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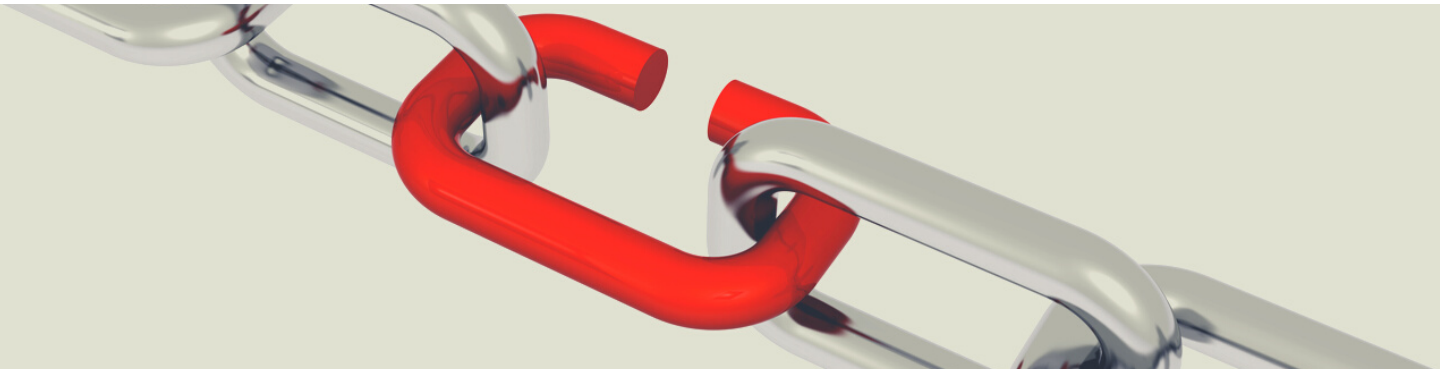
How to Find & Fix Broken Links

What are broken links?

Also referred as a dead links, broken links direct visitors to your website or a webpage that is no longer accessible, resulting in a 404-error page. This can be due to the original page being moved, updated with a different file name or deleted altogether. Broken links commonly occur in text links but can also affect images, videos, buttons, and downloadable documents.

Harmful Effects of Broken Links Include:

- A Bad User Experience - An unpleasant experience by a customer on your website will reduce the chances of them making a purchase or recommending your website and products to other potential customers. Many customers will not return to a website after only one negative experience.

- Your Google Ranking - Some of the factors that Google and other search engines use in ranking websites include their ability to collect information from the webpages and the amount of time visitors spend on your webpages. Both of these factors are negatively impacted by broken links and could result in lower rankings for your webpages in search engine results.

How to Check for Broken Links:

- Google Search Console – A powerful free tool that enables you to review any broken links and errors that Google discovers. This information is automatically updated every time Google crawls your site.
- Broken Link Check – A popular and free online broken link checking tool that is easy to use.

The Two types of Broken Links

1. Internal Broken Links - These links point to other pages within your website and may occur when you update or make any changes to your website or page URLs. These are easier to resolve as you have control over them and can check that they are working whenever you update or make changes to your site.
2. External Broken Links – These links point to pages on a different website. However, since you have no control over them it is necessary to periodically check them to ensure that they are working. In case an external link is not working, contact the webmaster and request for an updated link or find the page again via a relevant search.

How to Fix Broken Links:

Once you have found a broken link, fixing them can be as easy as correcting typos, or eliminating the bad links and replacing them with the correct URL. Ensure you check for broken links frequently to minimize the negative effects a broken link may have on your website.You can also set up 301 redirects to reroute visitors to an updated page if you change the location of content on your website or if you update your URL structure and names.

Need assistance determining your link building strategy?Michigan SBDC consultants are here to help!

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