



Little Warden Getting Started Guide

Version 0.1 - 11th November 2018

What is Little Warden?	1
Choosing Which URLs to Patrol	2
Adding URLs to Patrol	2
Selecting the Checks	3
Review the Reds	3
Evaluate the Yellows	3
And now, you are started.	3
Advanced Features & Configuration	4
Setting up & Customising Notifications	4
Synchronizing URLs with Google Search Console	4
Using Custom Configurations	4
Forcing a country check	5
Using the Little Warden API	5

What is Little Warden?

Little Warden is a sense check of some of the common mistakes that happen during the course of running one or more websites e.g. robots.txt changes, redirects breaking, development systems being indexable.

We check each URL up to once an hour for over 30 checks and report back on any changes or issues we find.

Little Warden then categorises each check result into three statuses

All Good - We believe that everything is great according to the industry best practice methods that we follow

Warning - We believe that some of these things could do with looking into.

Danger - We believe there is a serious issue that needs looking into now.

If your configuration is slightly different to the best practice 'for instance if you've just moved domains and want to ensure the homepage redirects' then use our Custom Configuration with each check to override our defaults.

Choosing Which URLs to Patrol

Obviously it's in our best interest to say ALL OF THEM (as the more sites you add the bigger the package you need) but considering how expensive domain names are and compared to the cost of Little Warden it makes sense.

This guide is written as if you owned a digital agency as that tends to be the majority of our customer base but if you are a brand or a small business owner, these rules will apply just the same

- **Main Domains** - The main domains that you trade on or get traffic from or to.
- **GEO Extension of those domains** - Even if the .ca just redirects to the .com, you want to ensure that the domain continues to redirect (and the domain or SSL certificate doesn't expire)
- **Any previous brands** - If a client has rebranded, make sure you are monitoring the old brand name, ensuring that the redirect works and that the domain (or SSL) doesn't expire.
- **Any previous clients** - If you lose a client, it costs little money to just keep an eye on the site in Little Warden, we have had agencies win clients back by using Little Warden and messaging them as a heads up if things break.
- **Any prospective client** - Nothing goes down better in a pitch than a quick win to start it off, "On day one we will start with a full technical SEO review as we can see from a quick overview that your www. to non www. Redirect isn't working and you have some duplicate content issues." That client is paying attention.
- **Any development area** - Ensuring things are crawlable and allowed to be indexed by Google is important, but just as important is ensuring things aren't. Development and staging areas should have a robots.txt deny all and if possible X-robots and meta robots just to be safe.

Adding URLs to Patrol

The first thing to do is to add some URLs to Patrol. This means that we check these every 24 hours for any issues, changes or downtime.

It's important to remember that Little Warden doesn't crawl your website for that you'll need one of many many many other tools so if you put in a URL that's the one we will check.

You can add URLs by using the form at <https://littlewarden.com/sites/new> or by using our Google Search Sync tool which will pull in any new sites from your Google Search Console account every hour and automatically scan them using our default checks.

Selecting the Checks

Depending on your package you can enable 15-30 checks on each URL, these can be unique with every URL you check or you can just stick with the defaults (you can also update the defaults for quicker checking in future)

If you have more than 500 URLs each with unique check requirements, please get in touch and we work with you on that.

Checks are sorted into categories to make things easier

Once the checks are selected it's time to go!

After a few seconds, you should start to see some of your urls return data (that means it's working) then it's time to move onto the next stage.

Review the Reds

This is the first thing we tackle in any project. These are the highest priority issues that we've found (in relation to common industry best practice) the most common issues that we find are a *www to non www. redirect* issue or the *rel='canonical'* not found.

If there are issues that don't conform to the industry standard then you can use Custom Configuration to modify the expected result.

Evaluate the Yellows

The yellows are next on the list, these tend to be less vital things to your website and mostly just issues for you to 'double check'. Once again if you have a use case which is different to what we would consider the 'Industry Standard' then just use our Custom Configuration to override it.

And now, you are started.

And that is it for 90% of users, the only other configuration you need to do is add more websites (you might want to read *What sites should I run with Little Warden*) or tweak the additional checks every now and then and wait for us to email you if something goes wrong or changes.

Advanced Features & Configuration

Setting up & Customising Notifications

Synchronizing URLs with Google Search Console

One of our most popular features is the ability to sync one or more Google Search Console accounts and have any new sites added (and verified) within GSC automatically imported into Little Warden with the default scan settings.

This means that you only have to concentrate on ensuring that GSC is up to date.

We can also import from GSC on an individual basis, when you first connect you will have the option of pulling EVERYTHING from GSC (which is the default) or individually selecting sites to be imported)

With the first option selected, we pull new sites in every hour that we discover in GSC.

Using Custom Configurations

The entirety of Little Wardens check system is built up of years of industry knowledge both from our internal experience and discussions with leading members of the industry (many of whom are now customers)

However in many circumstances, the industry best practice isn't applicable or the best case for a client so Little Warden has developed an easy to use way of overriding the best practice.

For Example

Let's say a client has rebranded from *iloveshoes.co.uk* to *yellowshoes.co.uk*;

When we visit *iloveshoes.co.uk*, industry best practice would assume the website to return a 200 OK status code but instead we see a 301 to *yellowshoes.co.uk*

We can just enable the custom configuration (which is prefilled with the endpoint already) and after a few minutes the system will adjust and Little Warden will display an **ALL GOOD** state for that check.

In another case let's say that the client is tracking *staging.yellowshoes.co.uk*;

When we visit *yellowshoes.co.uk*, industry best practice would assume the robots.txt would allow search engines to crawl but we can see the robots.txt has a deny all rule.

We can just enable the custom configuration to say, the rule SHOULD DENY all robots and after a few minutes the system will adjust and Little Warden will display an **ALL GOOD** state for that check.

There are not Custom Configuration rules for everything but as more checks and circumstances are discovered, we will continue adding them.

Forcing a country check

Sometimes sites will redirect visitors from a certain country to another domain or part of the website to ensure they get the best experience. Little Warden has hundreds of servers all around the world which check these sites so almost day you are visited by a different country.

If you want to force a country you can do so by viewing the site in Little Warden and clicking site options, you will then have the option of forcing only servers from that specific country to visit the site.

The current countries available are

- United States
- Netherlands
- United Kingdom
- Germany
- France
- Japan

More can added by request depending on demand.

Using the Little Warden API

For our more technical users, the API allows you to create, update, delete and retrieve information about one or more sites for an internal (or external) dashboard or reporting.

Our REST API has some simple copy and paste code samples on <https://littlewarden.com/api>