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A redirect is a way to send both users and search engines to a different URL than the one they have originally requested. URL redirection is a technique to make a webpage available to more than one URL. There are three types of redirects – 301 permanent redirect (Moved permanently), 302 (Moved temporarily) and Meta Refresh.

Redirects can be used for several reasons, some of them are:

1. It helps users to navigate the correct URL. Usually users do not type www with URLs and search engines cannot interpret that the URLs with www and without www are not different. Search engines consider both the URLs as different webpages. This property of search engines leads them to consider both the URLs as duplicate URLs. Webmasters use redirects for all non-www structure URLs and forward them to URLs with www structure.
2. URL direction can be applied to redirect user to the correct webpage. It also helps to forward the user to URL with updated information. Sometimes the content of webpage makes sense for a specific period of time and it gets irrelevant with the time. For this reason you can send users to the new URL with updated information.
3. Redirect helps the users to navigate the new set of URLs. When a website moves to new domain name all the URLs containing old domain name get moved to URLs with new domain name.

Redirects can also affect your search engine rankings. Redirects are an important part of search engine algorithms. Redirects can make a big difference in the ranking when a website is re-structured or moved to new domain. Many websites' ranking fall down when they are moved to a new domain, as they fail to plan redirects their webpages to the new URLs.

Here are some SEO best practices for using redirects:

1. Use 302-Redirect only when you are using new URL for short period of time. A 302-Redirect is a temporary redirect and passes 0% of link juice.
2. Use 301-Redirect when you are using webpage redirects, as it is a permanent redirect and it passes 90-99% of link juice to redirect page.
3. When you plan to move the website to a new domain name, make sure you have re-structured the webpage very carefully.
4. Keep the link value of the webpages. Once you've successfully moved webpages to new domain, request your referral website to update the referral links to the new URL.

The above practices will help you to redirect the correct URL and also improve your website search engine rankings.

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