

Redirects

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Learning objectives

After finishing this reading material you will be able to

- explain what redirects are and understand why they are important
 - manage redirects in the Yoast SEO plugin
 - explain when to use different types of redirects
 - explain what Regex redirects entail and understand where to manage these redirects in the Yoast SEO plugin.
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1. What are redirects?

Whether you're cleaning up pages on your site or changing your site structure, everybody has to delete posts or pages at some point. Deleting

comes with a risk though, because when the old URL gets visitors, they'll be served a 404 not found error. In most cases, especially for a frequently visited page, you'd want to redirect the old URL to a new one with the information you think is most relevant to these visitors. In other cases you might want to tell your visitors content has been deleted or temporarily show another page. This is not only important for visitors, but also for search engines. You have to tell search engine robots that there has been a change in your URLs and that they have to go somewhere else, temporarily or permanently.

2. Redirects in Yoast SEO

The premium version of the Yoast SEO plugin can help you with creating and managing redirects. On the Redirects page, you'll find a redirect manager and an overview of all the redirects you've created.

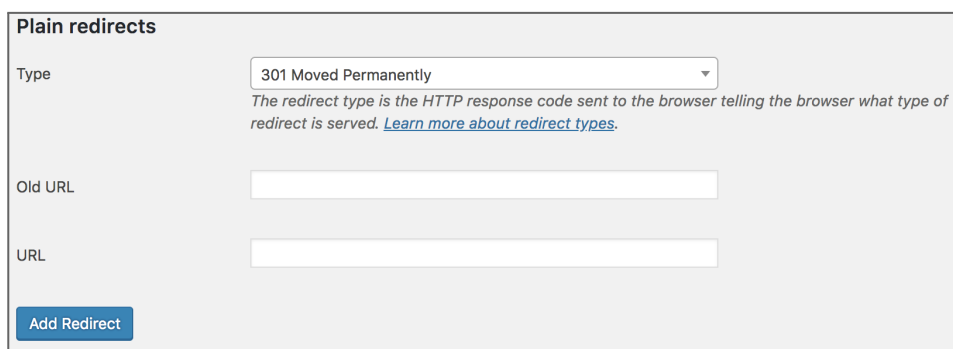
The image shows a screenshot of the 'Plain redirects' section in the Yoast SEO plugin. It features a form with three main input fields: 'Type', 'Old URL', and 'URL'. The 'Type' field is a dropdown menu currently set to '301 Moved Permanently'. Below this dropdown is a small text box explaining that the redirect type is the HTTP response code sent to the browser, with a link to 'Learn more about redirect types'. The 'Old URL' and 'URL' fields are empty text boxes. At the bottom left of the form is a blue button labeled 'Add Redirect'.

Image 1: Redirect manager in Yoast SEO

If you want to add a redirect via the redirects manager of Yoast SEO, all you have to do is select the type of redirect; enter the old URL; enter the new URL and hit 'Add Redirect'. You can either type in the absolute URL (the full URL, including the protocol and/or the domain, e.g. `'http://www.example.com/contact'`) or the relative URL (just the path, without the protocol and the domain, e.g. `'/contact'`). After you've clicked the button, the redirect manager will check whether that redirect can be made. All the redirects you add will show up in the overview below the redirect manager.

Redirects can also be created in other places of the plugin. For example, if you change the slug of one of your posts, the Yoast SEO plugin will automatically create a redirect for you. This redirect will also show up in the overview below the redirect manager.

3. Different types of redirects

There are many cases in which you might use a redirect, for example, when:

- you delete a page or post;
- you transfer your site to a new domain;
- you no longer want to use www in your domain;
- you merge websites;
- you change your CMS;
- you change your URL structure.

Because of this, there are a couple of different redirect types that you can choose from in Yoast SEO Premium:

301 – Moved permanently

The 301 is one of the most common redirects. Use this if you permanently want to redirect a deleted or moved page, or if you've changed something in your URL structure. By using this redirect, you tell search engine robots that this page is no longer available in this location and that it should no longer be indexed. If you don't set a redirect correctly, chances are your visitors – and crawl bots – will see [404 error messages](#), and that's not something you want.

302 - Found

A 302 is a fairly ambiguous redirect and is often used to make a temporary redirect. The code means that the requested content is found, but it lives under a different location. Why? It doesn't say. If you want to make sure visitors get to an alternative page when visiting this particular page, and you want to reuse the URL in the future, you can use a 302. So, this redirect is usually temporary and it doesn't carry or pass on link value to the new location.

Let's say you have a webshop with a product that's no longer for sale because it's seasonal. In this case, you might want to use a 302 redirect to send the user to the category page, so the users can look at similar items. And with the 302 redirect, you're telling search engine crawlers that your content is only offline temporarily.

307 - Temporary redirect

302s are often used to create temporary redirects, but with the advent of HTTP1.1 307 has taken its place as a valid temporary redirect. A 307 explicitly states that the requested URL has been moved to a temporary location and

will be back in a while.

Since this request can change in the future, the request has to keep being made with the original URL. Use this redirect if you're sure that the move is temporary and that you'll still need the original URL later on.

So, when to use a 307? If the URL is really temporary, you should use a 307. You should only use a 302 if you want the URL that you're redirecting to show up in the search results with the content of the page that you're redirecting to. If that's not what you want, use a 307. If something's not temporary but permanent, use a 301.

410 - Content deleted

You can use a 301 to redirect the page with the 404 to a relevant page, or the homepage, but in some cases, you might prefer another way: tell search engines – and users – this page was correctly deleted with a 410 redirect. This way, they know that the page won't return and can, therefore, delete the page from the index.

451 - Content unavailable or legal reasons

Should you ever be ordered by a judge to delete a page or in case you get a notice and takedown request, you should give this page a 451 header. This way, you tell search engines that there was a post here and that you wanted to fulfill this request, but some legal reason told you not to do so.

4. Regex redirects

If you're an expert SEO and you need to do complex redirections, you may need to use [Regex redirects](#). With normal redirects, you specify a single source URL and a destination URL. With Regex – regular expressions – redirects, you can, for instance, make a single redirect to move entire groups of URLs containing a specific keyphrase to a new location. This could save you a ton of time while working on a massive SEO project. However, you should only use Regex redirects if you know what you're doing because they can easily break your site.

Regular Expression redirects

Regular Expression (regex) Redirects are extremely powerful redirects. You should only use them if you know what you are doing. [Read more about regex redirects on our knowledge base.](#)

Type

301 Moved Permanently

The redirect type is the HTTP response code sent to the browser telling the browser what type of redirect is served. [Learn more about redirect types.](#)

Regular Expression

URL

Add Redirect

Image 2: Regex redirects in Yoast SEO



Key takeaways

- Whenever you delete a page, change your URL structure or switch to a new domain, you have to redirect your URLs
- We've explained how to create and manage redirects with the Yoast SEO plugin
- We've discussed the different types of redirects, including Regex redirects