.

Roles, in plain terms: an **Owner** controls everything, including adding and removing people; **Full** can see all data and take most actions; **Restricted** can view most data only. Verified owners hold the DNS record; delegated owners are added by a verified owner.

- ☐ A second Owner added, a current staff member or a second organizational account, so one departure cannot lock the organization out
- ☐ Developer or agency access set to Full or Restricted, never Owner, and dated for review when their engagement ends (the offboarding runbook, M2.4, carries the removal)
- ☐ Every person listed under Users and permissions is current and accounted for
- ☐ Settings, Associations: the Google Analytics 4 (GA4) property linked, so Chapter 13's reporting can read search data in one place
- ☐ Search Console added to the account inventory (M2.1): account, owners, recovery method

OWNERS \_\_\_\_\_

INVENTORY UPDATED ON \_\_\_\_\_

## STEP 6

## The First Read and the Weekly Habit

FIFTEEN MINUTES WEEKLY

Data fills in over about a week; then three reports, weekly.

Do not judge the site by the first empty screen. From the second week, in this order:

- 1 **Performance:** which searches surface the site, what people clicked, and the queries where you appear without clicks (next content improvements, per Chapter 7)
- 2 **Pages (under Indexing):** what is indexed and what is excluded, and why; "Discovered, currently not indexed" is normal for a new or small site, while a growing not-found list usually means deleted pages without redirects (section 7.1)
- 3 **Security and Manual Actions:** should read "No issues detected"; anything else is Chapter 8's outside opinion on a compromise, and WEP-01 takes over

- ☐ Email notifications confirmed on, delivered to a monitored organizational mailbox
- ☐ The weekly three-report read added to the maintenance calendar (M7.1) and the Monday Web Check (M7.3)
- ☐ Search Console clicks added as the findability number on the monthly one-page report (M13.1)

FIRST WEEKLY READ ON \_\_\_\_\_

CALENDAR LINE ADDED \_\_\_\_\_

## EXISTING-USER CHECKLIST

## Already Connected? Run This Once a Quarter

QUARTERLY

Not whether it exists, but whether it would survive a departure.

For readers who inherited a working Search Console, or set it up years ago. Each item is a pass or a fix; most fixes take under five minutes.

- |                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                          |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> You can sign in with an organizational account, not a former employee's or vendor's personal login             | <input type="checkbox"/> Pages report reviewed: not-indexed reasons explained; no unexplained growth in not-found errors |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The property is a Domain property, or the reason it is URL-prefix is known and written down                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Security and Manual Actions reads "No issues detected"                                          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> At least two Owners, both current staff or organizational accounts                                             | <input type="checkbox"/> Email notifications reach a monitored mailbox                                                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Users and permissions reviewed; no former staff or finished vendors hold Owner                                 | <input type="checkbox"/> GA4 association in place                                                                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The verification TXT record is still present in DNS (Settings, Ownership verification shows method and status) | <input type="checkbox"/> Search Console listed in the account inventory (M2.1) with current owner names                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The sitemap shows Success and was read within the last month                                                   | <input type="checkbox"/> The weekly three-report read is on the calendar (M7.1) and actually happening                   |

QUARTERLY CHECK DATE \_\_\_\_\_

FIXES ASSIGNED TO \_\_\_\_\_

## One connection, chapters of return

Search Console is the moment you stop guessing about findability. Chapter 9 called it a rite of passage for good reason: one DNS record and twenty minutes give you Google's own view of the site, feed the audit sheet's evidence column, supply the findability number on the monthly report, and stand watch for compromise. The procedure above adds what the setup screens leave out: organizational ownership, a second owner, an inventory line, and a weekly habit, so the connection outlasts whoever made it.

REVIEW RECORD · TWICE YEARLY

THIS PAGE WAS LAST REVIEWED ON \_\_\_\_\_

BY \_\_\_\_\_