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KEYWORD SAFE

AI CONTENT CHECKLIST FOR THE SEPTEMBER 2026 SPAM UPDATE

Check your AI-assisted pages the way a spam system would, and fix what looks mass-produced.

CHECKS	DO FIRST	PARTS	COST
26	5	5	Free



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10+ yrs · $8M+ ad spend managed · 150+ page-one rankings

Google has published research on a system called SAFE that uses AI agents to spot coordinated, mass-produced content, and the paper says it is already deployed. Search Engine Journal suggests it may be connected to the September 2026 spam update, which started on 24 September and finished rolling out on 8 October. Google has not said what it targeted. This checklist is what a normal site, one that uses AI as a helper and not a factory, should look at now that the rollout is done.

ON THIS SHEET

1 What changed — 5 CHECKS
2 Look at your content the way the system would — 6 CHECKS
3 Check your posting behaviour — 5 CHECKS
4 Check the links between your sites and accounts — 5 CHECKS

TICK IT ON YOUR PHONE
youtube.hamzajameel.com/free/safe-5

PART 1 OF 5 — 5 CHECKS

What changed

Facts from the Search Engine Journal report only.

- [ ] 1.1

Google published a research paper on SAFE, short for Scaled Abuse Forensics Examiner.

It describes AI agents that investigate abuse at scale rather than a single scoring model.

- [ ] 1.2

SAFE looks at three things together: the content itself, posting behaviour, and links between accounts.

The target is coordinated, mass-produced AI content, so patterns across many pages and accounts matter as much as any single page.

- [ ] 1.3

The paper says the system is deployed, not experimental.

That means it is already in use, whatever its exact role in ranking or spam action turns out to be.

- [ ] 1.4

Search Engine Journal says SAFE may be part of the September 2026 spam update.

This is a reasonable reading, not a confirmation from Google, so treat the link between the two as possible and not proven.

- [ ] 1.5

The spam update started on 24 September and finished rolling out on 8 October.

Rankings moved up and down during that window, so judge it on the pattern since 8 October, not a single bad day inside the rollout.

PART 2 OF 5 — 6 CHECKS

Look at your content the way the system would

The question is not was AI used. It is does this look mass-produced.

- [ ] 2.1 DO FIRST

Pull a list of every page you published in the last 12 months and sort it by publish date.

Look for days where 10, 20 or 50 pages went live at once. Bulk publishing plus near-identical structure is the clearest mass-production signal you can create by accident.

WHERE `WordPress › Posts › All Posts › Date column, or Search Console › Indexing › Pages › View data about indexed pages`

☐ 2.2

Check whether your pages share the same opening sentence pattern.

Search your own site for a phrase you suspect is repeated. If dozens of pages start the same way, rewrite the openings so each one begins with something specific to that topic.

COPY THIS

```
site:[yourdomain.com] "[first eight words of one of your intros]"
```

☐ 2.3

Run a near-duplicate crawl and list any pages above 80 percent similarity.

Template pages with a swapped city or product name are the classic pattern. Either merge them into one strong page or give each one genuinely different content.

WHERE `Screaming Frog › Configuration › Content › Duplicates › tick Enable Near Duplicates, then crawl and open the Content tab`

☐ 2.4

Ask an AI to grade a sample of your own pages for mass-production signals.

Paste three or four real pages and see what it flags. You are not asking whether AI wrote it, you are asking whether it reads like one of a thousand.

COPY THIS

```
Here are [3] pages from my website. For each one, answer these questions in a short table: 1) Does this page contain any information that could only come from first-hand experience, original data, or a named person? Quote it. 2) Could this page be regenerated for a different keyword by swapping five or six words? Show which words. 3) Does the structure match the other pages exactly, including heading order and paragraph length? 4) Score 1 to 5 for how mass-produced it reads, where 5 is clearly templated. Be blunt. Page 1: [paste] Page 2: [paste] Page 3: [paste]
```

☐ 2.5 • DO FIRST

Make sure every page carries at least one thing a generator could not produce.

A screenshot you took, a price you checked, a customer quote, a test result, a named author with a real bio. One concrete element per page is the cheapest defence there is.

☐ 2.6

Delete or merge pages you cannot defend in one sentence.

If you cannot say why this page exists and who it helps, it is thin content whether a human or a model wrote it. Redirect it to the nearest useful page rather than leaving a 404 on a linked URL.

PART 3 OF 5 — 5 CHECKS

Check your posting behaviour

SAFE looks at how and when things get published, not just what.

☐ 3.1

Slow down scheduled bulk publishing.

If you have a queue pushing several AI-assisted posts a day, pause it and space posts out. Sudden volume spikes are a behaviour signal and cost you nothing to smooth.

☐ 3.2 • DO FIRST

Check who is credited as the author on your AI-assisted pages.

Google calls made-up author names and AI-generated headshots a form of deception. Use a real person who can stand behind the page, with a bio that says what they actually do.

WHERE `WordPress › Users › All Users`

☐ 3.3

Look at whether one account published everything in a short window.

A single login posting hundreds of pages in a few weeks looks like automation. Spread new work across real contributors, and make sure the edit history reflects who actually worked on it.

☐ 3.4

Review the last 90 days of updates for date-only changes.

Refreshing the published date without changing the content is a behaviour pattern, not an improvement. Either make a real update or leave the date alone.

☐ 3.5

Turn off any auto-posting plugin or feed that generates pages without a human read.

Check your plugin list for anything that writes and publishes on a schedule. If nobody reads a page before it goes live, you do not control what goes out under your name.

WHERE `WordPress › Plugins › Installed Plugins`

PART 4 OF 5 — 5 CHECKS

Check the links between your sites and accounts

This section matters most if you run more than one site or buy placements.

☐ 4.1 • DO FIRST

List every site, social account and directory profile you control that links to your main site.

Write them in one spreadsheet with hosting, analytics ID, template and author names. A cluster of sites sharing all four is exactly the connection pattern the paper describes.

☐ 4.2

Check whether your sites share the same theme, footer text and contact details.

Shared boilerplate across several sites that also link to each other looks coordinated. Give each real site its own design, its own copy and its own contact page, or consolidate them into one.

☐ 4.3

Review your recent backlinks for mass-produced host sites.

Open a sample of the linking pages and read them. If the host site is itself a wall of templated AI articles, that link is not doing you any good and may associate you with the cluster.

WHERE `Search Console › Links › Top linking sites`

☐ 4.4

Stop buying placements on sites that publish dozens of near-identical posts a day.

Check any vendor's own site before you pay. If their content passes the mass-production test in section two, walk away.

☐ 4.5

Disavow only clear paid or automated link networks you can identify.

Disavow is a blunt tool and most sites never need it. Use it only for links you know you or a past agency bought, and keep a record of what you submitted and when.

WHERE `Search Console › Links, then use the disavow tool at the Search Console Help page for disavowing links`

PART 5 OF 5 — 5 CHECKS

Measure what the update did

☐ 5.1 DO FIRST

Export your Search Console data so you have a record.

Set the date range to the last 16 months, export Pages and Queries, and save the file with today's date in the name. Without a baseline you cannot tell a real drop from normal noise.

WHERE `Search Console › Performance › Search results › Export › Download CSV`

☐ 5.2

Compare the weeks since 8 October with the two weeks before 24 September, by page group.

Filter by URL folder rather than looking at the sitewide line. A drop concentrated in one templated folder tells you far more than a total that moved 5 percent.

WHERE `Search Console › Performance › Pages › + New › Page › URL contains`

COPY THIS

```
/[your-folder-name]/
```

☐ 5.3

Do not delete your whole archive in a panic.

Rankings swung in both directions during the rollout. Record what moved since it finished on 8 October, then act on the pattern you see.

☐ 5.4

Write a one-page content policy and keep it with your team.

State what AI may be used for, what a human must add before publishing, and who signs off. This is what stops the problem coming back next quarter.

COPY THIS

```
Our content policy: AI may be used for research, outlines, first drafts and editing. Before any page goes live a named human must: add at least one fact, figure, screenshot or quote that is not available from a general model; check every claim and link against the source; rewrite the opening so it is specific to this page; confirm the page answers a question a real customer asked us. No page publishes under an invented author. No more than [3] new pages go live per day. Sign-off is by [name/role].
```

☐ 5.5

Re-run the mass-production prompt on your ten most important pages once a quarter.

Content drifts back towards templates as teams get busy. A quarterly spot check on your money pages catches it before a future update does.

COPY THIS

```
Review these [10] pages from my site as if you were a spam investigator looking for coordinated, mass-produced content. For each page list: the strongest original element, the weakest templated element, and one specific change that would make it harder to mistake for machine output at scale. Then tell me which two pages I should fix first and why. Pages: [paste URLs and content]
```

WANT ME TO LOOK AT YOURS?

If you have gone through this and want a second pair of eyes, book a free call. We open the account together and look at what is actually happening. No deck, no pitch.

- **Book a free call** hamzajameel.com/book-a-call/
- **Free SEO audit** hamzajameel.com/free-seo-audit/
- **Instagram** @ihamza.jameel
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SOURCES

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3. https://developers.google.com/search/docs/fundamentals/creating-helpful-content