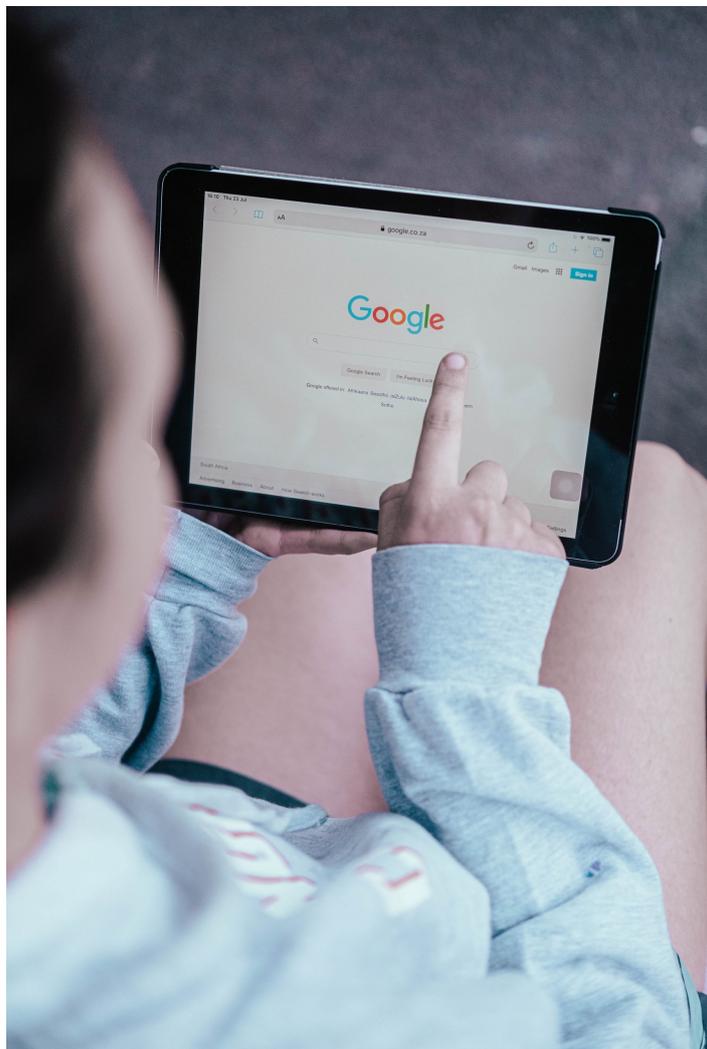


# 3 DEFINITIVE THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW THAT CAN SAVE YOUR GOOGLE RANKINGS



Posted on December 27, 2020 by Brian Petersen

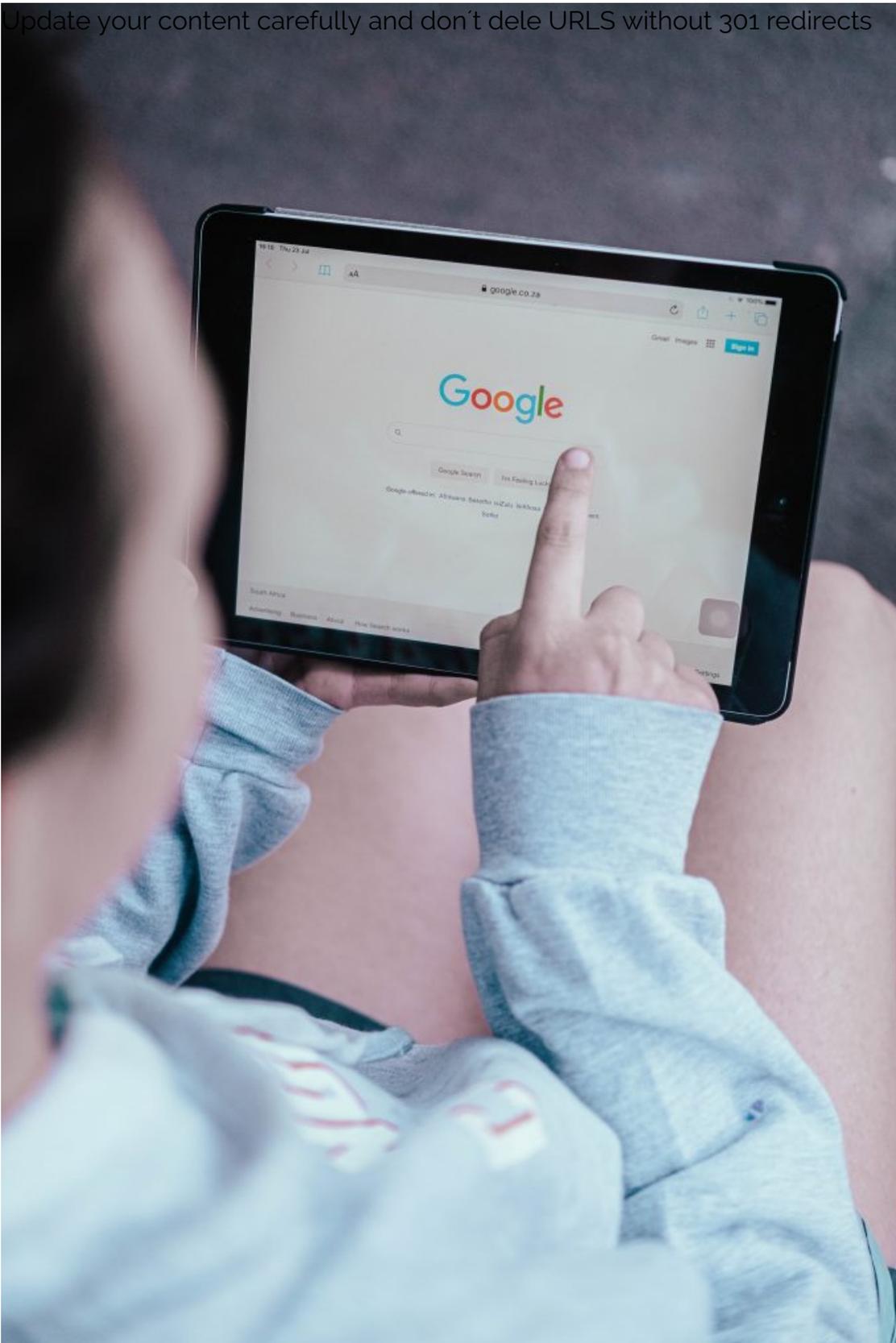


**Categories:** [Level: Beginner](#), [On-Page SEO](#), [SEO Tips](#)

**Tags:** [301 redirect](#), [Content optimization](#)



Update your content carefully and don't dele URLs without 301 redirects



Securing your **Google rankings** is a constant battle. Working with SEO is a constant chase trying to keep your content relevant and up to date.

We are all facing the issue that content needs to be update

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Staying up to date to please Google and your audience .- but deleting content without a careful investigation can end up hurting your rankings.

In this blog post, I have listed the three main things you should know before you update or delete content.

## **The three things to consider before deleting old content**

Before you decided to update or delete content, it might be a good idea to examine if the URL is actually ranking in Google.

Usually, you have optimized a piece of content for a specific keyword, but it is not unusual that a URL is ranking in SERPS for other keywords.

## **Consult Google Search Console and Google Analytics**

If you go ballistic and rewrite an entire article or delete it, you might face that you are losing both your rankings and traffic for that URL.

Check the URL in Google Search Console first - check if it ranks for keywords you are not aware of and use Google Analytics to determine if the URL drives any organic traffic from Google.

You might even discover keywords you were not even targeting from the beginning. I have made a blog post about how you can [leverage on Google Search Console for keyword research](#).

## Examine external links before deleting URLs

Even a URL you consider deleting is not ranking for any keywords is not the same that it is useless. You might have external backlinks pointing to your URL.

External websites might link to your URL, and if you delete the URL, those external links end in a 404 page. And are not passing any link juice to your site anymore.

That will be a shame if you lose external backlinks - especially if they came from authority sites.

Monitor your page's 404 errors - if you have a 404 error, that means that there either internal or external links pointing to a dead URL.

I advise that you always monitor for 404 errors, and a good tool for that is [SEMRUSH](#).

SEMRUSH can also be used for monitoring the external backlinks that point to your website.

## If you decide to delete a URL, use a 301 redirect

It is always better to be safe than to be sorry, and a good routine to implement is always to use 301 redirects if you must delete a URL.

You point the old URL to a relevant new URL and if there is no relevant URL, then point it to the most relevant category of your page.

If no relevant category is present, then point the old URL to the site's front page.

You must use a 301 redirect - never a 302 redirect.

The difference is that Google follows a 301 redirect and pass the link juice. [A 302 redirect](#) is considered a temporary redirect.

## Final thoughts about updating content and to improve your Google rankings

There is nothing wrong with updating content - in fact, you should update your best content regularly if you can bring more value to your users and improve your Google rankings.

Again you should pay attention to keywords that are already ranking - imagine you have a position in the SERPs, and you eliminate that keyword from some of the prominent spots as your headline, the H1 or H2 tags.

If you remove your primary keywords from such prominent positions, there is a good chance that you confuse Google and that URL is not going to rank.

You might also face a situation where a wrong URL is ranking for one of your primary keywords.

Those kinds of errors usually don't take a long time to fix, and I have made a [blog post about what you can do if a wrong URL is ranking for a keyword](#).

Keeping content fresh and updated can be a real pain in the behind, but you need to pay attention to your main competitors.

If they have better content or answer user questions and similar stuff, you need to keep up.

It can be a great help if you have a strategy for writing or updating your content briefs.

I have made a blog post about [how to create content optimized for SEO here](#).

Remember to sign up for our newsletter and be updated about what's cooking in the SEO Geek Lab and keep or improve your Google rankings.

**There are no comments yet.**