

## SEO & Search Strategy / Topical Maps

Design internal linking structures for topic clusters with anchor text recommendations, cross-linking opportunities, and link audits.

Difficulty: Intermediate → Advanced

Model: GPT-4 / Claude / Gemini

Use Case: Internal Linking, Site Structure, Topic Clusters

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Why This Prompt Exists

Most internal linking is random — links added without strategy.

You get:

- orphan pages with no links (Google can't find them)
- pillar pages that don't link to cluster content
- cluster content that doesn't link back to pillar
- generic anchor text ("click here," "learn more")
- missed internal linking opportunities

But internal linking is not optional.

It is how Google understands your site structure.

- Pillar → cluster: distribute authority to subtopics
- Cluster → pillar: signal relevance back to core topic
- Cluster ↔ cluster: show semantic relationships
- Anchor text: descriptive, not generic

Without an internal linking map, your topic clusters don't connect.

This framework forces AI to build linking plans that establish site architecture.

## The Prompt

Assume the role of an information architect who designs internal linking for topic clusters.

Your task is to create an internal linking map.

Generate:

### 1. LINKING STRUCTURE OVERVIEW

- Visual description of how pages connect
- Hub-and-spoke vs. mesh vs. hybrid

### 2. PILLAR → CLUSTER LINKS

- Where pillar links to each cluster piece
- Anchor text recommendations

### 3. CLUSTER → PILLAR LINKS

- Where each cluster links back to pillar
- Anchor text recommendations

### 4. CROSS-LINKING OPPORTUNITIES

- How cluster pieces link to each other
- Which clusters are semantically related

### 5. LINK AUDIT

- Existing links that need updating
- Missing links to add
- Broken or low-value links to remove

## INPUTS:

Pillar Page URL or Topic:

[INSERT]

Cluster Content URLs or Topics (5-10):

[LIST]

Existing Internal Links (if known):

[DESCRIBE OR "UNKNOWN"]

Content Relationships (which pieces are most related):

[DESCRIBE]

Site Structure:

[FLAT / HIERARCHICAL / HYBRID]

## RULES:

- Pillar → cluster links: distribute authority to subtopics
- Cluster → pillar links: signal relevance back
- Anchor text must be descriptive (not "click here")
- Cross-linking must be semantically relevant
- Link audit must identify specific pages to update
- Avoid over-optimization (don't force unnatural links)

## How To Use It

- Update pillar page first (add links to all cluster content).
- Then update each cluster piece (link back to pillar).
- Add cross-links between semantically related cluster pieces.

- Use descriptive anchor text that includes relevant keywords.
- Audit internal links quarterly; add links to new content.

### Example Input

**Pillar Page URL or Topic:** /freelance-pricing-guide/ (ultimate guide to freelance rates)

**Cluster Content URLs or Topics:** how-to-set-freelance-rates/, when-to-raise-rates/, hourly-vs-project-pricing/, handling-price-objections/, value-based-pricing-guide/

**Existing Internal Links:** Pillar links to 2 of 5 cluster pieces (inconsistent)

**Content Relationships:** Value-based pricing relates to hourly vs project; price objections relate to all

**Site Structure:** HIERARCHICAL (pillar at top)

### Why It Works

Most internal linking is random.

This framework improves outcomes by forcing:

- linking structure clarity (visual plan)
- pillar → cluster links (authority distribution)
- cluster → pillar links (relevance signaling)
- cross-linking opportunities (semantic relationships)
- link audit (maintenance)

Great internal linking doesn't happen by accident — it's designed.

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See also [The Topical Authority Gap Finder](#)