

Digital Asset Audit: Confidential Website

Methodology | Anastasia Bruce

Purpose

A website is a digital asset in the same way a piece of physical infrastructure or a financial instrument is an asset. It carries operational risk, reputational risk, and measurable performance characteristics. This audit applies the same controls assessment logic used in financial and compliance audits to a live website, treating Google's own performance thresholds as the pass or fail control set rather than relying on subjective judgment.

Scope and Tools

The audit was conducted on 4 July 2026 using Google PageSpeed Insights, running Lighthouse version 13.4.0. Testing was performed in desktop mode with custom network throttling applied, based on a single page session. Using a fixed date, a fixed tool version, and documented testing conditions was a deliberate choice. It allows the audit to be reproduced later and any change in results to be attributed to genuine improvement rather than to variation in testing conditions.

Step 1: Establish the Baseline

The first step was to capture the full set of Lighthouse category scores, covering performance, accessibility, best practices, and SEO, alongside the three Core Web Vitals metrics. This baseline was recorded exactly as returned by the tool, without adjustment, so that it could serve as a reliable reference point for any future audit of the same site.

Step 2: Classify Against Published Thresholds

Each metric was then classified using Google's own published thresholds for Good, Needs Improvement, and Poor performance, rather than an internal or subjective standard. This mirrors how a compliance audit works. A finding is measured against an external, publicly available standard, not against the auditor's personal opinion of what looks acceptable. Core Web Vitals in particular were treated as a strict pass or fail control set, since all three metrics must pass simultaneously for Google to certify the page experience as good.

Step 3: Prioritise by Estimated Impact

Findings were ranked using the estimated time or data savings that Lighthouse attaches to each recommendation, in the same way a risk register ranks findings by severity rather than by the order in which they were discovered. This ensures that remediation effort is directed first at the issues most likely to move the site from a failing to a passing state, rather than at whichever issue is easiest to fix.

Step 4: Recommend a Re-testing Cadence

Core Web Vitals reflect a rolling twenty eight day window of real user data, not a single point in time. For that reason, the audit recommends that re-testing be spaced at least one month apart. Testing more frequently than this would not reliably capture the effect of any single remediation, since the underlying data window would still be dominated by pre-fix visits.

Reference Standard

All thresholds and metric definitions used in this audit are drawn directly from Google's official Web Vitals documentation. This documentation is intended to remain the fallback reference for any future audit of this site, since Google periodically reviews and updates these thresholds.

Note: this methodology describes a repeatable approach applied to a single confidential website. The client and URL have been redacted to preserve confidentiality, while the method itself remains fully transparent and reproducible by any reader.