
WHITE PAPER

PLAYBOOK: THE AI-BUILT WEBSITE

The checklist for SEO, conversion and technology that Izoard applies to every content site, with the choice versus a CMS, the process and what you measure after launch

WHY THIS PLAYBOOK

An AI-built website is a site in plain HTML and CSS whose code is written by AI. A senior decides what makes the result: the keyword research, the structure, the copy and the review of every page. There is no CMS, no database and no plugin.

For content sites, meaning pages, forms, landing pages and a booking link, that is in our experience better than a CMS on every count: faster, safer and easier to change. This playbook brings together what we apply to every site for that, in the order in which we do it.

Use it in three ways:

- as a checklist when you have a new site built, by us or elsewhere;
- to test a quote: ask for each point whether it is included;
- to go through an existing site and see what is missing.

One principle up front. Google does not ask for separate optimisation for AI Overviews and AI Mode: the usual SEO foundation still applies ^[1]. So what follows works for people, for Google and for AI assistants at the same time.

1. CHOOSE YOUR ROUTE: AI-BUILT OR CMS

The first question is not how you build, but what your site has to do. An AI-built site suits a site that informs and brings in enquiries. As soon as the site itself becomes an application, with stock, payments or logins, a platform made for that is the better fit.

Which route suits which site		
YOUR SITUATION	OUR CHOICE	WHY
Service provider or SME with a content site, forms and one or more languages	AI-built	Fast, secure, no software maintenance, changes in minutes
Landing pages for Google Ads or Meta	AI-built	A new variant is hours of work; every page built around one goal
Web shop with stock and payments	Web shop platform	A web shop is more than pages
Members' area, customer portal, logins	CMS or custom build	You need accounts and permissions
Editorial team publishing daily with approval steps	CMS	Roles and workflows are built in

Choose an AI-built site if you answer yes to these questions:

- ☐ The site mainly has to inform and bring in enquiries (form, phone, booking).
- ☐ No accounts, payments or stock are needed.
- ☐ You change the site a few times a month, not ten times a day with several editors.
- ☐ You want the domain, code and accounts in your own company's name.

- ☐ You don't want monthly updates of software, themes and plugins.
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If you answer no to the second or third point, first discuss whether a CMS or a web shop platform is the better fit.

Staying on WordPress for now? Then work via MCP, not by hand in the admin area: an AI assistant then puts approved changes straight into the site. That is better than manual work, but it is still working within what the theme and the plugins allow.

For an SME site, the CMS therefore today mainly gets in the way. Which route fits which WordPress version is covered in the article "SEO via MCP in WordPress" on the izard.be blog.

2. THE SEO CHECKLIST

SEO starts before the first line of code. With an AI-built site, everything is set down in the briefing, and the build follows that briefing to the letter. There is no theme or plugin that changes anything afterwards.

STRUCTURE AND SEARCH DATA

- ☐ Keyword research before the structure: every page starts from a real search query, in Google and in AI assistants.
 - ☐ One main keyword, one goal and one URL per page. Two pages on the same question compete with each other.
 - ☐ A sitemap of the site on paper, with the keyword, the goal and the internal links for each page.
 - ☐ A briefing per page: search intent, title, H1, subheadings, internal links, structured data and alt text. The client signs off before any code exists.
 - ☐ Short, readable URLs in lower case with hyphens.
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PER PAGE

- ☐ A unique title and meta description, written for that page's search query.
 - ☐ One H1 and a logical structure with H2 and H3.
 - ☐ A canonical tag pointing to the preferred version of the page.
 - ☐ Internal links with descriptive anchor text to the most important pages.
 - ☐ Alt text that describes what is in the image.
 - ☐ Structured data in JSON-LD that matches what is visible on the page. Google explicitly asks you not to mark up content the reader cannot see ^[2].
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MULTILINGUAL SITES

- ☐ Separate URLs per language, so each language version can be found and indexed on its own.
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- ☐ Hreflang on every page: each language version refers to itself and to all other versions, with full URLs ^[3].
- ☐ An `x-default` for visitors whose language does not match ^[3].
- ☐ A separate briefing per language. People search in French with different words than in Dutch; a literal translation misses that.

TECHNOLOGY FOR CRAWLERS

- ☐ All content is in the HTML the server sends back. Google still calls server-side or pre-rendered HTML a good idea, partly because not all bots execute JavaScript ^[4].
- ☐ An XML sitemap with only canonical URLs, submitted in Search Console. Google ignores `priority` and `changefreq` ^[5]; keep `lastmod` correct.
- ☐ A robots.txt that allows Googlebot and the search crawlers of AI services, and a deliberate choice about crawlers that collect content for training.
- ☐ A 404 page that actually returns a 404 status.

GEO: READABLE AND QUOTABLE FOR AI

- ☐ The answer to the page's question is in the first two sentences.
- ☐ Figures, prices and deadlines come with a source and a date.
- ☐ Important content is on the page as text, not only in an image or a PDF. Google recommends that for its AI features too ^[1].
- ☐ Name, address and activity are the same everywhere: on the site, in your Google Business Profile and on your other profiles.
- ☐ An `Organization` block with your legal name, address and links to your profiles [`sameAs`].
- ☐ Pages with figures show the date of their last update.

3. THE CONVERSION CHECKLIST

A page that is found but delivers nothing is half the job. Conversion is not a layer you add afterwards: include it in the briefing, just like SEO.

THE GOAL OF THE PAGE

- ☐ One main goal per page: an enquiry, a phone call or a booking. One primary button.
- ☐ The promise from the ad or search result is repeated at the top: the same service, the same region, the same tone.
- ☐ On mobile, the primary button is visible straight away, without searching.
- ☐ Anyone who reads on finds the button again after every important section.

TRUST

- ☐ Proof a visitor can check themselves: reviews on an independent platform, references, accreditations. Only genuine ones, never made up.
- ☐ A price indication or a clear way of working, so the visitor knows what to expect.
- ☐ Contact details, service area and company details are on every page.

THE FORM

- ☐ Only the fields you really need to reply.
- ☐ A clear confirmation after sending, with what happens next and when.
- ☐ If something goes wrong, an alternative, such as an email address or phone number.
- ☐ Spam protection that does not get in the visitor's way.

LANDING PAGES FOR ADS

- ☐ Every ad group lands on the page about exactly that topic, not on the home page.
- ☐ The page sits on the same site and follows the same SEO rules. Google Ads gives the landing page its own rating within the Quality Score: above, at or below average ^[6].
- ☐ The page is fast on mobile. Speed is conversion too: Vodafone tested two versions of a landing page for paid traffic. The version with a 31% better LCP achieved 8% more sales, with no other differences ^[7].

TESTING

- ☐ Change one element at a time: the title, the button or the form.
- ☐ Measure on enquiries, not on clicks or time on page.
- ☐ Let a test run long enough for enough enquiries, and compare periods of equal length.

Because a page without a CMS can be changed in hours, you can test more often. The rule of one change at a time still stands.

4. THE TECHNICAL CHECKLIST

Technology is the part a visitor does not see, but does feel. With an AI-built site, most of it is already solved because there are fewer parts. What remains, you check on every site.

SPEED

- ☐ The Core Web Vitals are "good" on mobile: an LCP within 2.5 seconds, an INP of 200 milliseconds or less and a CLS of 0.1 or less. Google measures that at the 75th percentile of page loads ^[8].
- ☐ Fonts are on your own domain and the most important ones are preloaded.

- ☐ Images are in a modern format, at the right size, with width and height in the HTML, and images below the fold load later.
- ☐ As few third-party scripts as possible. Every script has an owner and a reason.

SECURITY

- ☐ No plugins, no database and no admin area on the server. For comparison: in 2025, 11,334 new vulnerabilities were added in the WordPress ecosystem, 91% of them in plugins ^[9].
- ☐ Domain, DNS, hosting and the place where the code lives are in your company's name, with two-step verification on every account.
- ☐ HTTPS on every page; HTTP redirects permanently.
- ☐ Forms also validate their input on the server side.

HOSTING AND VERSIONS

- ☐ The code is in version control (GitHub, in our case), with every version saved. You roll back a mistake within a few minutes.
- ☐ Hosting on a network close to the visitor. On Cloudflare, requests to static files are free and unlimited ^[10].
- ☐ Every change goes to a test address first before it goes live.

MIGRATING AN EXISTING SITE

- ☐ A list of all URLs that receive traffic or links, including PDFs and images.
- ☐ Every old URL redirects with a permanent redirect (301 or 308) to the best-matching new page, without chains ^[11]. Never everything to the home page.
- ☐ Both the old and the new site are verified in Search Console, and you monitor the traffic on both URLs ^[11].

MEASUREMENT AND PRIVACY

- ☐ Google Analytics and Search Console are ready before launch.
- ☐ Enquiries are measured as conversions, with one clear name per type.
- ☐ Cookie consent, privacy notice and cookie policy are in order before the first tag fires.

5. THE PROCESS IN EIGHT STEPS

The thinking takes the most time; the building itself is a matter of hours. For a complete site, count on a few weeks.

1. **Keyword research.** What your audience searches for, in Google and in AI assistants. Every page starts from search data.

2. **Structure and sitemap.** One keyword, one goal and one URL per page, per language.
3. **Briefing per page.** SEO and GEO are set up front, down to the alt text. You sign off before any code exists.
4. **Building with AI.** The code is there in hours. A senior reviews every page.
5. **Feedback round 1.** The complete site is on a test address for your remarks.
6. **Feedback round 2.** The final corrections; after that everything is locked down.
7. **Checks and tracking.** Everything is tested, and Google Analytics, consent and Search Console are set up.
8. **Live and yours.** On your own domain and in your name, editable via your own Custom GPT.

Two moments are decisive. At step 3 you sign off: what is not in there does not go into the site. At step 7, everything from chapters 2 to 4 of this playbook is checked.

6. WHAT YOU MEASURE, AND WHEN

You judge a new site on enquiries, not on how it looks. That only works with a baseline before launch and the same measurement afterwards.

Measurement plan for a new site

MOMENT	WHAT YOU MEASURE	WHERE
Before launch	Clicks and rankings per page, enquiries per month, Core Web Vitals, cost per enquiry in Google Ads	Search Console, Google Analytics, PageSpeed Insights, Google Ads
Launch day	Redirects, sitemap submitted, no error pages	Search Console, a crawler
After 30 days	Indexing of the new pages, errors, first enquiries	Search Console, Google Analytics
After 90 days	The same figures as the baseline, over a period of equal length	All four
Every month	Mentions in AI answers on a fixed list of questions	ChatGPT, Gemini, Perplexity, Google

Five points of attention:

- **Traffic from AI Overviews and AI Mode** is included in Search Console in the regular search traffic, under the search type "Web". You don't see it separately there ^[1].
- **Look beyond clicks.** Google says clicks from results with an AI Overview are of higher quality. It recommends also tracking conversions and time on site ^[1].
- **Compare fairly.** If your sector is seasonal, compare with the same period a year earlier.
- **Google Ads measures too.** Before launch, note the cost per enquiry and the three components of the Quality Score per campaign, and after launch compare the same campaigns.
- **One dashboard for everything.** We let Coupler.io pull in the data and Markifact open up the ad platforms. Via MCP, Claude turns it into an HTML page with analysis and slides, on Cloudflare or in the meantime as a Claude artifact.

7. AFTER LAUNCH: MAKING CHANGES WITHOUT A CMS

A site without a CMS is not harder to change, just different. There is no admin area; you describe what needs to change and an assistant does it.

- **Via your own Custom GPT.** A ChatGPT that knows your site, your copy and your SEO rules. You type in plain language what needs to change.
- **Small changes** go online straight away. **Bigger ones** we check for SEO first.
- **Every version is kept.** Broken? Yesterday's version is back up within a few minutes.
- **Everything stays yours.** If you move to another agency, you take the complete site with you.

What we deliberately don't build: web shops, logins and custom applications. They require a different setup. If you need them, we tell you in time.

8. WHAT TO ASK WHOEVER BUILDS YOUR SITE

Whether you build with us or elsewhere: use these questions to test a quote. A good builder answers them without hesitation, and puts the answers in writing.

- ☐ Are the domain, hosting, code and all accounts in my company's name from day one?
- ☐ Do I get a briefing per page with keyword, goal, title and structure, and do I sign it off before the build?
- ☐ How is every page reviewed before it goes live, and by whom?
- ☐ How do I change a text myself after launch, and what does a bigger change cost in year two?
- ☐ Which Core Web Vitals does the site achieve on mobile, and how is that measured?
- ☐ How is every old URL redirected, and who monitors Search Console for the first 90 days?
- ☐ Which third-party scripts will be on the site, and why?
- ☐ Does the builder work with a design system that Claude reads, so site, decks and ads follow the same house style?
- ☐ What happens if I later want to move to another agency or another system?

If you don't get a clear answer to one of these questions, keep asking before you sign.

9. SIX MISTAKES WE OFTEN SEE

1. **Letting AI write without review.** Google asks for accuracy, including in titles, meta descriptions, structured data and alt text. Generating many pages without added value can count as spam ^[12].
2. **Content that only appears after JavaScript.** What is not in the HTML is not read by all crawlers ^[4].
3. **Accounts in the builder's name.** Whoever holds the logins for domain and hosting holds your site.
4. **Redirecting everything to the home page** during a migration. Every old URL should go to the best-matching new page.

5. **Third-party scripts that eat up the speed.** A fast foundation is quickly lost with a chat widget, three pixels and a heavy cookie banner.
6. **Structured data that does not match the page.** Only mark up what the reader can also see ^[2].

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