What to Do with Your Old Blog Posts

Posted by -LaurelTaylor-

Around 2005 or so, corporate blogs became *the thing* to do. Big players in the business world touted that such platforms could "drive swarms of traffic to your main website, generate more product sales" and even "create an additional stream of advertising income" (Entrepreneur Magazine circa 2006). With promises like that, what marketer or exec wouldn't jump on the blog bandwagon?

Unfortunately, initial forays into branded content did not always dwell on minor issues like "quality" or "entertainment," instead focusing on sheer bulk and, of course, all the keywords. Now we have learned better, and many corporate blogs are less prolific and offer more value. But on some sites, behind many, many "next page" clicks, this old content can still be found lurking in the background.

This active company blog still features over 900 pages of posts dating back to 2006

This situation leaves current SEOs and content teams in a bit of a pickle. What should you do if your site has excessive quantities of old blog posts? Are they okay just sitting there? Do you need to *do* something about them?

Why bother addressing old blog

posts?

On many sites, the sheer number of pages are the biggest reason to consider improving or scaling back old content. If past content managers chose quantity over quality, heaps of old posts eventually get buried, all evergreen topics have been written about before, and it becomes increasingly harder to keep inventory of your content.

From a technical perspective, depending on the scale of the old content you're dealing with, pruning back the number of pages that you put forward can help increase your crawl efficiency. If Google has to crawl 1,000 URLs to find 100 good pieces of content, they are going to take note and not spend as much time combing through your content in the future.

From a marketing perspective, your content represents your brand, and improving the set of content that you put forward helps shape the way customers see you as an authority in your space. Optimizing and curating your existing content can give your collection of content a clearer topical focus, makes it more easily discoverable, and ensures that it provides value for users and the business.

Zooming out for a second to look at this from a higher level: If you've already decided that it's worth investing in blog content for your company, it's worth getting the most from your existing resources and ensuring that they aren't holding you back.

Decide what to keep: Inventory and assessment

Inventory

The first thing to do before accessing your blog posts is to make sure you know what you have. A full list of URLs and

coordinating metadata is incredibly helpful in both evaluating and documenting.

Depending on the content management system that you use, obtaining this list can be as simple as exporting a database field. Alternatively, URLs can be gleaned from a combination of Google Analytics data, Webmaster Tools, and a comprehensive crawl with a tool such as Screaming Frog. This post gives a good outline of how to get the data you need from these sources.

Regardless of whether you have a list of URLs yet, it’s also good to do a full crawl of your blog to see what the linking structure looks like at this point, and how that may differ from what you see in the CMS.

Assessment

Once you know what you have, it’s time to assess the content and decide if it’s worth holding on to. When I do this, I like to ask these 5 questions:

1. Is it beneficial for users?

Content that’s beneficial for users is helpful, informative, or entertaining. It answers questions, helps them solve problems, or keeps them interested. This could be anything from a walkthrough for troubleshooting to a collection of inspirational photos.