

STACK MATRIX * 22 TOOLS * 2026

KD 2026 SEO Stack Matrix

Twenty-two SEO + GEO tools we tested across 28 client retainers in 2025. Categorised by job-to-be-done. Pricing is annual list; volume / founder discounts almost always available - ask the vendor.

HOW TO READ THIS MATRIX

Best-Of: our default pick if cost is no object. Lite: works if you have <30 tracked keywords. Free-only stack: complete coverage at \$0 (slower but possible). Each tool gets 1-5 stars on AI Overview tracking - the 2026 differentiator.

Crawlers

Screaming Frog	\$259/yr	Best-Of, AI-Overview-aware (4*)
Sitebulb	\$420/yr	Visual reports for client decks (3*)
Ahrefs Site Audit	incl in plan	Quickest schedule scheduler (3*)

Backlink intelligence

Ahrefs	\$129-449/mo	Best-Of, freshest index (5*)
Majestic	\$50-400/mo	Strong for trust-flow scoring (3*)
LinkResearchTools	\$99-399/mo	Penalty recovery niche (3*)

Keyword + SERP

SEMrush	\$140-500/mo	All-in-one Best-Of (4*)
Ahrefs Keywords	incl	Cleanest data (5*)
KWFinder / Mangools	\$30-80/mo	Cheapest serious option (3*)
Surfer SEO	\$89-219/mo	Content-grading layer (3*)

Technical / page speed

Google PageSpeed Insights	free	Source of truth for CWV (5*)
WebPageTest	free	Deepest filmstrip + waterfall (4*)
DebugBear	\$99-299/mo	Continuous CWV monitoring (4*)

Local / GBP

Local Falcon	\$24-149/mo	Best Geo-Grid for India (5*)
BrightLocal	\$39-89/mo	Best for citation audit (4*)
Whitespark	\$25-200/mo	Cleanest review-velocity (4*)

AI Overview / GEO tracking

Otterly.AI	\$49-499/mo	Best AI Overview tracker (5*)
Peecc.ai	\$79-499/mo	Citation-source attribution (4*)
AthenaHQ	\$99-999/mo	ChatGPT mention tracker (4*)

Brief + content

Frase	\$15-115/mo	Quickest brief generator (3*)
Clearscope	\$199-999/mo	Best content scorer (4*)
MarketMuse	\$149-499/mo	Topical authority depth (4*)

How to choose: 4 questions

1. Are you billing \$5k+/mo per retainer? Default to Best-Of in every category.
2. Are you tracking AI Overview citations yet? If no - start with Otterly.AI before adding anything else to your stack.
3. How many tracked keywords? <30 = Mangools + GSC; 30-300 = Ahrefs Lite; >300 = full Ahrefs.
4. Do you have a Local component? If yes - Local Falcon is non-optional for the Indian market in 2026.