

## Retaining Search Engine Positions during the Migration Process

Migrating to a new ecommerce platform can be extremely beneficial to your company; however the migration process should be done with intelligent and precise planning. One of the biggest fears companies have when migrating a site from ecommerce platform to another is the possible loss of search engine positions. Some companies experience great gains in search engine positions after the migration process and some companies experience great losses. This document explains why the positions change and simple steps you can take to avoid common pitfalls.

**Why?** There are two major mistakes that many eretailers make when migrating to a new ecommerce platform. The first is that they change the URLs of their web pages and do not place 301 redirects on the old page URLs. Ideally you want to retain the same URLs on the new site that were in place on the old site. Each of your search engine listings send users to a specific page URL that is tied into that listing, thus if you change that page URL and don't place a 301 redirect on it your visitors will be set to a error page. Most eretailers have numerous marketing campaigns and back links pointing to specific page URLs within a site, thus changing the URLs can also greatly affect any marketing programs. Example:

If the old site had a page URL of <http://www.machinteractive.com/paid-search-engine-marketing-services.asp> then the new site should retain the URL <http://www.machinteractive.com/paid-search-engine-marketing-services.asp>

In many cases this is either not possible or an eretailer wants to intentionally revise the URL structures. In this case they would need to create and insert 301 redirects into the old pages with the forwarding address of the new page. Example:

### 301 Redirects (for .ASP pages)

Create a new page with the same name and extension for all the files which you have deleted. For example: If you have deleted the file having the name example.asp then recreate the new page with the same name. You will need to then place the following code into the file:

```
<%  
Response.Status="301 Moved Permanently"  
Response.AddHeader "Location", "http://www.new-url.com"  
response.end  
>
```

You have to follow this process for every page which you have on your site, which has been changed.

The second major mistake commonly made is changing the on page variables that greatly affect a site's ranking. By removing / altering these on page variables your search engine positions can

immediately plummet. It is always best to seek Professional Search Engine Optimization Agencies' assistance with this so that all of the page variables can be mapped and brought over to the new site's design and structure. Most search engine optimization companies also have a number of proprietary tools that they can use to examine the new site's search engine friendliness, which is vital to review before taking the new site live. The most important on page variables to make sure you retain are as follows

1. Title Tags
2. META Tags
3. Keyword Density
4. H1 Tags
5. Alt Tags on Pictures

There are literally hundreds of possible factors that affect your sites search engine rankings, incorporating the above steps will not guarantee that you will retain your rankings, however they will greatly increase your chances of retaining them.

Once the new site has been brought live make sure to monitor error reports from your web analytics software. This way if anything has fallen between the cracks or any major issues arise you can quickly identify and rectify them.

## **About MachInteractive**

[MachInteractive](#), a division of MachroTech LLC, is a full-service interactive marketing firm that specializes in search engine marketing services designed to deliver targeted sales prospects and paying customers. Our team of Internet marketing experts and eBusiness professionals is expert at deploying search engine strategies that produce measurable business results.

Services Include:

- **Strategic Site Migration**
- **Online Marketing Strategy**
- **Natural Search Engine Optimization**
- **Paid Search Engine Marketing** (e.g., pay per click)
- **Website Analytics Consulting**

See the article at <http://www.goecart.com/enewsletter/sep06/Migrating-Ecommerce-Storefront.asp> for additional site migration information.

You can also contact MachInteractive for a case study of the migration of GoECart.com.