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Moving your site to a new domain? Domain migration could be beneficial in terms of professional search engine optimization if you want that your new pages in your new site will receive the same quality SEO signals as the pages in your old site.

However, for lots of webmasters and search engine optimization experts, they find domain migration as a risky process in terms of professional SEO. Domain migration involves multiple tasks requiring to be meticulously performed correctly. If not, you will be potentially bringing in non-trivial crawling and indexing problems such as those annoying 404 (File Not Found) errors which can harm the user experience hurting your site's performance in Google search results and thus causing consequential lost of rankings and organic traffic.

In moving your site, you must not only make sure that the transition is invisible and seamless to the user but also ensure that you have alerted Google that your new pages should get the same quality signals as the pages on your own site.

So Here are the Steps to an SEO-friendly Domain Migration:

â€¢ Before rolling out changes to the entire site, you must first do a test by moving the contents into one section, directory or subdomain of your site. Do a 301 redirect to permanently redirect those pages on your old site to your new site. 301 Redirecting your site will indicate to Google and other search engines that your site has permanently moved.

â€¢ Then, do a check if the pages on your new site are appearing in Google's search results. Once you are sure that new pages from the test are appearing in search results as expected, you can now move your entire site.

â€¢ You should not execute a blanket redirect of all page URLs to only one page, section, or URL of the new site. Though this will avoid 404 errors, it will not provide a good user experience.

â€¢ Do a page-to-page permanent 301 redirect to permanently redirect those pages on your old site to your new site. This means that you should redirect each page on the old site to its corresponding page on the new site. Though this is more work, it will give your users a consistent and transparent experience as well as save as much traffic as possible. In cases, where you are unable to have a 1:1 match between pages on your old and new site, you can redirect every page on your old site to a new page with similar content.

â€¢ You must keep the same directory structure. This will make it much easier to redirect links when changing a domain name.

â€¢ Do a check on both external and internal links to pages on your site. Ideally, make an update on all and any legacy links that point to the old site. Make sure that all of these links are redirected to your new site. Make sure also to check if don't have broken legacy links on your new site, especially if your original content includes absolute links instead of relative links.

â€¢ It's best to retain control of your old site domain as well as maintain 301 redirects for at least 180 days in order to prevent confusion.

â€¢ Make sure to create 404 error pages. In this way, if errors occur, visitors will be able to receive a

message helping them navigate to the new page.

â€¢ Finally, make sure to keep both your new and old site verified in Webmaster Tools, and regularly review them for crawl errors. This will not only ensure 301 redirects from the old site are working properly but it will also ensure that the new site isn't showing unwanted 404 errors.

Indeed, domain migration is not an easy task. If you feel that doing this is time consuming or outside your expertise to do, then you can ask assistance from a trusted Search Engine Optimization Firm that can help you move your site to a new domain

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