

# FreeTalkLive - Technical Site Audit

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## **1 Quick Overview**

### **1.1 Indexing**

When initially looking at the site I looked at how the page looks in desktop search, mobile search, and to Crawler Bots. The most important pages such as the homepage, the guest list and the Bitcoin Tip Jar all have priority in search results which hints at the site being easy to navigate.

### **1.2 Ranking**

FreeTalkLive generally ranks well but I can only check a few terms without an in depth look at analytics. The search "free talk live" displays important pages which is great.

However, with some fixes I believe you could easily be ranking #1 for general terms like "libertarian radio." Tunein should be easy to beat and looking at "The Bob Zadek Show" site, I think you should be outranking them.

### **1.3 Mobile**

Note: I realize there is a "mobile friendly" version of the page, but this is not implemented correctly, nor will it register on a phone. More on that in the "Mobile" section of this document.

The website is not currently mobile friendly. This is very important to fix as Google will be making this a ranking factor in April. If you test your site at <http://www.google.com/webmasters/mobile-friendly/> you'll see that FreeTalkLive's text is too small, the links are too close together and there is no mobile viewport.

I believe a lot of this is happening because of the custom implementation of Reddit you're using. (Pulling your main content from Reddit.) I'll get into this later but I would recommend not using Reddit at all. Most of your site traffic is probably being sent to them. Instead, I recommend the Hacker News API which uses the same layout (Reddit like voting system and link sharing) but you can keep the traffic on your site.) Most developers already know about HackerNews, whoever works with your site will probably find it very easy to implement this: <https://github.com/HackerNews/API>

Note: I'm aware that you moved to Reddit because of troubles with Drupal, HackerNews would be a great compromise between control and ease.

## 2 On-page optimization

### 2.1 Optimized Titles

Generally you're doing title tags right. The page title is always followed by "— Free Talk Live" and the title lengths are kept between 55-60 characters. There are three page titles that could use shortening. (Currently the titles are cut off in search results which looks unprofessional.)

[https://www.freetalklive.com/mark\\_featured\\_allaccesscoms\\_ten\\_questions\\_full](https://www.freetalklive.com/mark_featured_allaccesscoms_ten_questions_full)

[https://www.freetalklive.com/ian\\_featured\\_allaccesscoms\\_ten\\_questions\\_full](https://www.freetalklive.com/ian_featured_allaccesscoms_ten_questions_full)

[https://www.freetalklive.com/radio\\_babe\\_newspaper\\_column\\_about\\_ftl\\_full](https://www.freetalklive.com/radio_babe_newspaper_column_about_ftl_full)

### 2.2 Missing Page Titles and Meta Descriptions

The pages listed below are missing both title tags and meta descriptions. (Amp Refund Policy, Alternative Payment Options, and Terms.) It's fine to use plain HTML for some pages such as the terms. But that's no excuse to leave out required meta tags, viewports, and other items. (I say that lovingly.)

[https://www.freetalklive.com/sites/all/themes/ftl\\_2/amp-payment-options-alternative.html](https://www.freetalklive.com/sites/all/themes/ftl_2/amp-payment-options-alternative.html)

[https://www.freetalklive.com/sites/all/themes/ftl\\_2/amp-refund-policy.html](https://www.freetalklive.com/sites/all/themes/ftl_2/amp-refund-policy.html)

[https://www.freetalklive.com/sites/all/themes/ftl\\_2/terms.html](https://www.freetalklive.com/sites/all/themes/ftl_2/terms.html)

### 2.3 Keywords

With the lack of on-page content (content is being pulled from Reddit), you're missing out on the opportunity to rank for many keywords. Generally, you won't get a lot from link submissions, but you will see traffic increases by hosting the content locally. I'll get into this later, but it would also be very beneficial to move your show summary, currently hosted in Google Groups, to a subfolder such as [freetalklive.com/blog](https://www.freetalklive.com/blog) in blog form.

The website is using the meta keywords tag and duplicating the same keywords. The meta keyword tag is obsolete, the only reason any search engine checks these is to look for spamming. Currently the way Free Talk Live is set up, it is technically spamming keywords which is a negative factor that WILL hurt your website.

	1	libertarian,talk radio,libertarianism,maximum freedom,minimum government,classical liberal
	1	libertarian,talk radio,libertarianism,maximum freedom,minimum government,classical liberal
	1	libertarian,talk radio,libertarianism,maximum freedom,minimum government,classical liberal
	1	libertarian,talk radio,libertarianism,maximum freedom,minimum government,classical liberal
	1	libertarian,talk radio,libertarianism,maximum freedom,minimum government,classical liberal
	1	libertarian,talk radio,libertarianism,maximum freedom,minimum government,classical liberal
	1	libertarian,talk radio,libertarianism,maximum freedom,minimum government,classical liberal
	1	libertarian,talk radio,libertarianism,maximum freedom,minimum government,classical liberal
	1	libertarian,talk radio,libertarianism,maximum freedom,minimum government,classical liberal
	1	libertarian,talk radio,libertarianism,maximum freedom,minimum government,classical liberal
	1	libertarian,talk radio,libertarianism,maximum freedom,minimum government,classical liberal
	1	libertarian,talk radio,libertarianism,maximum freedom,minimum government,classical liberal
	1	libertarian,talk radio,libertarianism,maximum freedom,minimum government,classical liberal
	1	libertarian,talk radio,libertarianism,maximum freedom,minimum government,classical liberal
full	1	libertarian,talk radio,libertarianism,maximum freedom,minimum government,classical liberal
	1	libertarian,talk radio,libertarianism,maximum freedom,minimum government,classical liberal
	1	libertarian,talk radio,libertarianism,maximum freedom,minimum government,classical liberal

**NO!!!  
Don't do this!**

## 2.4 URLs

URL structure is generally very clean and easy. (guests/steve) I'm a little worried that the site might be using excessive URL parameters but I think this is coming from the Reddit comment system and isn't a big factor right now. With my limited knowledge of how the site is built and works I can't go too far in-depth on this.

## 3 Content

### 3.1 Homepage

There is no real content on the homepage aside from links. (Which don't count.) There is a great opportunity to summarize each show at the top of the page where it says "Play Episode." I'm not sure why you've chosen to do the large link full of tags. To search engines this is going to be considered either thin or spammy content. (Both of which are negative factors.)

I would recommend writing a paragraph or two in natural language that describes the episode and not put a link over it. The play episode button is enough. Linking the tags to a download is redundant and confusing.

On the actual page for the podcast after clicking "Play Episode," expand on the summary. Try for at least 300-400 words. If you want to be lazy (and who doesn't) just pull some quotes or memorable calls from the show and transcript them. Maybe even link to the stories you talked about or things that callers brought up on the show.

### 3.2 Landing Page

I really like your donation page. For people who have already been listening to the show it's fantastic. As a nationally syndicated radio show, you don't have

to worry a lot about landing pages because the show should drive the donations. In the same sense, the site should drive new listeners.

On that note, the Play Episode button being at the top of the homepage is fantastic.

It might be good clean up the donation page to include some images and bullet points, right now it's an ugly wall of text. But generally I think you're landing pages are doing their job just fine.

### 3.3 General Content

There is no blog. :( A blog would be a great thing to post to monthly. I know Ian already blogs at FreeKeene.com but doing a monthly behind the scenes or host feature would be great for the show. Show people what goes on behind the scenes, mention new sponsors or radio stations. People love those kinds of things and they will drive traffic and give people an appreciation for what it takes to run FreeTalkLive, thus improving donations.

Note: I noticed you have an unfinished Wiki page marked as TODO. (/wiki) FreeTalkLive does a fantastic job of explaining things on air that listeners may not know about. Start creating the wiki by transcribing the descriptions of different things. Then link to these pages often within show summaries. Take some inspiration from Wikipedia's interlinking structure and create resources to explain things where needed.

### 3.4 Header Tags

Right now, every page on the site is using the same H1 tag, "Free Talk Live." At the same time, most pages have a second H1 tag. For example, `freetalklive.com/guests/john_glaser` uses both "Free Talk Live" and "John Glaser" as a header.

Get rid of the Free Talk Live. Not only is it considered bad practice to use two but every page uses the same tag AND it's hidden from the user. Two major no-no's that can and will harm your site rankings.

## 4 Duplicate Content

I don't think there is going to be a lot of issues with duplicate content. Even though titles are being pulled from submitted links and the content is replicated from Reddit, it's all links. Of course, that's an issue in itself that I've already mentioned.

The excessive URL parameters that I mentioned earlier can cause duplicate content. For now, I'd just recommend keeping an eye on Google Webmasters and any site messages that may appear there.

While in webmasters make sure that you have added all versions of the site. `http://www.freetalklive.com/` `http://freetalklive.com/` `https://freetalklive.com/` and `https://www.freetalklive.com/`, and then of course

prioritize the HTTPS version. Although, it looks like you may have already done that.

## 5 Accessibility & Indexation

### 5.1 Robots.txt

Your robots file is generally well structured and blocking the right things. However, the site should not be blocking things like scripts. (Google openly discourages doing so.) It's good to block admin and user profile pages but for anything that appears on the site, don't block it. I don't know what's in the 'includes' or 'misc' folders (pictured below) but chances are you want Google to be able to find the scripts and themes folders.

```
User-agent: *
Crawl-delay: 10
# Directories
Disallow: /includes/
Disallow: /misc/
Disallow: /modules/
Disallow: /profiles/
Disallow: /scripts/
Disallow: /themes/
```

As a side note, the below is a great solution for query strings. Whoever set it up did great with this. I'd recommend adding ?order, ?destination and a few other query strings that are showing up on my crawl. I can send a full list of data via email if needed. glover.ethan@gmail.com

```
# Paths (no clean URLs)
Disallow: /?q=admin/
Disallow: /?q=comment/reply/
Disallow: /?q=filter/tips/
Disallow: /?q=logout/
Disallow: /?q=node/add/
Disallow: /?q=search/
Disallow: /?q=user/password/
Disallow: /?q=user/register/
Disallow: /?q=user/login/
```

### 5.2 Broken Links

1. On this page: [https://www.freetalklive.com/guests/mr\\_tacpans](https://www.freetalklive.com/guests/mr_tacpans) "Visit his blog here." should be: <http://mrtacpans.blogspot.com/>
2. On this page: <https://www.freetalklive.com/publicity?page=8> press Ctrl+F and search for:

"FTL's Ian Guest Hosts on WKBK", under that there's a link named "archive." The link is broken, I'm not sure where it's supposed to go.

3. This page: [https://www.freetalklive.com/guests/cindy\\_sheehan](https://www.freetalklive.com/guests/cindy_sheehan) Has a link at the bottom "Check out his page." Cindy Sheehan is a she and this is a broken link to an MP3. Maybe this is the right link? <http://cindysheehanssoapbox.blogspot.com/>
4. The same issue as above exists on Darryl Rouson's page: [https://www.freetalklive.com/guests/darryl\\_rouson](https://www.freetalklive.com/guests/darryl_rouson)
5. On this page: <https://www.freetalklive.com/shrine/melissa> the "co-host" link is broken. It's linking to /shrine/about.php, I'm not sure what that is supposed to be.
6. On the Amp page, <https://www.freetalklive.com/amp> look for "Dunker" under Platinum Amplifiers. The link should be, <http://dunkerbike.com/>
7. On this page, <https://www.freetalklive.com/publicity?page=7> search for, "Ian Appears on Free Minds TV." The link to "publicity" is broken. It should be, <https://www.freetalklive.com/publicity>

The above are only internal broken links. I found a number of links to other sites that are broken. Again, feel free to email me for this data. [glover.ethan@gmail.com](mailto:glover.ethan@gmail.com)

### 5.3 Sitemaps

The Drupal sitemap module is doing a fantastic job. I'm sure you already have, but make sure it's submitted to both Google and Bing Webmasters.

## 6 Site architecture and internal linking

Most sites do a good job here, including FreeTalkLive. The homepage links to subfolders (categories) and those categories link deeper where needed. Broken links are already listed above, with a fix of those the sites link structure should work great.

## 7 Site Speed

Google Pagespeed insights ranks FreeTalkLive.com very low on pagespeed. (57/100 on mobile). However, it's recommendations aren't very helpful. The site webmaster may have had some trouble on this but I have a few theories as to what might be causing the problem.

1. Images being pulled from Reddit are not given dimensions (width and height), leaving the browser to do extra work.

2. Images being pulled from Reddit are not using CSS sprites properly. If you had more control over this (such as through the HackerNews API) this could be an easy fix.
3. GZip is not enabled. You'll definitely want to use this to cut down on bandwidth usage for you and your users.
4. You may already be doing so, but make sure the JavaScript and CSS files are minified. Get rid of the whitespace and remove any redundant calls.
5. Use a CDN such as CloudFlare (free) or Amazon CloudFront (quality).
6. If not already, leverage browser caching (web hosts usually have a tutorial on this).
7. Banner ads are using query strings for tracking clicks. Ideally you want to use UTM parameters (ask if you don't know how). If not, try implementing URL redirects, or direct links instead if possible.

## 8 Mobile

The "mobile" version of the site is more like an app. A mobile version of the site implemented via `m.freetalklive.com` should allow users to browse the entire site. For many sites this means cutting out the side bars, increasing text size and implementing a different version of advertising other than statically placed banners.

To make things easier you can utilize CSS media queries to have the site responsively change to specific screen sizes. In general you'll need at least two media queries in your CSS file for the device widths of 768px and 480px. This will resize the website appropriately for tablets and phones respectively.

## 9 International

FreeTalkLive is listened to internationally. While the show is obviously in English, it might be nice to have the site in different languages. CMS platforms make translation very easy. This is a minor issue and may be ignored (everything in this report thus far is a Stage 1 requirement in digital marketing) but if it's easy to do, do it.

Just make sure the plugin or method you go with uses the `hreflang=""` method found here in Google Documentation: <https://support.google.com/webmasters/answer/189077?hl=en>

## 10 Analytics

Analytics is a fairly advanced thing that I can only get into with a look at your dashboard. (Which I'm certified with if you need help.) In short, make sure



you're using these things to get the most out of Analytics.

1. Enable Demographics tracking.
2. Set up goals!
3. Exclude internal IP addresses. (Don't track yourselves.)
4. Use UTM Parameters in email, banner ads, and any links on other sites to FTL.
5. Track user interactions and events.

## 11 Stay Awesome

FreeTalkLive is great, I don't do these reports for everyone. (Marketing companies charge around \$1,000 for these.) If you need any help with anything, please let me know. I can implement the vast majority of all this fairly easily. Just email me at [glover.ethan@gmail.com](mailto:glover.ethan@gmail.com)

If you found any of this helpful I would appreciate it if you connect with me on LinkedIn and give me a recommendation. ;) <http://www.linkedin.com/in/ethanglover>