

How to create an SEO strategy for website redesign and migration

A new guide, **Best Practices for Website Redesign & Migration**, outlines detailed best practices for implementing search engine optimization (SEO) for a website redesign.

It includes a list of comprehensive tips aimed at educating website owners about common redesign obstacles, website structure as it relates to SEO, preserving domain and URL equity, keyword research, and more.

This post summarizes some key SEO migration elements listed in the guide, with an emphasis on helping organizations avoid costly errors related to a website redesign and domain or platform migration.

Content produced in collaboration with Investis Digital.

Whitepaper

Common SEO obstacles in website redesign and migration

A proliferation of web design platforms and tools have made it easier than ever for businesses to complete a website redesign

in record time.

However, many of these platforms aren't fully compatible with older computers, slower connection speeds, and present obstacles for search engine spiders.

The Investis Digital SEO guide lists twelve of the most common obstacles and includes tips for avoiding them. Here are a few examples:

Dynamic URLs that don't include keywords

Dynamic URLs rely on variable parameters provided by the web server and are not easily indexed by search engines since they change based on user query input. A dynamic URL typically

includes character strings versus keywords. Investis Digital recommends that dynamic URLs be rewritten to include relevant keywords.

Non-permanent redirects

Investis Digital recommends avoiding all redirects that aren't permanent. That is, only permanent 301 server-side redirects should be incorporated into your website update. That means avoiding 302, JavaScript, and meta refresh redirects.

Page content

Since text is the backbone of how search engines determine keyword relevancy, the Investis Digital guide recommends that some relevant content be included on all pages. Ideally, at least one short paragraph of unique text should be present on each page. If this isn't possible, then tier-one and tier-two pages should incorporate text-based, keyword-rich headers.

Three of the twelve obstacles listed in the Investis Digital SEO guide

Six key elements of an SEO-focused redesign

The Investis Digital guide lays out a comprehensive list of elements that companies should incorporate into their redesign strategy, from website structure to keyword research, and from meta information to internal site linking. The guide acts as a blueprint for businesses so they can minimize the impact of the redesign on organic search engine rankings and traffic. Here is a brief summary of each element:

1. Website structure

Folder structure, web page file names, and keyword-rich content all play a role in an optimal website structure. “The decisions you make about the naming conventions of your folders and files, and the way in which you point to specific pages of your website, can have a huge impact on overall traffic and sales,” writes Investis Digital.

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2. Keyword research

Keyword research should be the starting point of your website redesign so that you can incorporate relevant, high-volume keywords throughout the entire site structure. Investis Digital reviews important keyword guidelines such as how many different terms to target and what keyword research tools to use when gathering information.

3. Meta information

Meta information—also referred to as metadata—is the information that appears in search engine results pages for organic listings. SEO meta information includes a variety of tags such as <title> and <meta-description>. The guide provides checklists to help businesses fully optimize each of these important tags.

4. Body content

Body content is important for good search engine rankings as well as overall website usability. The Investis Digital guidelines cover the specifics of creating high quality, SEO-

friendly content attributes that will contribute to search ranking such as keyword choice, frequency, placement, spacing, and titles.

5. Internal site linking

Internal links are an important element of good SEO design as they determine how search engines perceive relevancy for specific keywords. Investis Digital covers the best practices for internal link creation such as using descriptive text-based links in the main navigation, limiting the number of links on a page, and more.

6. URL equity

URL equity is “the sum of several important values tied to URL structure.” Dynamic versus static URLs, as noted above, play a role in URL equity as do a URL’s external links to the website, age of the domain, and more.

The importance of creating an SEO redesign strategy

A key pain point with any redesign is the loss of organic search traffic that occurs when established domain equity is lost. The Investis Digital guide provides information to help companies avoid the negative effect a large-scale redesign can have on search visibility and website traffic.

*Example of a successful client domain migration.
Source—Investis Digital*

With a strong emphasis on maintaining URL equity, a sample workflow to help with planning, and a list of expected obstacles, businesses can use this guide to create a comprehensive SEO strategy for their website redesign or platform migration.

For more tips on how to create an SEO strategy for website redesign and migration, check out the full guide, “Best Practices for Website Redesign & Migration.”

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