

Your Comprehensive SEO & GEO Checklist for Success in 2026

A 2026 Guide to Optimising for Search Engines, AI Overviews,
Generative Engine Optimisation (GEO), Entity SEO & Beyond

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May 2026 Edition — Fully Updated for AI Search & GEO

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1 Introduction

Welcome to the **Comprehensive SEO & GEO Checklist for 2026**, crafted by Jorge Jaroslavsky of JJSEO in Leeds, West Yorkshire. Search is undergoing its most significant transformation since Google's founding. AI-powered answer engines — Google AI Overviews, ChatGPT Search, Perplexity, and Gemini — now synthesise answers directly for users, making it essential to optimise not just for rankings but for *AI citation and entity recognition*.

This 2026 edition introduces two major new pillars: **Entity SEO & Knowledge Graph Optimisation** and **Generative Engine Optimisation (GEO)**, alongside comprehensive updates to every existing section. Research shows that up to 60% of searches will result in zero website clicks by 2026 — meaning your brand must be discoverable *within* AI answers, not only through traditional blue links.

- ★ **NEW in 2026:** Entity SEO (Section 5) — optimise for Google's Knowledge Graph so AI systems recognise and trust your brand.
- ★ **NEW in 2026:** Generative Engine Optimisation / GEO (Section 8) — get cited in ChatGPT, Gemini, Perplexity & Google AI Overviews.
- ★ **UPDATED:** All AI tools, pricing, and model names refreshed to May 2026.
- ★ **UPDATED:** Core Web Vitals, crawl budget, WCAG 2.2 accessibility, and multi-modal search added.

2 Technical SEO

Technical SEO forms the backbone of search visibility. In 2026 it also underpins AI crawlability — if an AI system cannot efficiently access and parse your site, it cannot cite your content.

2.1 Ensure Mobile-Friendliness & Responsiveness

With over 60% of searches on mobile devices, a responsive design is essential. AI features also roll out on mobile first, creating visibility gaps for desktop-only monitoring.

Action: Test your site using Google's Mobile-Friendly Test and monitor mobile vs desktop SERPs separately.

Tip: Use CSS frameworks like Bootstrap; audit for font size, tap-target sizes, and viewport meta tags.

Example: Ensure your Leeds-based business menu is navigable on smartphones without excessive zooming.

2.2 Secure Your Website with HTTPS

Action: Install an SSL certificate (Let's Encrypt is free) and implement 301 redirects from HTTP.

Tip: Check for mixed-content warnings in Chrome DevTools after migration.

Example: Redirect <http://jjseo.co.uk/services> to <https://jjseo.co.uk/services>.

2.3 Optimise Website Speed & Core Web Vitals **[UPDATED]**

Google's Core Web Vitals — LCP, INP (replaced FID), and CLS — remain central ranking signals. The INP (Interaction to Next Paint) threshold of <200ms is now fully enforced.

Action: Use Google PageSpeed Insights and GTmetrix. Aim: LCP <2.5s, INP <200ms, CLS <0.1.

Tip: Compress images to WebP/AVIF, enable browser caching, defer scripts, lazy-load images.

Example: Reducing a Leeds business homepage image from 3MB to 300KB can halve load time.

2.4 Fix Broken Links & Redirects

Action: Scan for 404 errors quarterly using Screaming Frog or Ahrefs.

Tip: Set up 301 redirects for outdated URLs. Avoid chains of more than two redirects.

Example: Redirect an old Leeds SEO service page to the updated version on jjseo.co.uk.

2.5 Create & Submit an XML Sitemap

Action: Generate with Yoast SEO or Rank Math and submit via Google Search Console.

Tip: Exclude non-canonical pages. Keep sitemap fresh — auto-update on publish.

2.6 Configure Robots.txt Correctly

Action: Block admin areas and staging environments; test in Google Search Console.

Tip: In 2026, robots.txt is also a policy surface for AI crawlers. Add Disallow rules for GPTBot, ClaudeBot, or PerplexityBot if you do not want AI training on your content.

Example: User-agent: GPTBot / Disallow: / — to block OpenAI's crawler.

2.7 Implement Structured Data

Action: Add JSON-LD schema using Google's Structured Data Markup Helper. Test with Google's Rich Results Test.

Tip: Use LocalBusiness, FAQPage, HowTo, Article, and Person schema. Prioritise schema that connects your brand to the Knowledge Graph.

Example: Add LocalBusiness schema for JJSEO's Leeds office details including sameAs links to social profiles.

2.8 Crawl Budget Management [NEW 2026]

AI crawler traffic has grown significantly in 2026. Managing crawl budget ensures both Google and AI systems index your priority pages efficiently.

Action: Use Google Search Console's Crawl Stats report to identify crawl inefficiencies.

Tip: Consolidate thin pages, fix redirect chains, and use canonical tags to reduce wasted crawl budget.

Example: If JJSEO has 50 service-area pages with thin content, consolidate into 10 richer pages to concentrate crawl budget.

3 On-Page SEO

On-page SEO optimises individual pages for rankings, AI parsing, and user relevance. In 2026, write for two audiences: human users and AI retrieval bots.

3.1 Optimise Title Tags

Keep titles under 60 characters with primary keywords. Reflect user intent.

Action: Keep under 60 characters with primary keywords.

Tip: Include your primary entity in the title.

Example: SEO Consultant Leeds | JJSEO Services

3.2 Craft Meta Descriptions

Meta descriptions drive clicks from search results.

Action: Write unique descriptions under 160 characters.

Tip: Include a call-to-action and keywords.

Example: Boost your rankings with Jorge Jaroslavsky's expert SEO services in Leeds. Get in touch today!

3.3 Use Header Tags

H1, H2, and H3 structure content for readability, SEO, and AI parsing.

Action: Use one H1 per page (primary entity), with H2/H3 for subtopics.

Tip: Place primary entity keywords naturally in H1; subtopic entities in H2.

Example: H1: SEO Services in Leeds | H2: Technical SEO Audit

3.4 Incorporate Keywords & Entities Naturally [UPDATED]

In 2026, keywords signal user intent while entities provide semantic context. Use both. Avoid keyword stuffing — AI systems penalise unnatural repetition.

Action: Use SEMrush, Ahrefs, or Google NLP API to identify both keywords and key entities for each page.

Tip: Target long-tail, intent-rich phrases. Use the Google NLP API to check entity salience on your top pages.

Example: 'SEO consultant Leeds for small businesses' over generic 'SEO'; with entity markup for Jorge Jaroslavsky as a Person entity.

3.5 Add Alt Text to Images

Action: Add descriptive alt text with keywords; keep under 125 characters.

Example: alt="Jorge Jaroslavsky analysing SEO data in Leeds"

3.6 Optimise URLs

Action: Use short, keyword-rich URLs with hyphens. Avoid dynamic parameters.

Example: <https://jjseo.co.uk/seo-for-automotive>

3.7 Implement Internal Linking

Action: Link to related pages with descriptive anchors. Aim for 3–5 internal links per page.

Tip: Internal links also create entity relationships — link from an author page to service pages to reinforce entity associations.

Example: Link 'Explore my Leeds SEO audits' to the audit page with an anchor that includes your service entity.

4 Content Optimisation

High-quality, entity-rich, and frequently updated content is the single biggest driver of both traditional rankings and AI citations in 2026. AI systems favour content with unique data, clear authorship, and factual precision.

4.1 Create High-Quality, Original Content

Generic AI-generated content is increasingly filtered by search engines. Differentiate with first-party data, case studies, and expert commentary.

Action: Write in-depth articles (1,500+ words) for key topics. Include original statistics, client outcomes, or unique Leeds market insights.

Tip: Use Grammarly for polish. Attribute every article to a named expert (e.g. Jorge Jaroslavsky) to build Author entity signals.

Example: A blog post: '2026 SEO Strategies for Leeds Businesses — Data from 50 Client Campaigns' by Jorge Jaroslavsky.

4.2 Content Freshness & Updates [UPDATED]

Recency is a major AI citation signal in 2026. LLMs and AI search tools prefer recent sources, especially for fast-changing topics like SEO, pricing, and regulations.

Action: Establish a 3–6 month review cycle. Build a content inventory spreadsheet tracking last-updated dates and add visible 'Last Updated' dates to each page.

Tip: Prioritise pricing, legal, and service pages — stale content on these loses AI citations to newer competitors.

Example: Refresh your 2025 Leeds SEO guide with May 2026 algorithm changes, new statistics, and updated case studies.

4.3 Conduct Keyword & Intent Research

Action: Use Google Keyword Planner, Ahrefs, or Ubersuggest. Map keywords to intent clusters — informational, navigational, commercial, transactional.

Tip: Focus on low-competition, high-intent terms. In 2026, intent clusters beat single keywords for AI retrieval.

Example: Target 'local SEO consultant Leeds' (commercial intent) alongside 'how to improve local SEO Leeds' (informational intent).

4.4 Incorporate Multimedia & Multi-Modal Content [UPDATED]

AI search is increasingly multi-modal. Optimised video, images, and infographics are now indexed and cited by AI systems.

Action: Embed optimised images (WebP), videos (with transcripts), and infographics. Add captions and schema markup for all media.

Tip: Include video transcripts — AI systems index text from transcripts just like page copy.

Example: A video: 'How JJSEO Boosted Leeds Business Rankings in 2025' with a full transcript and VideoObject schema.

4.5 Include Clear CTAs

Action: Add CTAs like 'Contact JJSEO' on key pages. Use action-oriented language.

Example: 'Book Your Free SEO Consultation with Jorge Jaroslavsky in Leeds!'

4.6 Build Topical Authority & Content Clusters [NEW 2026]

Topical authority — demonstrating comprehensive coverage of a subject area — is now a primary ranking factor for both Google and AI engines. Instead of isolated blog posts, build interconnected content clusters around your core entities.

Action: Create a pillar page for each core topic (e.g. 'Local SEO Leeds') with supporting cluster pages covering subtopics (e.g. 'Google Business Profile Optimisation Leeds', 'Leeds Local Citations', 'NAP Consistency').

Tip: Use semantic keyword clustering tools like MarketMuse or Surfer SEO to map adjacent intents and identify content gaps.

Example: JJSEO pillar: 'SEO Services Leeds' linked to clusters: 'Technical SEO Leeds', 'Content Marketing Leeds', 'Local SEO Leeds', 'E-commerce SEO Leeds'.

- Break pages into 200–300-word topical chunks with clear headers — LLMs retrieve chunks, not whole pages.
- Include data points that serve as standalone citations (statistics, named outcomes).
- Use retrieval-friendly phrasing: direct questions followed by clear, factual answers.

5

Entity SEO & Knowledge Graph Optimisation ★ NEW

2026

Entity SEO is the **single most important new discipline in 2026**. Search engines and AI systems have moved from keyword matching to entity understanding — identifying and connecting distinct *people, organisations, products, services, locations, and concepts*. Brands that are clearly defined as trusted entities gain visibility in AI Overviews, Knowledge Panels, and AI chatbot citations.

Google's Knowledge Graph now holds 800+ billion facts about 8 billion entities.

Entity clarity — not keyword density — determines whether AI systems cite your brand.

E-E-A-T signals validate which entities AI prioritises for recommendations.

AI systems like ChatGPT handle 2.5 billion prompts daily — entity presence = brand reach.

5.1 Understanding Entity SEO

An **entity** is any uniquely identifiable thing: a person (Jorge Jaroslavsky), an organisation (JJSEO), a location (Leeds), a service (Technical SEO Audit), or a concept (Core Web Vitals). Google stores entities in its Knowledge Graph with attributes and relationships. Traditional SEO matched words; entity SEO builds *semantic identity*.

Action: Use Google's Knowledge Graph Search API to check if your brand already has an entity entry.

Tip: Use Google's free NLP API Demo to see which entities Google extracts from your page content and their salience scores (0–1).

Example: Paste your homepage copy into the NLP Demo — JJSEO should appear as a high-salience Organisation entity linked to Leeds and SEO services.

5.2 Build Your Entity Identity

AI systems cross-reference your entity across multiple sources — website, social profiles, directories, Wikipedia, Wikidata, and press mentions. Consistency across all of these builds Knowledge Graph confidence.

Action: Create and consistently maintain: Google Business Profile, LinkedIn, Crunchbase, and social profiles with identical Name, Description, and URL.

Tip: Add sameAs links in your Organisation schema pointing to verified profiles (LinkedIn, Google Business Profile, Wikidata if applicable).

Example: "sameAs": ["https://www.linkedin.com/company/jjseo", "https://www.google.com/maps/place/jjseo"]

5.3 Schema Markup for Entity Clarity

Schema is your direct communication channel to search engines and AI systems. In 2026, schema must go beyond basic LocalBusiness — it must explicitly connect entities and their relationships.

Action: Implement: Organization (with sameAs, logo, foundingDate), Person (for Jorge Jaroslavsky with author pages), LocalBusiness, Service, FAQPage, Article (with author entity).

Tip: Every schema entity should have a unique @id (e.g. https://jjseo.co.uk/#organization) that acts as its canonical identifier across all pages.

Example: "@type": "Organization", "@id": "https://jjseo.co.uk/#organization", "name": "JJSEO", "founder": {"@type": "Person", "@id": "https://jjseo.co.uk/#jorge"}

5.4 Knowledge Graph Optimisation

To earn a Knowledge Panel and appear in AI summaries, Google must be confident in your entity's identity, expertise, and relevance.

Action: Strengthen your About page with verifiable credentials, awards, and client outcomes. Ensure your author/bio page is comprehensive and links to external profiles.

Tip: Tools: InLinks, WordLift, and MarketMuse for entity salience tracking. Monitor branded search results to see if Google shows a Knowledge Panel for JJSEO.

Example: A rich 'About Jorge Jaroslavsky' page listing 10+ years of SEO expertise, 50+ Leeds business clients, and external mentions, linked from every blog post.

5.5 Topical Entity Mapping

Map your content around a semantic network of related entities rather than isolated keywords. This signals topical authority to both Google and AI systems.

Action: Identify your seed entity (e.g. 'SEO Services Leeds'). Map related sub-entities: 'Technical SEO', 'Local SEO', 'Google Business Profile', 'Core Web Vitals', 'AI Overviews'. Create content for each node and link them.

Tip: Analyse competitor top pages with Google's NLP API to find entities they cover that you're missing.

Example: JJSEO seed entity: 'SEO Consultant Leeds'. Sub-entities: 'Local SEO Leeds', 'Technical SEO Audit Leeds', 'SEO Services Leeds', 'Entity SEO Leeds'.

5.6 Author & Brand Entity Signals

In 2026, 'author rank' — the consistency of expert commentary under the same byline — increasingly affects content performance in both search and AI systems.

Action: Create a detailed author page for Jorge Jaroslavsky with photo, bio, credentials, and sameAs links. Add the author entity to every piece of published content.

Tip: Syndicate thought leadership articles under the same byline on LinkedIn, Search Engine Journal, and industry publications to strengthen entity recognition.

Example: Guest post on Search Engine Land as 'Jorge Jaroslavsky, JJSEO Leeds' — each mention reinforces the Person entity and its association with SEO expertise.

6 Off-Page SEO

Off-page SEO builds authority and trust. In 2026, brand mentions and citations — even without links — contribute to AI entity recognition alongside traditional backlink signals.

6.1 Build High-Quality Backlinks

Action: Guest post on industry blogs or collaborate with Leeds businesses.

Tip: Avoid low-quality link schemes. In 2026, a single authoritative link (e.g. Search Engine Land, BBC Yorkshire) outweighs 100 low-quality ones.

Example: A backlink from a Leeds business directory or regional news site to jjseo.co.uk.

6.2 Optimise Google Business Profile [UPDATED]

GBP is now an entity signal as well as a local visibility tool. AI systems use your GBP data to validate and classify your business entity.

Action: Claim and fully complete your GBP: categories, services, photos, posts, Q&A, and booking link.

Tip: Post weekly updates to GBP — freshness signals matter for both local rankings and AI entity confidence.

Example: JJSEO GBP: 'SEO Consultant Leeds, West Yorkshire' with services listed and weekly 'SEO tip' posts.

6.3 Encourage Positive Reviews

Action: Request Google reviews from satisfied Leeds clients after project completion.

Tip: Respond professionally to all reviews. Reviews are entity trust signals — AI systems factor in reputation alongside authority.

6.4 Leverage Social Media & Brand Mentions

Action: Share content on LinkedIn, X (Twitter), and local Leeds business groups.

Tip: Unlinked brand mentions now influence AI entity understanding. Consistent brand messaging across platforms reduces ambiguity for AI systems.

Example: A post on LinkedIn: 'Jorge Jaroslavsky, JJSEO Leeds, shares 2026 SEO tips for West Yorkshire businesses.'

6.5 Digital PR & AI Citation Building [NEW 2026]

AI systems like ChatGPT and Perplexity cite brands that appear as referenced sources across credible third-party websites. Digital PR — earning mentions in reputable publications — is a direct path to AI citation.

Action: Pitch original data, expert commentary, and local business stories to Leeds press, regional business journals, and industry publications.

Tip: Monitor AI-generated answers about your niche using Perplexity or ChatGPT. Note which brands are cited and pursue mentions in those same sources.

Example: A quote from Jorge Jaroslavsky in the Yorkshire Post about local SEO trends creates a credible entity signal for AI systems.

7 Local SEO

Local SEO targets customers in Leeds and West Yorkshire. In 2026, hyper-localisation and entity-verified local data improve both traditional and AI-powered local search results.

7.1 Consistent NAP Information

Action: Display consistent Name, Address, and Phone (NAP) on every page and across all directories.

Tip: Use a footer or header for NAP visibility. Any inconsistency damages entity confidence in the Knowledge Graph.

Example: Jorge Jaroslavsky, JJSEO, Leeds, West Yorkshire, UK | +44 113 XXX XXXX consistently across all platforms.

7.2 Optimise for Local Keywords

Action: Include 'Leeds' or 'West Yorkshire' in titles, headers, and content naturally.

Tip: Use Moz Local or BrightLocal for local keyword tracking. Target both service + location queries and conversational local queries.

7.3 List in Local Directories

Action: List JJSEO on Yelp, Bing Places, Yell.com, and Leeds-specific business directories.

Tip: Ensure NAP is identical across all listings — discrepancies confuse the Knowledge Graph.

7.4 Hyper-Local Signals [NEW 2026]

AI-powered local search in 2026 prioritises hyper-specific local expertise. Generic 'Leeds' content is less effective than neighbourhood- or sector-specific local content.

Action: Create content targeting specific Leeds districts (e.g. Leeds City Centre, Headingley, Roundhay) and specific local industries (hospitality, legal, automotive).

Tip: Add LocalBusiness schema with specific geo-coordinates and serviceArea fields, and use FAQ schema addressing hyper-local questions.

Example: A page: 'SEO for Headingley Restaurants' with specific case study data from local clients.

8 GEO — Generative Engine Optimisation ★ NEW 2026

Generative Engine Optimisation (GEO) — also called Answer Engine Optimisation (AEO) or LLM Optimisation (LLMO) — is the practice of designing content so it can be understood, extracted, and cited by AI systems. Where traditional SEO earns rankings, GEO earns *citations* in AI-generated answers. Both are now essential.

60% of searches are projected to result in zero clicks by 2026 — AI answers the question directly.

ChatGPT handles 2.5 billion prompts daily; Perplexity serves millions of research queries.

AI engines use Retrieval-Augmented Generation (RAG) to pull specific content chunks — not whole pages.

Brands with clear entity signals, structured content, and strong E-E-A-T are cited most.

8.1 What is GEO / AEO?

Traditional SEO: optimise for Googlebot → rank in blue links → earn clicks. GEO: optimise for AI retrieval → be cited in AI-generated answers → earn brand visibility and trust, even with zero clicks.

Action: Audit which of your pages currently appear as cited sources in ChatGPT, Perplexity, or Google AI Overviews for your target queries.

Tip: GEO and SEO reinforce each other. Strong SEO authority improves AI citation likelihood — don't abandon traditional SEO.

8.2 Structure Content for AI Retrieval [UPDATED]

AI systems use embedding-based retrieval (RAG). They extract specific 200–300-word chunks, not whole articles. Content must be self-contained, factual, and clearly structured.

Action: Break long pages into clear, headed sections of 200–300 words. Open each section with a direct answer, then provide supporting context.

Tip: Use bullet points, numbered lists, and comparison tables — AI parsing systems prefer structured information over dense prose.

Action: Place critical information in the first 100–200 words of each page.

Example: A page section: 'What is Local SEO?' followed immediately by a 2-sentence direct answer, then a bullet list of 5 key tactics.

8.3 Enhance Authority with E-E-A-T for AI [UPDATED]

Google's E-E-A-T (Experience, Expertise, Authoritativeness, Trustworthiness) is now a primary filter for AI citation. AI systems prioritise credible, verifiable sources.

Action: Add author bios with credentials to every article. Include: name, title, years of experience, and external validation (certifications, press mentions).

Tip: Include citations to reputable sources, original data, and client testimonials with verifiable outcomes.

Example: 'Jorge Jaroslavsky, SEO Consultant with 10+ years' experience, has grown organic traffic for 50+ Leeds businesses. Google Partner Certified.'

8.4 Conversational & Intent-Cluster Queries

Action: Target long-tail, question-based keywords: 'How can I improve my website's SEO in Leeds in 2026?'

Tip: Use FAQ sections. In 2026, add 'Related Questions' sections mirroring People Also Ask patterns.

Example: FAQ page on jjseo.co.uk: 'Why hire a Leeds SEO consultant?', 'How much does SEO cost in Leeds?', 'How long does SEO take to work?'

8.5 Structured Data for AI

Action: Implement FAQPage, HowTo, Article, and Person schema on relevant pages.

Tip: Test schema with Google's Rich Results Test and Schema Markup Validator.

Example: FAQPage schema on 'What are the benefits of SEO for Leeds businesses?'

8.6 Zero-Click & AI Answer Visibility

Action: Provide direct, factual answers in the first paragraph of each key page — these are pulled as AI snippets.

Tip: Use concise, quotable statistics and declarative statements. Include data points that serve as standalone citations.

Example: Page opener: 'In 2026, local SEO is the fastest ROI channel for Leeds service businesses, delivering an average 3–5x return within 6 months.'

8.7 Monitor GEO & AI Visibility Performance **[UPDATED]**

Action: Use Ahrefs, SEMrush, Otterly, or Peec to monitor AI Overview appearances and branded AI mentions. Manually check ChatGPT, Perplexity, and Gemini for target queries monthly.

Tip: Note which competitors are cited in AI answers for Leeds SEO queries and analyse what content earns those citations.

8.8 Adapt to Agentic Browsers

Action: Optimise for real-time relevance by updating content frequently — AI browsers prioritise recent sources.

Tip: Publish original commentary and data regularly on X/LinkedIn to boost visibility in Perplexity and Grok's real-time indexing.

8.9 Multi-Modal AI Search **[NEW 2026]**

AI search is no longer text-only. Google Lens, ChatGPT's image input, and voice search are growing channels. Ensure your visual and audio content is as optimised as your text.

Action: Add descriptive alt text, file names, and captions to all images. Provide transcripts for all video and audio content. Implement ImageObject and VideoObject schema.

Tip: Voice search queries are conversational and local — optimise for natural language phrases like 'best SEO consultant near Leeds' in your FAQ content.

9 Analytics & Monitoring

9.1 Google Analytics 4

Action: Install GA4 tracking. Set up conversion events for form submissions, phone clicks, and calls.

Tip: Monitor organic vs AI referral traffic. Some AI tools now pass referral data — track 'perplexity.ai', 'chatgpt.com' referrals.

9.2 Google Search Console

Action: Submit your sitemap and check for crawl errors and manual actions monthly.

Tip: Monitor the Performance report for AI Overview impression data — GSC now shows AI Overview appearances for your queries.

9.3 Track Keyword Rankings

Action: Use SEMrush or Rank Tracker. Track both traditional rankings and AI Overview inclusion.

Example: Track 'SEO consultant Leeds' across Google (position 1–10), Google AI Overview, and Perplexity.

9.4 Monitor User Metrics

Action: Analyse bounce rate, session duration, and engagement rate in GA4.

Tip: GA4's 'Engagement Rate' replaces bounce rate — aim for engagement rate above 50%.

9.5 AI Visibility Tracking [NEW 2026]

Traditional rank tracking does not capture AI visibility. In 2026, monitor your brand's presence in AI-generated answers as a separate KPI.

Action: Use Otterly, Peec, or Profound to track brand mentions and citations in ChatGPT, Gemini, Perplexity, and Google AI Overviews. Conduct manual monthly audits.

Tip: Set up Google Alerts and Mention.com for brand monitoring. Track unlinked brand mentions — these are AI entity signals.

Example: Monthly report: JJSEO mentioned in ChatGPT responses to 'best Leeds SEO consultant' — track frequency and context.

10 User Experience (UX)

A seamless UX improves engagement and indirectly boosts SEO and AI citation likelihood — AI systems are influenced by dwell time and engagement signals.

10.1 Improve Navigation

Action: Create a logical menu structure. Include a search bar for larger sites.

Example: Menu: Home | Leeds SEO Services | GEO Services | Case Studies | Blog | Contact

10.2 Use Professional Design

Action: Use consistent fonts, colours, and modern CMS themes. Minimalist design with clear entity positioning builds credibility.

10.3 Minimise Intrusive Elements

Action: Use exit-intent pop-ups sparingly. Avoid interstitials that Google penalises on mobile.

10.4 Test Across Devices & Browsers

Action: Test on Chrome, Firefox, Safari, and mobile. Use BrowserStack for cross-device testing.

Tip: Monitor both desktop and mobile SERPs separately — AI features often differ between devices.

10.5 Accessibility (WCAG 2.2) [NEW 2026]

Web accessibility is both a legal obligation and an SEO signal in 2026. WCAG 2.2 compliance improves crawlability and user experience for all visitors, including AI parsers.

Action: Audit with Lighthouse or axe. Ensure: sufficient colour contrast (4.5:1), keyboard navigation, focus indicators, and descriptive link text.

Tip: AI systems benefit from accessible markup — semantic HTML, ARIA labels, and descriptive alt text all improve AI content parsing.

Example: Replace 'click here' links with descriptive anchors: 'Download JJSEO's Free Leeds SEO Audit Checklist'.

11 AI Tools for SEO

AI tools accelerate every aspect of SEO in 2026 — from content ideation and schema generation to competitor analysis and GEO monitoring. Below are the leading tools updated for May 2026.

11.1 Grok 3 (xAI) [UPDATED]

Real-time data analysis from X (Twitter). Strengths: trending keyword identification, real-time sentiment analysis, dynamic content generation. Free tier on X; X Premium+ for higher quotas.

SEO Use Case: Identify trending Leeds SEO topics from X in real time for timely content creation.

Limitation: Less suited for deep technical writing or large-document analysis.

11.2 Gemini 2.5 Pro (Google) [UPDATED]

Deep integration with Google's ecosystem — Search Console, Analytics, Workspace. Strengths: large context window (1M tokens), multimodal analysis, Google data access. Free tier; Gemini Advanced ~£17.99/month.

SEO Use Case: Analyse competitor content at scale and identify entity gaps for Leeds AI Overview optimisation.

Limitation: Less creative than ChatGPT for long-form content generation.

11.3 Copilot (Microsoft) [UPDATED]

GPT-4o powered, integrated with Microsoft 365. Strengths: Office document generation, Bing real-time search, Teams integration. Free tier; Copilot Pro ~£19/month.

SEO Use Case: Draft meta descriptions and content directly in Word; use Bing Search integration for SERP research.

Limitation: Full value requires Microsoft 365 subscription.

11.4 ChatGPT o3 (OpenAI) [UPDATED]

Versatile, reasoning-optimised. Strengths: complex SEO analysis, long-form content, Search integration, browsing. Free (GPT-4o mini); Plus ~£17/month; Pro ~£170/month.

SEO Use Case: Analyse search intent clusters, create question-based content for AI Overviews, and draft structured data.

Limitation: Search is better with Plus/Pro; free tier has limitations.

11.5 Claude Sonnet 4.6 (Anthropic) [UPDATED]

Excels at technical SEO, large document analysis, and nuanced writing. Strengths: 200K context window, schema markup generation, precise instruction-following. Free tier; Pro ~£14/month.

SEO Use Case: Generate complex JSON-LD entity schema, analyse full site audits, and create GEO-optimised content structures.

Limitation: No real-time web search in the base model (web search available via *claude.ai* with search enabled).

11.6 Perplexity Pro [UPDATED]

AI + real-time search with cited sources. Strengths: cited research, competitive analysis, trend monitoring. Free tier; Pro ~£17/month.

SEO Use Case: Research trending Leeds SEO keywords with citations; monitor which brands AI cites for your target queries.

Limitation: Less suited for long-form creative content generation.

11.7 Choosing the Right AI Tool [UPDATED]

Task	Best Tool(s)
GEO / AI Overview content	ChatGPT o3, Claude Sonnet 4.6
Entity schema generation	Claude Sonnet 4.6
Real-time trend research	Grok 3, Perplexity Pro
Competitor & keyword research	Gemini 2.5 Pro, Perplexity Pro
Long-form content creation	ChatGPT o3, Claude Sonnet 4.6
Microsoft 365 integration	Copilot
Google ecosystem analysis	Gemini 2.5 Pro
AI visibility monitoring	Otterly, Peec, Perplexity

12 Ongoing Maintenance

12.1 Update CMS & Plugins

Action: Update WordPress and plugins monthly. Back up before updates. Outdated software is a security and SEO risk.

Tip: In 2026, ensure your SEO plugin (Yoast or Rank Math) is current — these tools embed important structured data defaults.

12.2 Conduct SEO & GEO Audits

Action: Run quarterly audits using Ahrefs or Moz. Include: technical, on-page, entity, AI Overview visibility, and GEO citation checks.

Tip: Add a GEO audit layer: test 20 target queries in ChatGPT, Perplexity, and Gemini. Note which competitors are cited and why.

Example: Fix duplicate content on a Leeds service page found in audit; update entity schema; refresh stale statistics.

12.3 Stay Updated on SEO & GEO Trends

Action: Follow Search Engine Journal, Search Engine Land, and the Google Search Central Blog for algorithm and AI updates.

Tip: Attend UK SEO events and webinars. The landscape is changing faster than at any point in SEO's history.

Example: Adapt immediately to any 2026 Google AI Overview algorithm changes impacting Leeds businesses.

13 Conclusion

This 2026 SEO & GEO Checklist, crafted by **Jorge Jaroslavsky of JJSEO** in Leeds, West Yorkshire, equips you to succeed in the most complex and exciting era in search history. The fundamentals — technical excellence, quality content, strong backlinks, and local optimisation — remain as important as ever. But the frontier has moved: brands that win in 2026 are those that are also **clearly understood as trusted entities** by AI systems and **cited in AI-generated answers**.

Entity SEO and GEO are not replacements for traditional SEO — they are the next layer. Build your semantic identity, structure content for AI retrieval, demonstrate E-E-A-T at every touchpoint, and monitor your AI visibility alongside your rankings.

- ✓ Technical SEO: crawlable, fast, mobile-first, structured data with entity @id
- ✓ On-Page SEO: entity-first titles, headers, and content — write for humans AND AI
- ✓ Entity SEO: build Knowledge Graph presence via schema, consistent profiles, sameAs
- ✓ GEO / AEO: structured 200–300-word chunks, direct answers, FAQPage schema, E-E-A-T
- ✓ Content: topical authority clusters, fresh data, original insight, named authorship
- ✓ Off-Page: quality backlinks + digital PR for AI citation building
- ✓ Local SEO: NAP consistency, hyper-local content, GBP freshness
- ✓ Analytics: GA4 + GSC + AI visibility monitoring (Otterly / Peec)
- ✓ UX: accessible, fast, mobile-first — WCAG 2.2 compliant

For personalised SEO & GEO solutions tailored to your Leeds business, contact **Jorge Jaroslavsky at jjseo.co.uk** to schedule a consultation. I'd love to help elevate your presence in search, AI Overviews, and beyond!