

7 SEO MISTAKES TO AVOID

During Your Next

ALASKA WEBSITE REDESIGN

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Ignoring SEO from the start



Though we are over 15 years from the turn of the century, it's pretty obvious that many Alaskan websites are just catching on to that fact. Fortunately, many businesses are realizing that it's time for a website redesign. When doing so, it's easy to focus only on the features that are appealing to the eye. But to ensure your new site will truly resonate with your target audience (and to save yourself from some major headaches down the road) you need SEO to be ingrained in your redesign strategy from the very beginning.

Think of it this way: you could spend countless dollars on upgrading your car with a shiny new body, tinted windows, new wheels. But without seats, no one can ride it.

SEO are the seats in your vehicle. Make sure to take discoverability and accessibility equally into account when thinking about your sleek new site.

#SEO redesign MISTAKE NUMBER 2

Not doing an audit of your existing site

Before you bust out the wrecking ball and start demolishing your soon-to-be-forgotten site, make sure you take the time to examine it to determine what's working and what isn't.

Here are some key metrics you may want to consider when auditing your site:

- Number of visits/visitors/unique visitors (monthly average)
- Top performing keywords (in terms of rank, traffic, and lead generation)
- Number of inbound linking domains
- Total number of total pages indexed
- Total number of pages that receive traffic

Wish you had a master document where you could record all of these important metrics and track the progress of your website redesign?



Improper identification and/or use of keywords

Find **search engine optimization** services? We are a **search engine optimization** experts. Why not talk to an experienced **search engine optimization** company? Our **search engine optimization** experts analyze and optimize your website to help improve your performance.

It's a new era for SEO, and considering how much many Alaskan businesses thrive on tourism, SEO should be a top priority – its how much of that tourism traffic will find you.

Moreover, SEO standards are changing. If Google finds out that you are blatantly overusing (or hiding) keywords on your site, your credibility (and rankings) could take a serious hit. Anymore, site keywords need to be used in natural, organic contexts.

To quote from Google directly,

“In creating a helpful, information-rich site, write pages that clearly and accurately describe your topic. Think about the words users would type to find your pages and include those words on your site.”

Not considering URL structure

If your site is littered with lengthy, indecipherable URLs that don't align well with the actual content of your site pages, restructuring your URLs should definitely be a priority during your next website redesign. Search engines prefer URLs that make it easy to understand what your page content is all about.

Fortunately, many Alaskan businesses – especially in the service industry – thrive in a niche. Thus much their content is highly interrelateable and very SEO friendly.

A general rule to follow when creating your new URLs: use dashes (-) between words instead of underscores (_).

Google treats dashes as separators, which means it can return results when you search for a single word that appears in a URL and when you search for a group of words that appears in a URL. In contrast, Google treats underscores as connectors, which means it will only return results when you search for a group of connected words that appears in a URL.

The bottom line: using dashes creates more opportunities for your pages to be discovered.

Holding on to negative SEO



Over time – and I am safe in saying that many Alaskan websites go years before considering a redesign – websites can build a lot of backlink “junk” from external sites that are no longer in use or have become poor in standing.

We all know that getting backlinks (a.k.a. inbound links) from trusted websites is a great way to give your website’s search rankings a boost, but if Google finds backlinks from spammy, low-quality sites, your rankings will suffer. This is known as “negative SEO”.

A website redesign presents the perfect opportunity for you to analyze your backlinks and remove the shady ones. If you use Google Webmaster Tools, you’ll see a “manual penalty” appear if Google detects one of these low-quality links. You’ll then have the option to make such links “no follows” so Google stops paying attention to them.

Not implementing responsive design



Earlier this year Google announced that a website's responsive design will be a significant factor in how well it is ranked. Websites that are optimized for mobile will fair significantly better in search results than websites that aren't.

With responsive design, all of your website's URLs are the same across all devices, and they all serve up the same HTML code. This isn't the case with other mobile configurations, such as setting up a separate, mobile-only site (which requires a different set of URLs) or implementing dynamic serving (which uses the same URLs but serves up different HTML).

With responsive design, the only thing that changes across devices is the styling. This configuration makes it easier for Google to crawl your pages and retrieve your content.

Failing to think like a human



With the Hummingbird update of 2013, Google gained the ability to recognize full-sentence queries. Google doesn't want to deliver you "results" anymore, they want to deliver answers. And the best answers don't come from content farms, they come from websites that are crafted with their visitors -- human beings -- in mind.

One of the best things you can do when going through the process of designing or working with a designer for your new site is put yourself in the place of people who are visiting your site. What questions do you have answers for?

Considering the niche oriented market of Alaska, this will be much easier for many Alaskan businesses to do because they tend a pretty firm idea of why people come to them.

ABOUT US



Internet Marketing Alaska is a division of NorthWest Data Solutions (NWDS) based in Anchorage, Alaska. Our mission is to help businesses succeed in the ever-changing internet environment. NWDS was founded in 2003 and designed around creating marketing that people love.