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JavaScript SEO Training Course

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Hi! We're Gray Dot Co

We're into JavaScript SEO. And Headless SEO.
And, really, all manner of needlessly complicated software stuff.

SAM TORRES

Chief Digital Officer

Data & dev nerd

SEO mermaid™

TORY GRAY

Founder & CEO

SEO & data nerd

Puzzle enthusiast

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On behalf of Sitebulb & WTS

The very best sponsors a girl could ask for...

Sitebulb

Site Auditing Tool

Desktop & Cloud crawling

Famously sweary release notes

WTS

Global Community

Tech SEO Nerds

Home to best members of all time

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What this series covers

- Understanding JavaScript SEO
- Auditing JS for SEO
- Prioritizing & Explaining JS SEO Issues
- **Bonus:** Live Auditing Q&A (Exclusive to #WTS)

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Prioritizing & Explaining JavaScript SEO Issues

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4 tiers of JavaScript SEO issues...

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#1 No unique, indexable URLs

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#2 No content on pages (or some critical content is missing)

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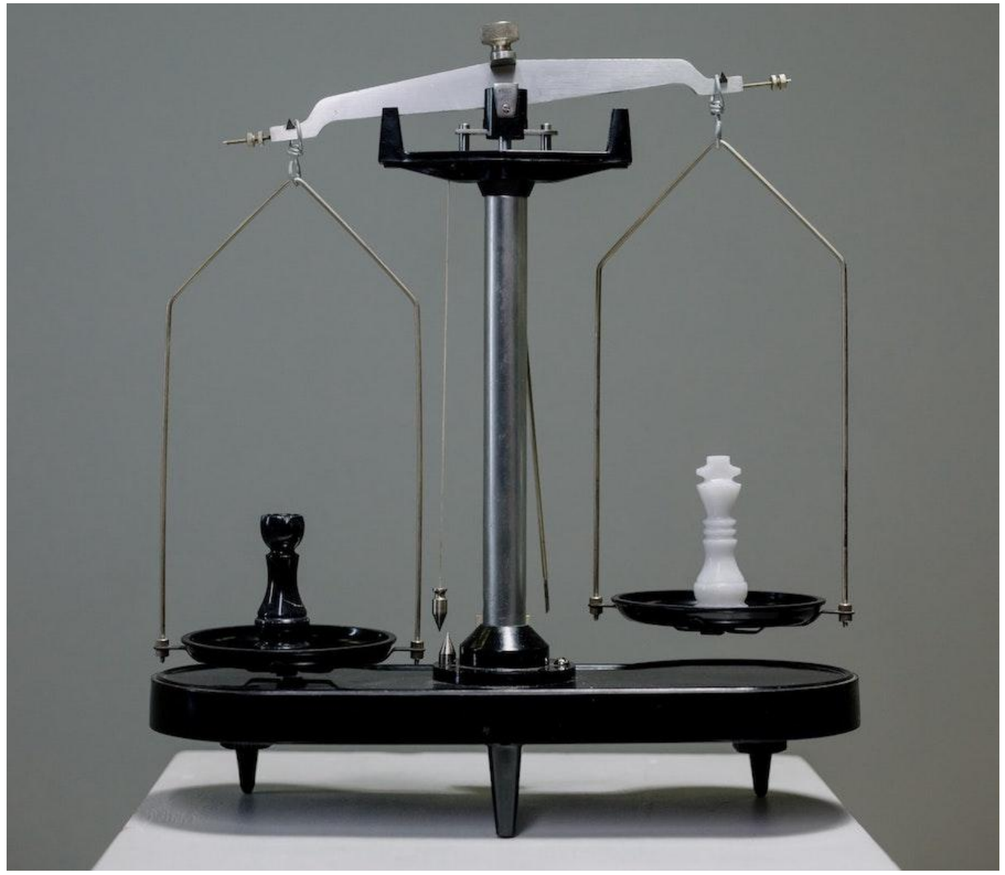
#3 Content is accessible, but requires rendering



Reading: SSR v CSR Case Studies

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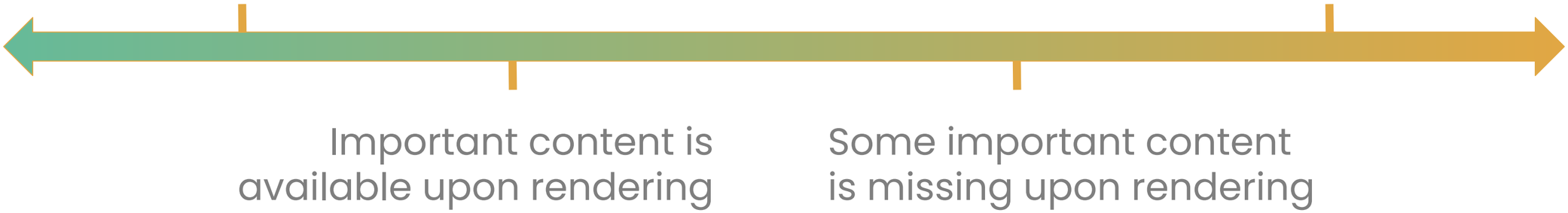
#4 Critical errors: timeouts, breaking the head

Reading: Real World JS Problems

Reading: Render Gauntlet

How to think about issues



Remember: Critical SEO Fields

Remember: Critical SEO Pages

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Product Management for SEO and JavaScript

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Use your team's language

Examples:

- Tags
  - Tag name
  - Attribute
  - Value
  - Text node
- Web components
  - Slot(s)
- DOM
  - Light DOM
  - Shadow DOM
  - Virtual DOM
- Stage, Production
- Rendering (and types)

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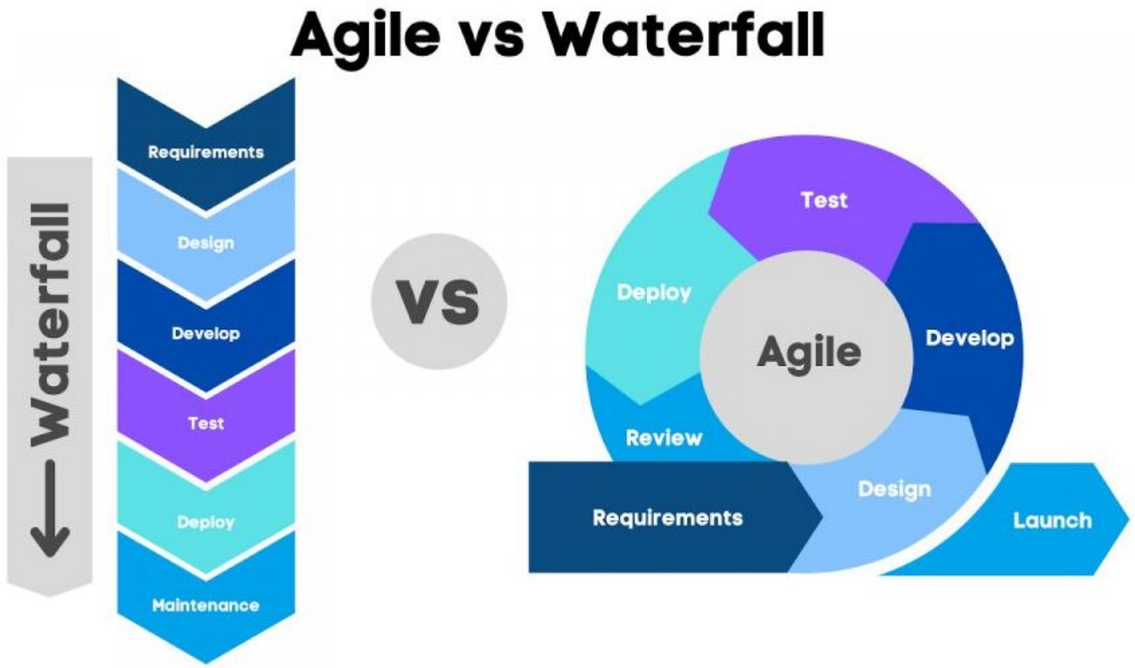
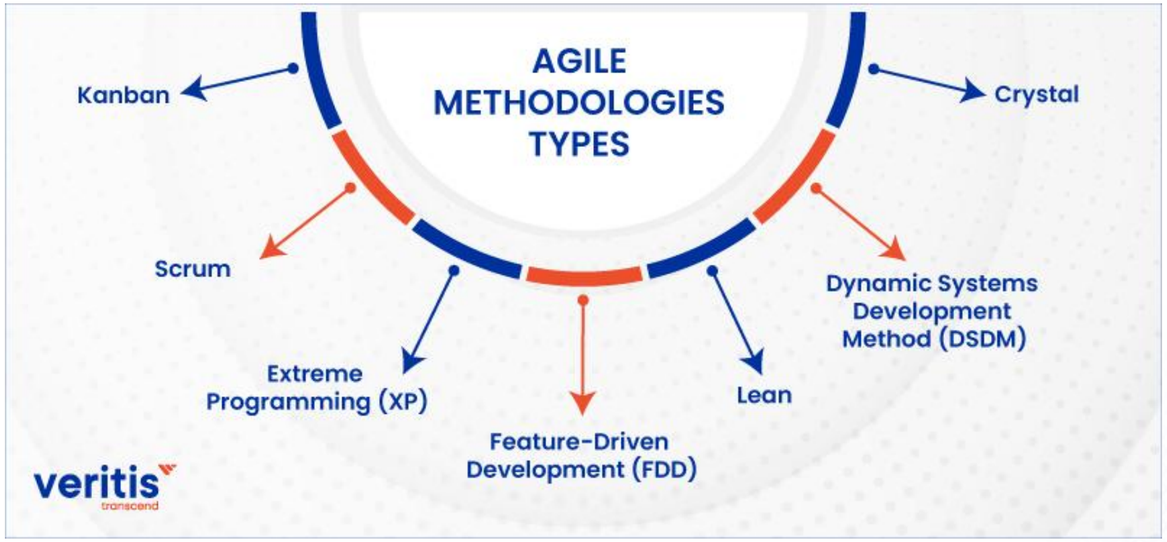
Use your team's processes





[Image credit: Planyway]

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Use your team's project organization methodology

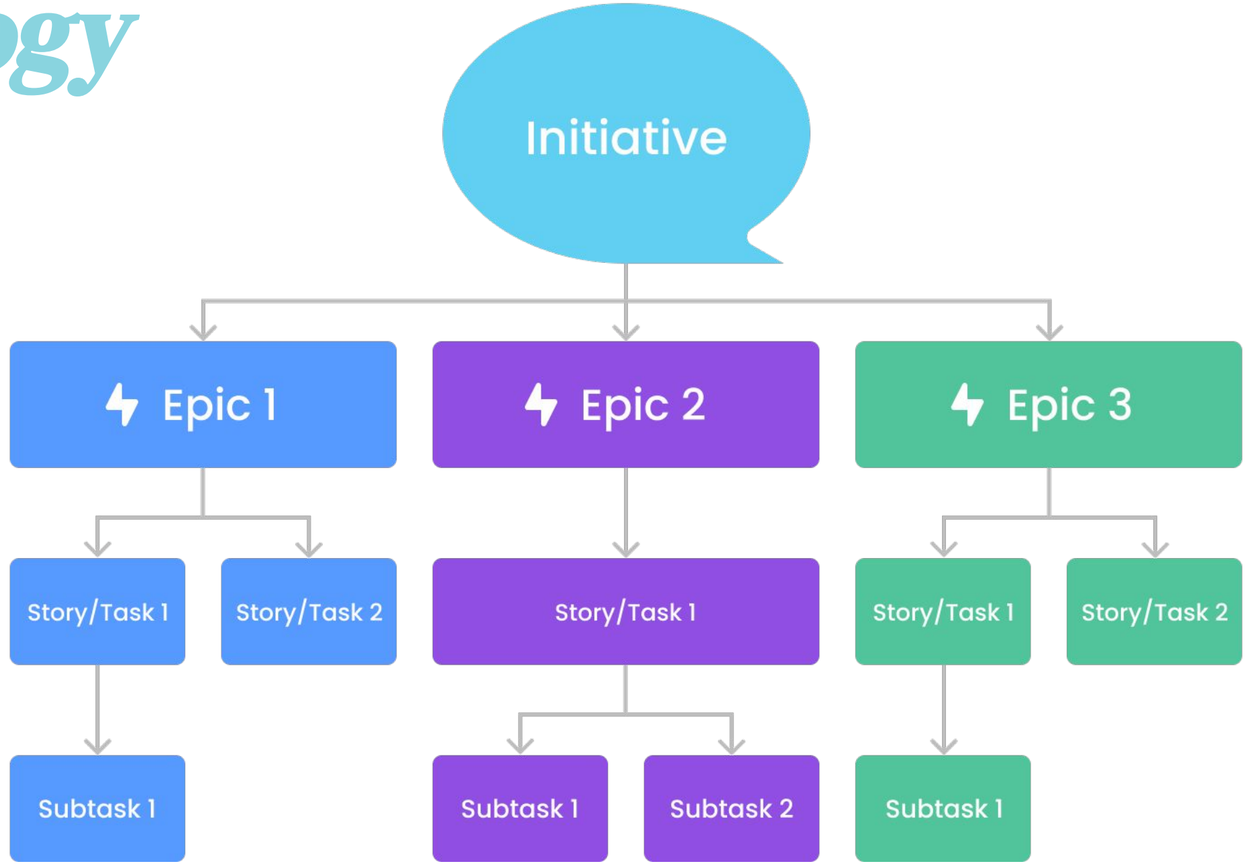

Image credit: Planyway

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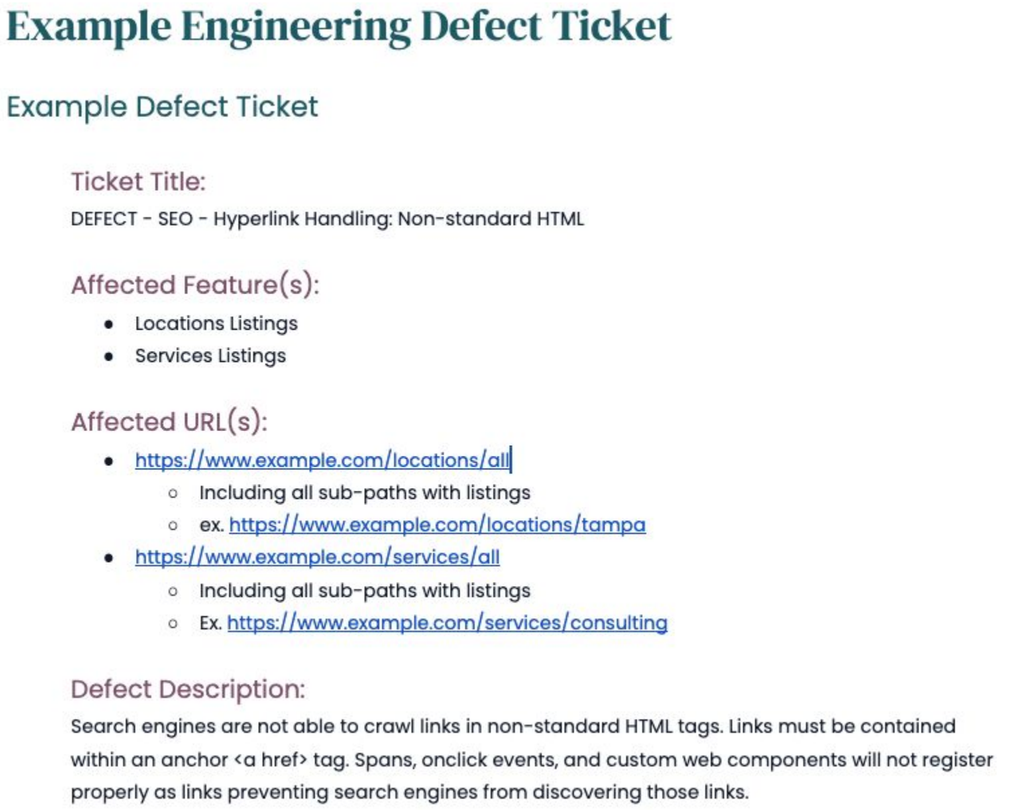
Crafting defect tickets that get implemented

Elements:

- Title
- Affected sections/features
- Affected URLs
- Defect Description
- Actual Behavior
- Expected Behavior
- Impact
- Steps to reproduce
- Context, technical notes & references
- Testing notes
- Acceptance criteria



Example Engineering Defect Ticket

Example Defect Ticket

Ticket Title:

DEFECT - SEO - Hyperlink Handling: Non-standard HTML

Affected Feature(s):

- Locations Listings
- Services Listings

Affected URL(s):

- https://www.example.com/locations/all
  - Including all sub-paths with listings
  - ex. https://www.example.com/locations/tampa
- https://www.example.com/services/all
  - Including all sub-paths with listings
  - Ex. https://www.example.com/services/consulting

Defect Description:

Search engines are not able to crawl links in non-standard HTML tags. Links must be contained within an anchor <a href> tag. Spans, onclick events, and custom web components will not register properly as links preventing search engines from discovering those links.

Template credit: Defect Ticket

https://thegray.company/ticket

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More PM resources

- Worth learning from: Vanda Pokecz, Holly Miller Anderson, Gus Palogia, Adam Gent, Eli Schwartz, Gray Dot Company
- SEO Roadmap
  - https://thegray.company/blog/how-to-build-seo-roadmap
- SEO Business Case
  - https://thegray.company/blog/seo-product-management-business-case
- Product Requirements Documentation
  - https://thegray.company/blog/seo-product-requirements-how-to-template

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Documentation

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What documentation should cover: rendering

- **Rendering types** (https://web.dev/articles/rendering-on-the-web)
  - Which types are available to your brand (current type & potential types)
  - How those types may affect a search engine's ability to crawl/render/rank your site
    - Onely: Rendering Queue: Google Needs 9X More Time To Crawl JS Than HTML
  - Anticipated differences in performance between the types

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What documentation should cover: errors

- **Serving accurate HTTP status codes**
  - https://developers.google.com/search/docs/crawling-indexing/javascript/javascript-seo-basics#use-meaningful-http-status-codes
  - https://thegray.company/blog/single-page-application-spas-404s-seo
- **Soft 404s**
  - https://developers.google.com/search/docs/crawling-indexing/javascript/javascript-seo-basics#avoid-soft-404s

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What documentation should cover: site structure

- **URL creation** - avoid fragments (e.g. “#”- hashes - or “#!” - called hash bangs - neither of which are recommended.)
  - https://developers.google.com/search/docs/crawling-indexing/javascript/javascript-seo-basics#use-history-api
- **Pagination**
  - https://developers.google.com/search/docs/crawling-indexing/javascript/lazy-loading#paginated-infinite-scroll
  - https://developers.google.com/search/docs/specialty/ecommerce/pagination-and-incremental-page-loading
- **Menu/Navigation**
- **Filters, Facets & Sorting**

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What documentation should cover: links

- **Linking**
  - https://developers.google.com/search/docs/crawling-indexing/links-crawlable

- **Major takeaway: No <a href>, no link.**
  - Can follow: Anchor Text
  - Can't follow:
    - <a routerLink="some/path">
    -
    - <a onClick="goto('https://thegray.company')">

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What documentation should cover: rich media

- **Rich media**
  - https://developers.google.com/search/docs/appearance/google-images#semantic-html
  - https://developers.google.com/search/docs/appearance/video#help-google-find

- **Major takeaway: No <img src>, no image.**
  - Can follow: <img src="puppy.jpg" alt="a golden retriever puppy">
  - Can't follow:

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What documentation should cover: (more) on-page

- **Page copy**
  - Text nodes:
    - This is a Text Node
    - <h1 class="class-name">This is also a Text Node that's an H1</h1>
    - This is also a Text Node that's Anchor Text
    - <h1 description="class-name"> ← That's not page copy!
- **Lazy loading**
  - https://developers.google.com/search/docs/crawling-indexing/javascript/lazy-loading
- **Structured data**
  - https://developers.google.com/search/docs/appearance/structured-data/generate-structured-data-with-javascript#testing

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What documentation should cover: web components

- Web components
  - https://developers.google.com/search/docs/crawling-indexing/javascript/javascript-seo-basics#web-components
- Parts of a Tag: Tag Name, Attribute(s), Value, Text Node

```
<custom-component description="This is a Value" custom-attribute>
    <p>This is a text node.</p>
    This is also a text node.
</custom-component>
```

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More about web components

- **No Text Node = no page copy** (attributes, values don't count!)

<my-custom-component description="This is a Value" custom-attribute content="This is not page copy">
</my-custom-component>

- **No Text Node (Anchor text) = links ONLY in the code, not on the page**

<my-custom-component description="This is a Value" custom-attribute><slot> </slot>
</my-custom-component>

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Examples (good ones!): Groupon

```
▼<div class="relative md:hidden">
  ▶<div class="flex items-center justify-center gap-2 p-2">…</div> flex
  ▼<div data-testid="mob-category-nav" class="relative w-full overflow-hidden borde
    r-b border-separator">
    ▼<div class="hide-scrollbar flex items-center gap-5 overflow-x-auto"> flex
…       <a id="mobileNavigationItem:beauty-and-spas" class="shrink-0 whitespace-nowra
        p border-b-[1px] border-b-transparent pb-4 pt-2 text-center text-sm font-semi
        bold first:ml-4 last:mr-4" data-bhc="mobileNavigationItem:beauty-and-spas"
        href="https://www.groupon.com/local/kitchener-waterloo/beauty-and-spas">
        Beauty & Spas</a> == $0
        <a id="mobileNavigationItem:gifts" class="shrink-0 whitespace-nowrap border-b
        -[1px] border-b-transparent pb-4 pt-2 text-center text-sm font-semibold firs
        t:ml-4 last:mr-4" data-bhc="mobileNavigationItem:gifts" href="https://www.gro
        upon.com/gift">Gifts</a>
        <a id="mobileNavigationItem:auto-and-home-improvement" class="shrink-0 whites
        pace-nowrap border-b-[1px] border-b-transparent pb-4 pt-2 text-center text-sm
        font-semibold first:ml-4 last:mr-4" data-bhc="mobileNavigationItem:auto-and-h
```

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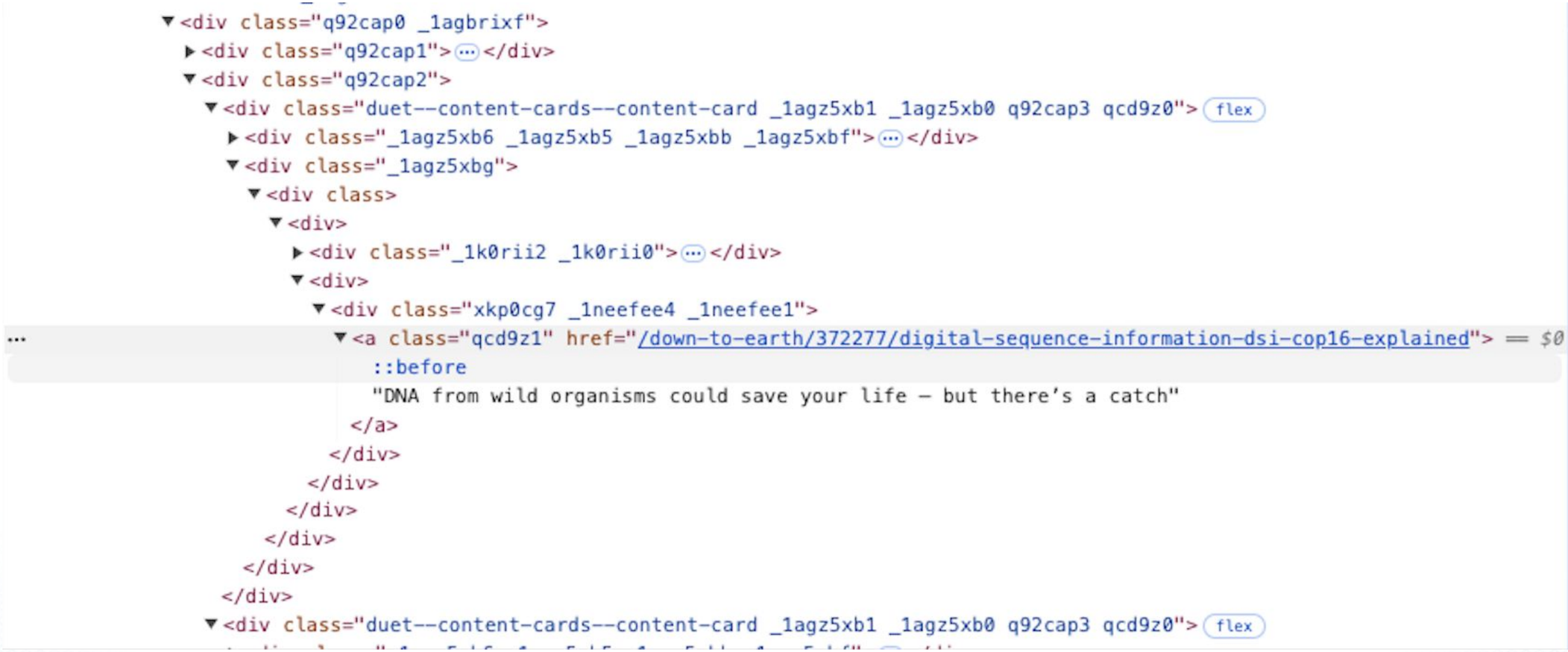
Examples (good ones!): Vox



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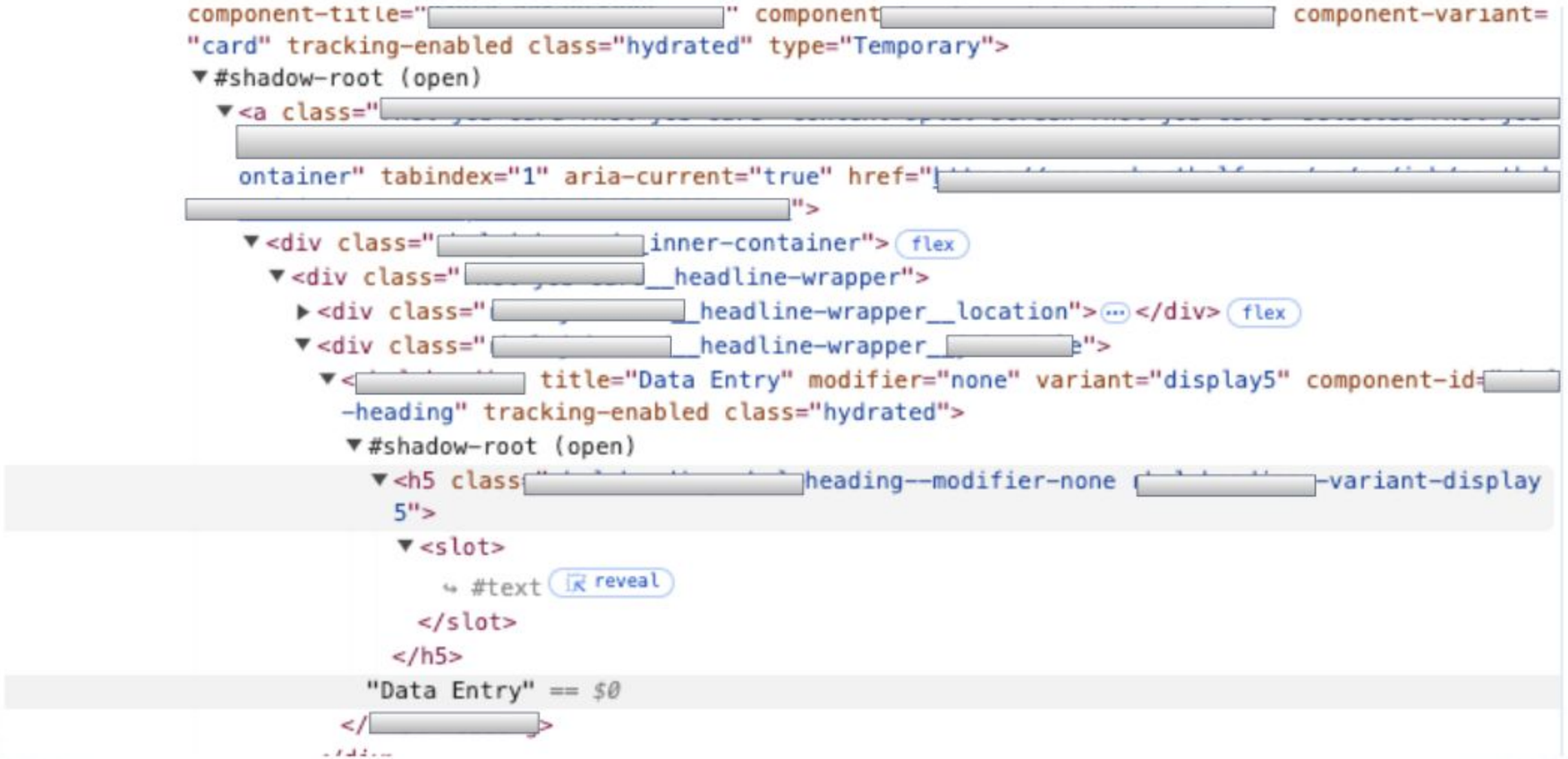
More examples (less great)



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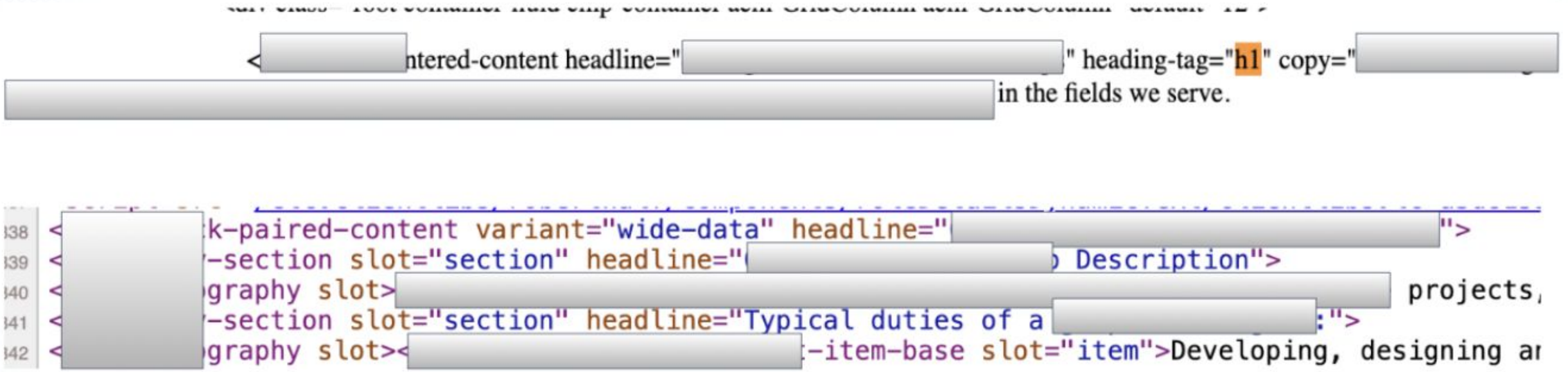
More examples (no bueno)



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QA & Monitoring for SEO and JavaScript

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On the importance of QA: Goals

Minimize
the chances of deploying code with detrimental SEO impact

Catch and correct errors
that make their way into production early

Identify opportunities
for future, related SEO enhancements

Reading: SEO QA

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Critical JavaScript QA list: what might BREAK

All normal SEO QA

- **Meta ordering**
  - Critical SEO tags sometimes (incorrectly) moved out of the head, including: title, meta desc, meta robots, canonical.
- **Custom overrides**
  - Custom, one-off changes may accidentally be overwritten.

Consider: SEO Testing Guide

Include tips, tricks, tools & resources for the QA team.

Reading: SEO QA

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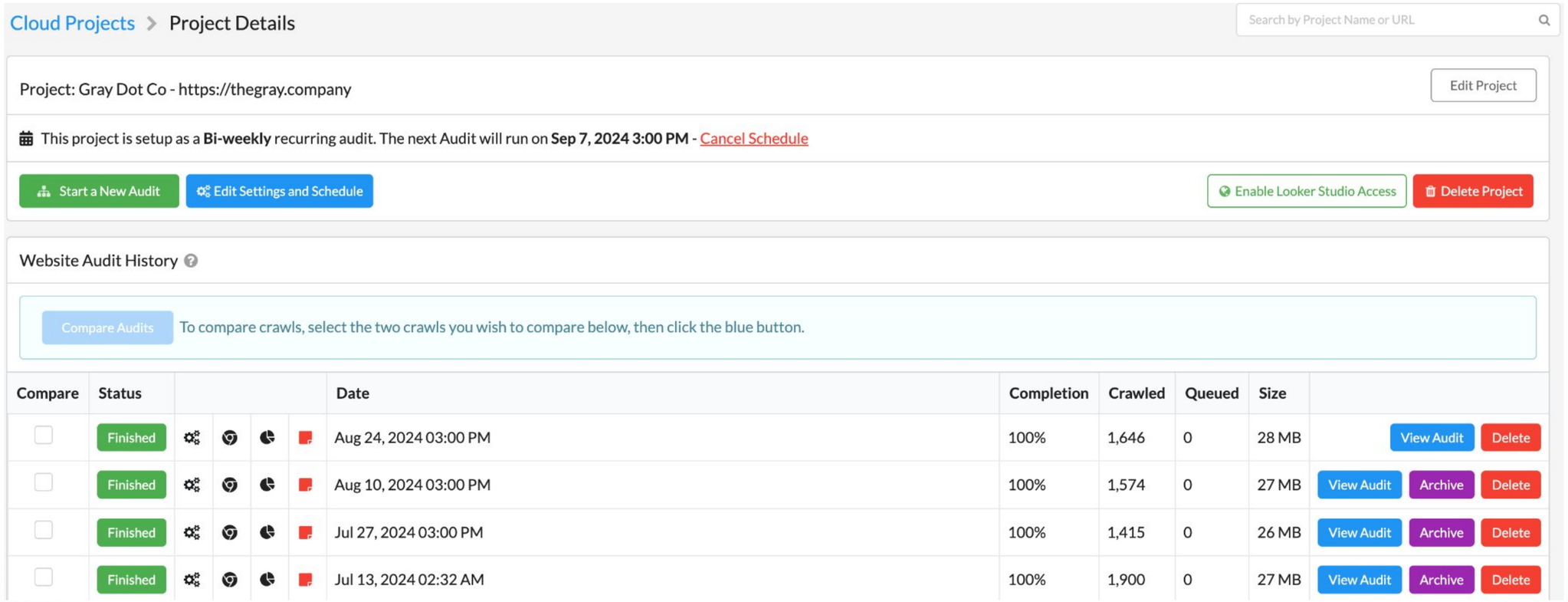
Monitoring for consistency



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Questions?

Share in the comments!

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Don't forget!

Final session....

Tuesday
October 4th
4pm BST (11am ET)

- Live Auditing Q&A
  (Exclusive to #WTS)

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Thank you!

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X (Formerly Twitter)

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