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Generated on 15/11/2026 00:10

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Getting your site indexed in Google Search Console, step by step

Google Search & Indexing

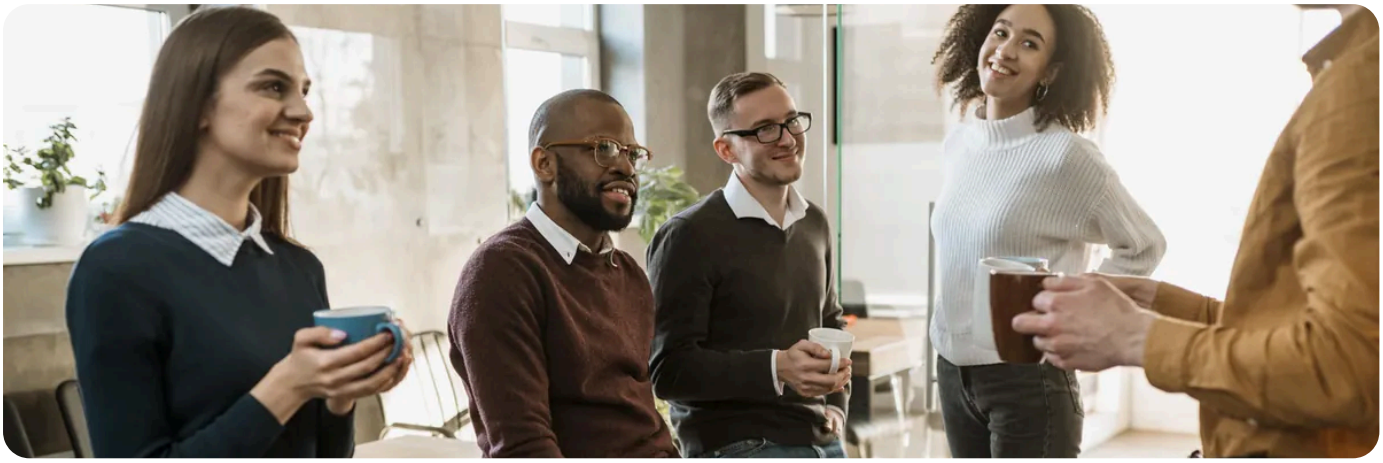
CODE	VERSION	COUNTRY · LANGUAGE
RLX-AO-KB-664	v2026.09.27	Angola · English

Interweb Angola
RLX Angola, Lda. · Group RLX Holdings
Tax ID (NIF) 500 260 5724 · Commercial registration no. 26464-25/250724

https://www.meu.interweb.ao/knowledgebase/664

Getting your site indexed in Google Search Console, step by step

Google Search & Indexing Created on **September 27, 2026** 4 min read



Search Console is the free tool you use to tell Google the site exists, hand it the list of pages, and find out what it could not read. This article is the step by step. The wider picture, with the Business Profile and the rest, is in **being found on Google**.

Three things to confirm first

1. **The site opens on its final address**, over https and without errors. If the padlock is missing, deal with that first: **the causes, in order**.

2. **The site is not closed to search engines.** In WordPress that is a box under **Settings** and **Reading**. Plenty of sites are born with it ticked and nobody remembers to untick it.

3. **You have access to the domain DNS.** That is how ownership is proved, and it is the route that serves everything Google asks of you afterwards.

! **With the site closed to search engines, none of this works.**
You can add the property, submit the sitemap and request indexing, and Google will obey the do-not-index instruction without telling you that is the reason. It is cause number one of sites that never appear.

Adding the property

1. Open **search.google.com/search-console** and sign in with the business Google account, not your personal one.

2. Click **Add property**. It offers two types, and the difference matters: see the table below.

3. Choose **Domain** and type the domain without https and without www.

4. It hands you a **TXT record** to add to the DNS. Add it in the domain zone: **proving the domain is yours**.

5. Wait for propagation and click **Verify** again. If it fails the first time, wait a little longer: **how long DNS changes take to propagate**.

Property type	What it covers
Domain	Everything: with and without www, http and https, and every subdomain. Proved through DNS. This is the recommended choice
URL prefix	Only that exact address. Proved by file, by HTML tag or other routes. Useful when you have no DNS access

Handing over the sitemap

1. **Find the sitemap address.** On WordPress with an SEO plugin it usually ends in sitemap_index.xml or sitemap.xml. Open it in a browser to confirm it responds.

2. In Search Console, open **Sitemaps**, paste the address and submit.

3. **Check the status.** It should read as successfully fetched, and show how many addresses were discovered.

4. **Come back a week later.** The data takes time to appear, and looking the next day only gives the impression it did not work.

Asking for a page to be indexed

1. Use **URL Inspection**, at the top, and paste the page address.

2. If it says the page is not indexed, click **Request indexing**.

3. **Ask once.** Asking every day speeds nothing up and there is no advantage in insisting.

Requesting indexing is not a guarantee.
It is a request, and Google decides. If a page stays out of the index week after week, the problem is in the page or the site, not in the request: see the table of causes below.

What to read in the first weeks

Section	What it tells you
Performance	Which searches bring people to the site, and how many. It is information that exists nowhere else
Pages	How many are indexed and, above all, which are not and why
Sitemaps	Whether the sitemap was read, and when
Security issues	Whether Google has flagged the site as dangerous. If anything appears here, deal with it before anything else

The commonest reasons for «not indexed»

Reason	What to do
Crawled, currently not indexed	It read the page and chose not to keep it. Usually a thin or repeated page. Improve the content
Discovered, currently not indexed	It knows the page exists and has not been yet. Often a sign of a slow site or too many low-value pages
Alternate page with canonical tag	It merged the page with one it considers the original. Usually correct
Excluded by noindex tag	Somebody, or the SEO plugin, asked for no indexing. Check the plugin settings
Blocked by robots.txt	The robots file prevents reading. Correct it
Server error (5xx)	The site failed when it tried to read. If it repeats, talk to us
Not found (404)	The page stopped existing. Redirect it, or leave it if that was deliberate

Do the same at Bing.
Bing has an equivalent free tool, and it can import what you already set up in Search Console. Ten minutes, and you never go back.

NEED A HAND?

Search Console reporting server errors on your pages?

Open a support ticket →

SEE ALSO

- Being found on Google: Business Profile, Search Console and the basics
- Proving the domain is yours: TXT verification records
- The best SEO plugins for WordPress and how to choose one
- Visitor statistics: where they are and what they mean
- The first Yoast SEO settings to get right
- Removing the red Google warning from your site

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