



FREE DOWNLOAD

The Content Decay Audit Worksheet

A quarterly, print-and-fill workflow for finding the posts that are quietly losing traffic – and deciding, page by page, whether to refresh, merge, redirect, or delete.

01	The audit workflow	4 steps
02	The decision matrix	4 verdicts
03	The worksheet — audit 8 pages per quarter	fill in
04	The refresh checklist	10 checks

By Gaurav Tiwari — the exact audit I run on 2,100+ posts every quarter.

The audit workflow

Content decays silently. A post that ranked #3 two years ago slides to #8, and nobody notices until the traffic graph does. This audit takes about 90 minutes per quarter and stops the slide.

FOUR STEPS IN GOOGLE SEARCH CONSOLE

- 1 Compare periods.** Performance → last 3 months vs previous 3 months.
- 2 Filter the losers.** Sort pages by click change; flag anything down more than 20%.
- 3 Diagnose each page.** Search the main keyword in a private window. New competitor? AI Overview eating clicks? Outdated info?
- 4 Pick a verdict.** Use the matrix below. Write it in the worksheet. Set a deadline.

THE DECISION MATRIX

Refresh

Topic still relevant

- Update stats, add what's new, answer-first the opening – then update the modified date

Merge & redirect

Two posts, one topic

- Fold the weaker post into the stronger one; 301 the old URL

Redirect only

Obsolete, has backlinks

- 301 to the closest relevant page so the link equity survives

Delete

No traffic, no links, 12+ months

- Dead weight dilutes your site; remove it and let crawl budget flow to winners

AUDIT DATE
_____COMPARED PERIODS
_____PAGES FLAGGED

— FLAGGED PAGES — VERDICT & DEADLINE

- 1 URL _____
Clicks Δ ____% · Diagnosis _____ · Verdict _____ · Due _____
- 2 URL _____
Clicks Δ ____% · Diagnosis _____ · Verdict _____ · Due _____
- 3 URL _____
Clicks Δ ____% · Diagnosis _____ · Verdict _____ · Due _____
- 4 URL _____
Clicks Δ ____% · Diagnosis _____ · Verdict _____ · Due _____
- 5 URL _____
Clicks Δ ____% · Diagnosis _____ · Verdict _____ · Due _____
- 6 URL _____
Clicks Δ ____% · Diagnosis _____ · Verdict _____ · Due _____
- 7 URL _____
Clicks Δ ____% · Diagnosis _____ · Verdict _____ · Due _____
- 8 URL _____
Clicks Δ ____% · Diagnosis _____ · Verdict _____ · Due _____

Cap it at 8. An audit that flags 40 pages fixes none of them. Do the worst 8 this quarter; the rest can wait 90 days.

The Refresh Checklist

Per page

FOR EVERY PAGE YOU MARKED "REFRESH"

- ☐ Re-read the top 3 ranking pages for the keyword first
- ☐ Rewrite the opening – answer the query in 2 sentences
- ☐ Update every stat, price, version number, and screenshot
- ☐ Add one thing competitors don't have (data, test, opinion)
- ☐ Check headings match what people actually search
- ☐ Fix or remove dead outbound links
- ☐ Add 2–3 internal links from newer related posts
- ☐ Trim anything that no longer earns its place
- ☐ Update the modified date only after real changes
- ☐ Request re-indexing in Search Console

— AUDIT COMPLETE WHEN

Every flagged page has a verdict and a deadline, refreshed pages are re-submitted for indexing, and the next audit is in your calendar 90 days out.

Track the result: compare each refreshed page's clicks 8 weeks later. Wins compound – the full recovery playbook lives at gauravtiwari.org/resources/blogging-resources/