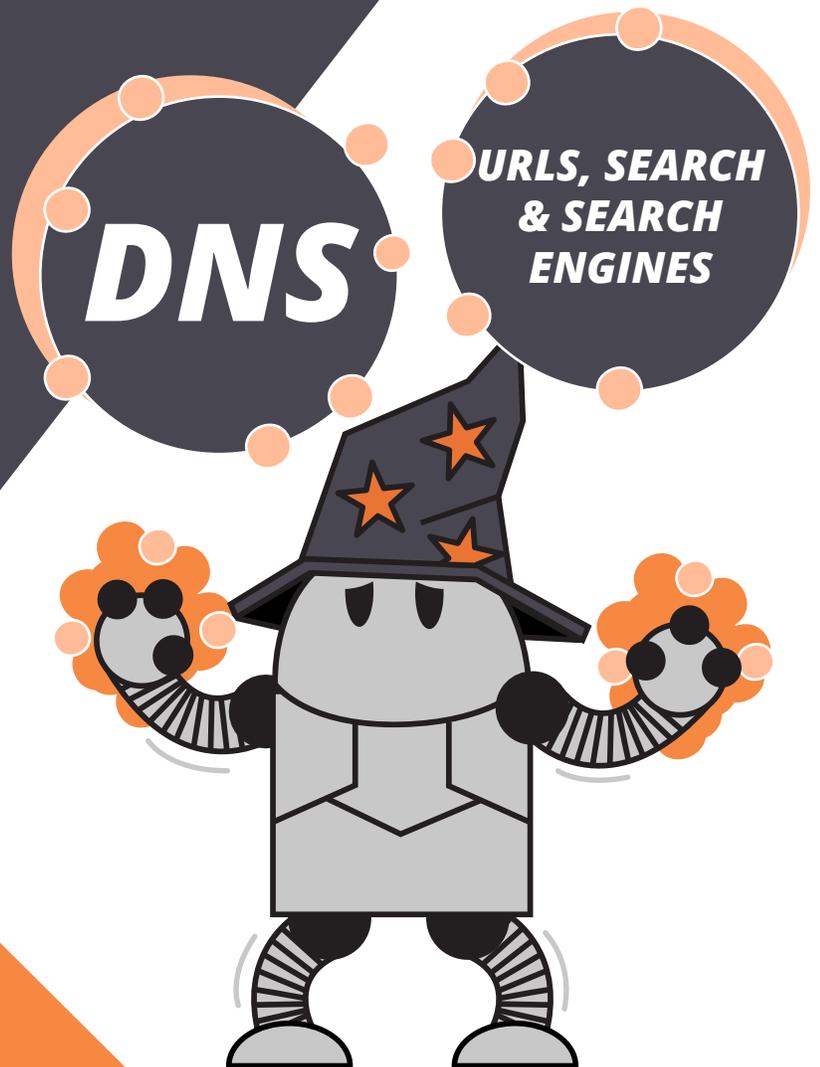


Pro-tips for a Successful Website Migration:

10 tips & tricks to help your next migration go smoothly

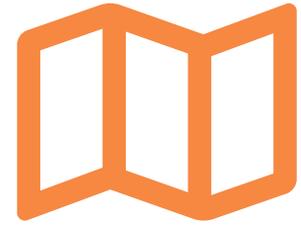


If you have any questions
contact us at sales@troyweb.com

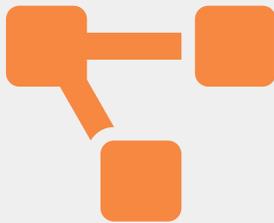


{ 1. CREATE A MAP }

URL Mappings are a critical and often overlooked process in website migrations. At the beginning of your project build a full inventory of ALL the current urls (pages) in the old site. You can use a scanning tool or do it manually. Get the list in a spreadsheet and during the project make sure every old page has a “new page”, even if it’s just your new homepage. No page should be left behind.



{ 2. KNOW YOUR REDIRECTS }



Keep search engines informed about where your resources are and where your old ones went. Keep an inventory of redirects you currently have set up for old URLs (you likely need to support several old versions of the website and/or old marketing (print) material, etc... Search engines will only know what you tell them when they visit these urls. Make sure you know the difference between permanent redirects and temporary redirects

{ 3. GOOGLE YOURSELF }

Prior to deployment, do a google search of your business name and filter the results to your domain. Search for various important search

terms and stash all these results in a spreadsheet. Make sure your team knows the importance of these search results during development. After you go live, follow the links in these search results and find out what happens. Stomp out fires as needed.



{ 4. TEST DNS MIGRATION INTERNALLY }

You can modify your production DNS entries for just your testing team using internal network tools or by modifying your hosts file. This is the only way to really test what the world will see when you actually go live, without actually going live. This approach will allow you to find out what's going to break (broken certificates, bad links, etc..) without actually breaking them.



{ 5. HAVE A BACKUP }



It's always better to stand up new infrastructure for your new site and keep that old site up and running. This allows you to revert back quickly if the migration goes bad and it also gives you easy access to old content that may get missed in the migration.

You can also use the Wayback Machine to reclaim orphaned content as a result of a poorly executed migration and it's a great resource for going way back in the past, to get something long forgotten about.

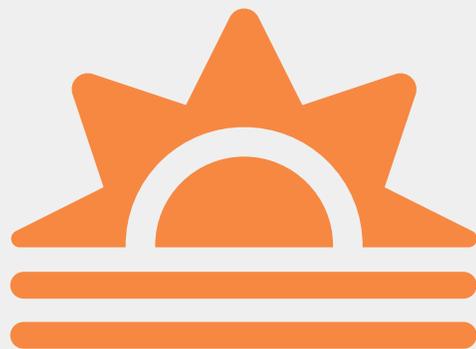
Setup a new subdomain to point back to your old website so you can easily go back and grab any orphaned content. Make sure you password protect the old site and drop the analytics in order to block the search engines from indexing BOTH sites, which becomes an entirely different problem.

{ 6. BE PREPARED }

Plan your migration when the entire team is available, i.e. early in the workday. Many people do migrations late at night when traffic is low, but there's also no one available for support in those wee hours. Early in the morning is the better way to go and get the testing team ready to roll right away.

Set your TTL for your DNS A record (or any other records) very low a week before your planned deployment. If you have issues during your deployment, you will be able to "switch back" quickly and those changes will get pushed out to the public quickly.

If your DNS is currently hosted on that ancient registrar where you



bought your domain in 1998, it may be a good time to migrate your DNS to Amazon Route53 or another modern host (migrate the dns first then do the website later). This is a bigger project but with Route 53 you will find much better tools for managing your DNS records once it is time for the deployment. Many of the old registrars have extremely crude tools.

{ 7. GET SMART }

Look at your current log files and analytics and identify what your most popular content is and what platforms (mobile, desktop) your visitors are using. Also look at the links that no one is going to. Use this information to prioritize the content and your testing plan.

Take the time to build a smart 404 handler on the new website that can try to figure out where someone might want to go if the page they are requesting is not there. Does the url contain a keyword such as “/products” or “/about” that might help you figure out where to redirect them?



Make sure you have logging enabled for all 404 results to your website. This will allow you to find the “old links” to your site that are not resolving to a legit page on the new website. Monitor the logs and fix anything that makes it through the gaps. You should be doing this weekly anyway, migration or not, it’s the only way to stay on top of it.

{ 8. ONE STEP AT A TIME }



Make changes one step at a time. If you are planning on restructuring your blog’s slug patterns, categories or tags in your new website, consider doing that after you go live with the new site. Reducing variables (how many things are changing at once) can be critical in effectively debugging issues post-deployment.

{ 9 . ADA TESTING }

Prioritize the home page. Do it early, get your colors right. What does the site look like without css? Use an ADA tool like Google Lighthouse or WAVE to scan your site for ADA issues



{ 10. THINK LEGAL }

Read the fine print on every image you use on your site. Just because it is on Google as “Free”, doesn’t mean it’s free to use without recognition. When in doubt, hire a photographer and get your own images. An image of your actual team is way better than that stock image of people pointing at a blank screen.

Review all prior contracts with content writers and providers that



dealt with your website. Before even starting the migration, if you know that the content does not belong to you, your project changes from a migration to a redesign. Better to know now than later.

