

EVERY**MUNDO**



# SEO for Airlines

## The Ultimate Guide

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## SEO for Airlines: The Ultimate Guide

In more than 14 years of developing fare marketing solutions for airlines, we can't tell how many times our customers have asked: "what can we do better to achieve success in SEO?".

We always tell them to start by maximizing [airTRFX](#), our fare marketing platform that handles most of the technical SEO functionalities required to excel in organic search. Adopting airTRFX alone guarantees better rankings and more bookings in auto-pilot mode.

However, many of our customers want to go beyond airTRFX pages. They want to improve the core website and it makes sense. After all, many core site pages have the highest conversion rate in organic search especially for branded searches. They may generate the most amount of revenue and transactions across the airline's website, by far.

Improving the core website will also boost the SEO performance of the airTRFX pages. Google does not treat sections of the same site differently. Instead, it looks at the overall quality of the website. That's why we have always provided advice for customers on how to optimize their pages. It's in everyone's best interests. However, the advice went out fragmented and a little vague most of the time. Until now.

This whitepaper is the most comprehensive compilation of best SEO practices for airlines. It's an advanced problem-solving guide. It covers absolutely everything there is to know about doing SEO for airlines, from multilingual SEO to link building.

This is a guide for SEO agencies, in-house SEO specialists, digital marketing generalists, or developers who find themselves doing SEO for an airline's website.

Before diving into it, let's point out a few caveats:

**1. There is never a cookie-cutter solution.** The guide includes proven SEO techniques and best practices. It condenses more than a decade of delivering results for more than 50 airlines. However, it does not offer plug and play solutions. What works for a certain airline may not work for another.

First, you need to assess the feasibility of implementing the most complex techniques. Does it make sense on your airline's website? Does your team have the resources? Can the CMS handle it? Then, you need to test, and keep testing. In an enterprise setting, implementing some of these practices will take time, but we promise you that it's well worth it.

**2. Dive into the technical documentation.** Each section of this whitepaper teaches the basics and shows examples of implementation in the airline vertical. We can't (and we don't want) to

write everything there is to write about each topic. Others have done it way better than we could ever do it.

That's why there is a list of useful tools and resources at the end of each section. In most cases, you won't be able to implement these techniques without consulting additional technical documentation. But don't despair, we compiled that documentation for you.

- 3. You can't do it alone.** SEO is a multifaceted discipline. It requires technical skills, extensive research, copywriting expertise, relationship building, and strategic thinking. You will need a team to implement most of the SEO tactics for airlines that we uncover in this guide. Most likely, you will need to work with developers, content specialists, and PR strategists.

In our experience, building an SEO team in an airline setting is surprisingly difficult to do. No one is fully dedicated to SEO. Teams are split. People don't want to take on more responsibilities. Sometimes, even company politics are in play.

You will have to learn how to demonstrate the positive impact of the changes you are requesting. Arm yourself with supporting evidence and arguments: case studies, Google's official guidelines, statements from Googlers, new developments in SEO, competition research, etc. Focus on quick-wins. Dissipate myths. Highlight how the current SEO performance helps grow the bottom line.

When positive results start to pour in, make sure that your colleagues and management know about them.

With that said, let's get into it!

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## 1. Create Landing Pages for All Routes

Launching dedicated pages for every origin and destination can provide an airline with an unmatched capability to attract traffic and generate bookings.

This is a good reason why Online Travel Agencies (OTAs) devote massive resources toward developing millions of high-performance landing pages for flight destinations.

For example, according to SEMrush, Kayak has created thousands of flight route pages that receive 8.5 million users from organic searches. This amount of traffic would cost \$6.5 million monthly in Google Ads, but it's all organic!

### Organic Research: [www.kayak.com/flight-routes/](http://www.kayak.com/flight-routes/)

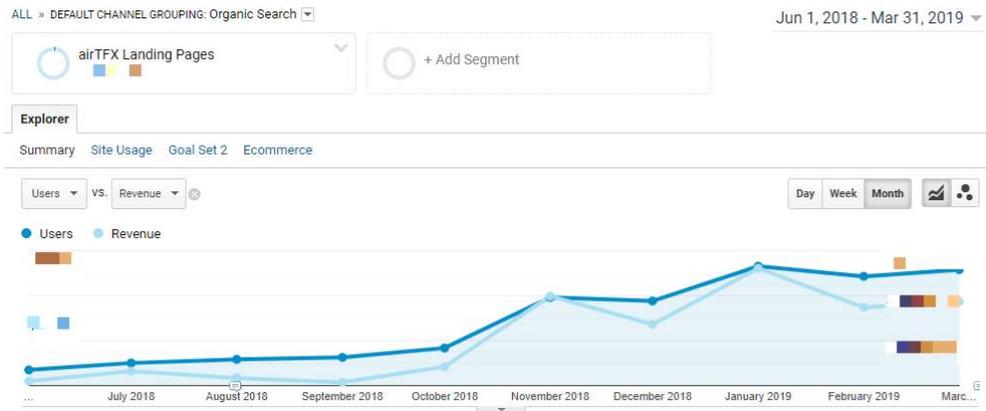


We have seen noticeable results for our customers after adopting [airTRFX](#), a fare marketing platform to launch and manage unlimited route pages, in every language and country. These pages are grouped into “page templates” that target the different keyword permutations that users type in search engines to find flight offers:

- Destinations (or Homepage)
- Flights from City to City
- Flights to City
- Flights from City
- Flights from Country to Country
- Flights to Country
- Flights from Country

For example, 10 months after launching more than 2K airTRFX pages in June 2018, Spirit Airlines has:

- Grown the number of target non-branded keywords on the 1st page by more than 290% across the top search engines only in the US.
- Generated additional 2MM+ Organic Sessions compared to the previous year.
- Reached an Organic ROI of more than 7,526.5%, brought about by additional 68,000+ organic transactions and an increase of Organic Revenue by 12.7%.



We have also helped our customers regain their natural position in search results pages for branded search queries. For example, it's common for some OTAs to outrank airlines on Google even for branded keywords, such as "Aeroflot flights to New York":

aeroflot flights to new york

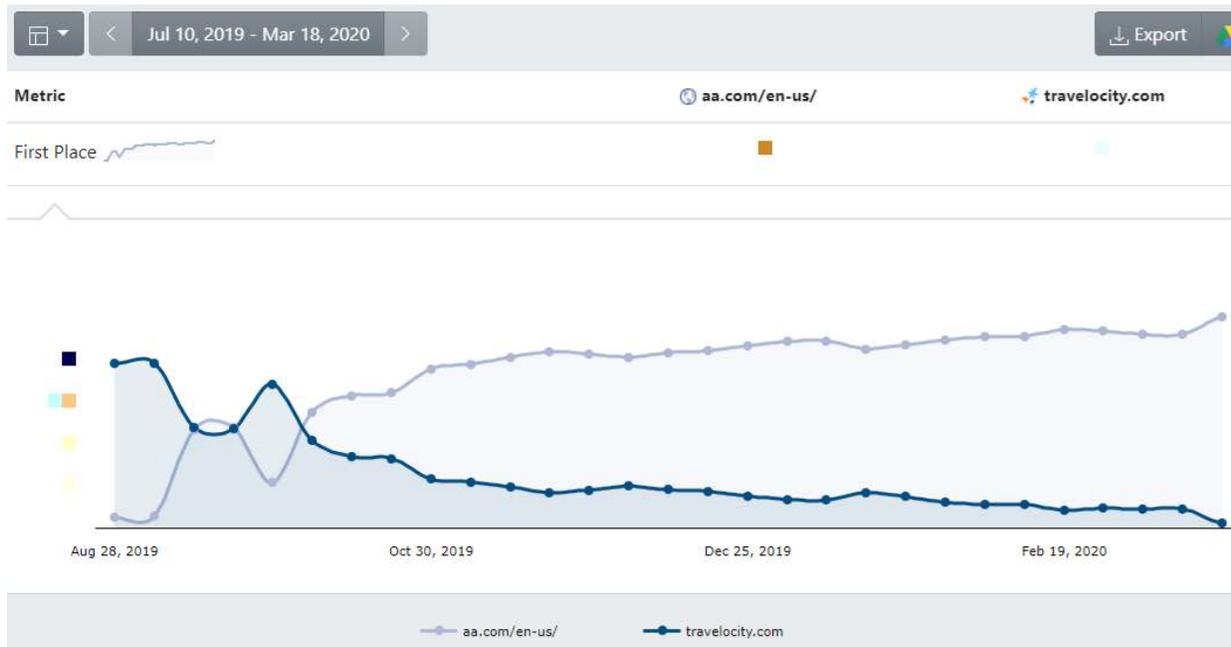
www.travelocity.com › Flights › Aeroflot-Russian Airlines Flights ▾  
**Aeroflot-Russian Airlines Flights: New York (JFK) to Moscow ...**  
 Aeroflot-Russian Airlines **Flights** from **New York** (JFK) to Moscow (SVO). As COVID-19 disrupts travel, a few airlines are offering WAIVING CHANGE FEE for new ...

www.travelocity.com › Flights › Aeroflot-Russian Airlines Flights ▾  
**Aeroflot-Russian Airlines Flights: Moscow (SVO) to New York ...**  
 Aeroflot-Russian Airlines **Flights** from Moscow (SVO) to **New York** (JFK). As COVID-19 disrupts travel, a few airlines are offering WAIVING CHANGE FEE for new ...

www.aeroflot.ru › ... › Travel Guide › United States ▾  
**Flights to New York: find out the prices for direct ... - Aeroflot**  
 Aeroflot flies to **New York** City's John F. Kennedy International Airport. The duration of the **flight** is approximately ten hours. The cheapest fares for round trips and connecting **flights** sell out quickly, so we recommend you purchase your tickets well in advance.

American Airlines was one of those airlines that lagged behind Travelocity in Google US search engine, particularly for branded searches with purchasing intent. These are search queries on Google that denote buying intent and include the airline's name (e.g.: "American Airlines cheap flights to Chicago").

As the timeline chart below shows, before launching airTRFX in August 2019, American Airlines barely ranked in first place for this type of keywords. But after just a couple of months of deploying airTRFX, American Airlines started to outrank Travelocity. As of March 2020, Travelocity has lost the first place for almost all these keywords.



By not ranking first on Google for branded searches with purchasing intent, airlines may be leaving a significant chunk of revenue on the table. For example, we estimate that there are around 300K monthly searches in the US from users actively looking to book a flight with American Airlines.

Airlines shouldn't assume that they will capture branded traffic by default. Your airline may not be as popular as American Airlines, but you definitely don't want an OTA receiving most of the traffic that your airline's website should own. OTAs know the value of branded traffic for airlines, which is why many have launched dedicated pages for airlines. For example, it's very likely that [Kayak](#) or [Skyscanner](#) already have a page targeting branded searches for your airline.

Branded searches shouldn't be underestimated, especially the type that denotes buying intent. If your airline does not have the infrastructure to generate pages to target branded traffic, consider investing in airTRFX, which can help your airline own the traffic coming from branded searches instead of giving it away to OTAs.

## 2. Generate Localized Versions of the Route Pages

Not all route pages are (or should be) created equal.

For example, would you rather serve pages in English or German language to German-speaking users? Would it be more convenient for British users to book a flight on a page displaying fares in USD rather than in GBP? Should there be a “flight to New York” page served to users in Manila even though the airline does not fly from Manila to New York? Correct answer: No.

Google recommends site owners creating [localized versions of pages](#) when:

- The main content is in a single language, but the template is translated (e.g.: navigation, footer).
- The content has small regional variations in a single language (e.g.: currency).
- The content is fully translated into multiple languages.

### Implement hreflang links

The main method to indicate localized versions of a page to Google is by using the hreflang attribute. The hreflang link tells Google what is the preferred page for a specific language or country.

The hreflang link element includes three fragments:

rel="alternate", which specifies the existence of an alternative URL.

hreflang="lang\_code", where "lang\_code" is a supported language/region code targeted by the version of the page.

href="url\_of\_page", where "url\_of\_page" is the URL version for the specified language/region. For example, suppose that you have 3 versions of a route page:

- An English version for United States at <https://airline.com/en-us/flights-to-new-york>
- A Spanish version for Mexico at <https://airline.com/es-mx/vuelos-a-nueva-york>
- A German version for Germany at <https://airline.com/de-de/fluge-nach-new-york>

There are three ways to use the hreflang attribute:

A) HTML tags added to the <head> container:

```
<link rel="alternate" hreflang="en-us" href="https://airline.com/en-us/flights-to-new-york"/>
<link rel="alternate" hreflang="es-mx" href="https://airline.com/es-mx/vuelos-a-nueva-york" />
<link rel="alternate" hreflang="de-de" href="https://airline.com/de-de/fluge-nach-new-york" />
```

B) HTTP response with the hreflang link header:

Link: <https://airline.com/en-us/flights-to-new-york>; rel="alternate"; hreflang="en-us",  
<https://airline.com/es-mx/vuelos-a-nueva-york>; rel="alternate"; hreflang="es-mx",  
<https://airline.com/de-de/fluge-nach-new-york>; rel="alternate"; hreflang="de-de"

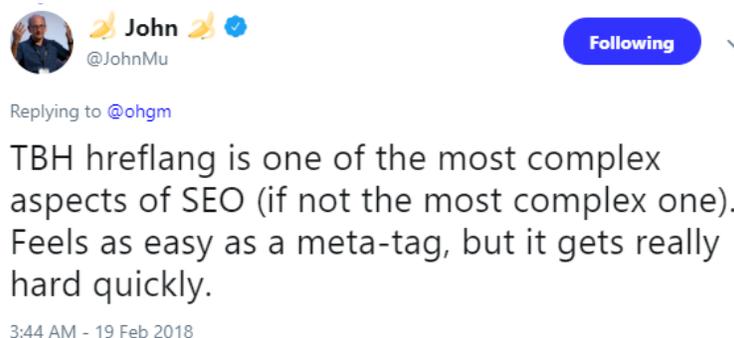
C) Hreflang links added to the XML sitemap:

```
<html:link
  rel="alternate"
  hreflang="en-us"
  href="https://airline.com/en-us/flights-to-new-york"/>
<html:link
  rel="alternate"
  hreflang="es-mx"
  href="https://airline.com/es-mx/vuelos-a-nueva-york"/>
<html:link
  rel="alternate"
  hreflang="de-de"
  href="https://airline.com/de-de/fluge-nach-new-york"/>
```

However, it's not enough just to deploy the hreflang links. There are also critical implementation mistakes to avoid:

- **Missing return links:** If page A links to page B, page B must link back to page A.
- **Missing self-referential hreflang link:** each URL should have a hreflang link pointing to itself.
- **Hreflang links pointing to non-indexable URLs:** avoid linking out to canonicalized, noindex, and non-200 status code URLs.
- **Incorrect language codes:** make sure that all language and region codes are supported by the [ISO 639-1](#) and [ISO 3166-1 Alpha 2](#) nomenclatures, respectively.

If this seems confusing to you, you are not alone. Even [John Mueller](#), the lead Webmaster Trends Analyst at Google, acknowledges that implementing hreflang is one of the most complex aspects of SEO:



There are some hreflang generators out there, but we vouch for [Aleyda Solis's hreflang generator tool](#). Just submit the localized URL and its language/region code and you are good to go.

English ▾

Select Country of the URL ▾

Spanish ▾

Select Country of the URL ▾

REMOVE

+ ADD AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE / COUNTRY URL VERSION

- REMOVE ALL AND START CLEAN

Generate the hreflang annotations as:

Tags to include in the head area of the pages HTML
  Attributes in an XML Sitemap

**GENERATE THE HREFLANG TAGS FOR THESE URLS**

Here you have your hreflang annotations. Copy them to use on your pages!

```
<link rel="alternate" href="https://www.spirit.com/en/flights" hreflang="en" />
<link rel="alternate" href="https://www.spirit.com/es/vuelos " hreflang="es" />
```

Obviously, this tool wouldn't be feasible to implement hreflang at a massive scale. This would require a team of developers dedicated to this purpose or a CMS with in-built capabilities, like [airTRFX](#).

airTRFX dynamically handles the hreflang implementation at scale. It deploys hreflang links across all localized URLs while avoiding the most frequent errors of a static implementation.

For example, if new URLs get added, airTRFX will dynamically deploy the hreflang link on the new URLs and place the return links on the corresponding localized URLs. The system also automatically prevents hreflang links from pointing to non-indexable URLs, such as redirected, broken, or canonicalized URLs.

This is what the dynamically generated hreflang links on [American Airlines](#) look like:

```
<link rel="canonical" href="https://www.aa.com/en-us/flights"/>
<link rel="alternate" hreflang="en-us" href="https://www.aa.com/en-us/flights"/>
<link rel="alternate" hreflang="en-aw" href="https://www.aa.com/en-aw/flights"/>
<link rel="alternate" hreflang="en-bb" href="https://www.aa.com/en-bb/flights"/>
<link rel="alternate" hreflang="en-bm" href="https://www.aa.com/en-bm/flights"/>
<link rel="alternate" hreflang="en-bq" href="https://www.aa.com/en-bq/flights"/>
<link rel="alternate" hreflang="en-bz" href="https://www.aa.com/en-bz/flights"/>
<link rel="alternate" hreflang="en-vg" href="https://www.aa.com/en-vg/flights"/>
<link rel="alternate" hreflang="en-cw" href="https://www.aa.com/en-cw/flights"/>
<link rel="alternate" hreflang="en-dm" href="https://www.aa.com/en-dm/flights"/>
<link rel="alternate" hreflang="en-ky" href="https://www.aa.com/en-ky/flights"/>
<link rel="alternate" hreflang="en-gd" href="https://www.aa.com/en-gd/flights"/>
<link rel="alternate" hreflang="en-ht" href="https://www.aa.com/en-ht/flights"/>
<link rel="alternate" hreflang="en-jm" href="https://www.aa.com/en-jm/flights"/>
```

Once implemented, if you want to debug the installation on a single page, use [Merkle's hreflang Tags Testing Tool](#).

HTML & HTTP HEADERS
XML SITEMAP(S)

URL  
https://www.spirit.com/en/flights

User Agent  
Googlebot S... ▼

TEST URL

Status	hreflang Tags	Self-referencing	Indexable	Detected Language	<html> lang Attribute	Content-Language
200 OK	2	en	✓	English	en	-

Search... ↓

hreflang	Language	Region	Source	Alternate URL	Status	
✓	en	English	-	HTML	https://www.spirit.com/en/flights	200 OK
✓	es	Spanish	-	HTML	https://www.spirit.com/es/vuelos	200 OK

For a full hreflang audit on a large site, follow the detailed steps in the [Screaming Frog's guide to auditing hreflang](#).

As if hreflang alone wasn't enough, there are additional best practices for multilingual SEO that airlines shouldn't ignore.

## Avoid IP redirects

Not only can it be frustrating for users, but it may prevent Google from indexing non-US versions of the site (Googlebot mostly crawls from US IP addresses).



Replying to @\_sebastiansimon @methode and @aleyda

I'd avoid redirects by IP location in most cases; it's easy to break indexing & frustrate users.

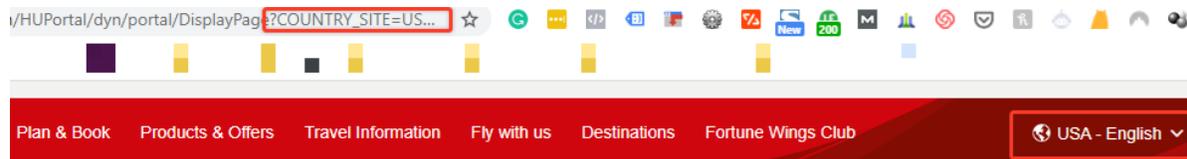
2:01 AM · Jun 20, 2017 · TweetDeck

Instead, provide the user with a language/country selector. airTRFX can also handle this for an airline's website. It provides an SEO-friendly and customizable language/country selector that allows users to switch between regions and languages:



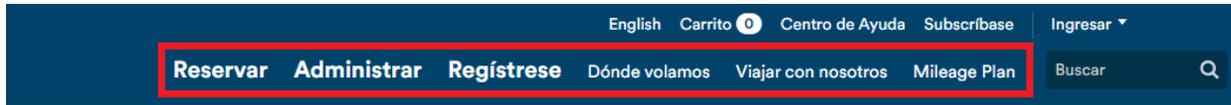
## Don't use URL parameters to target international site editions

Google specifically discourages the use of URL parameters to identify the international site editions (e.g.: <https://airline.com?loc=es>). That's because they can be hard to handle and they result in bad user experience.



## Translate the full page, not just the boilerplate content

This is disastrous for user experience and won't help search engines at all. Just don't do this:



### Consejos para viajar

10 tips to make your next flight easier.

Getting ready to fly? We want to make sure you arrive at your gate with plenty of time to catch your flight, despite the extra busy airports.

Here's some of our best advice for planning ahead to make your airport and security checkpoint experience as simple as possible.

#### 1. Go digital.

Check in for your [flight online](#). Download and use the [aplicación de](#) to save time waiting in ticket counter lines. Our app offers you digital boarding passes, lets you track your flight status (especially important during the winter holidays when the weather can cause delays), sends notifications about your flight, gives you the chance to change to earlier or later flights (if available), and so much more.

Also, be sure to download the [Gogo® Entertainment App](#) before you head to the airport; it's quicker and easier to do this on the ground than while using the slower Wi-Fi connection on the plane. This will help you start watching free movies and TV shows more quickly onboard.

## Set International Targeting in Google Search Console

If the site uses a dedicated subdomain or subfolder for each international version (e.g.: <https://airline.com/en-us/>), create a Google Search Console property and associate it with the relevant country via the [International Targeting tool](#).

### Search Console

#### International Targeting

Language Country

Target users in: **United States** ▼

Save Cancel

Keep in mind that this option is not available for ccTLDs properties. In this case, you won't be able to specify a geographic location, as shown in the example below from [Japan Airlines](#) Google Search Console property:

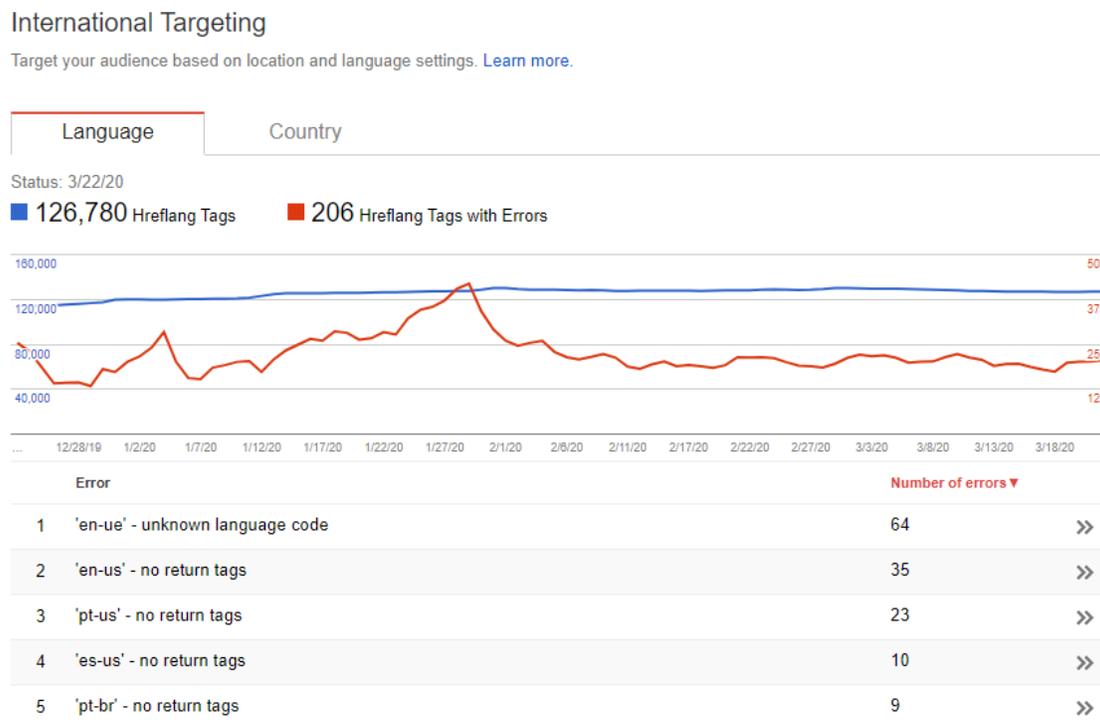
Search Console [Use new Search Console](#) <https://www.jal.co.jp/flights/en-au/> Help

### International Targeting

Language Country

Your site's domain is currently associated with the target: Japan [Learn more](#)

You should also regularly monitor the Language section of the International Targeting report because it can flag up to 1,000 hreflang errors on the site.



The errors could be of two types:

- No return tags: an hreflang tag has no matching tag on the target page.
- Unknown language code: unsupported language/region code.

## Useful Tools and Resources

- [Google's documentation on multilingual SEO](#)
- [Hreflang generator](#)
- [Hreflang implementation guide](#)
- [Hreflang checker](#)
- [Screaming Frog's guide to auditing hreflang](#)

### 3. Set up an SEO-Friendly Site Architecture with Internal Links

Internal links are critical for SEO. They can be the cause of an outstanding SEO success or the culprit of an SEO debacle. In the airline industry, they just can't be ignored.

In fact, according to a [Searchmetrics study](#), in the travel industry, the pages on Google's first results page use 23% more internal links than in other verticals.

Why are internal links so important for the SEO success of any airline's website? There are a few tested reasons:

**Google relies on internal links to discover new pages.**

[According to Google:](#)

"Some pages are known because Google has already crawled them before. Other pages are discovered when Google follows a link from a known page to a new page."

**Internal links help distribute PageRank around the site.**

PageRank is a mathematical formula described in a 1997 [research project](#) by the founders of Google. It basically uses the number and quality of links pointing to a page to determine the value of such a page.

Although [Google removed support for Toolbar Pagerank](#) in 2016, Google's algorithms still use PageRank:



Gary "鯨理/경리" Illyes   
@methode



DYK that after 18 years we're still using PageRank (and 100s of other signals) in ranking?

Wanna know how it works?[infolab.stanford.edu/~backrub/google](http://infolab.stanford.edu/~backrub/google)  
... [pic.twitter.com/3YJeNbXLml](https://pic.twitter.com/3YJeNbXLml)

♥ 129 2:16 PM - Feb 9, 2017



Therefore, the quantity and quality of internal links pointing to a page is a signal to Google about the importance of that page.

## Internal links establish the information hierarchy.

Internal links help search engines understand the content structure of a website, which should be shaped into a silo type. By siloing pages via internal links, a site allows search engines to crawl topically-related pages. Therefore, search engines (and users!) will have a better time navigating and understanding the site structure and the context of the content hubs.

When it comes to implementing an interlinking structure, there are important best practices to consider.

## Use relevant modules of internal links on route pages

A powerful way to construct content silos on an airline's website is to embed interlinking modules on route pages pointing to other relevant route pages. In fact, this is a widely used technique across top organic OTAs and airlines.

airTRFX, our fare marketing platform, has an in-built functionality to generate highly relevant interlinking modules based on specific "page templates".

The examples below show how OTAs and airlines (through airTRFX) use interlinking modules for the most used page templates:

Page template: [Flights to \[Destination\]](#). E.g. [Flights to New York](#)

- Popular Flights to [Destination]. Example from [United Airlines](#) (airTRFX):

### Explore more flights to New York

[Houston - New York](#)

[Austin - New York](#)

[Tampa - New York](#)

[San Francisco - New York](#)

[Phoenix - New York](#)

[Seattle - New York](#)

[Los Angeles - New York](#)

[San Diego - New York](#)

[Sacramento - New York](#)

[Chicago - New York](#)

[Fort Lauderdale - New York](#)

[Dallas - New York](#)

[Denver - New York](#)

[Orlando - New York](#)

[Miami - New York](#)

- Cheapest Flights to [Destination]. Example from [Skyscanner](#):

## Cheapest flights to New York from United States

Miami to New York from \$67

Price found Mar 20, 2020, 3:45 PM



Los Angeles to New York from \$72

Price found Mar 20, 2020, 1:12 PM



Chicago to New York from \$34

Price found Mar 17, 2020, 3:09 PM



Orlando to New York from \$31

Price found Mar 20, 2020, 1:54 PM



[See all routes](#) ▾

- Flights to [Nearby Destination]. Example from [CheapOair](#).

## Flights to Nearby Cities

- [Manhattan Flights](#)
- [Newark Flights](#)
- [Islip Flights](#)
- [Trenton-Mercer Flights](#)
- [Newburgh Flights](#)
- [Bridgeport Flights](#)
- [Poughkeepsie Flights](#)
- [New Haven Flights](#)
- [Allentown-Bethlehem Flights](#)
- [Philadelphia Flights](#)

Page template: Flights from [Origin] to [Destination]. E.g. Flights from Chicago to New York

- Single link to the corresponding Flights to [Destination] page.
- Single link to the corresponding Flights from [Origin] page.

Example from [United](#) (airTRFX):

## Discover more flights

[From Austin](#)

[To New York](#)

- Single link to the return flight page. Example from [Kayak](#).

## Flights to New York

**Return flight deals:**

[New York - Chicago](#)

Page template: Flights from [Origin]. E.g. Flights from New York

- Popular Flights from [Origin]. Example from [American Airlines](#) (airTRFX):

### Destinations from New York

[New York to Miami](#)

[New York to Port-au-Prince](#)

[New York to Acapulco](#)

[New York to Los Angeles](#)

[New York to Chicago](#)

[New York to Amman](#)

[New York to Dallas](#)

[New York to Orlando](#)

[New York to Stockholm](#)

[New York to St. John's, Antigua](#)

[New York to London](#)

[New York to Atlanta](#)

[New York to Phoenix](#)

[New York to Cancun](#)

[New York to Austin](#)

- Cheapest Flights from [Origin]. Example from [Skyscanner](#):

## Cheapest flights to United States from New York

New York to Miami from \$19

Price found Mar 20, 2020, 3:10 PM



New York to Orlando from \$16

Price found Mar 20, 2020, 4:21 PM



New York to Los Angeles from \$36

Price found Mar 20, 2020, 6:26 PM



New York to Chicago from \$18

Price found Mar 17, 2020, 8:41 PM



See all routes

- Flights to [Nearby Origin]. Example from [Orbitz](#).

### Flights from Cities near New York

[Flights from Fort Lee - Paramus](#)

[Flights from Newark](#)

[Flights from Somerset](#)

## Embed links to route pages on top authoritative pages

A highly authoritative page is a page with high PageRank. Typically, it's a page with many high-quality incoming links and generates a lot of traffic. The purpose is to transfer PageRank from the top authoritative page to the route page.

Sadly (or happily!), Google no longer provides PageRank metrics. Therefore, you will need the assistance of third-party tools to identify pages with potential PageRank. Notice the keyword "potential". This is because:

- No tool out there can provide real PageRank numbers. Instead, they use their own metric to measure the page value, from an SEO standpoint.
- [Google does not use these third-party metrics](#) in its algorithms.

However, third-party tools such as [Moz](#), [Ahrefs](#), or [SEMrush](#) can give you hints about which pages have a high value. For example, in Ahrefs you can use Best by Links report to get a snapshot of the top authoritative pages:

#	Page	UR ↓	Referring domains	External links ↓	
				Dofollow	Nofollow
1	Cape Air Official Site   Book Direct with Us for the Lowest Fares <a href="http://www.capeair.com/">www.capeair.com/</a>	80	2,472	47,018	1,457
2	Cape Air Baggage Information <a href="http://www.capeair.com/flying_with_us/baggage.html">www.capeair.com/flying_with_us/baggage.html</a>	37	168	393	210
3	Cape Air Check Your Flight Status <a href="http://www.capeair.com/flying_with_us/flight-status.html">www.capeair.com/flying_with_us/flight-status.html</a>	30	63	104	63
4	Cape Air   About Cape Air <a href="http://www.capeair.com/about_us/index.html">www.capeair.com/about_us/index.html</a>	29	52	301	72
5	Cape Air Travel Deals   Cheap Flights and Fare Specials <a href="http://www.capeair.com/travel_deals/index.html">www.capeair.com/travel_deals/index.html</a>	28	57	1	144
6	Cape Air Group Flights and Group Discounts <a href="http://www.capeair.com/book_flights/group-flights.html">www.capeair.com/book_flights/group-flights.html</a>	27	45	252	61
7	Book Flights with Cape Air <a href="http://www.capeair.com/book_flights/ibe-book-flights.html">www.capeair.com/book_flights/ibe-book-flights.html</a>	24	30	57	2
8	Single News <a href="http://www.capeair.com/theme/single-news.html?id=1510">www.capeair.com/theme/single-news.html?id=1510</a>	23	43	4	51
9	Cape Air Frequently Asked Questions <a href="http://www.capeair.com/faq/">www.capeair.com/faq/</a>	22	27	19	22
10	Traveling with Pets on Cape Air <a href="http://www.capeair.com/flying_with_us/traveling-with-pets.html">www.capeair.com/flying_with_us/traveling-with-pets.html</a>	22	20	276	5

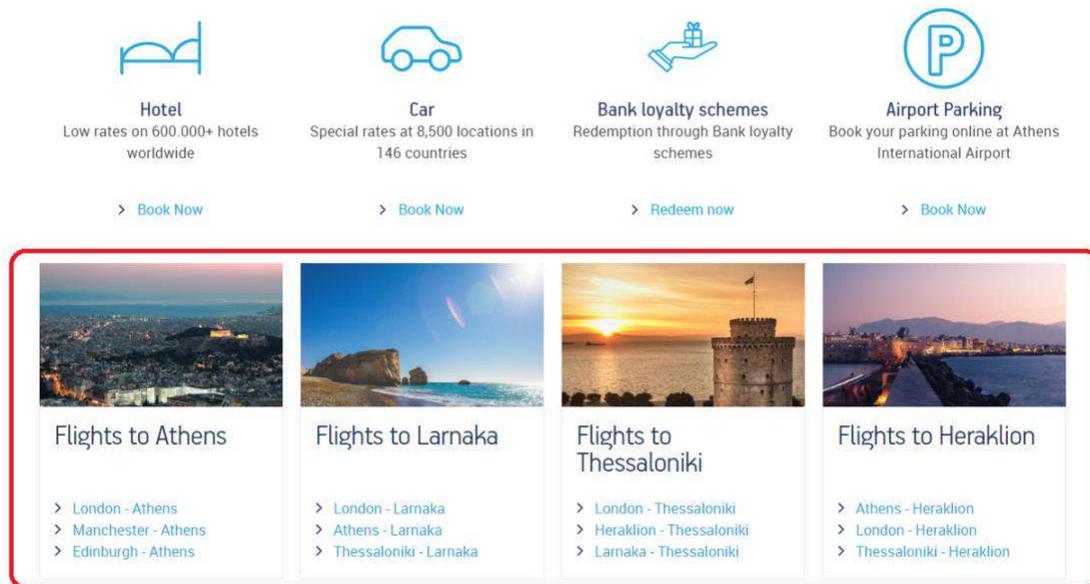
The golden rule here is, though: link only when it's relevant. Avoid unnatural links. For example, would it make sense to have a link on the airline's privacy policy page pointing to the Chicago flight page? Very unlikely.

Here are common good candidates for high authoritative pages to link out from:

- Homepage
- Destination guides
- Travel notices
- Press releases published on the website
- Promotional pages
- FAQ pages
- Some policy pages
- Blog posts

The homepage is an especial case because it's typically the most authoritative page on an airline's website. As you can see in the above screenshot, the homepage is by far the page with most inbound links on [Cape Air website](#).

This is why it's super important to strategically link out from the homepage to the top route or promotional pages. The example below shows how [Aegean Airlines](#) uses an interlinking module on the homepage to showcase its priority routes:



## Link to the top route pages from the header or footer menus

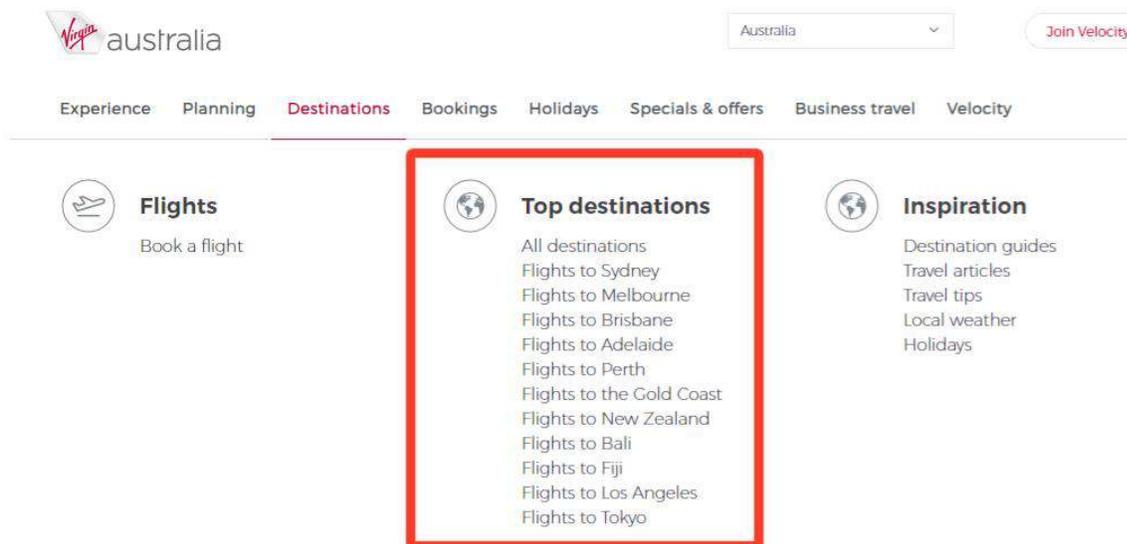
Generally, in-content links are more valuable than sitewide links from the header or the footer. However, navigational links shouldn't be ignored. Our customers who implemented links to the top route pages from the header or footer menus have experienced impressive results.

For example, the chart below shows the exponential organic growth of an airline's website after implementing interlinking from the header and footer menus:

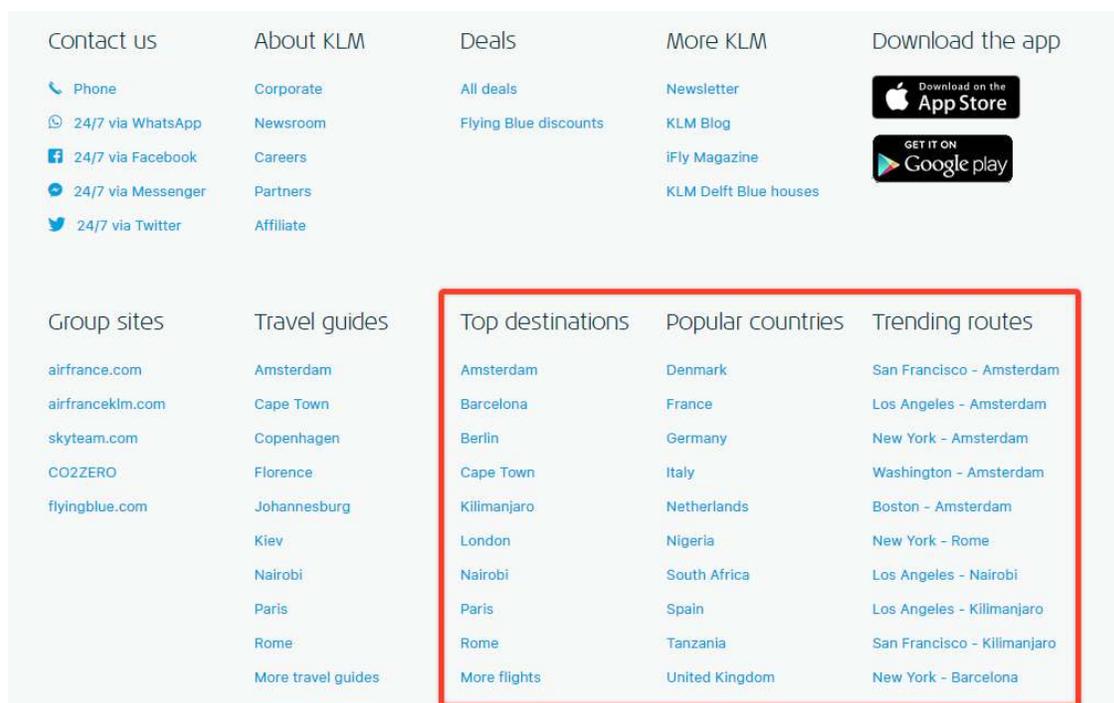


Of course, this is not meant to be a green light for mega menus. In fact, you should avoid mega menus. They are difficult to handle and can become a UX and SEO nightmare if not correctly implemented.

Instead, choose 5 to 6 top airline routes to link from the header menu. Example from [Virgin Australia](#):



You can also add some footer links pointing to the top airline's international, or domestic routes. Example from [KLM](#):

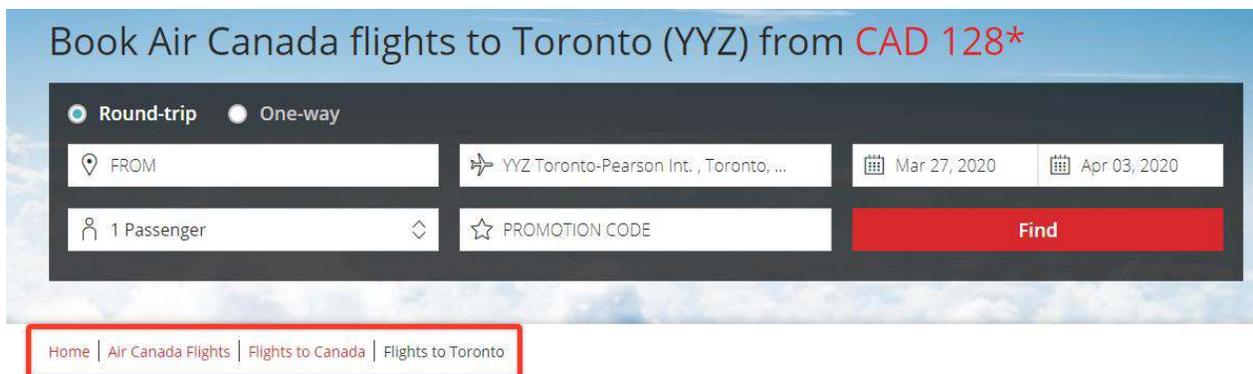


## Use navigation breadcrumbs

Navigation breadcrumbs are a hierarchically structured menu that indicates the path from the homepage to the current page.

Breadcrumbs are widely used in e-commerce websites because they result in good user experience and they are extremely beneficial for SEO. Specifically, breadcrumbs help search engines crawl and understand the structure of a website. As a bonus, Google can show them in the actual search results!

Below there is an example of how airTRFX generated SEO-optimized breadcrumbs for the [flights to Toronto page](#) on the Air Canada implementation:



When implementing breadcrumbs, you should avoid the four most common mistakes:

- Wrong path hierarchy
- Duplicate paths
- Non-responsive text links

Additionally, it's recommended to implement the [Breadcrumb schema](#) since Google uses the markup to categorize the information from the page in the search results.

airTRFX not only takes care of dynamically building the breadcrumb links, but also comes with the BreadcrumbList schema fully integrated, as shown below:

BreadcrumbList		0 ERRORS 0 WARNINGS ^
@type	BreadcrumbList	
itemListElement		
@type	ListItem	
name	Home	
position	1	
item		
@type	Thing	
@id	<a href="https://www.aircanada.com/ca/en">https://www.aircanada.com/ca/en</a>	
itemListElement		
@type	ListItem	
name	Air Canada Flights	
position	2	
item		
@type	Thing	
@id	<a href="https://www.aircanada.com/en-ca/">https://www.aircanada.com/en-ca/</a>	
itemListElement		
@type	ListItem	
name	Flights to Canada	
position	3	
item		
@type	Thing	
@id	<a href="https://www.aircanada.com/en-ca/flights-to-canada">https://www.aircanada.com/en-ca/flights-to-canada</a>	
itemListElement		
@type	ListItem	
name	Flights to Toronto	
position	4	
item		
@type	Thing	
@id	<a href="https://www.aircanada.com/en-ca/flights-to-toronto">https://www.aircanada.com/en-ca/flights-to-toronto</a>	

## Link directly to canonicals and 200-status pages

Avoid linking out to canonicalized and non-200 status URLs (3XX, 4XX, or 5XX). This can dilute page authority, waste crawl budget, and result in poor user experience.

You can use [Ahrefs Site Audit tool](#) to identify internal links with issues:

Issue	Crawled	Change
INDEXABLE		
🟡 Page has links to redirect	7,313	—
🔴 HTTPS page has internal links to HTTP	7,246	—
🔴 Page has nofollow and dofollow incoming internal links	6,151	—
🔴 Page has links to broken page	1,540	—
🔵 Page has only one dofollow incoming internal link	952	—
🔴 Page has nofollow incoming internal links only	304	—
🔴 Page has no outgoing links	5	—
🔴 Redirected page has no incoming internal links	3	—

Once you gather the list, go ahead and replace the affected destination URL with the canonical and 200 status URL.

Caveat: sometimes, internal links point to a canonicalized version of a URL for a good reason. It could be because some URL parameters are required, or for another thousand excuses. It is always advisable to involve the IT or development teams before making regrettable decisions.

## Use SEO-friendly anchor text.

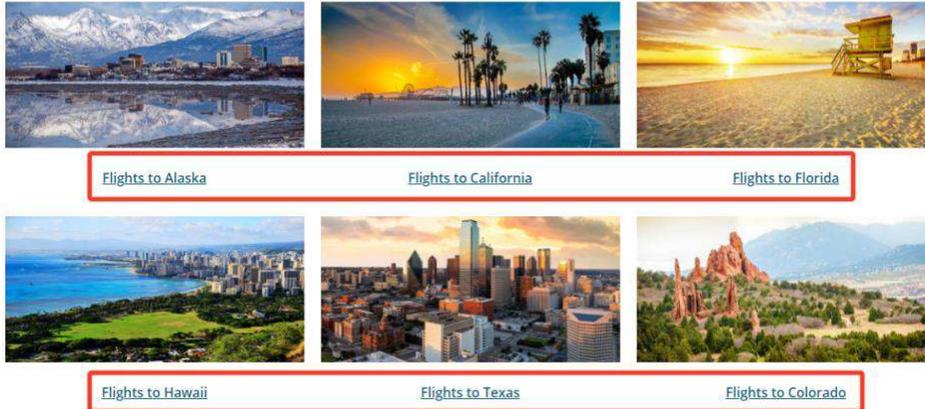
Anchor texts send relevance signals to search engines. Therefore, they should “hint” what the linked page is about.

We recommend using consistent anchor text on structural links and keyword-rich anchor text on contextual links.

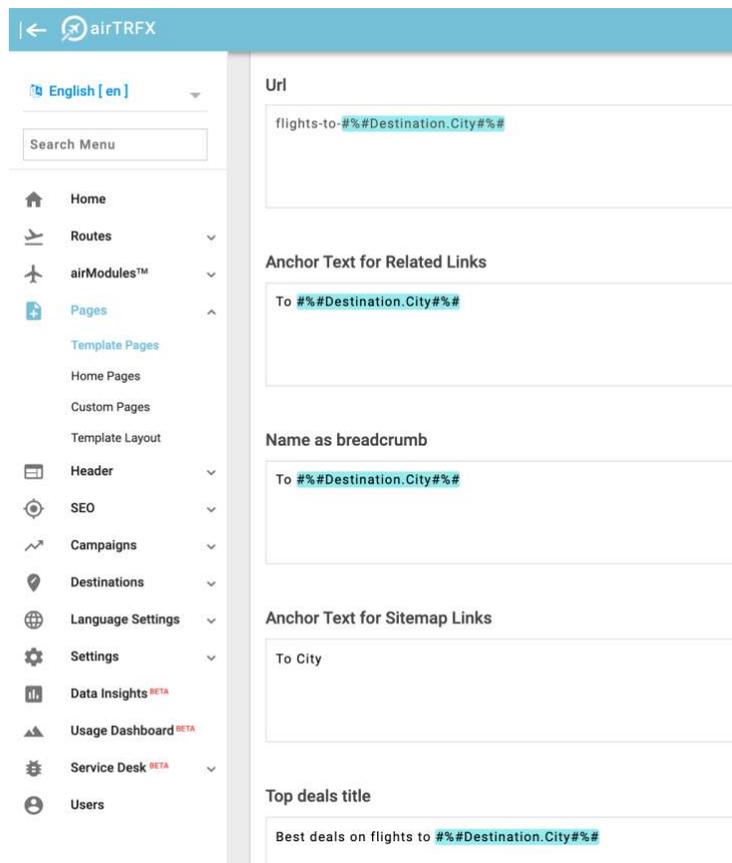
Structural links are typically included in:

- Header menu
- Navigation breadcrumbs
- Footer links
- Interlinking modules based on page templates

Book the best deals on flights to these popular US States



Structural links, especially from interlinking modules, are extremely important to facilitate crawlability and the flow of PageRank. That's why in airTRFX we built a functionality that allows you to customize anchor texts for structural links as you see fit, as the below image shows.



The pages that commonly include contextual links are:

- Destination guides
- Travel notices
- Press releases published on the website
- Promotional pages
- Blog posts

**Special offers**

Our e-newsletter: (un)subscribe

Europe fares

Africa fares

India fares

Business Class

> **New Destinations**

Keep in touch

< Back to Plan and Book

## New KLM Routes and Destinations

Discover more flights to exciting new destinations, now available to book!

---

**On this page:**

- ▼ Växjö
- ▼ Mauritius
- ▼ Gdansk
- ▼ Porto
- ▼ Catania
- ▼ Freetown and Monrovia
- ▼ Mumbai
- ▼ Cagliari
- ▼ Graz
- ▼ Split
- ▼ Malaga
- ▼ Minneapolis

---

**Växjö**

From the 14th May 2018 KLM will launch a new scheduled service to Växjö, Sweden.

Växjö is a vibrant city in Småland. You can enjoy its beautiful nature reserves any time of the year. Amongst the highlights of the city we can mention the glass museum, packed with gorgeous works of art and plenty of history as well as its waterfront parklands, historic church and several award-winning culinary eating-houses.



KLM flights (Operated by Cityhopper) will fly daily to Växjö with an Embraer 175. Departing from Amsterdam at 12:00 and arriving in Växjö at 13:35.

An extra flight will also operate the weekends until 02nd July 2018.

[Book your flight to Växjö today >](#)

[Back to top ^](#)

**Mumbai**

As a rule of thumb, avoid using generic anchor text such as “click here”, “read here”, etc. Also, don’t use the same anchor text for two different pages.

## Leverage HTML sitemaps

Even though HTML sitemaps are [not too important for SEO](#) these days, having it is [still beneficial](#), especially for large websites. They can serve as a directory for users and help search engines crawl the website.

Airlines that have implemented airTRFX can enable this functionality by default. For example, on United Airlines' website there is a top footer with links to an HTML sitemap for every page template:

[Flights to Countries/Regions](#) | [Flights to City](#) | [Country/Region to Country/Region Flights](#) | [City to City Flights](#) | [Flights from Cities](#) | [Flights from Countries/Regions](#) | [City to Country/Region Flights](#)

Each HTML sitemap looks like this:



## United Cheap Flights to Cities | Page 1

<a href="#">To Aberdeen</a>	<a href="#">To Guayaquil</a>	<a href="#">To Paderborn</a>
<a href="#">To Abu Dhabi</a>	<a href="#">To Guernsey</a>	<a href="#">To Paducah</a>
<a href="#">To Acapulco</a>	<a href="#">To Gulfport</a>	<a href="#">To Palermo</a>
<a href="#">To Adana</a>	<a href="#">To Gunnison</a>	<a href="#">To Palm Springs</a>
<a href="#">To Adelaide</a>	<a href="#">To Halifax</a>	<a href="#">To Panama City</a>
<a href="#">To Agadir</a>	<a href="#">To Hamburg</a>	<a href="#">To Panama City</a>
<a href="#">To Agana, Guam</a>	<a href="#">To Hamilton</a>	<a href="#">To Papeete, Tahiti</a>
<a href="#">To Aguiadilla</a>	<a href="#">To Hamilton</a>	<a href="#">To Paphos</a>
<a href="#">To Aguascalientes</a>	<a href="#">To Hancock</a>	<a href="#">To Paris</a>
<a href="#">To Ahe</a>	<a href="#">To Hangzhou</a>	<a href="#">To Pasco</a>
<a href="#">To Ahmedabad</a>	<a href="#">To Hanoi</a>	<a href="#">To Patras</a>
<a href="#">To Akron</a>	<a href="#">To Hanover</a>	<a href="#">To Pendleton</a>

## Don't block links to pages with SEO value

It makes sense to block links to search results pages or other useless pages. In fact, we recommend it! It will help with crawl budget and avoid “[watering down](#)” the indexed pages.

These low-value pages can significantly eat into a site's crawl budget. Here is just a sample of them:



But when it comes to linking out to pages with useful content, you absolutely don't want to block those links. Otherwise, Google won't be able to access and index that content. Also, don't use the “nofollow” attribute on those links either.

## Useful Tools and Resources

- [How Google search works](#)
- [Google's guide to implementing Breadcrumb schema](#)
- [Google's guide to the Google Search Console Links report](#)
- [Ahrefs' guide to auditing internal links](#)
- [Ahrefs' guide to PageRank](#)

## 4. Use Consistent Canonicals and Site Preference Signals

The canonical URL is the preferred URL in a set of variations. It's the URL that you want Google to serve in search.

The same URL can have multiple variations based on several factors, such as the use of http/https, www/non-www, parameters, etc. Below are examples of possible variations of a homepage:

- A) <https://www.airline.com>
- B) <http://airline.com>
- C) <https://airline.com??cmpgn=facebook>

B and C are variations of the preferred URL, which let's say it's A in this case. Therefore, B and C should have a canonical tag pointing to A.

A canonical tag is an HTML tag that would look like this if installed on C, based on the above example:

```
<link rel="canonical" href="https://www.airline.com" />
```

By properly canonicalizing variations of the same URL, you are [consolidating duplicate content](#). According to Google, "if you don't explicitly tell Google which URL is canonical, Google will make the choice for you, or might consider them both of equal weight, which might lead to unwanted behavior".

That "unwanted behavior" could be any or all of the below:

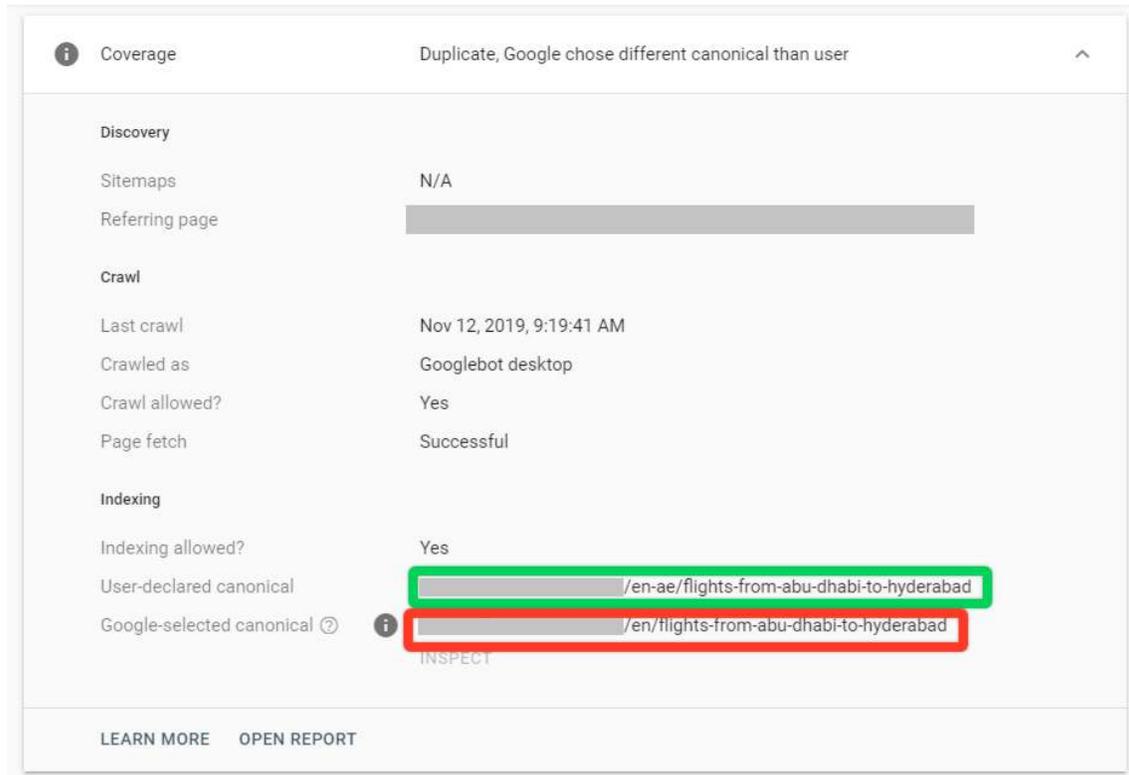
- Google showing the unpreferred URLs in search results.
- Dilution of link signals across the duplicate URLs, which would lead to the deterioration of the SEO value of the preferred URL.
- Google "wasting" crawl budget on duplicate pages instead of spending it on new or updated pages.

A proper site canonicalization structure is the absolute first step to prevent these "unwanted behaviors". However, in our experience with more than 50 airlines, the sad truth is that it may not be enough. Even with all canonicals well implemented on an airline's website, Google may still choose its own canonical, which could be particularly damaging to the airline's SEO performance.

For example, in Google Search Console, there is an "unwanted behavior" reflected in the Coverage report called "Duplicate, Google chose a different canonical than user". We recently

helped an airline fix massive deindexation issues caused by Google choosing its own canonical. For illustration purposes, let's call the airline Avengers Airlines.

Here is what Google Search Console shows when you inspect a URL included in this report:



Basically, Google is saying that it chooses to serve <https://avengersairlines.com/en/flights-from-abu-dhabi-to-hyderabad> in search rather than the preferred URL <https://avengersairlines.com/en-ae/flights-from-abu-dhabi-to-hyderabad>.

Although not too helpful, [Google describes the issue](#) in this way:

“This page is marked as canonical for a set of pages, but Google thinks another URL makes a better canonical. Google has indexed the page that we consider canonical rather than this one.”

But why would Google think another URL makes a better canonical? It comes down to what Google calls “[site preference signals](#)” and they include:

- Canonical annotations (the user-declared canonical)
- Redirects
- Internal linking
- URL in the sitemap file
- HTTPS preference
- “Nicer” looking URLs

Because most airlines have country-market site editions (localized versions of the website), let's add hreflang to the mix.

Google's advice on this? Be consistent. Stick to one canonical URL and align the site preference signals around it.

Going back to the example of Avengers Airlines, we noticed that many site preference signals were already aligned around the preferred URL:

- Self-referring canonicals in place.
- Properly implemented hreflang tags.
- Preferred URLs in the corresponding XML sitemap.
- "Nice" looking preferred URLs.

Then, why was Google picking its own canonical for the preferred URLs? Inconsistent redirects and interlinking.

It turned out that Avengers Airlines' website migrated from subdomain to root domain and ended up redirecting thousands of pages from multiple country-market site editions (en-ae, en-us, etc.) to the generic English site edition (en). Here are examples of pages that they wrongly redirected to the generic English version:

<https://subdomain.avengersairlines.com/en-ae/flights-to-hong-kong>  
<https://subdomain.avengersairlines.com/en-us/flights-to-new-york>  
<https://subdomain.avengersairlines.com/en-kr/flights-to-seoul>

Interestingly enough, the subdomain version of the affected page (<https://subdomain.avengersairlines.com/en-ae/flights-from-abu-dhabi-to-hyderabad>) was properly redirected to the root domain version (<https://avengersairlines.com/en-ae/flights-from-abu-dhabi-to-hyderabad>).

However, by redirecting thousands of localized URLs on the subdomain to the generic English version on the root domain, Avengers Airlines sent the wrong site preference signals to Google. Therefore, Google ultimately decided to pick up the unpreferred URL for most of the localized URLs, even for those that were properly migrated from the subdomain to the root domain.

We also found thousands of internal links from the country-market site editions to generic English URLs even though the relevant localized URL existed.

After working with Avengers Airlines to fix the inconsistent redirects and internal linking network, the site immediately experienced a drop in the number of deindexed pages. Here is a snapshot of the immediate drop for one country-market site edition:



## Useful Tools and Resources

- [Google's documentation on canonicals](#)
- [Google's guide to the Index Coverage report in Google Search Console](#)
- [Google's video on the site preference signals](#)
- [Screaming Frog's guide to auditing canonicals](#)

## 5. Optimize the Content for SEO

Although on-page SEO has become less important over the years, optimizing for keywords still matters. Actually, on its [How Search Works page](#), Google states that:

“The most basic signal that information is relevant is when a webpage contains the same keywords as your search query. If those keywords appear on the page, or if they appear in the headings or body of the text, the information is more likely to be relevant.”

Of course, ranking it's not only about keyword matching. There are multiple factors that help Google assess whether a page contains an answer to a search query. Yet, creating keyword-rich content is still a must-do in SEO.

### Identify the target keywords

Identifying the target keywords is the very first thing to tackle even before writing the page content. Based on our extensive experience with more than 50 airlines, we know that the main keywords that users use to search for flights on Google are:

Searching for flights to destination: “cheap flights to [destination]”, “cheap [destination] flights”, “flight tickets to [destination]”, “cheap airfare to [destination]”, and more.

Searching for flights from origin to destination: “cheap flights from [origin] to [destination]”, “[origin] to [destination] flights”, “plane tickets from [origin] to [destination]”, and more.

When searching for flights in general: “cheap flights”, “cheap airline tickets”, “flight deals”, and more.

### Optimize the on-page SEO elements

Once you have identified the main keyword permutation and top variations to target, it's time to start creating and optimizing the content. Here are a few guidelines:

- Use the main target keyword in the page title. Keep the title within 30-60 characters and use consistent capitalization. Finally, don't forget to add the airline name.

Example: *Cheap Flights to New York From \$30 | American Airlines*

- Use the main target keyword in the meta description. Always write a unique meta-description and keep it within 70-155 characters.

Example: *Looking for cheap flights to New York? Browse our flight deals to New York and let American Airlines take you there.*

- Optimize the URL: make it short and include the main keyword. Also, Google recommends matching the [language of the URL](#) with that of the page content.

Example: <https://www.aa.com/en-us/flights-to-new-york>

- Use only one <H1> tag and make sure it includes the main target keyword.

Example: *Cheap Flights to New York with American Airlines*

- Drop the main target keyword in the first paragraph or 100 words.
- Include the main target keyword or a variation in <H2> tags.

Examples:

## Popular flights to New York

<p>Dallas (DFW) to New York (LGA) 04/19/20 - 04/19/20</p> <p>From <b>\$147*</b></p> <p>Updated: 12 hours ago Round trip</p> <p><a href="#">Book now</a></p>	<p>Los Angeles (LAX) to New York (JFK) 06/02/20 - 06/06/20</p> <p>From <b>\$177*</b></p> <p>Updated: 23 hours ago Round trip</p> <p><a href="#">Book now</a></p>	<p>Dallas (DFW) to New York (NYC) 03/27/20 - 03/27/20</p> <p>From <b>\$147*</b></p> <p>Updated: 18 hours ago Round trip</p> <p><a href="#">Book now</a></p>
---	--	---

## Find deals on flights to New York

From / To Everywhere - JFK	Dates Any time	Price Range finder
<input type="text" value="City or airport"/>	<input type="text" value="JFK - New York John F Kennedy Intl"/>	<input type="text" value=""/>

- Sprinkle the target keyword or a variation in the content body.

### Top tips for finding cheap **flights to New York**

Looking for cheap airfare to New York? 25% of our users found round-trip tickets to New York for the following prices or less: From Chicago \$149, from Los Angeles \$198, from San Francisco \$214

Book at least 2 weeks before departure in order to get a below-average price.

High season is considered to be July, August and September. The cheapest month to fly to New York is January.

Enter your preferred departure airport and travel dates into the search form above to unlock the latest New York flight deals.

For **flights to New York**, there are two main options directly in NYC; namely, LaGuardia Airport (LGA) and JFK International Airport (JFK). LaGuardia acts primarily as a domestic outlet for travelers going to and from NYC. JFK, on the other hand, is more internationally focused and offers direct flights to destinations all around the world.

In addition to the main two airports, the neighboring Newark Liberty International Airport (EWR) is also a great option for **flights to New York**. While Newark is technically in New Jersey, it also serves as a large air traffic hub for NYC. It is only 12 miles from New York City and is easily reached via AirTrain Newark, which stops at a number of subway stations in downtown NYC.

We have also enabled many of these functionalities in airTRFX so airlines can use the on-page content elements as they see fit. There are several variables available to build dynamic content elements across different route pages.

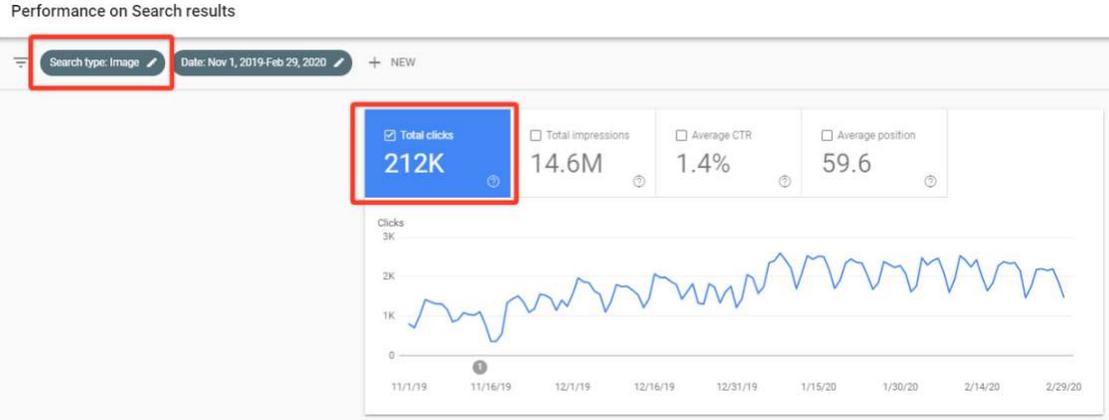
For example, the variable Destination.City can be used in page titles, H1, and meta descriptions to add the corresponding destination to each “flights to city” page, as the below image shows:

The screenshot displays the airTRFX admin dashboard. On the left is a navigation menu with options like Home, Routes, airModules™, Pages, Header, SEO, Template Pages Metadata, Home Pages Metadata, Custom Code, Campaigns, Destinations, Language Settings, Settings, Data Insights BETA, Usage Dashboard BETA, Service Desk BETA, and Users. The main panel is titled 'Template Pages Metadata' and shows the configuration for the 'Flights to City' template. It includes fields for 'SEO Title Tag', 'Meta Description', 'Sitemap Meta Title', and 'Sitemap Meta Description', all containing the dynamic text: 'Flights to ##Destination.City## | ##Airline.Name##'.

### Optimize images

Although visual content may not be as important for airlines' websites as it is for other ecommerce sites, they shouldn't be ignored. In fact, images may become an important source of traffic for airlines' websites.

For example, the Google Search Console report below shows an important amount of image traffic for one of our customers:



This traffic is mostly driven by searches about the airline's aircraft models, seat maps, and airport maps.

QUERIES	PAGES	COUNTRIES	DEVICES	SEARCH APPEARANCE	DATES
Query					Clicks
boeing 777-300er					3,223
boeing 737-900					2,800
boeing 787-9					2,349
boeing 777-300					2,158
boeing 777-200					1,955
boeing 767-300					1,810
boeing 777 seat map					1,326
houston airport map					1,313
frankfurt airport map					952
iah airport map					841

Rows per page: 10 1-10 of 1000

- Use the right format. The right format depends on the type of image. Basically, each format uses different compression methods. Here are some accepted guidelines:
  - Choose JPEG for photographs.
  - Use PNG for illustrations, graphs, or anything with text.
  - Use SVG for icons or logos.
  - or, use WebP instead of JPEG and PNG. It uses a superior compression method, but it's only supported by Chrome and Opera. Refer to [Google's WebP documentation](#) to learn more about it.
  - Use GIF for animations

- Choose the right file name. Create a descriptive name for the image file.

For example, if your image shows a Boeing 777 seat map, the file name should be boeing-777-seat-map.jpg.

- Use descriptive alt text for images. Alt tags describe images when they fail to load and the visitor is using a screen reader.

For example, here's the HTML syntax of the Boeing 777 seat map image would look like:

```

```

- Resize images according to the page dimensions. Upload images in the maximum width needed rather than in the original full size.

If you upload an image wider than the maximum width of its placement, the browser will still load the image in its full size, which may be detrimental to page speed!

- Reduce file size. Make sure that the image is compressed so it is served in the smallest file size possible.

Google recommends several open-source tools to help with this:

- [Guetzli](#)
- [MozJPEG](#)
- [Pngquant](#)
- [ImageOptim](#) (check out the [alternatives](#) for Windows and Linux)

- Create an image sitemap. This is coming [straight from Google](#):

*Images are an important source of information about the content on your site. You can give Google additional details about your images and provide the URL of images we might not otherwise discover by adding information to an image sitemap.*

Learn more about the technical requirements on Google's documentation for [creating image sitemaps](#).

- Implement lazy-loading for images. Basically, lazy-loading makes images load when they need to be loaded.

In Google's words: *Lazy loading can significantly speed up loading on long pages that include many images below the fold by loading them either as needed or when the primary content has finished loading and rendering.*

All lazy-loading methods use some sort of JavaScript, which might cause some rendering issues. More on this in our JavaScript rendering section.

Use a Content Delivery Network (CDN). Airlines customers are spread all over the world, so it's a good idea to serve web files from the closest server to them. A CDN can help with that. Here are a few recommended CDNs:

- [Cloudflare](#)
- [KeyCDN](#)
- [Amazon CloudFront](#)
- [Google Cloud CDN](#)
- [AKAMAI](#)

Because CDN URLs typically look like xyz.cdnprovider.com, we recommend using the airline's domain or subdomain via a new CNAME record. This will host images on the airline's domain and prevent potential broken URLs when changing CDN provider.



**John**  
@JohnMu

Replying to [@pedrodias](#) [@sandeepmalviy](#) and [@dannysullivan](#)

CDN URLs is fine, but I'd try to avoid moving image URLs too much, so I'd tend towards using your own domain/subdomain (via CDN).

6:25 AM · Oct 17, 2017 · [Twitter Web Client](#)

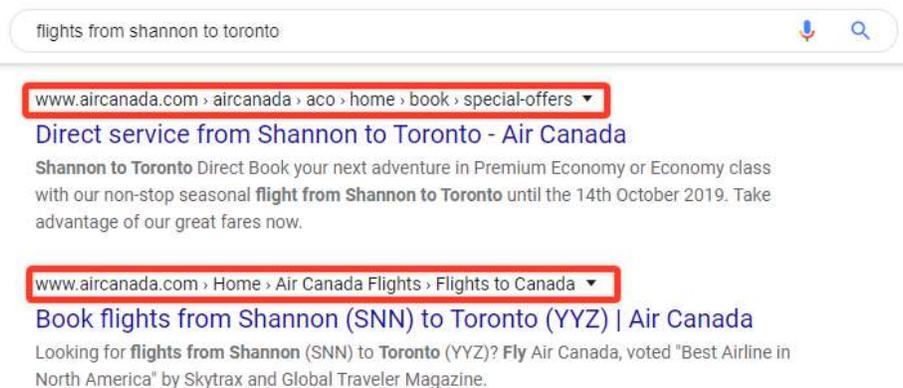
## Consolidate similar content

When there are pages with very similar content living on the same website, keyword cannibalization can occur. Keyword cannibalization simply means that almost identical pages compete for the same keywords and search engines can't determine which page to serve for such keywords.

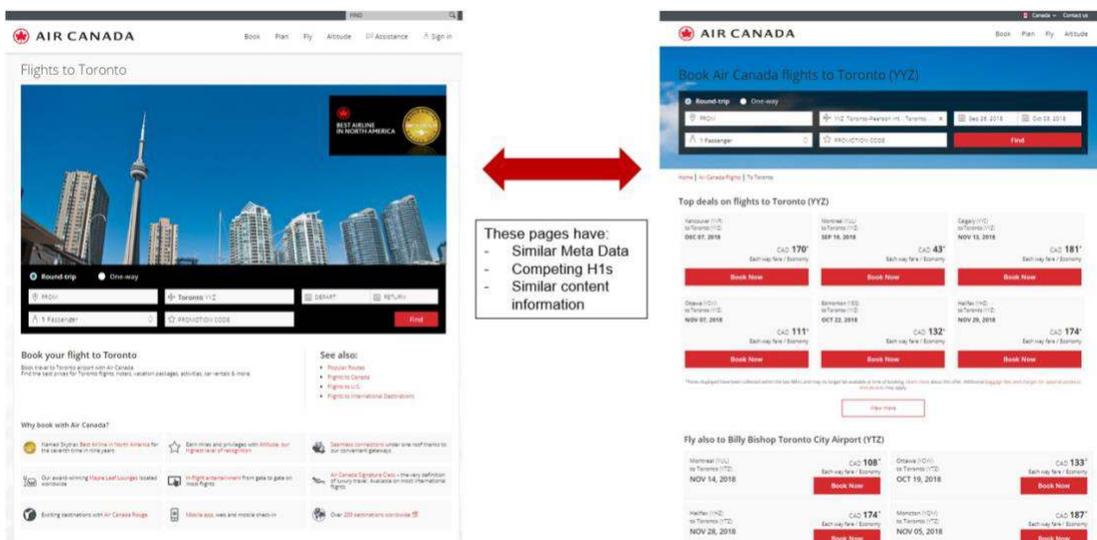
This phenomenon is very common on airlines' websites where there usually are separate pages with very similar content. For example,

- Page 1: Promotional offers to [Destination]
- Page 2: Travel guide to [Destination]
- Page 3: Cheap flights to [Destination]

For example, on [Air Canada's website](#) there used to be several pages with very similar content competing in SERP. Before consolidating those pages after the airTRFX implementation, a search for "flights from Shannon to Toronto" would get you two pages ranking in position 2 and 3, like the image below shows:



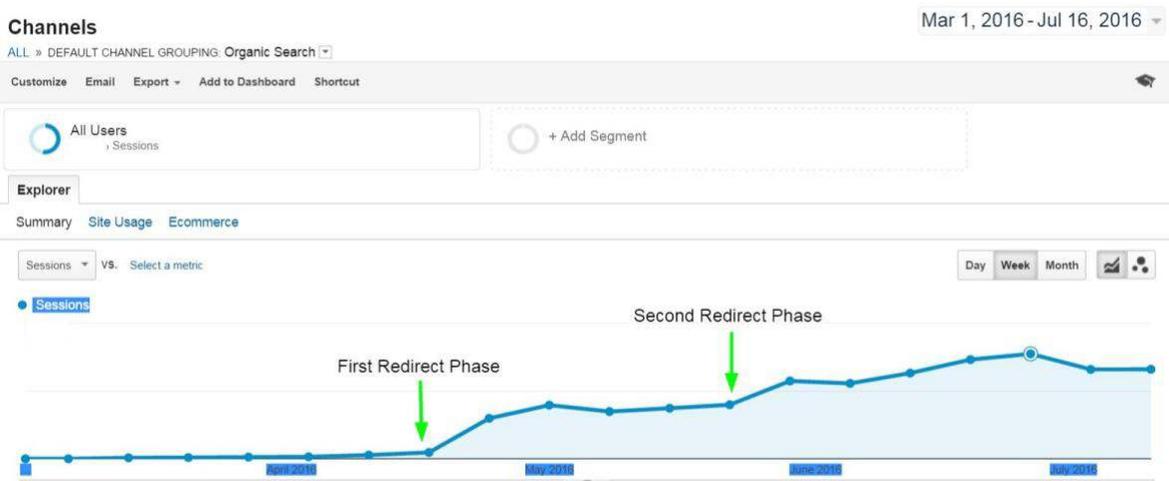
When looking at two similar pages on Air Canada's website, it is easier to realize why this was happening:



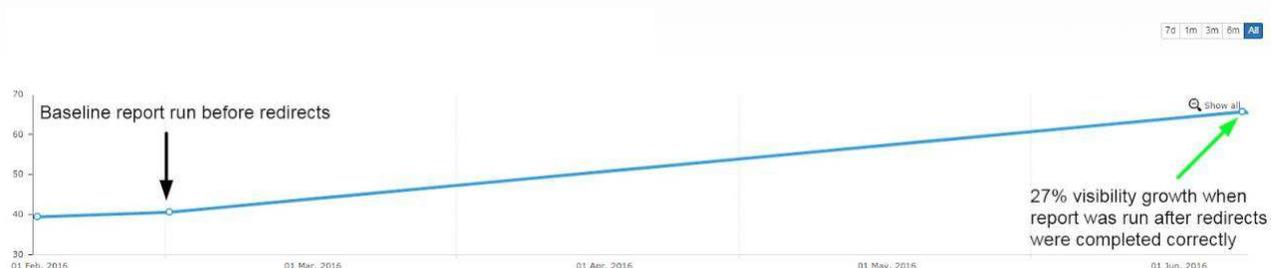
The truth is that this competition in search result pages may result in a myriad of negative impacts:

- It can cause an undesirable page to rank above a desirable page.
- It can effectively drag down the rankings for all the competing pages.
- It can dilute the authority of the desirable page because internal and external links may point to several versions of the same content.
- It can cause inefficient crawling since search engines spend more time crawling the same content and leave less time to discover new content.

The most effective way to prevent these unwanted behaviors is to consolidate pages with very similar content through 301 redirects. For example, the graph below shows the exponential growth in organic traffic for an airline after redirecting “travel guide” and “flights” pages to the airTRFX pages:



Likewise, the Visibility Percent (metric from Advanced Web Rankings) for non-branded keywords with purchasing intent (e.g. “cheap flights to Toronto”) increased by 27% in 3 months:



To spot keyword cannibalization issues, follow the [detailed guide from Ahrefs](#).

## Useful Tools and Resources

- [Google's guide on how search algorithms work](#)
- [Google's guide to writing good titles and snippets](#)
- [Google's guide to image optimization](#)
- [Google's image best practices](#)
- [Backlinko's guide on on-page optimization](#)
- [Ahrefs' guide to keyword cannibalization](#)
- [Ahrefs' guide to image optimization](#)

## 6. Make the JavaScript SEO-Friendly

[95% of all websites on the web use JavaScript](#). That's more than 1.5 billion websites! Therefore, it's highly likely that an airline's website will use JavaScript at some point to load content or links. Despite its popularity, though, JavaScript and SEO have always had a complicated relationship.

There are three methods of serving JavaScript content:

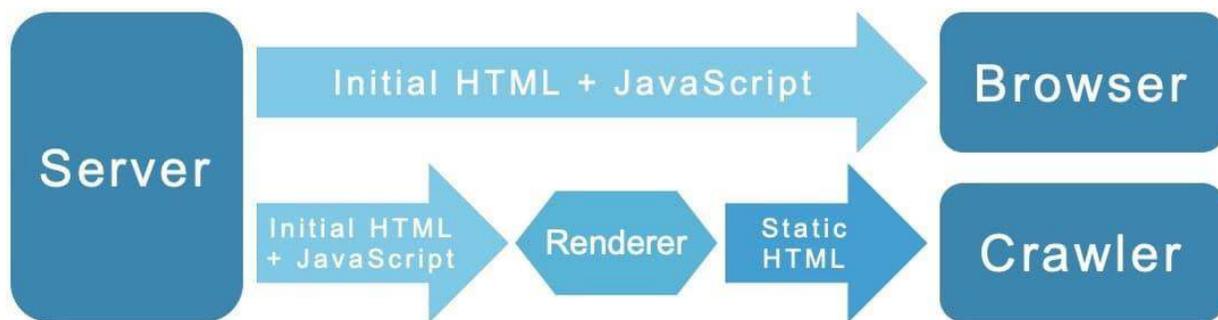
### Server-side rendering

The JavaScript content is already in the HTML file when Googlebot receives it. Typically, search engines don't have issues with JavaScript rendering (but developers do!).

Airlines that adopt airTRFX won't need to worry a thing about JavaScript rendering issues because all the content on airTRFX pages is served via server-side rendering.

### Dynamic rendering

In this method, Google receives a static version of the HTML, with JavaScript already executed through a renderer. Users, however, receive the normal initial HTML plus the client-side JavaScript content.



Google recommends this method only for websites that use rapidly changing JavaScript content or JavaScript features that are not supported by crawlers.

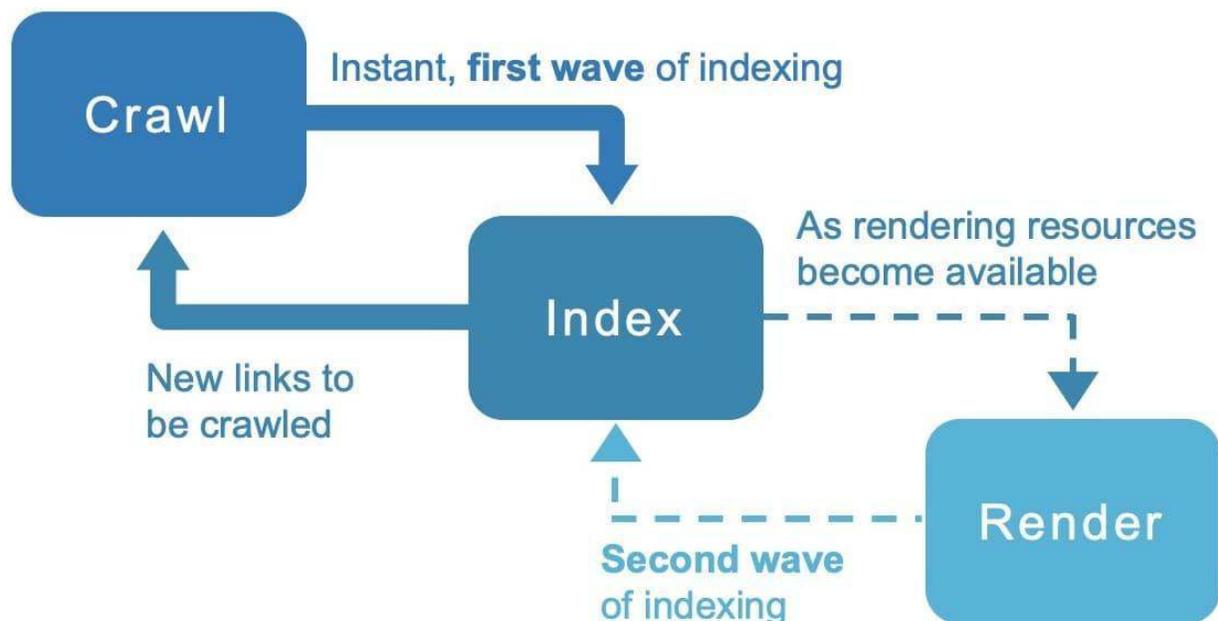
To learn more about dynamic rendering, check out [Google's handy guide](#).

### Client-side rendering

The JavaScript content is not in the initial HTML file. JavaScript loads the content from the server in the browser. Search engines struggle with client-side JavaScript rendering and there is never a guarantee that the JavaScript content will be indexed.

Although Googlebot uses an [evergreen version of Chromium](#), it faces a number of limitations when crawling client-side JavaScript content:

- Parsing, compiling and executing JavaScript is very time-consuming.
- Google indexes JavaScript content in a “[second wave](#)”. This means that Google first indexes what it finds in the initial HTML (“first wave”). Later, as resources become available, it comes back to parse, compile and execute the JavaScript content. As a consequence, Google can take a while ([days or even weeks!](#)) to discover and index JavaScript-powered links and content. By the way, Google recently said that it is soon [doing away](#) with the two waves of indexing, but it’s not dead yet.

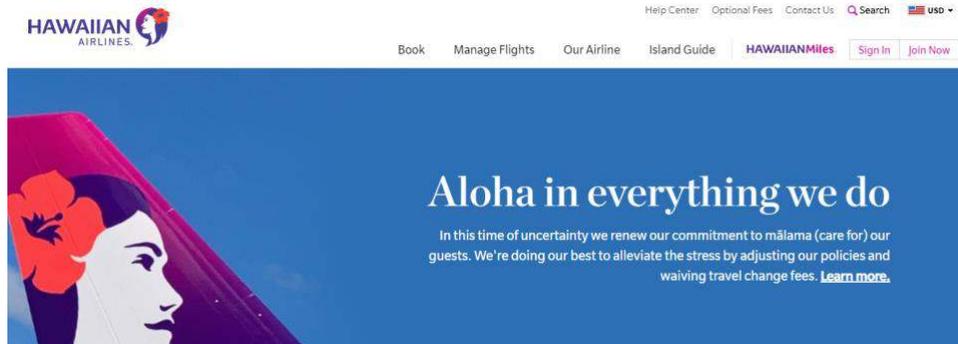


- A significant use of JavaScript can negatively affect [crawl budget](#), which is the number of webpages that Google can crawl on a site.

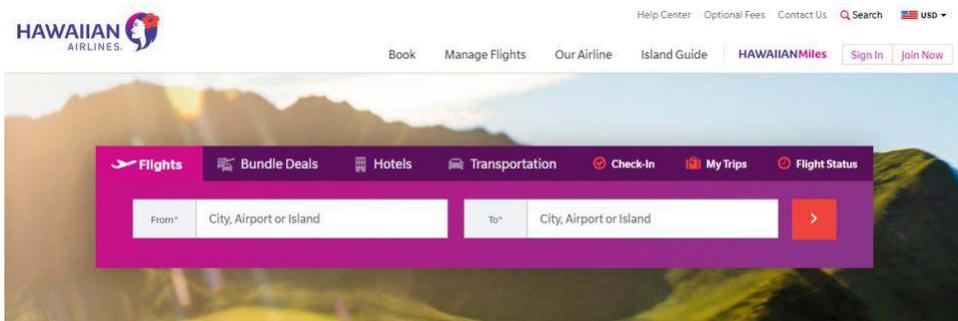
There are a few ways to check whether Google is properly rendering and indexing JavaScript content. But first, you will need to identify the JavaScript content elements.

Install [Quick JavaScript Switcher](#) on Chrome to quickly enable and disable JavaScript. Then, identify the content unavailable with JavaScript disabled. For example, let’s try it on <https://www.hawaiianairlines.com/>.

It goes from this, with JavaScript enabled:

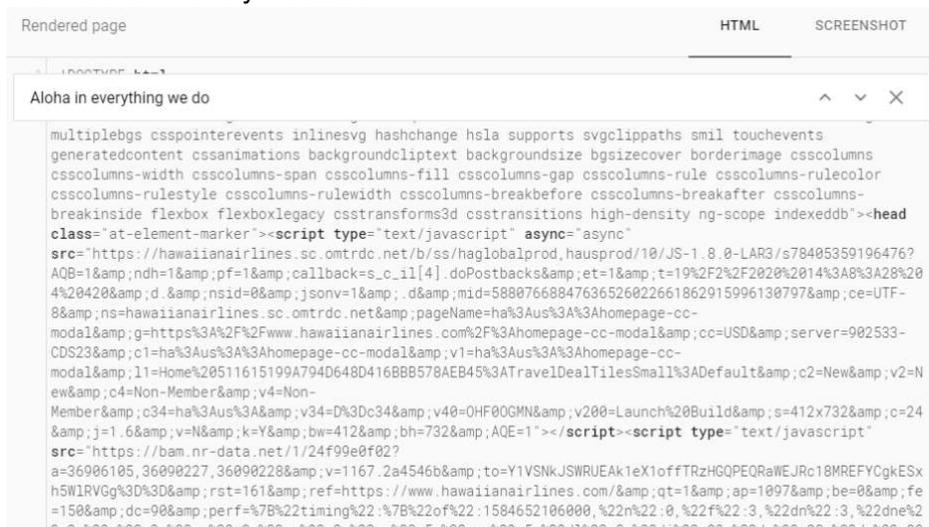


To this, with JavaScript disabled:



It seems that the content on the homepage slider is powered by client-side JavaScript. To check whether Googlebot is able to render the JavaScript content or links, we always recommend using the [Mobile-Friendly Test tool](#). Then, inspect the rendered HTML and see whether the JavaScript content or links are there.

Following up on the example above, let's try to find "Aloha in everything we do" in the rendered HTML from the Mobile-Friendly Test tool:



Nothing. Obviously, copying and pasting the rendered HTML code into a text editor would be more practical. You can also use the [URL Inspection in Google Search Console](#) for the same purpose.

Pro tip: some JavaScript sites will require manually resubmitting the URL a couple of times before the Mobile-Friendly Test tool outputs a more complete rendered HTML.

The next step would be to verify whether Google is indexing the JavaScript content (spoiler: it can't!). You can use the “site” search command for this purpose:  
site:https://www.hawaiianairlines.com/ "Aloha in everything we do":



There may be a few reasons why Google cannot render or index the JavaScript content:

- Google encountered timeouts while rendering.
- Some rendering issues occurred.
- Google is blocked from accessing JavaScript files.
- Google is indexing the content with a delay.

Like with almost anything in SEO, there also happen to be rules of thumb to manage sites that rely too much on JavaScript.

## Write compatible JavaScript code

Although now Googlebot supports the latest JavaScript features, there still are [some limitations](#). Therefore, make sure that your code is friendly to Googlebot.

## Don't block JavaScript files from Googlebot

If a JavaScript file is critical to load valuable content, Googlebot should render it and index it. Therefore, it must be able to crawl the JavaScript file!

## Fix lazy-loaded content

Lazy-loading is common and recommended UX best practice, but it can hide content from Google if it is not properly implemented. Follow [Google's guidelines](#).

## Don't use fragment URLs to load different content

Googlebot ignores the #fragment. Therefore, it won't treat URLs with a hash as a different URL and it won't index the content if it is different.

## Avoid JavaScript content that requires user-interaction to load

[Google does not act as a real user](#). It does not scroll the page. It does not click on tabs or buttons. Thus, you can expect Google not to render and index JavaScript content that loads upon an user interaction.

To confirm whether Googlebot can render and index this content, use the Mobile-Friendly Test Tool and the site search command as outlined earlier.

## If using an “onclick” link event, make sure to use the href attribute too

[Google does not always follow links with “onclick” events](#). It's common to see this type of link on an airline's website, especially on the header menu. Our advice is almost always the same: don't use it alone, wrap it into a href attribute. Here are “good” and “bad” links:

```
<a href="/good-link">Will be crawled</a>
```

```
<span onclick="changePage('bad-link')">Not crawled</span>
```

```
<a onclick="changePage('bad-link')">Not crawled</a>
```

```
<a href="/good-link" onclick="changePage('good-link')">Will be crawled</a>
```

## Useful Tools and Resources

- [Google's guide to implementing Dynamic Rendering](#)
- [Google's introduction to the new evergreen Googlebot](#)
- [Google's introduction to the two waves of indexing](#)
- [Google's guide to JavaScript SEO](#)
- [Google's guide to fixing common JavaScript issues](#)
- [Google's guide to implementing lazy-loading content](#)
- [Google's video series on JavaScript SEO](#)
- [Onely's guide to JavaScript SEO](#)
- [Google's Mobile-Friendly Test tool](#)
- [Quick JavaScript Switcher Chrome extension](#)

## 7. Optimize the Site for Mobile-First Indexing

In 2016, Google announced that it was experimenting with mobile-first indexing, which basically means that Google would look at the mobile version of a site FIRST during the crawling, indexing, and ranking processes. During 2018 and 2019, Google slowly rolled out mobile-first indexing and is expected to include [all websites by September 2020](#).

As the web becomes more mobile-friendly, airlines need to make sure that their websites offer the best user experience and [provide Google with consistent information](#) from the desktop and mobile versions of the site.

### Be mobile-friendly

First and foremost: be mobile-friendly. It seems redundant, but it's important to stress it.

There are [three methods to make a website mobile-friendly](#):

- [Responsive Web Design](#)
- [Dynamic Serving](#)
- [Separate URLs](#)

We always advise our customers to build a responsive website, which is the safest and more efficient method. We strongly recommend against using separate websites for each website version.



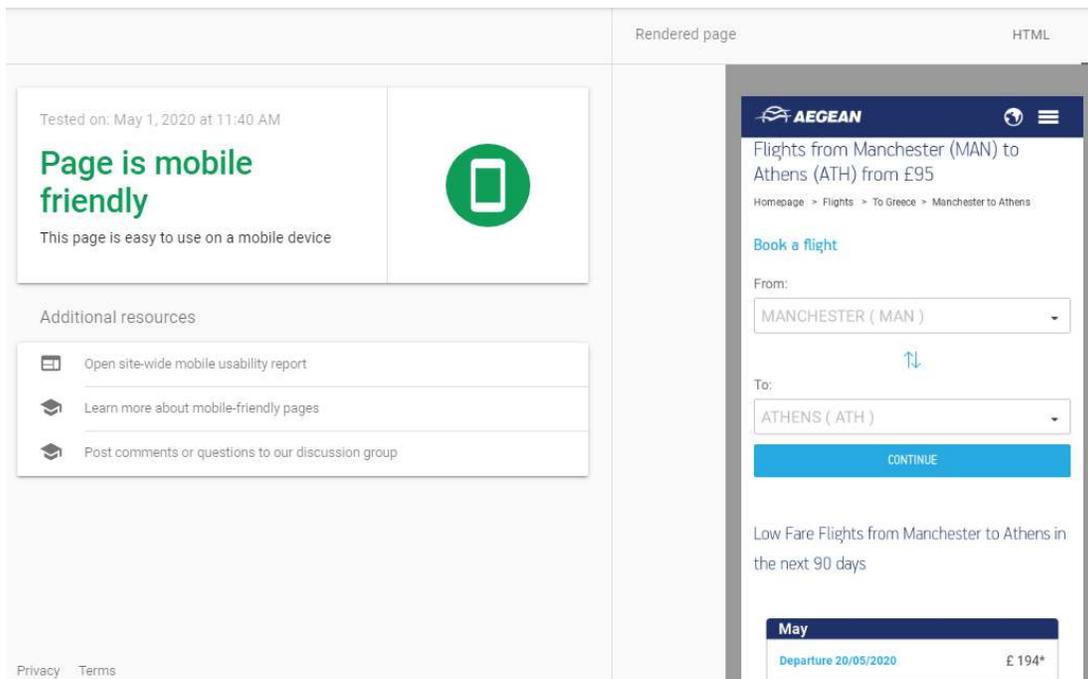
**John** 🇺🇸  
@JohnMu

Replying to [@info\\_rajive](#) [@rustybrick](#) and [@dannysullivan](#)

Looks like the mobile URL isn't being picked up as belonging to the desktop URL. That can sometimes happen, and is one of the reasons we don't recommend separate mobile URLs anymore. Separate URLs for the same content makes things unnecessarily harder.

4:14 AM · Jun 20, 2019 · [TweetDeck](#)

To comply with the best practices for SEO and user experience, the pages in airTRFX are fully responsive for all devices and browsers.



## If using separate URLs for mobile, adhere to the implementation requirements

However, if for a good reason (and it better be very good) you still need to use separate URLs for the mobile site (e.g.: <https://m.airline.com>), then make sure that you adhere to the [best SEO practices](#):

**Signal the relationship between the desktop and mobile URLs** by using the link tag with `rel="canonical"` and `rel="alternate"` elements.

On the desktop page, add a `rel="alternate"` tag pointing to the corresponding mobile URL. On the mobile page, add a `rel="canonical"` tag pointing to the corresponding desktop URL.

There are two methods to implement this annotation: in the HTML and in XML sitemap. For example, let's say the desktop version of a page is <https://airline.com/en-us/flights-to-chicago> while the mobile version is <https://m.airline.com/en-us/flights-to-chicago>.

The annotation in the HTML of the desktop page would look like this:

```
<link rel="alternate" media="only screen and (max-width: 640px)"
href="https://m.airline.com/en-us/flights-to-chicago">
```

On the mobile page, the HTML annotation would be:

```
<link rel="canonical" href="https://airline.com/en-us/flights-to-chicago">
```

The annotation in the XML sitemap should be:

```
<url>
  <loc>https://airline.com/en-us/flights-to-chicago</loc>
  <xhtml:link rel="alternate" media="only screen and (max-width: 640px)"
    href="https://m.airline.com/en-us/flights-to-chicago" />
</url>
</urlset>
```

### **Use a canonical tag on the mobile URL pointing to the desktop URL.**

For example, on <https://m.airline.com/en-us/flights-to-chicago>, the canonical tag annotation should be:

```
<link rel="canonical" href="https://airline.com/en-us/flights-to-chicago" />
```

### **Detect user-agent strings and redirect them correctly.**

You can redirect users to the best URL (preferably a 302 redirect), based on the device they are using. Remember to treat Googlebot like any other user-agent.

Googlebot supports HTTP (including the [Vary HTTP Header](#)) and JavaScript redirects. Regardless of the method you use, the redirect must be consistent with the rel="alternate" link tag.

### **Allow users to switch between the desktop or mobile URL.**

This will allow users to override the redirect policy in case it's faulty and choose the URL version they want to see.

### **If using hreflang, link between desktop and mobile URLs separately.**

Hreflang links on the desktop URL should point to the localized desktop URLs. Similarly, hreflang links on the mobile URL should point to the localized mobile URLs.

For example:

On <https://airline.com/en-us/flights-to-chicago>, the hreflang annotation should be:

```
<link rel="canonical" href="https://airline.com/en-us/flights-to-chicago">
```

```
<link rel="alternate" media="only screen and (max-width: 640px)" href="https://m.airline.com/en-us/flights-to-chicago">
<link rel="alternate" hreflang="es-es" href="https://airline.com/es-es/flights-to-chicago">
<link rel="alternate" hreflang="fr-fr" href="https://airline.com/fr-fr/flights-to-chicago">
<link rel="alternate" hreflang="de-de" href="https://airline.com/de-de/flights-to-chicago">
```

On the mobile version, <https://m.airline.com/en-us/flights-to-chicago>, it would be:

```
<link rel="canonical" href="https://airline.com/en-us/flights-to-chicago">
<link rel="alternate" hreflang="es-es" href="https://m.airline.com/es-es/flights-to-chicago">
<link rel="alternate" hreflang="fr-fr" href="https://m.airline.com/fr-fr/flights-to-chicago">
<link rel="alternate" hreflang="de-de" href="https://m.airline.com/de-de/flights-to-chicago">
```

### **Avoid cross-links.**

Make all internal links on the desktop website point to desktop URLs. The same on the mobile website.

### **Use the same robots.txt directives on both versions of the site.**

In most cases, you should instruct search engines to crawl the same parts of both versions of the website.

### **Create an XML sitemap for the mobile site.**

Same as with the robots.txt file, there should be an XML sitemap for both versions of the site. Also, submit both XML sitemaps to their respective Google Search Console properties.

### **Verify both versions of the site in Google Search Console.**

For traffic and ranking analysis, reporting, or troubleshooting, you will want to have access to search and indexation data of both versions of the site.

## **Provide consistent experience on the desktop and mobile site**

Finally, regardless of whether the website uses responsive design, dynamic serving, or separate URLs, there are some [best practices](#) in the Mobile-First Indexing era:

- Use the same metadata, meta robots tags, and OpenGraph tags on the desktop and mobile sites.
- Use the same content on the desktop and mobile sites, including headings.
- Use the same interlinking structure on the desktop and mobile sites.

- Make sure that the mobile and desktop sites have the same structured data.
- Use the same images and alt text for images on the mobile and desktop site. Make sure that videos are playable on mobile devices.
- Make sure that both the desktop and mobile pages return the same status code.
- Let Google crawl JavaScript, CSS, and image files required for the site to be mobile-friendly.
- Avoid interstitials that block users from completing tasks.

## Useful Tools and Resources

- [Google's announcement of Mobile-First Indexing](#)
- [Why Google recommends responsive web design](#)
- [Google's technical guide for separate mobile websites](#)
- [Google's Mobile-First Indexing best practices](#)
- [Google's Mobile-Friendly Test tool](#)
- [Marie Haynes guide on Mobile-First Indexing](#)
- [Mobile-First Indexing checker](#)

## 8. Install Dynamic XML Sitemaps

An [XML sitemap](#) is a file that lists all the URLs of a site. It also includes secondary information, such as when a page has been updated, its update frequency, and relative importance. With all its attributes, the annotation for each URL in the XML sitemap would be:

```
<?xml version="1.0" encoding="UTF-8"?>
<urlset xmlns="http://www.sitemaps.org/schemas/sitemap/0.9">
  <url>
    <loc>https://www.airline.com/</loc>
    <lastmod>2020-01-01</lastmod>
    <changefreq>monthly</changefreq>
    <priority>0.8</priority>
  </url>
</urlset>
```

Keep in mind that hreflang links could also be included in the XML sitemap, as we discussed in the [multilingual SEO section](#).

The XML file is typically located at <https://airline.com/sitemap.xml> or [https://airline.com/sitemap\\_index.xml](https://airline.com/sitemap_index.xml). However, a sitemap can be placed anywhere on a site, considering that it will affect only descendants of the parent directory.

XML sitemaps are especially important for large websites because they help search engines discover, crawl, understand, and index the webpages. Actually, Google has said that it receives XML sitemaps “[in the form of an energy drink](#)”:

johnmu 🍷 @johnmu 🍷 14 points · 3 months ago

All sitemap files of a site are imported into a common, big mixing cup, lightly shaken, and then given to Googlebot by URL in the form of an energy drink. It doesn't matter how many files you have. If you give the last-modification date (which you should), then you just need to make sure you're giving the same date for any given URL across the files.

As with everything in SEO, there are certain [guidelines for handling XML sitemaps](#).

### Create an XML sitemap for each localized site edition

Create a parent XML sitemap listing the sub-sitemaps for each localized site version. This will improve the discoverability and crawlability of the pages targeting a language/region. Additionally, you will be able to submit every separate sitemap to each Google Search Console property associated with a language/region.

For example, see how airTRFX generates a parent XML sitemap (more below) listing the individual XML sitemaps for each site edition on [FlyTap](#):

```

▼<sitemapindex xmlns="http://www.sitemaps.org/schemas/sitemap/0.9">
  ▼<sitemap>
    <loc>https://flights.flytap.com/cs-cz/sitemap.xml</loc>
    <lastmod>2020-03-17T00:15:22+00:00</lastmod>
  </sitemap>
  ▼<sitemap>
    <loc>https://flights.flytap.com/da-dk/sitemap.xml</loc>
    <lastmod>2020-03-17T00:15:22+00:00</lastmod>
  </sitemap>
  ▼<sitemap>
    <loc>https://flights.flytap.com/de-at/sitemap.xml</loc>
    <lastmod>2020-03-17T00:15:22+00:00</lastmod>
  </sitemap>
  ▼<sitemap>
    <loc>https://flights.flytap.com/de-ch/sitemap.xml</loc>
    <lastmod>2020-03-17T00:15:22+00:00</lastmod>
  </sitemap>
  ▼<sitemap>
    <loc>https://flights.flytap.com/de-de/sitemap.xml</loc>
    <lastmod>2020-03-17T00:15:22+00:00</lastmod>
  </sitemap>
  ▼<sitemap>
    <loc>https://flights.flytap.com/en-ao/sitemap.xml</loc>
    <lastmod>2020-03-17T00:15:22+00:00</lastmod>
  </sitemap>
  ▼<sitemap>
    <loc>https://flights.flytap.com/en-ar/sitemap.xml</loc>
    <lastmod>2020-03-17T00:15:22+00:00</lastmod>
  </sitemap>

```

## Break up large sitemaps into smaller sitemaps

Sitemaps should be no larger than 50MB uncompressed and can contain a maximum of 50,000 URLs. Therefore, for very large airline sites, you will have to split sitemaps that surpass these limits into smaller sitemaps. You should also include them in a parent XML sitemap, often named [sitemap\\_index.xml](#):

```

▼<sitemapindex xmlns="http://www.sitemaps.org/schemas/sitemap/0.9">
  ▼<sitemap>
    <loc>https://flights.etihad.com/ar/sitemap.xml</loc>
    <lastmod>2020-01-08T11:48:47+00:00</lastmod>
  </sitemap>
  ▼<sitemap>
    <loc>https://flights.etihad.com/ar/sitemap2.xml</loc>
    <lastmod>2020-01-08T11:48:47+00:00</lastmod>
  </sitemap>

```

## Only include pages with SEO value

Google will crawl the URLs exactly as listed in the sitemap. Therefore, the XML sitemap should only include pages that you want search engines to serve in search results. But not all pages on an airline's website have SEO value. In fact, on a typical airline's website, there are several types of pages that definitely should not be included in the XML sitemap. By including only relevant pages with SEO value, you are telling search engines to prioritize those pages over the excluded pages.

This advice goes beyond just being a rule of thumb. A messy sitemap can negatively impact the SEO performance of a large website. After all, everything listed on a sitemap will eventually be picked up by Google, and it better be good!

Here are the pages that should be included in the XML sitemap:

- **Canonical URLs.** Canonicalized URLs with parameters, session IDs, etc. should be excluded from the XML sitemap to reduce duplicate crawling.
- **URLs with consistent HTTP protocol.** Do not mix pages with https and HTTP protocol in the sitemap. Be consistent!
- **URLs with 200 response code.** Why would you want search engines to constantly crawl redirected or broken pages? That's a waste of crawl budget, which on a very large website could become a critical issue. Therefore, avoid including 3XX, 4XX, and 5XX pages in the sitemap.
- **Indexed and unblocked pages.** If a page has a noindex meta robots tag or has been blocked in the robots.txt file, it's because that page is not intended to be served in search. Likewise, it should be excluded from the XML sitemap.

The airTRFX sitemaps, by default, exclude all these pages dynamically.

## Make the sitemap dynamic

Static sitemaps are not recommended for airlines' websites. Airlines are constantly adding/removing new pages, routes, or very often update content on existing pages. Thus, managing static XML sitemaps on an airline's website could become a nightmare. This is why we have never met someone at an airline dedicated to updating static XML sitemaps.

If the website CMS can't handle dynamic XML sitemaps, make sure to involve the IT or Development teams. Alternatively, there are plenty of [dynamic sitemap generators](#) out there, fully supported by most search engines.

## Use the <lastmod> tag

The <lastmod> tag indicates the URL's last modified date and time. [Google ignores the <changefreq> and the <priority> tags](#), but the <lastmod> tag, a.k.a “last modified”, is the most important ancillary information. It's recommended to dynamically change the last modified value when meaningful changes to an URL occur.



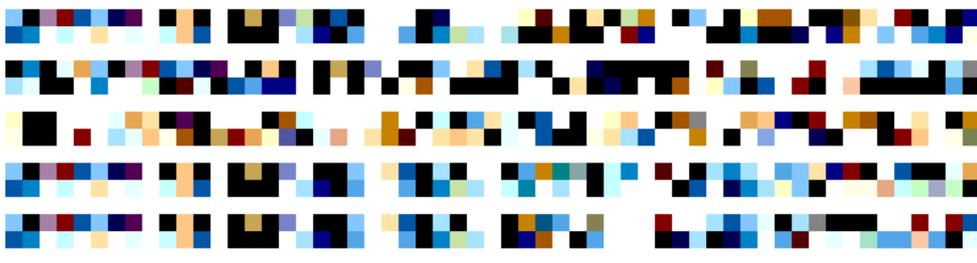
## Avoid URLs with non-ASCII characters

An XML sitemap can contain only URLs with ASCII characters. If the sitemap URL contains non-ASCII characters, there will be an error when trying to add it.

### This page contains the following errors:

error on line 1 at column 446260: xmlParseEntityRef: no name

### Below is a rendering of the page up to the first error:



There are also some characters that require entity escaping:

Character		Escape Code
Ampersand	&	&amp;
Single Quote	'	&apos;
Double Quote	"	&quot;
Greater Than	>	&gt;
Less Than	<	&lt;

## Submit the sitemaps to Google Search Console

Whenever an XML sitemap is new or has been significantly updated, submit it to the Google Search Console. This will make Google catch up with the changes way faster.

You can use the [Google Search Console Sitemap tool](#) for this purpose:

Add a new sitemap

<https://flights.flytap.com/da-dk/sitemap.xml>

Submitted sitemaps

Sitemap	Type	Submitted ↓	Last read	Status	Discovered URLs
/sitemap.xml	Sitemap	Jun 7, 2019	Jul 1, 2019	Success	185

Rows per page: 10 1-1 of 1

Keep in mind that you will need [Owner permission](#) in Google Search to use this tool.

If the XML sitemap is properly formatted, you should see the “Success” status almost immediately. Otherwise, the Status report would return “Has errors” or “Couldn’t fetch”. For a full list of potential XML errors, check out [Google’s guide to the Sitemap report](#) in Google Search Console.

## Specify the sitemap location in the robots.txt file

It will help search engines discover the location of the XML sitemap. To do this, add the following line to the robots.txt, including the full sitemap URL:

Sitemap: <https://airline.com/sitemap.xml>

If there are multiple sitemaps, adding the parent XML sitemap would be enough.

## Useful Tools and Resources

- [Google's XML sitemap guidelines](#)
- [Google's guide for large sitemaps](#)
- [Google's guide to the Google Search Console Sitemap tool](#)
- [XML sitemap protocol](#)
- [List of XML sitemap generators supported by Google](#)

## 9. Optimize the Robots.txt File

The [robots.txt file](#) tells crawlers which pages they can or can't access. The robots.txt file is part of the [Robots Exclusion Protocol \(REP\)](#), which is a group of web standards that regulate how bots crawl, access, index, and serve the web content.

An optimized robots.txt file can bring three key benefits for an airline's site:

- It helps Google maximize the crawl budget of the site.
- It can prevent server overload.
- It can keep non-public sections of a site private.

However, the robots.txt comes with certain [limitations](#):

- It may not be supported by all search engines.
- It may be interpreted differently by certain crawlers.
- Blocked pages can still be indexed if linked to from other sites.

Given the potential for disaster a robots.txt file brings, you must ensure it follows the [best SEO practices](#).

### Follow the format, location, and syntax rules

To start, the file must be named "robots.txt" and a site can have only one. The file format must be plain text encoded in UTF-8 with ASCII characters. It must be placed at the root of a domain or a subdomain, otherwise, it will be ignored by crawlers.

Also, Google enforces a size limit of 500 kibibytes (KiB) and ignores content after that limit.

There may be one or more groups of directives, one directive per line. Each group of directives includes:

- **User-agent:** the name of the crawler. Many user-agent names are listed in [Web Robots Database](#).
- **Disallow:** a directory or page, relative to the root domain, that should not be crawled by the user-agent. It could have more than one entry.
- **Allow:** a directory or page, relative to the root domain, that should be crawled by the user-agent. It could have more than one entry.

Keep in mind that groups are processed from top to bottom, and a user-agent can match only one rule set, which is the first, most-specific rule that matches a given user-agent. Additionally, rules are case sensitive and typos are not supported!

You can also make comments preceded by a # and everything after it will be ignored.

The robots.txt file also supports a limited form of “wildcards” for pattern matching:

\* designates 0 or more instances of any valid character.

\$ designates the end of the URL.

Avoid the use of “crawl-delay” since Google and other crawlers might ignore it. Specifically, Google has its own sophisticated algorithms to determine the optimal crawl speed for a site.

For example, here is how the robots.txt for [Cape Air](#) looks like:



```
User-agent: *
Disallow: /aco/ # keep them out of IBE functionality
Disallow: /errorpages/
Disallow: /scripts/
Disallow: /includes/
Disallow: /templates/
Disallow: /styles/
Disallow: /js/
Disallow: /EResponse/
Disallow: /EReleases/
```

Let’s explain the structure of the robots.txt file, based on the example above:

- **User-agent:** \* indicates that the directives are meant for all crawlers.
- **Disallow:** the directories (e.g. /aco/) indicate the forbidden paths for the crawlers.
- **#:** a comment meant for humans, ignored by crawlers.

For a full rundown of the syntax rules with examples, check out [Google’s robots.txt specifications](#).

## Make the robots.txt file return a 200 response code

If you want the directives in the robots.txt to work, the HTTP result code should signal success. Otherwise, Google can treat the robots.txt file differently depending on its HTTP response code:

- **3XX:** Google follows at least five redirect hops. If the robots.txt is not found, it will be treated like a 404, which means that there are no crawling restrictions.

- **4XX**: Google assumes that there is no valid robots.txt file, which means that there are no crawling restrictions.
- **5XX**: server errors are seen as temporary errors that result in a full disallow of crawling. If the robots.txt file is still unreachable after 30 days, Google will serve the last cached version of the file. If unavailable, Google assumes that there are no crawl restrictions.

## Don't use the robots.txt to keep pages out of Google

The purpose of the robots.txt is to manage crawling, not indexing.

For example, a blocked page can still appear in search results if other pages link to it.

In another example, if a page or a group of pages are already indexed and you want to remove them from Google, you shouldn't rely on the robots.txt. This is because the robots.txt does not support a noindex directive.

Instead, use a [noindex directive](#) through a robots meta tag or X-robots-tag HTTP header.

Even if you use a noindex directive on a page or group of pages that are already indexed, you should not block the page(s) in the robots.txt. If you do so, Google won't be able to process the noindex directive!

## Don't block pages and resources that you want search engines to crawl

This seems pretty obvious, but it's worth it to stress it. You want to make sure that the robots.txt is not intentionally or unintentionally blocking resources that search engines should crawl.

This is especially important for JavaScript and CSS files that are essential for the content and mobile-friendliness of a page.

For example, based on the [Cape Air](#) example above, it seems that they are blocking a directory called /js/, which is likely where some JavaScript scripts live. You can use the [Mobile-Friendly Test tool](#) to verify it. Just submit an URL and click on the Page Loading Info tab:

	<a href="https://www.capeair.com/scripts/search_capeair_travelpass.js?9">https://www.capeair.com/scripts/search_capeair_travelpass.js?9</a>	Script	Googlebot blocked by robots.txt
	<a href="https://www.capeair.com/scripts/search_messages.php">https://www.capeair.com/scripts/search_messages.php</a>	Script	Googlebot blocked by robots.txt

If you want to test whether your robots.txt is blocking important pages, use the [Google Search Console Robots.txt tool](#). In this case, let's check the [Cape Air's robots.txt file](#):

```
1 User-agent: *
2 Allow: /
3
4 # Sitemap File
5 Sitemap: https://flights.capecair.com/sitemap_index.xml
6
```

0 Errors 0 Warnings Submit

https://flights.capecair.com/en/flights-to-chicago Googlebot ALLOWED

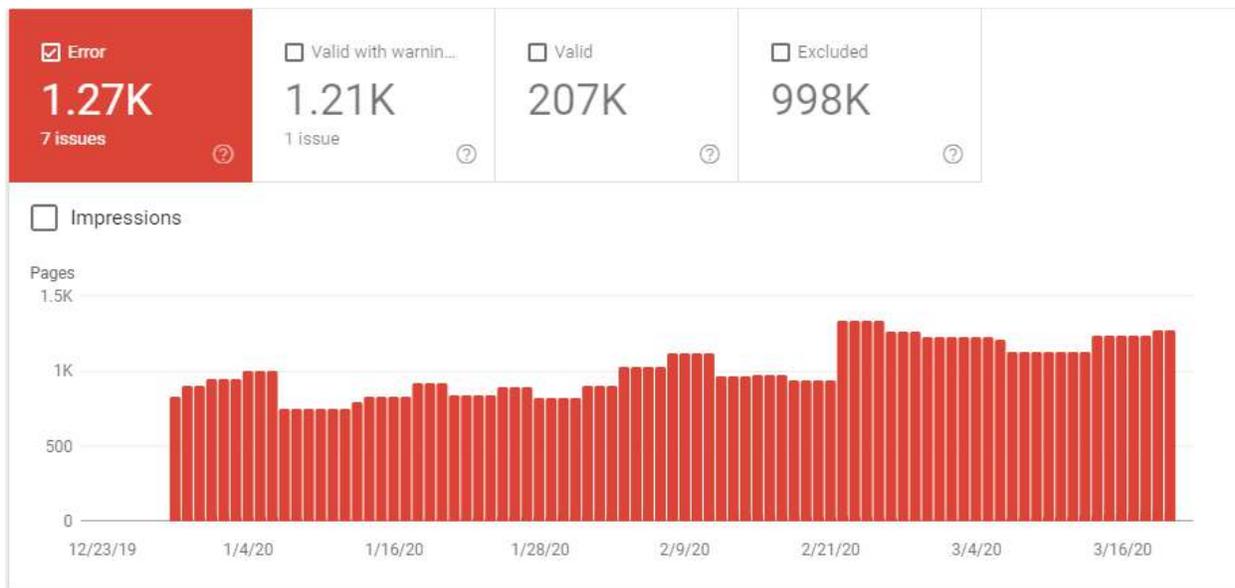
## Maximize crawl budget

The [crawl budget](#) is basically the number of URLs that Google wants to crawl on a site. The crawl budget limit depends on two factors:

- **Crawl rate limit:** the maximum fetching rate for a site without degrading the user experience and overloading the server capabilities.
- **Crawl demand:** the number of URLs that are important enough for Googlebot to crawl. This number depends on the URL's Internet popularity and staleness in the Google index.

Crawl budget is not a problem for small or even medium-sized websites with a few thousand URLs.

However, a typical airline's website is quite large. It has several thousand URLs and, in some cases, even more than a million URLs. Here is an example of how the Coverage report looks like for one of our customers:



There are a number of factors that can affect the crawl budget:

- Faceted navigation and session identifiers
- On-site duplicate content
- Soft error pages
- Hacked pages
- Infinite spaces and proxies
- Low quality and spam content
- And more!

Wasting server resources on these URLs will drain crawl budget from pages that actually have value. You can prevent Googlebot from accessing those URLs by blocking them in the robots.txt file.

In our experience, below are the most common type of pages that should be blocked in the robots.txt of an airline's website:

- Deep links part of the Internet Booking Engines (IBE)
- URLs with session identifiers
- URLs with parameters that don't essentially change the content (e.g.: internal tracking parameters)
- Non-public pages (e.g.: staging sites, account pages, admin pages, etc.)
- Search result pages
- Conversion pages
- Print pages
- URLs of scripts that are not essential for a page content or user functionalities

## Useful Tools and Resources

- [Google on the Robots Exclusion Protocol specifications](#)
- [Google's introduction to the robots.txt file](#)
- [Google's guide to creating a robots.txt file](#)
- [Google's robots.txt specifications](#)
- [Google's specifications for the noindex directives](#)
- [Web Robots Database](#)
- [List of Google crawlers](#)
- [Google's Mobile-Friendly Test tool](#)
- [Google's Robots.txt Test tool](#)
- [Google's crawl budget guide](#)
- [Google's FAQ pages on the robots.txt file](#)
- [ContentKing's guide to the robots.txt file](#)

## 10. Implement Structured Data

Structured data is a standardized format to provide information about a page and classify the page content. It helps Google and other search engines understand the content of a page.

Structured data also allows Google to enable search results features, known as rich snippets. However, even if the structured data is implemented correctly, there is no guarantee that Google will display rich snippets in search results.

Here is an example of a rich snippet from a Product schema type on [Air Europa](#):



### Use the right structured data format

Although most structured data for search uses [schema.org vocabulary](#), you should rely on [Google's documentation](#). If Google does not specify attributes or objects for structured data, it means that they are not required for search even if schema.org requires them. Still, Google can support other schema.org structured data that is not included in the documentation.

As a general principle, the more attributes or objects you define, the more likely is that Google will display rich snippets for the marked-up pages. However, keep in mind that it's better to provide less but more accurate information!

There are three implementation formats for structured data:

- [JSON-LD](#) (Recommended)
- [Microdata](#)
- [RDFa](#)

You can test the compliance with the correct structured data format using the [Structured Data Testing Tool](#).

https://www.klm.com/en-us/flights-from-tampa-to-amsterdam

NEW TEST

1 <!DOCTYPE html><html  
 2 class="english "  
 3 lang="en"  
 4 data-currency-in-front="true"><head><meta charset="UTF-8"><title>Flights Tampa to  
 5 );src:url(https://assets.airtrfx.com/bundles/kltrfx/less-autopilot/fonts/fontello/fi  
 6 ) format('embedded-opentype'),url(https://assets.airtrfx.com/bundles/kltrfx/less-au  
 7 ) format('truetype'),url(https://assets.airtrfx.com/bundles/kltrfx/less-autopilot/fi  
 8 ) format('truetype'),url(https://assets.airtrfx.com/bundles/kltrfx/less-autopilot/fi  
 9 ) format('svg');font-weight:normal;font-style:normal}article.social-sharing(padding  
 10 ) no-repeat;vertical-align:middle}.eu{background-position:0 -128px}.ad{background-p  
 11 );background-repeat:no-repeat;vertical-align:middle}.flag.bq{background-position:0  
 12 ) format('truetype');font-style:normal}@font-face{font-family:'SegoeUI';src:url(ht  
 13 ) format('truetype');font-style:normal}@font-face{font-family:'SanFrancisco';src:ur  
 14 ) format('truetype');font-style:normal}@font-face{font-family:'NoaLight';src:url(ht  
 15 ) format('woff');font-weight:300;font-style:normal}@font-face{font-family:'klmicons  
 16 );src:url(https://assets.airtrfx.com/bundles/kltrfx/less-autopilot/fonts/klm/klmic  
 17 ) format("embedded-opentype"),url(https://assets.airtrfx.com/bundles/kltrfx/less-au  
 18 ) format("truetype"),url(https://assets.airtrfx.com/bundles/kltrfx/less-autopilot/fi  
 19 ) format("truetype");font-weight:normal;font-style:normal}.banner{display:inline-block;  
 20 );background-size:14px;background-repeat:no-repeat;width:14px;height:10px;bottom:10  
 21 );background-position:40% 60%;background-color:#ccc;float:right;clear:right;}

Detected 0 ERRORS 9 WARNINGS 4 ITEMS

WebPage	0 ERRORS	0 WARNINGS	1 ITEM
Airline	0 ERRORS	0 WARNINGS	1 ITEM
BreadcrumbList	0 ERRORS	0 WARNINGS	1 ITEM
Product	0 ERRORS	9 WARNINGS	1 ITEM

If you see errors or warnings, you can dig deeper by clicking on each detected structured data and check the recommendations and issues.

← Product All (1)

Product PREVIEW 0 ERRORS 9 WARNINGS

@type	Product
name	Tampa (TPA) to Amsterdam (AMS) flights
offers	
@type	AggregateOffer
lowPrice	960
priceCurrency	USD
highPrice	The <i>highPrice</i> field is recommended. Please provide a value if available.
offerCount	The <i>offerCount</i> field is recommended. Please provide a value if available.
aggregateRating	The <i>aggregateRating</i> field is recommended. Please provide a value if available.
brand	The <i>brand</i> field is recommended. Please provide a value if available.
description	The <i>description</i> field is recommended. Please provide a value if available.
image	The <i>image</i> field is recommended. Please provide a value if available.
review	The <i>review</i> field is recommended. Please provide a value if available.
sku	The <i>sku</i> field is recommended. Please provide a value if available.
	This Product is missing a global identifier (e.g. isbn, mpn or gtin8). Please see documentation for valid identifiers.

Keep in mind that Errors will invalidate the implementation while Recommendations are just suggestions by Google to improve the quality of the schema. Even if your structured data has a bunch of Recommendations, as the above screenshot shows, the implementation is still valid. Besides, some Recommendations might not be applicable to all pages or websites.

Likewise, the [Rich Result Test tool](#) can tell you whether a page is eligible for rich results.

https://www.klm.com/en-us/flights-from-tampa-to-amsterdam

## Test results

ⓘ This is a beta version. Not all rich results and error types are supported yet. [Learn more](#)

Tested on: May 1, 2020 at 12:18 PM

### Page is eligible for rich results

All structured data on the page can generate rich results.



👁️ PREVIEW RESULTS

📄 VIEW RENDERED HTML

You can even see how the rich result will look like in search by click on Preview Results:

https://www.klm.com/en-us/flights-from-tampa-to-amsterdam

## ← Results Preview

Search  
Result type 1

☰ Google 👤  
previewid:874d16ae-8e30-435 🔍  
ALL IMAGES NEWS SHOPPING VID

📄 This tool provides a preview of results in Google Search. Best viewed on mobile devices. [Learn more.](#)

📄 <https://support.google.com> › answer  
**Flights Tampa to Amsterdam | Fly KLM**

Find the best flights and travel deals from Tampa to Amsterdam. We know your time is precious. With KLM you know you can make the most of it!

Price  
Starting from \$960.00

Unfortunately, this tool does not support all rich results yet. For a full list of supported rich results, check [Google's documentation](#).

You can also monitor and troubleshoot errors in the [Google Search Console Enhancement report](#).

Enhancements					
Type		Valid	Errors	Trend	
Speed (experimental)	Mobile	23	29,535		<a href="#">OPEN REPORT &gt;</a>
	Desktop	318	26,003		
Mobile Usability		35,395	2,145		<a href="#">OPEN REPORT &gt;</a>
AMP		75	0		<a href="#">OPEN REPORT &gt;</a>
Breadcrumbs		25,498	30		<a href="#">OPEN REPORT &gt;</a>
Job Postings		0	0		<a href="#">OPEN REPORT &gt;</a>
Logos		137	0		<a href="#">OPEN REPORT &gt;</a>
Products		0	1		<a href="#">OPEN REPORT &gt;</a>
Review snippets		17	0		<a href="#">OPEN REPORT &gt;</a>
Videos		1	0		<a href="#">OPEN REPORT &gt;</a>

If you find problems in the structured data, fix it, retest with the [URL Inspection Tool](#), and request another index.

Review [Google's most common structured data errors](#) for additional insights.

## Follow the structured data quality guidelines

Google has defined strict [quality guidelines for structured data](#). In case of a violation, Google won't display rich results or, in the worst case, it can take [manual action](#) against the site.

Here are the most important quality guidelines for structured data:

- Provide updated information.

- Don't mark up content that is not visible to the user.
- Don't mark up misleading or deceiving content, such as fake reviews or impersonation of a person or organization.
- Don't mark up content that promotes pedophilia, bestiality, sexual violence, violent or cruel acts, targeted hatred, or dangerous activities.
- Don't mark up content that engages in illegal activities or promotes harm to others.
- Don't mark up content that is irrelevant to the focus of the page.
- Specify all required properties for the structured data.
- Put the structured data on the page that it describes and on all duplicate pages for the same content.
- Use markup for a specific product, not a category or list of products.
- If using images on the structured data, the image URLs must be crawlable and indexable.
- If you mark up one item in a list you must mark up all items. For example, on a flight from Miami to New York page listing fare modules, if a fare module is marked up as a Product schema type, then all fare modules must be marked up.

If the site has been hit with a manual action by Google, review the [Manual Actions report in Google Search Console](#), identify the affected pages and fix the issue in compliance with the technical and quality guidelines. Finally, submit a [Reconsideration Request](#) and wait for the results.

## Implement relevant structured data

There are hundreds of structured data types, but not all of them apply to an airline's website. You can review the [list of schemas](#) at schema.org and on [Google's search gallery](#).

Based on our experimentation with dozens of structured data types across 50 airlines, here are the types that we find more relevant to any airline's website:

## Airline or Organization

Provides information about the airline, such as the legal name, IATA code, address, email, logo, etc.

Organization		PREVIEW	0 ERRORS	0 WARNINGS	^
@type	Organization				
name	Aegean Airlines				
url	http://en.aegeanair.com/				
logo	https://el.aegeanair.com/media/aegean_logo.png				
sameAs	https://www.facebook.com/aegeanairlines				
sameAs	https://twitter.com/aegeanairlines				
telephone	8011120000				
address					
@type	PostalAddress				
streetAddress	Kifissia				
addressLocality	Athens				
addressCountry					
@type	Country				
name	Greece				
contactPoint					
@type	ContactPoint				
contactType	customer support				
telephone	+30 2106261000				
url	https://en.aegeanair.com/contact				
memberOf					
@type	Organization				
name	Star Alliance				
url	http://www.staralliance.com/				

## BreadcrumbList

It marks up the path from the homepage to the current page. Google Search may use it to display the path to the page in search results.

BreadcrumbList		0 ERRORS	0 WARNINGS	^
@type	BreadcrumbList			
itemListElement				
@type	Listitem			
name	HOME			
position	1			
item				
@type	Thing			
@id	https://www.aireuropa.com/			
itemListElement				
@type	Listitem			
name	FLIGHTS			
position	2			
item				
@type	Thing			
@id	https://www.aireuropa.com/en-us/flight-deals			
itemListElement				
@type	Listitem			
name	To Spain			
position	3			
item				
@type	Thing			
@id	https://www.aireuropa.com/en-us/flight-deals-to-spain			
itemListElement				
@type	Listitem			
name	To Madrid			
position	4			
item				
@type	Thing			
@id	http://www.aireuropa.com/en-us/flight-deals-to-madrid			

## Flight

It represents an airline flight and includes information such as the departure and arrival gate, terminal, and airport; the type of aircraft, the flight number, duration, and distance; and more.

Flight		0 ERRORS 0 WARNINGS ^
@type	Flight	
departureTime	2020-04-03T14:37:00-04:00	
arrivalAirport		
@type	Airport	
iataCode	SJU	
geo		
@type	GeoCoordinates	
latitude	18.438444	
longitude	-66.006586	
departureAirport		
@type	Airport	
iataCode	TPA	
geo		
@type	GeoCoordinates	
latitude	27.979129	
longitude	-82.534736	
offers		
@type	Offer	
price	32	
priceCurrency	USD	
seller		
@type	Thing	
name	JetBlue Airways	

## AggregateOffer

It represents an aggregation of offers within a product and includes information such as the product name, description, currency, and lowest price.

Product		PREVIEW 0 ERRORS
@type	Product	
name	Helsinki to Busan Flights (HEL - PUS)	
offers		
@type	AggregateOffer	
lowPrice	971	
priceCurrency	EUR	

A word of caution, though. One of Google's data structured quality guidelines indicates to "use markup for a specific product, not a category or list of products." Therefore, you want to make sure that the aggregateOffer schema is installed on an actual product page, instead of on a category page.

For example, on any airline's website, the most common page templates where a Product schema type may seem applicable at first are:

- Flights to [Destination]
- Flights from [Origin] to [Destination]
- Flights from [Destination]

However, if you think about it, the Flights to [Destination] and Flights from [Origin] can be considered as product category pages. That's because on any of those page templates you will find multiple flight routes instead of just one. For example, on a Flights to New York page, there may be several flight routes departing from different locations to New York.

Although some OTAs seem to be getting away with it, such as [TripAdvisor](#) and [Skyscanner](#), [Google already took action](#) against them in 2016 due to their noncompliance with the quality guidelines. In all fairness, all Google did was to remove their rich snippets from the search results.

Still, we recommend installing the aggregateOffer structured data on the Flights from [Origin] to [Destination] page template only, just to be on the safe side.

## FAQ

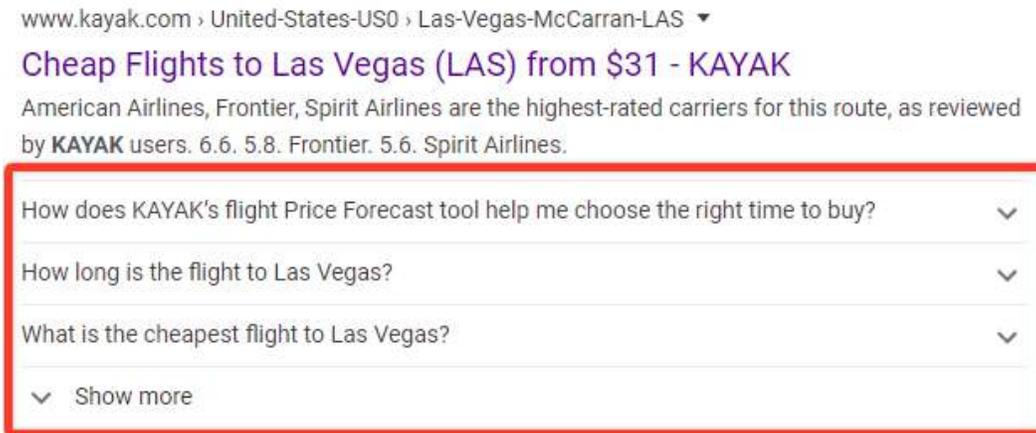
Google started to support the FAQ structured data just in 2019. Since then, it has become widely popular in some verticals. The travel industry is one of them, with virtually all top organic OTAs using it on flight route pages, including [Kayak](#), [Expedia](#), [Skyscanner](#), [CheapOair](#), and [CheapFlights](#).

The FAQ structured data is suitable for a page that contains a list of questions and answers pertaining to a particular topic, provided that users cannot submit answers.

There also are some implementation requirements specific to the FAQ structured data:

- Each question should include the entire text of the question, and each answer should include the entire text of the answer.
- The question or answer cannot include any of the following types of content: obscene, profane, sexually explicit, graphically violent, promotion of dangerous or illegal activities, or hateful or harassing language.
- All FAQ content must be visible to the user.
- If there is FAQ content that is repetitive on the site (meaning, the same question and answer appear on multiple pages), mark up only one instance of that FAQ for the entire site.

The FAQ structured data is particularly appealing to travel sites because of the large real estate it takes in search results. Here is an example from Kayak:



Here is the FAQ markup looks like for one question and answer:

FAQPage		0 ERRORS 0 WARNINGS ^
@type	FAQPage	
mainEntity		
@type	Question	
name	How does KAYAK's flight Price Forecast tool help me choose the right time to buy?	
acceptedAnswer		
@type	Answer	
text	KAYAK's flight Price Forecast tool uses historical data to determine whether the price for a given destination and date is likely to change within 7 days, so travelers know whether to wait or book now.	

We recommend using different questions based on each page template, as shown below:

Page template: Flights to [Destination]

- How long is a flight to [Destination]?
- How much is a [Airline] flight to [Destination]?
- What is the cheapest [Airline] flight to [Destination]?
- When to buy cheap [Airline] flights to [Destination]?
- How many [Airline] flights to [Destination] are there per day?
- What is the least-busy month to travel to [Destination] with [Airline]?
- What percent of [Airline] flights to [Destination] gets delayed?
- What airport is closest to [Destination]?
- What car rental companies are at [Destination] airport?
- Can you take an Uber from [Destination] airport?

Page template: Flights from [Origin] to [Destination]

- How long is the flight from [Origin] to [Destination]?
- How many [Airline] flights depart from [Origin] to [Destination] per day?
- Are there [Airline] non-stop flights from [Origin] to [Destination]?
- How much is a [Airline] flight from [Origin] to [Destination]?
- What is the cheapest [Airline] flight from [Origin] to [Destination]?
- What is the cheapest day to fly from [Origin] to [Destination] with [Airline]?
- When is the earliest [Airline] flight from [Origin] to [Destination]?
- When is the latest [Airline] flight from [Origin] to [Destination]?
- What percent of [Airline] flights from [Origin] to [Destination] gets delayed?
- Which airports will you be using when flying from [Origin] to [Destination] with [Airline]?

Page template: Homepage

- Where does [Airline] fly to?
- Does [Airline] fly international?
- What are [Airline] most popular destinations?
- How to book flights on [Airline]?
- When to buy [Airline] flight tickets?
- How to get cheap [Airline] flight tickets?

## Tools and Resources

- [Schema.org site](#)
- [Google's structured data guidelines](#)
- [Google's guide to build and test structured data](#)
- [Google search gallery](#)
- [Structured Data Testing tool](#)
- [Rich Results Test tool](#)
- [Google's Rich Result Test documentation](#)
- [Google Search Console Enhancement report](#)
- [Google Search Console URL Inspection tool](#)
- [Google Search Console Manual Action report](#)
- [Airline structured data](#)
- [Airline structured data](#)
- [BreadcrumbList structured data](#)
- [AggregateOffer structured data](#)
- [FAQ structured data](#)

## 11. Optimize Page Speed

Site speed has always been an obsession for conversion-focused websites. That's because 53% of mobile users leave a site that takes longer than three seconds to load! There are also [plenty of case studies](#) that demonstrate why performance matters for conversions.

Site speed may also have implications for a site's performance in organic search. In July 2018, Google announced that page speed would become a ranking factor in what's officially known as [Google Speed Update](#).

Here are the key highlights of the Speed Update:

- It affects pages that deliver the slowest experience to users.
- It applies the same standard to all pages, regardless of the technology used to build the page.
- It is based on user experience metrics rather than relying entirely on "static" metrics like TTFB, DOMContentLoaded event, Onload event, Fully Loaded event, etc.

However, although the faster the better, there is a threshold, a limit below which a faster page doesn't get any SEO benefit. The Speed Update only affects the slowest sites, meaning that saving a few microseconds off of an already fast page will not lead to a ranking improvement. Therefore, the site does not need a perfect score.

In fact, according to Googlers, page speed is a "tiny" ranking factor:



**Socially distant Gary Illyes** ✓  
@methode

Replying to [@jocherivolta](#) and [@pedrodias](#)

Ranking wise it's a teeny tiny factor, very similar to https ranking boost. That particular one is not surprising. You do that primarily to enable users to convert.

3:55 PM · Apr 28, 2020 from [Zurich, Switzerland](#) · [Twitter for iPhone](#)

Page speed might not be that important for SEO, as long as your pages load relatively fast compared to the top organic pages. This is not at all meant to say that you shouldn't prioritize page speed. After all, a slow page can be an outstanding conversion killer.

## Focus on user experience metrics

The [user experience metrics](#) are used by Google to measure a page performance as perceived by a human. To understand when a page delivers this feedback to its users, Google defined the below metrics:

The Experience	The Metrics
Is it happening? Did the navigation start successfully? Has the server responded?	First Paint (FP) / First Contentful Paint (FCP)
Is it useful? Has enough content rendered that users can engage with it?	First Meaningful Paint (FMP)
Is it usable? Can users interact with the page, or is it still busy loading?	Time to Interactive (TTI)
Is it delightful? Are the interactions smooth and natural, free of lag and jank?	Long Tasks (technically the absence of long tasks)

Below there is a more specific description for each user experience metric:

- **First Contentful Paint** : marks the time at which the first text or image is painted.
- **First Meaningful Paint**: measures when the primary content of a page is visible.
- **Speed Index**: shows how quickly the contents of a page are visibly populated.
- **Time to Interactive**: is the amount of time it takes for the page to become fully interactive. [Learn more](#).
- **First CPU Idle**: marks the first time at which the page's main thread is quiet enough to handle input. [Learn more](#).
- **Max Potential First Input Delay**: the maximum potential First Input Delay that your users could experience is the duration, in milliseconds, of the longest task.

Besides these metrics, Google recently announced essential metrics for a healthy site as part of the [Web Vitals](#) project. Google says that there are three important metrics when it comes to providing great user experience:

- **Largest Contentful Paint (LCP)**: measures loading performance. To provide a good user experience, LCP should occur within 2.5 seconds of when the page first starts loading.
- **First Input Delay (FID)**: measures interactivity. To provide a good user experience, pages should have a FID of less than 100 milliseconds.
- **Cumulative Layout Shift (CLS)**: measures visual stability. To provide a good user experience, pages should maintain a CLS of less than 0.1.

You can measure the user experience metrics with [Lighthouse](#) and [Google PageSpeed Insights](#). Lighthouse is primarily for your local iteration as you build your site while PageSpeed

Insights provides a snapshot of improvement opportunities. However, the recently announced Web Vitals metrics are not yet available to test with Lighthouse or Google PageSpeed Insights.

Additionally, there are many more site speed tools that you can check on [Google's performance tooling page](#). This is because a single metric, user or tool can't capture the representative user experience on a site.

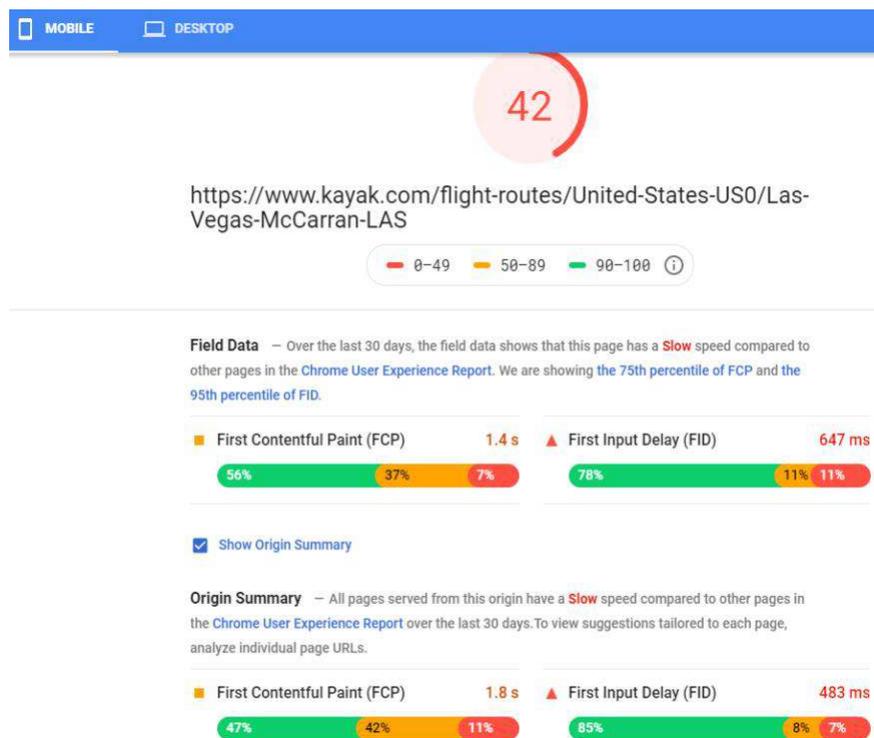
The [Google PageSpeed Insights tool](#) is one of the most used for speed optimization because it provides field data, lab data, and an overview of optimization opportunities to improve user experience metrics.

It provides two reports, one for Mobile and another for Desktop devices. In both reports, you will find:

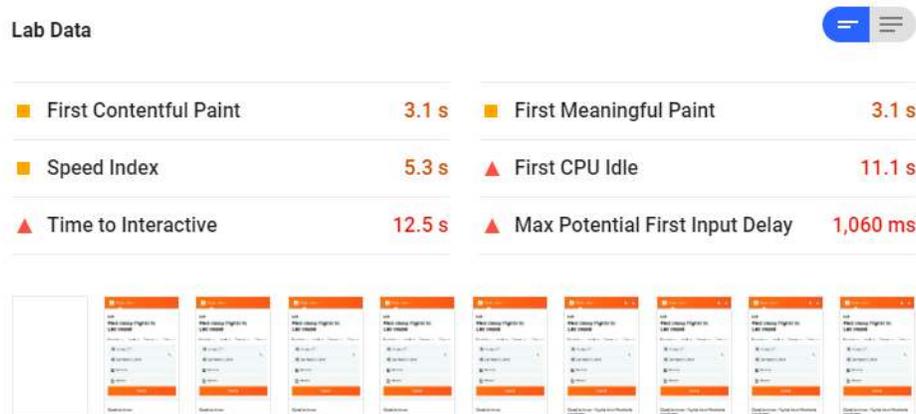
**Performance score:** it summarizes the page performance. A score of 90 or above is considered fast, and 50 to 90 is considered moderate. Below 50 is considered to be slow.

**Field data:** it includes the historical performance of a URL and represents anonymized data from users in the real-world on a variety of devices and network conditions. It captures the real-world experience from the [Chrome User Experience Report](#), but it has limited debugging capabilities.

**Origin summary:** it includes an overage of the field data for the whole site.



**Lab Data:** it includes performance data collected within a controlled environment with a predefined device and network settings. It is helpful for debugging issues, but it may not represent real-world experience.



**Opportunities:** it includes suggestions to improve the page's performance metrics.

**Diagnostics:** it provides additional information on how a page adheres to best practices for web development.

**Passed audits:** it indicates the audits that have been passed by the page.

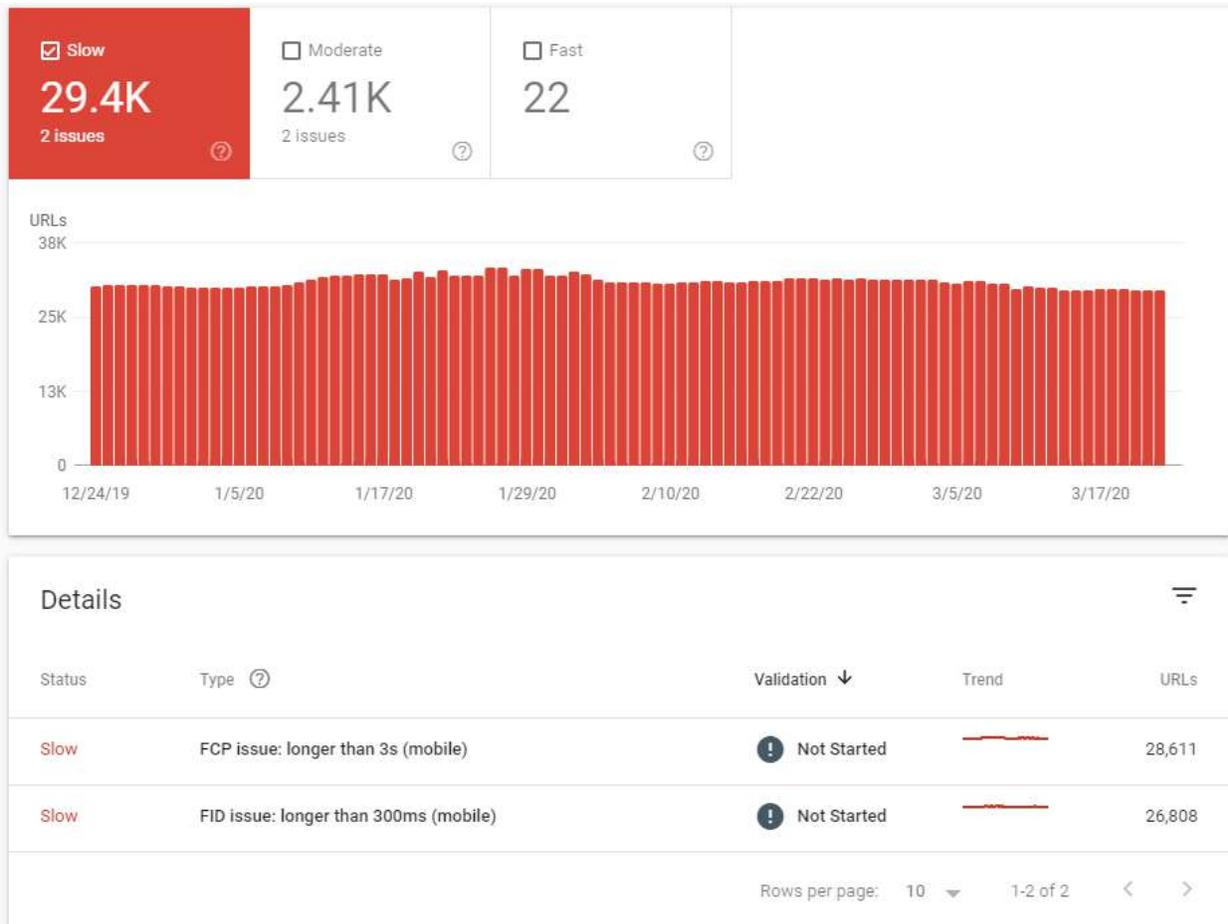
**Opportunities** — These suggestions can help your page load faster. They don't **directly affect** the Performance score.

Opportunity	Estimated Savings
▲ Eliminate render-blocking resources	1.35 s
▲ Remove unused CSS	0.96 s
▲ Defer offscreen images	0.81 s
■ Serve images in next-gen formats	0.6 s

**Diagnostics** — More information about the performance of your application. These numbers don't **directly affect** the Performance score.

▲ Avoid an excessive DOM size — 8,533 elements	▼
▲ Reduce the impact of third-party code — Third-party code blocked the main thread for 270 ms	▼
▲ Minimize main-thread work — 11.8 s	▼
▲ Reduce JavaScript execution time — 5.9 s	▼
● Avoid chaining critical requests — 13 chains found	▼
● User Timing marks and measures — 19 user timings	▼
● Keep request counts low and transfer sizes small — 83 requests • 1,350 KB	▼

You can also monitor the site's speed performance in the [Google Search Console Speed report](#). The report shows performance grouped by speed status, metric type, and similar URL type. The report is based on two metrics: FCP and FID. It provides field data from the Chrome User Experience Report.



The page speed is evaluated against the below metrics:

	Fast	Moderate	Slow
FCP	<1s	<3s	>=3s
FID	<100ms	<300ms	>=300ms

## Implement the common fixes first

There is a [vast array of techniques](#) to optimize the loading and rendering performance of a page. We recommend the airline's IT or Development team look into all the potential speed optimization opportunities. You can also start with the priority issues detected by the tools outlined above or with the most common fixes to optimize page speed:

- Reduce server response times
- Avoid redirect chains
- Minify and compress CSS and JavaScript
- Defer unused CSS
- Resize and compress images.
- Serve images in next-gen formats
- Enable text compression
- Preload key requests
- Avoid enormous network payloads
- Defer off-screen images
- Eliminate render-blocking resources
- Pre-connect to required origins
- Ensure text remains visible during web-font load
- Minimize main-thread work
- Reduce JavaScript execution time
- Serve static assets with an efficient cache policy
- Avoid an excessive DOM size
- Minimize Critical Requests Depth
- Optimize API responses
- Lazy-load unused dependencies
- Avoid extra DNS lookups
- Use a CDN

To dive into how to do all this stuff, check out [Google's documentation](#) and [this great guide from Link Assistant](#).

## Useful Tools and Resources

- [Google's full documentation on page performance](#)
- [Google Speed Update announcement](#)
- [Google's guide to user-centric performance metrics](#)
- [Lighthouse tool](#)
- [Google PageSpeed Insights tool](#)
- [Google's Web Vitals project](#)
- [Google's list of performance measurement tools](#)
- [Chrome User Experience Report](#)

## 12. Link Building for Airlines

A comprehensive list of best SEO practices for airlines can't be complete without a word or two about link building. Although Google wants to downplay the role of backlinks in its algorithms, the truth is that backlinks still are a backbone of SEO (remember [PageRank?](#)).

However, the traditional link building scheme that relies on identifying link opportunities and reaching out to potential link posters just don't work for airlines. This approach is not scalable for enterprise companies, and most of the time results in outreached webmasters or bloggers asking money in exchange for the link placement.

### Work in tandem with PR

The airline's PR strategy can become the best link building strategy too. If PR and SEO work in tandem, it will be extremely beneficial for the company, beyond just backlinks. A synergy between PR and SEO can improve the airline's reputation, build trust, expand the audience, improve rankings, and, of course, drive bookings!

Before we dive into a few PR tactics that can build links for the airline, there are a couple of tips we want to point out:

- If PR is promoting specific destinations, ask them to include links to the promoted route pages.
- Make sure that PR uses the preferred or canonical URLs. Using a canonicalized or redirected URL will not be as effective and a precious opportunity will be lost.
- Make sure that links from paid sponsorships have the [rel="sponsored" attribute](#).

Here are a few PR tactics that can work for SEO too:

### Press releases

Work with PR to get links on every article or press release published in the news. Take a look at the materials the marketing and PR teams have created. They may include content assets and articles from which to link to a relevant page.

## TAP reforça oferta de voos para a Rússia durante a maior competição de futebol

JE editors e TAP / 17 Mai 2018

O evento desportivo do ano permite aliar duas paixões: futebol e viagens. Para além dos jogos, há tesouros históricos e naturais para descobrir no país dos czares.



Imperdíveis são também a famosa Praça Vermelha, a catedral de São Basílio e o Kremlin, residência oficial do presidente da Rússia.

Não precisa de se deslocar muito para visitar os principais pontos de interesse, dada a sua proximidade.

De salientar, para quem não gosta do frio, que o calendário da maior festa do desporto rei coincide com temperaturas agradavelmente positivas na Rússia.

Dentro e fora dos estádios haverá espírito desportivo, mistura de culturas e a alegria dos russos, que não perdem uma oportunidade para celebrar. Pode já garantir lugar nos festejos.

A TAP reforça a oferta para **Moscovo com 2 voos diários**. De 9 de junho a 17 de julho haverá uma frequência adicional, num total de 78 frequências extra.

Muitas opções para quem quer fazer parte desta convocatória. O pontapé de saída da

## Impact Windows 40% Off - Sale Ends June 17, 2018

Impact Windows & Doors on Sale. Contact Us Today & Request a Free Estimate.

floridawindowsanddoor.com



ÚLTIMAS

FENPROF conta espingardas para luta que se avizinha  
18-13

Mayweather bate CR7 por KO entre os

Simplify Your HR  
Zenette is Your Partner in The Changing World of Work-Make HR Management More Manageable

It will be also beneficial to include links to relevant route pages on news pages published on the airline's website. This is because content or news aggregators may pick up the story and get you some nice backlinks.

## Media coverage opportunities

There are plenty of platforms that allow experts on certain topics to connect with journalists. For example, sites like [HARO](#) will send you a plethora of queries from journalists looking for news sources on a daily basis. This may represent a great opportunity for an airline to build relationships with journalists and media outlets. Also, you can secure a link on each story!

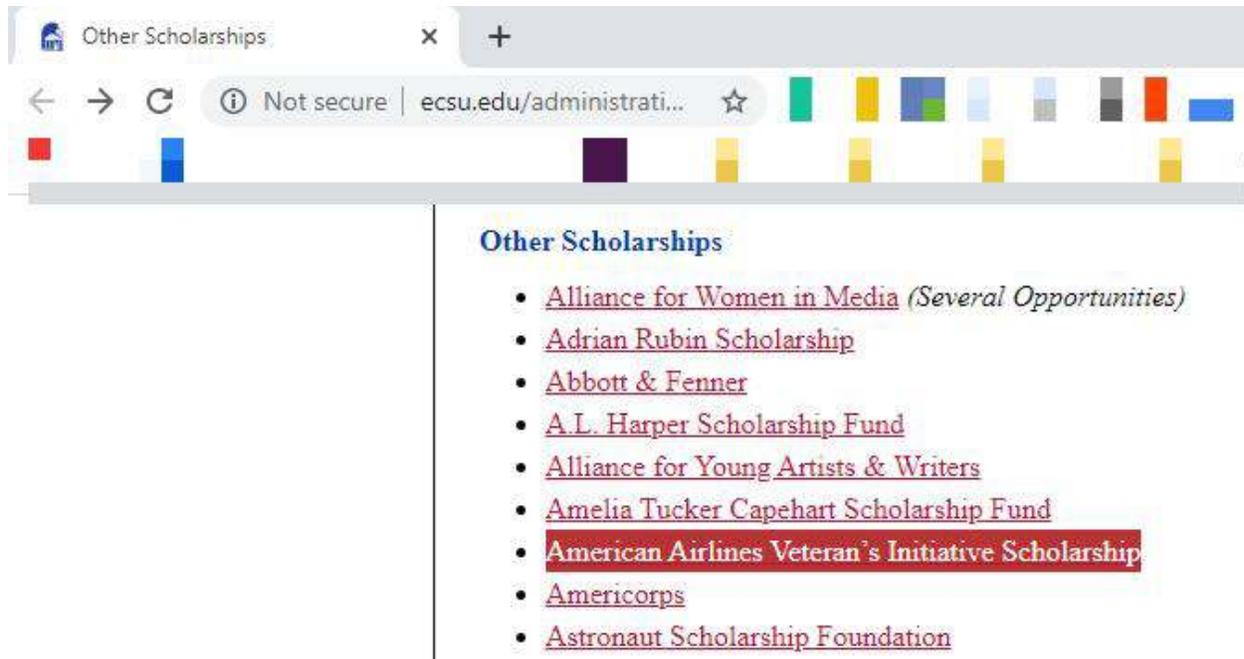
## Community engagement

It's very common for large airlines to become very engaged with the local or national communities. Work with the PR team to gather a full list of community initiatives that can be leveraged for links, including sponsorships, charities, scholarships, contests, etc.

For example, make sure to reach out to sponsored partners for an acknowledgment on their sites.

The screenshot shows a web browser window with the URL <https://www.united.com/web/en-US/content/company/globalcitizenship/community.aspx>. The page content includes a red banner with the text "GOLD PARTNERS" and a gold medal icon with "2019". Below the banner are logos for Charles River, Pepsico, Pfizer, United Airlines, and The Walt Disney Company. A "LEARN MORE" button is highlighted with a red box.

Likewise, secure a mention of the airline's scholarship programs on sites of universities and colleges.



## Create linkable assets

Invest in content and create assets that can attract both users and links.

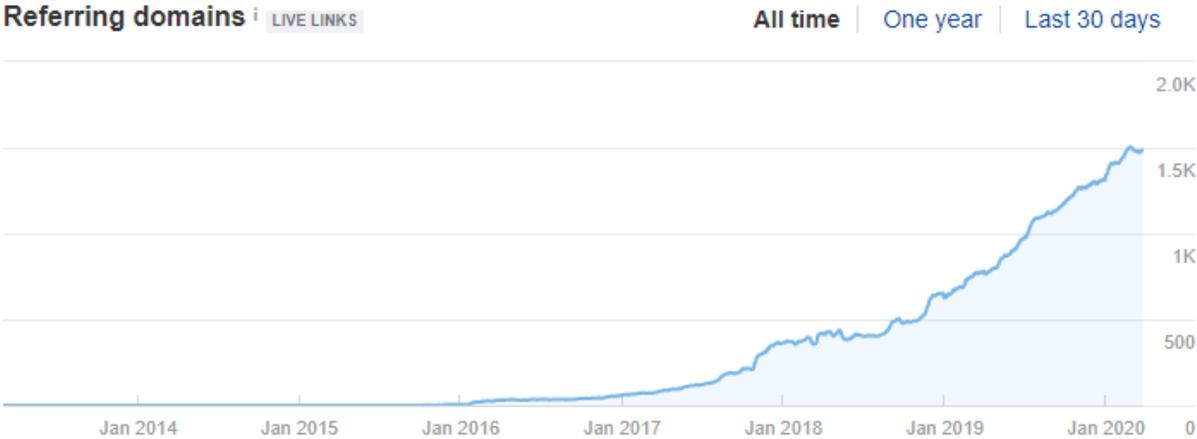
In airTRFX, we have enabled a feature called Custom Pages that allow airlines to build different types of pages other than routes and destinations pages. Airlines can create an unlimited number of Custom Pages to cover topics with high search interest.

Some common content assets for airlines are:

Travel guides

Inspirational travel pages can provide airlines with an unmatched capability to attract natural links and visitors. After all, [95% of all US travelers](#) search for their travel destinations online.

For example, [Skyscanner's tips and inspiration articles](#) have generated almost 50K backlinks in the last three years:



## Flight tracker tool

Keywords about an airline's flight status or tracker are among the most popular search queries on search engines, generating hundreds of thousands of monthly searches. This interest offers a great opportunity to build a dedicated page with a flight tracking tool for users.

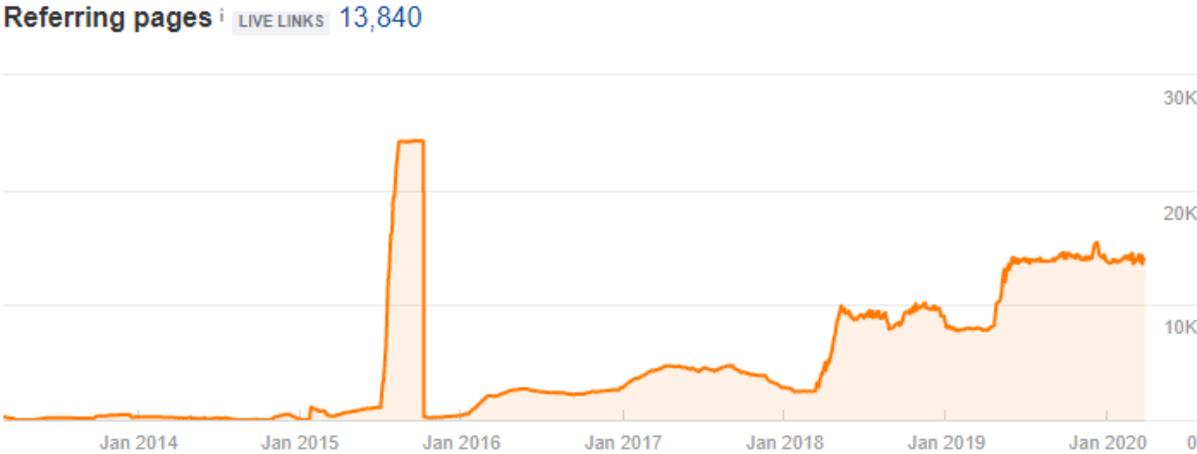
For example, [American Airlines flight tracker](#) page has gained thousands of links over the years:



Online check-in page

Searches about doing a flight check-in online are only second to searches for the airline’s flight tracker. Make sure there is a dedicated landing page to serve in search engines for these search queries.

For example, [United’s check-in page](#) has become one of the most linked pages on the airline’s website:

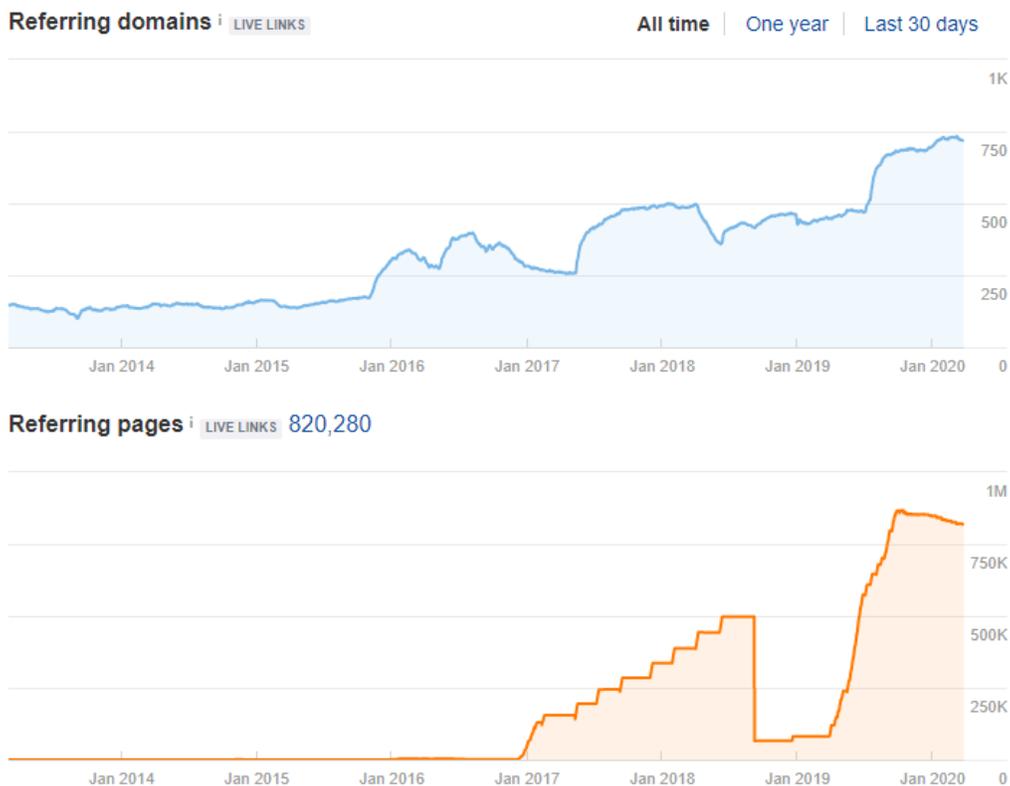


## FAQ and help pages

FAQ and help pages are powerful content assets that can naturally acquire an unlimited number of backlinks. Conduct a keyword research and find out what are the most asked questions on Google. [SEMrush Keyword Magic tool](#) is one of the best tools out there to uncover questions related to any airline's services and flights. For example, here some of the most popular questions about American Airlines:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Keyword		Volume
<input type="checkbox"/>	do american airlines miles expire	+	1,900
<input type="checkbox"/>	does american airlines have wifi	+	1,900
<input type="checkbox"/>	where does american airlines fly	+	1,900
<input type="checkbox"/>	does american airlines have tvs	+	1,600
<input type="checkbox"/>	how to change american airlines flight	+	1,300
<input type="checkbox"/>	is american airlines safe	+	1,300

In another example, [Southwest's FAQ page](#) is actually the third-most linked page on the airline's site:



**Newsfeed section**

A news feed hub is another site section that will naturally pick up backlinks from media outlets. Many airlines have dedicated subdomain for this type of content, but we recommend a subdirectory implementation instead.

Here is how many backlinks [Delta's news hub](#) acquired over the years:



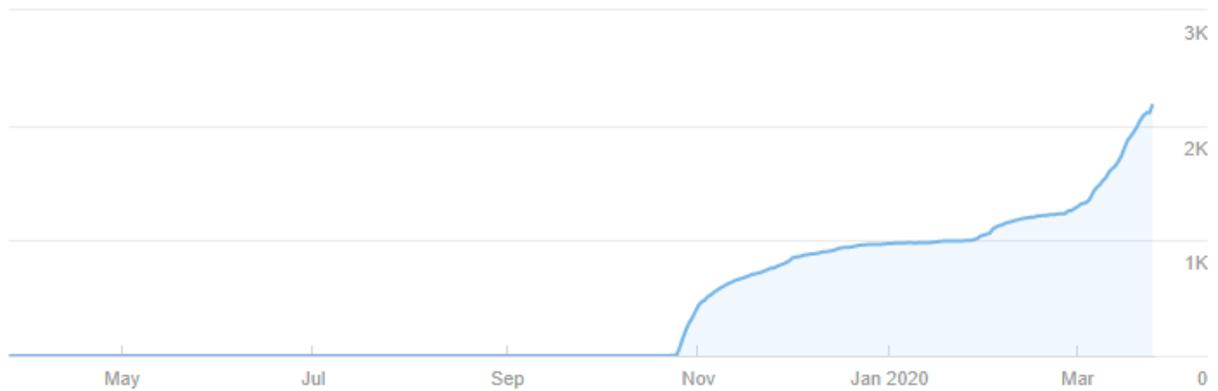
## Travel alerts and notices page

Build a travel notices page that provides real-time information about the airline's flights, services, and policies. It will instantly become a natural information source for media outlets.

For example, [United's travel notices page](#) gained more than 10K backlinks in less than five months!

### Referring domains <sup>i</sup> LIVE LINKS

All time | **One year** | Last 30 days



### Referring pages <sup>i</sup> LIVE LINKS 11,139



## Dedicated page for deals and promotions

A dedicated page that aggregates the latest flight deals is one of the few pages that can gain backlinks incredibly fast. That's because travel bloggers and specialized sites are constantly looking for airline deals to share with their audience. If the airline offers an affiliate program, the possibilities are endless.

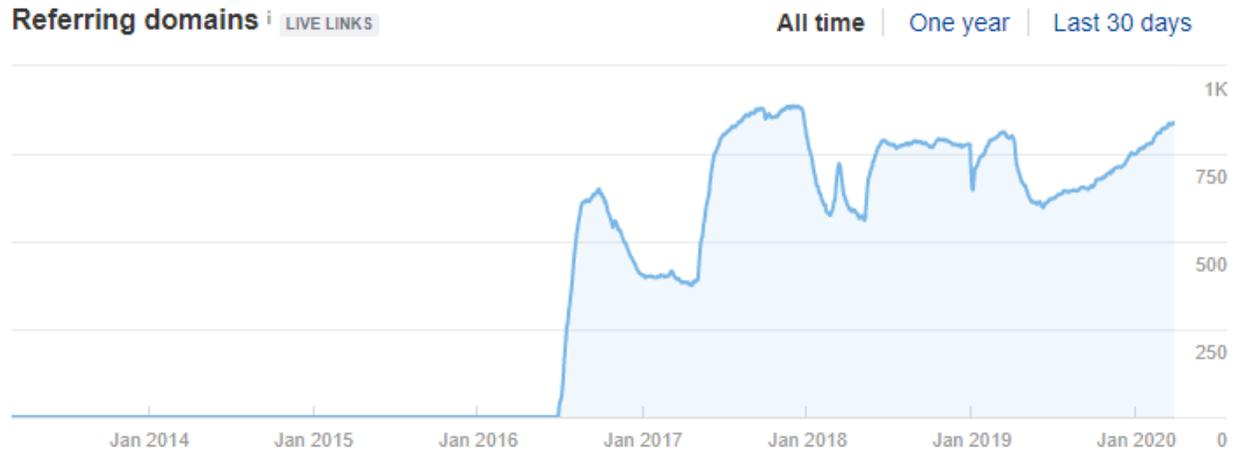
For example, Air Canada has earned more than 20K backlinks since launching a dedicated page for [deals and promotions](#) in 2017:



## Dedicated membership page

Once an airline offers a loyalty or membership program, it instantly becomes news. When it happens, you better be prepared. Build a dedicated page providing an overview of the loyalty program. It will start acquiring backlinks in auto-pilot.

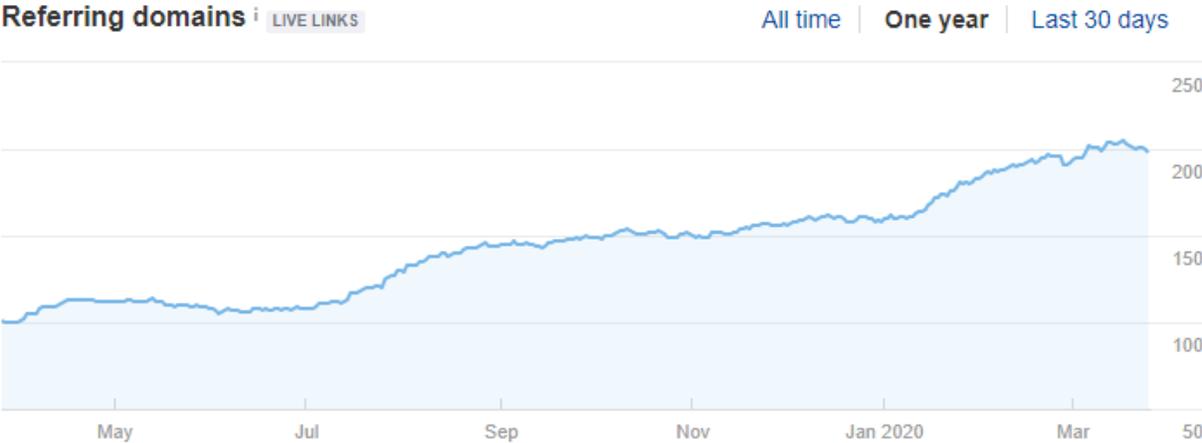
Check [American Airlines AAdvantage Program](#):



Route map

Another useful tool to naturally pick up backlinks is the airline’s route map.

For example, [United’s route map](#) has been constantly earning backlinks over the course of a year:



## Dedicated policy pages for baggage, cancellation, and pets

Baggage, cancellation, pets. These are, in that order, the most searched policy matters on any airline's website. Therefore, building a dedicated page for each policy guarantees an exponential number of backlinks.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Keyword		Volume
<input type="checkbox"/>	<a href="#">american airlines baggage policy</a>	+	27,100
<input type="checkbox"/>	<a href="#">american airlines cancellation policy</a>	+	9,900
<input type="checkbox"/>	<a href="#">american airlines pet policy</a>	+	9,900

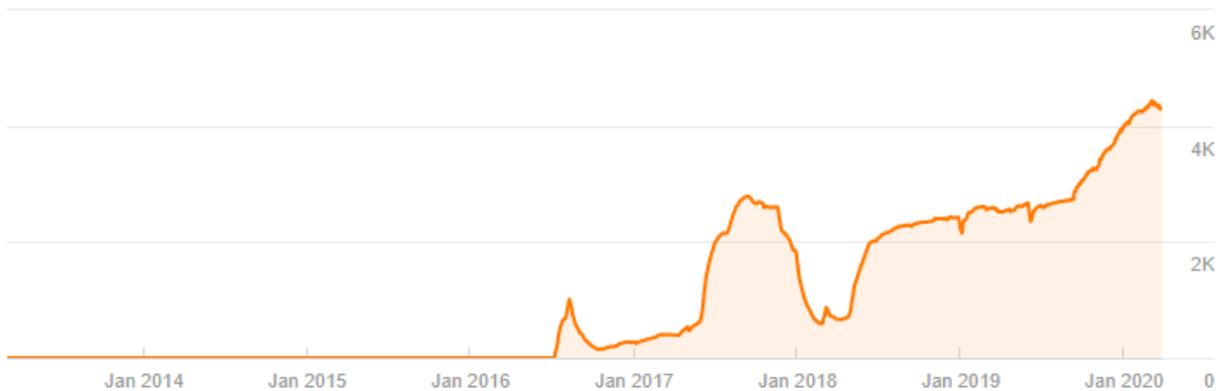
American Airlines has made a great work with its [baggage policy page](#), which keeps earning backlinks:

### Referring domains i [LIVE LINKS](#)

All time | One year | Last 30 days



### Referring pages i [LIVE LINKS](#) 4,273

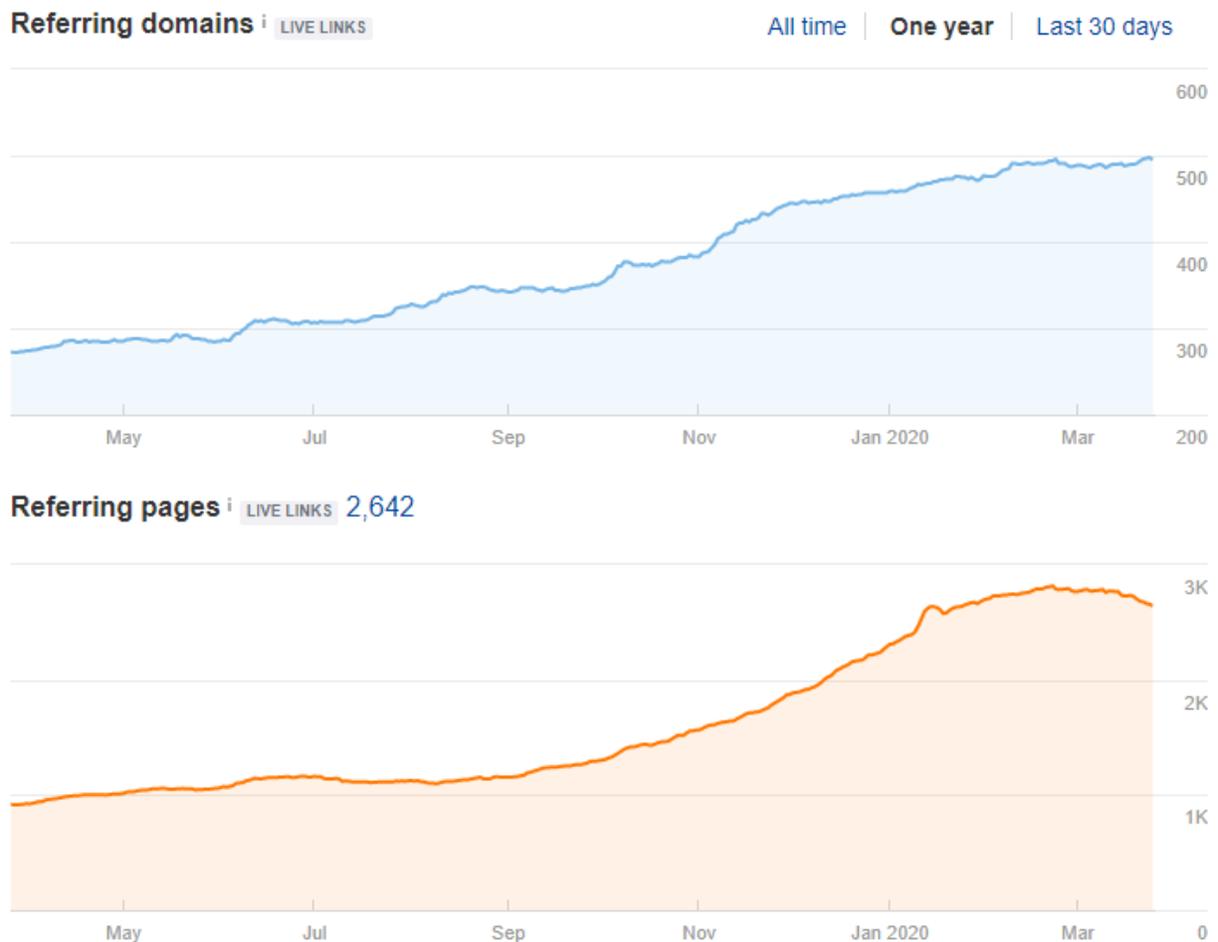


You should also create dedicated pages for other policies and topics that are popular. Use [SEMrush Keyword Magic tool](#) to conduct keyword research and identify potential opportunities. Avoid building separate pages for sub-topics because it might dilute the page value that a single comprehensive page would earn over time. Instead, consolidate similar content on a page entirely dedicated to a topic.

### Fare finder tool

Another tool that can be super helpful for users is a fare finder calendar.

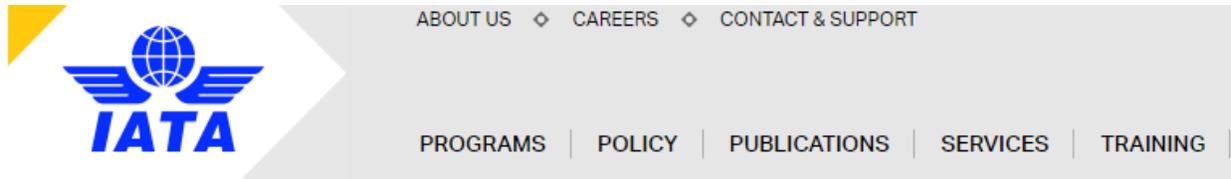
For example, [Southwest's Low Fare Calendar](#) is increasingly becoming one of the most popular pages on the site:



## Leverage airline associations and alliances

Airline [associations](#) and [alliances](#) can be powerful tools for acquiring inks. This also extends to [tourism boards](#) and [airports' websites](#).

Look for opportunities not only on the associations or alliances websites but also in joint events and publications.



[Home](#) > [About Us](#) > [Members](#) > [Current Airline Members](#) > [Aegean Airlines](#)

### ABOUT US

Mission & Vision

Priorities

Members

Current Airline Members

Airline Membership Benefits

Membership Application Fees & Dues

Strategic Partners

International Training Fund

Governance Structure

## Aegean Airlines

<b>Legal Name</b>	Aegean Airlines S.A. - Aviation Limited Company
<b>ICAO Code</b>	AEE
<b>Airline Code</b>	390
<b>IATA Designator</b>	A3
<b>Region</b>	Europe
<b>City</b>	Athens
<b>Address</b>	31 Viltanioti St. 14 Kifissia 14564
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.aegeanair.com">www.aegeanair.com</a>

## United

United is a founding member of the Star Alliance network.

The airline has a rich history in aviation, tracing its roots to 1926 when a small Swallow biplane owned by Walter T. Varney carried airmail to Nevada from Pasco, Washington – at marked the true beginning of commercial air transportation and the birth of United Airlines.

Today, the airline operates the most fuel efficient fleet among U.S. network carriers with the world's most comprehensive global route network, including world-class international gateways to Asia and Australia, Europe, Latin America, and the Middle East. United, together with United Express, offers more than 4,500 flights a day to **338 destinations** from hubs in **Chicago, Denver, Guam, Houston, Los Angeles, New York/Newark, San Francisco, Tokyo and Washington, D.C.**

United employs more than 87,500 people worldwide.

[Book a flight with United](#) 

	Joined Star Alliance	May 1997
	Airports Served	338
	Aircraft	1,262
	Frequent Flyer Programme	MileagePlus®
	Countries Served	49
	Hub Airport(s)	Chicago, Denver, Houston, Los Angeles, Newark, San Francisco and Washington D.C. International: Tokyo, Guam
	Sales Revenue (in US\$)	37.7 BUSD
	Employees	89,800

## Interlink between corporate websites

It's common for airlines to have multiple websites with their own brand identity. When it makes sense and helps users, have a link pointing to the airline's website.



## Promote links on social media

Social networks provide an easy way to share and distribute content. Viral content, promotions, or announcements can lead to new backlinks to the airline's website.

The screenshot shows the Facebook profile of Volaris (@VolarisUSA). The profile picture is a colorful cross logo. The page has a navigation menu on the left with options like Home, About, Photos, Events, Videos, Notes, Posts, Offers, Community, and Info and Ads. A 'Create a Page' button is at the bottom of the menu.

The main content area shows a post from Volaris, 51 minutes ago. The text of the post is: "¡No lo pienses más! 😍 Ese viaje romántico a la Ciudad de México va a estar lleno de largos y cariñosos viajes en trajineras. 🌴💕 ¡Reserva ahora! <http://bit.ly/2BoLPHI>". The text is highlighted with a blue box. Below the text is a promotional image for a flight from Oakland to Mexico City. The image features a colorful archway with the word 'volaris' and a sign that says 'Vuela desde/hacia Ciudad de México saliendo de Oakland desde \$145\* USD'. The sign also includes the dates 'Compra hasta 26/02/2019' and 'Viaje: 01/03/2019 to 11/04/2019'.

On the right side of the page, there are buttons for 'Book Now' and 'Send Message'. Below these are sections for 'Community', 'About', and 'Pages Liked by This Page'. The 'Community' section shows 'Invite your friends to like this Page', '3,775,435 people like this', and '3,777,063 people follow this'. The 'About' section lists the phone number '01 5511028000', the website 'www.volaris.com/?culture=en-US', and the category 'Travel Company'. The 'Pages Liked by This Page' section shows a page named 'MOM, I'M FINE' with a 'Like' button.

## Monitor online mentions

It's hardly possible to follow up on every single mention on the Internet, especially for large websites such as airlines'. It's even harder to secure a backlink every time someone mentions the airline out there.

However, targeted link reclamation can become a powerful method to earn backlinks. Set up alerts on mention monitoring tools such as [Mention](#) for different types of mentions:

- Airline name and brand terms
- Airline services
- Airline's membership program
- Airline's credit card programs
- Airline's community programs
- Airline's prominent employees

You want to pay special attention to mentions by top travel influencers, sites, magazines, journalists, and prominent clients. Obviously, you only want to reach when the mention is:

- Positive
- Relevant (not just an occasional mention)
- The link is almost certain to be secured
- It comes from sites with the highest page authority

## Useful Tools and Resources

- [Ahrefs guide to PageRank](#)
- [Moz's guide to Google's valuation of links](#)
- [Google's qualification of outbound links](#)
- [List of airline trade associations](#)
- [List of airlines alliances](#)
- [SEMrush Keyword Magic tool](#)
- [Ahrefs suite of SEO tools](#)
- [HARO platform](#)
- [Buzzstream's guide to using HARO](#)
- [Mention monitoring tool](#)