Seventeen years of car writing, made findable again

Hooniverse, an independent car publication publishing since 2009, relaunched on November 9, 2026, after a five-week rebuild set by an Authority Audit.

The audit read the site the way search engines and readers do, then handed back a prioritized roadmap of specific fixes for what was costing the site traffic and trust. This case study shows what was found, what was fixed first, and what the before and after actually looked like.

207 to 8

Categories collapsed into News, All Things Hoon, Reviews, Motorsports, Project Cars, For Sale, Podcasts, and Hooniverse Asks.

1,136

Tag archives retired, with 38 kept and the remaining tag pages told not to index.

19,833

Posts sorted into the new categories, with filing rules from the founder deciding the edge cases.

216

Rows in the redirect map for retired category addresses, so old links land in the right new home.

804

Google Font families requested by the old homepage in one blocking stylesheet, on a site visibly using two fonts.

5 weeks

From the sample audit on October 2, 2026, to the relaunch on November 9, 2026.

Client: Hooniverse.com, founded and edited by Jeff Glucker.
Audit, roadmap, and launch direction: David Traver Adolphus, Authority Audit.
Design and migration: Jason Siu.
Before captures: October 5, 2026. After captures: November 9, 2026.

Contact: David Traver Adolphus · david@authorityaudit.net

THE SITE AND THE PROBLEM

A good publication that search engines could barely read

Hooniverse is an independent enthusiast publication with roughly 19,800 posts across new-car reviews, project-car features, podcasts, and video. It runs on WordPress with a small independent team and no in-house search function. Founder and Editor-in-Chief: Jeff Glucker.

The site had been through two previous revamp attempts, a redesign and a later cleanup engagement, and neither delivered lasting results. Jeff described both as costly setbacks, which is why this engagement was scoped fixed-price and fixed-scope from the start.

What search engines saw

- Zero structured data site-wide: No Article, Review, Organization, or Person schema at all.
- No meta descriptions anywhere: All 188 sampled posts had none, so every search snippet was auto-generated.
- Taxonomy bloat: A total of 207 category pages and 1,069 tag archive pages were submitted for indexing, most of them thin.
- Bylines with no author bios: Expertise signals were thin for readers and machines alike.
- Internal linking that rode on widgets: Contextual editorial links inside articles were rare.
- An AI-search citability gap: Strong, quotable prose sat with no machine-readable scaffolding behind it.

What readers saw

- A dated, widget-dense theme: White cards with thick black borders sat over a gravel-textured background under a starry-night header.
- A heavy display-ad load: Ad units overlapped article text and photos in the captures.
- A missing-page problem hiding in plain sight: The Page not found page was the third most-viewed page on the site, with 869 views from September 7 to October 6, 2026.

THE NUMBERS BEFORE THE REBUILD

Nearly half the reported traffic was not human

Traffic, September 7 to October 6, 2026

Google Analytics recorded 63,474 sessions in 30 days. Of those, 41.5 percent showed a clear automated-traffic signature, with very short visits from data-center-heavy countries. True human traffic was about 58 percent of reported sessions, and that is the number the new hosting was sized on.

Search, October 6 to 20, 2026

Search Console recorded 6,199 clicks and 947,004 impressions, at a 0.7 percent average click-through rate and a 7.2 average position. The property had only been verified on October 6, so no search data existed before that date. The site had been flying blind on search performance.

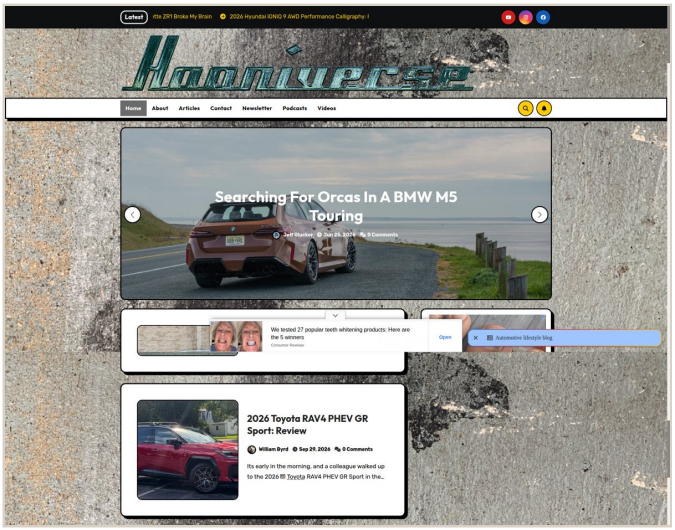
Index and speed, October 2026

Index coverage on October 15 showed 30,857 pages indexed and 178,326 not indexed. Core Web Vitals flagged 100 percent of pages as slow on largest contentful paint, the time the main content takes to appear, with 2,462 pages rated poor on mobile and none rated good.

> The pattern was consistent: Great writing, accumulated structure. Every year had added categories, tags, fonts, and widgets, and nothing had ever been taken away.

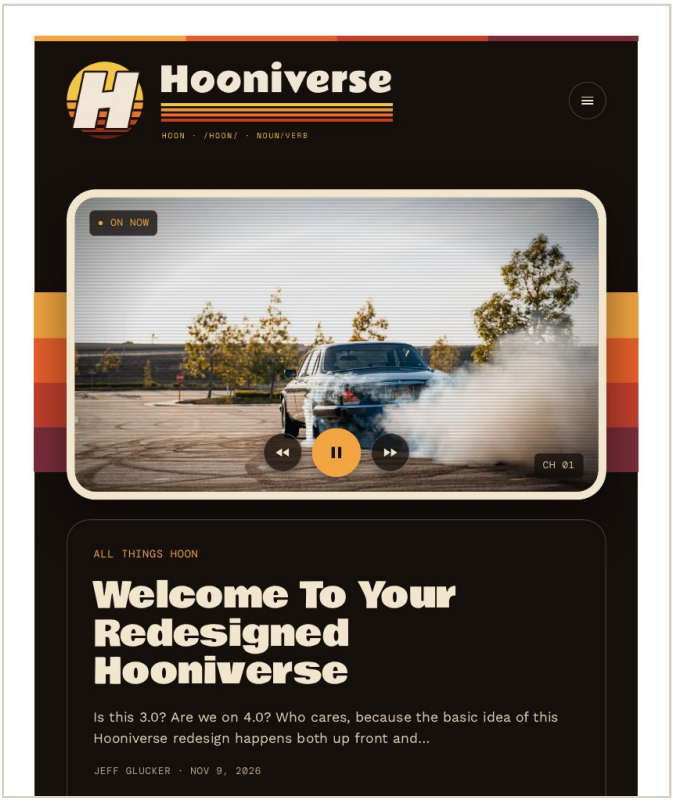
Homepage: The first thing a reader met

BEFORE: OCTOBER 5, 2026



Before: The old BlogArise theme, with a gravel background, a pop-up ad over the article cards, and pagination running to 1,981 pages.

AFTER: NOVEMBER 9, 2026



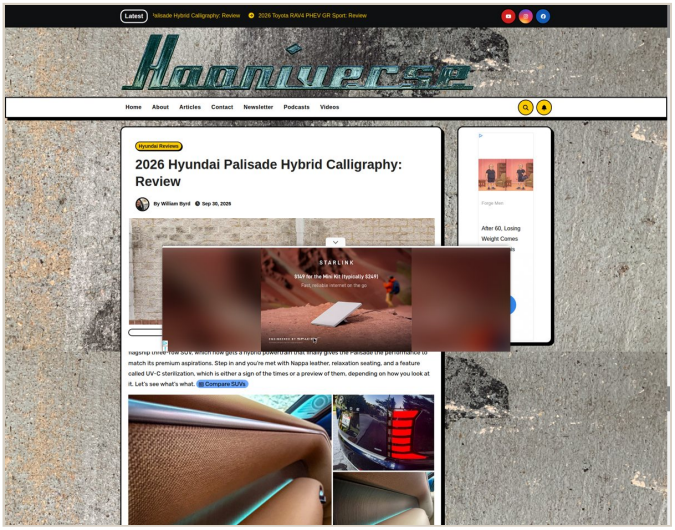
After: A custom lightweight theme, dark and clean, leading with one featured story and no third-party ads.

BEFORE AND AFTER: THE ARTICLE PAGE

Same review, same photos, a different site around them

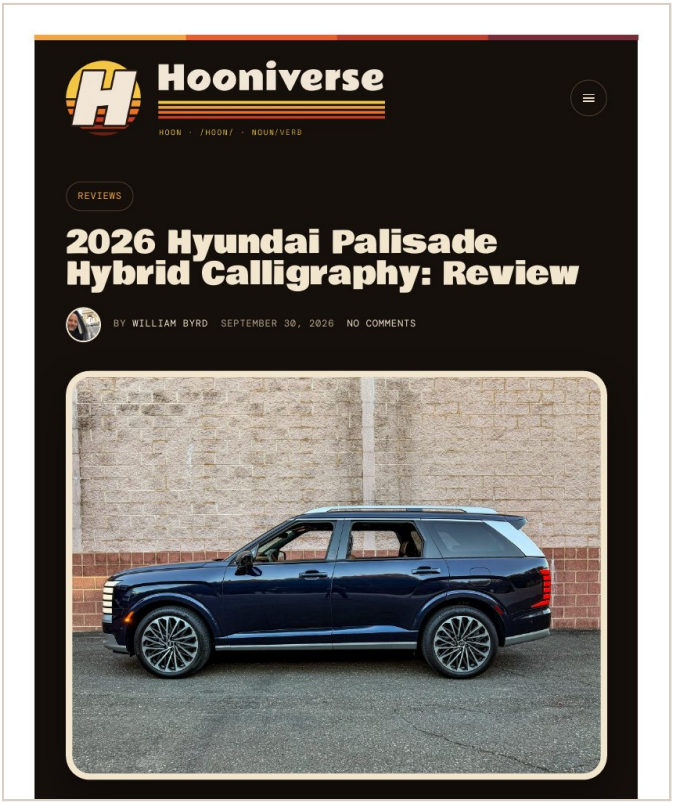
The fairest test of a relaunch is the same article on both sites. Below is one review captured before and after: The 2026 Hyundai Palisade Hybrid Calligraphy review by William Byrd, published September 30, 2026.

BEFORE: OCTOBER 5, 2026



Before: A display ad covers the hero image and the opening lines. The byline carries no bio, and the sidebar competes with the review itself.

AFTER: NOVEMBER 9, 2026



After: The headline, byline, and hero photo stand alone. Nothing overlaps the article, and the reading column runs uninterrupted.

> What changed around the words matters as much as the design: The new templates carry the meta descriptions and structured data the old theme never rendered, so this review can finally be filed, described, and cited by search and AI systems.

WHAT THE AUDIT SET IN MOTION

The rebuild was pointed at the fixes that mattered, in order

The audit came first, and it set the job. A sample audit went to Jeff on October 2, and it landed at a crossroads: Seventeen years of content, a site damaged by a botched refresh, facing either a full relaunch or a quiet grave. The audit identified what actually mattered and what did not, and kept the rebuild pointed at the highest-leverage fixes.

- Collapsed 207 categories into eight: News, All Things Hoon, Reviews, Motorsports, Project Cars, For Sale, Podcasts, and Hooniverse Asks.
- Retired 1,136 tag archives and kept 38: The tag pages that remained were set to noindex, meaning search engines are told not to list them.
- Built a 216-row redirect map for the retired categories: Old addresses now land on the right new home instead of a dead end.
- Put meta description templates in the new theme: Roughly 19,800 posts stopped relying on auto-generated snippets.
- Put schema markup in the new templates: Article and Review, Organization, Person, and BreadcrumbList are now built in.
- Specified a lean font setup and caching: The 804-family stylesheet is gone.
- Sized the hosting on real human traffic: Bot filtering at the edge was specified in the plan after the automated share was measured.
- Set up Search Console and verified it on October 6, 2026: Nobody flies blind on search again.
- Built structured review formats and author byline blocks: Reviews gained the quotable structure AI search cites, and bylines gained bios and credentials.
- Sorted 19,833 posts into the eight categories: Jeff's filing rules decided the edge cases, and Reviews covers every kind of review, not only car reviews.

Who did what

David Traver Adolphus did the audit, wrote the roadmap, and directed the launch, including the taxonomy, the sorting, and the decisions moving between Jeff and Jason. Jason Siu did the design and the migration, executed against that roadmap. Jeff Glucker made the editorial calls, including the final filing rules and the category descriptions.

Timeline: Sample audit October 2, 2026. Before captures October 5, 2026. Search Console verified October 6, 2026. Sorting and redirect map completed in late October 2026. Relaunch November 9, 2026. Post-launch checks at 48 hours, two weeks, and 90 days.

RESULTS

Structural results verified at launch, traffic results to follow

MEASURE	BEFORE, OCTOBER 2026	AFTER, NOVEMBER 9, 2026
Theme	BlogArise, widget-dense, with ad units overlapping content.	Custom lightweight theme, dark and clean, with no third-party ads.
Categories	207.	8.
Tag archives	1,069 submitted for indexing.	38 kept, 1,136 retired, and remaining tag pages set to noindex.
Redirects	Retired addresses had no map.	A 216-row redirect map for retired categories.
Meta descriptions	None on 188 of 188 sampled posts.	Templates shipping in the new theme.
Structured data	None site-wide.	Article and Review, Organization, Person, and BreadcrumbList in the templates.
Fonts	804 families in one blocking stylesheet.	A lean font setup and caching in the new theme.
Search data	No Search Console coverage before October 6.	Property verified October 6, with the homepage crawled on launch day.
Speed and 404s	100 percent of pages flagged slow, and the 404 page drew 869 views in 30 days.	To be re-measured at the 48-hour and two-week checks.

Post-launch traffic and search numbers are pending by design. The relaunch was one day old when this study was written, and a one-day reading would be noise. The 48-hour verification lands November 11, 2026, the two-week check November 23, 2026, and the 90-day check-in February 7, 2027. This study will be updated with measured results as they come in.

> *“I can’t thank Jason and David enough, they accomplished exactly what I needed for Hooniverse. Honestly, it feels like a weight has been lifted off my shoulders and I can focus on trying to recapture a bit of what used to make this site great.”*
>
> Jeff Glucker, Founder and Editor-in-Chief, Hooniverse, November 9, 2026

The takeaway

The audit's job is to find out what the project actually is before money is spent building the wrong thing. Hooniverse did not need a fresh coat of paint. It needed 207 categories collapsed into eight, 1,136 tag archives retired, and a rebuild pointed at the fixes that mattered, in the order that mattered.