

It works 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. It interacts with thousands of customers. It has detailed knowledge of your company, products, services, and history. Even with everything it does for your organization, if your website provides customers with poor information, gives out bad directions, or communicates using garbled messages, it might be time to reassess its role in the company.

The truth is, broken links and misspellings on your website give your visitors a frustrating and unprofessional experience that has your organization's logo written all over it.

Broken Links

What causes them?

The most common cause of a broken link, which results in a “404 Error” page, is that the targeted page simply doesn’t exist. This can happen for a few reasons, including:



Bad URLs

These can be the result of mistyping the URL, a URL being moved or changed internally, or if a third party URL is moved without your knowledge. In the case of an internal change, updating the link should fix the situation. However, third party URL changes can be more complicated. In some cases you might be able to track down the new URL, but often times you’ll be forced to remove the link entirely. Be sure to frequently monitor links that direct users to a third party.

Changed domain name

If your company redesigns its website, migrates to a new Content Management System (CMS), or switches hosting servers, it can impact the naming convention of the previously used URL. Even during the smoothest website migrations, things happen. Links break, content vanishes, and keeping track of every line of code is nearly impossible. After completing your migration or redesign, be sure to re-check every page for broken links.

How do they impact your company?

Reputation & credibility

Customers come to your site because they believe that your organization can provide them with a solution to their needs. Broken links present them with roadblocks and dead-ends that will lead them to second-guess your organization’s ability to deliver what they need.

Poor user experience & loss of sales

Broken links prevent visitors from reaching, accessing, and interacting with desired content. When they aren’t able to solve a problem, they can’t form a positive connection with your organization. As a result, one of two things will happen: Either they won’t think of you for their future needs, or they’ll remember their previous experience and actively choose to not do business with you.

Word of mouth

Good news travels fast. Bad news travels faster. According to CeBIT, 81% of people are influenced by the opinions of others on social media. Everything on the internet is highly visible and easily shareable. Don’t let an error on your website spread like wildfire.

Misspellings

From honest mistakes to blatant disregard for the conventions of a language, not all misspellings are created equal.

Incorrect spelling & typos

We've all read an article, blog, or webpage and thought, "Wait, is that even a word?" Nope. Sometimes an accidental keystroke results in the inadvertent creation of a word that will never be recognized by a dictionary. Spellcheck is your friend, but proofreading is your savior. Set up a reliable editing workflow before you release your content into the world.

Contextual misspellings

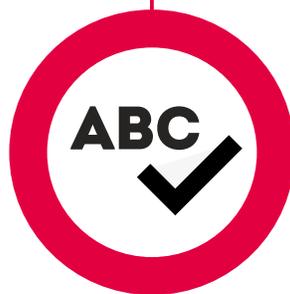
Sometimes a simple oversight can lead to contextual misspellings slipping through the cracks. These occur when a word isn't technically misspelled but still looks out of place in the context of a sentence. For example: "sad" / "said". These ones are tricky, because standard spellchecking tools aren't likely to catch them. Spending an extra five minutes proofreading your content out loud will save you a lot of embarrassment and hassle down the road.

Homophones

Homophones are some of the most common misspellings in print and online materials. These words may sound alike, but they're spelled differently and have very different meanings and uses. For example, in English:

There / Their / They're
Your / You're
To / Too
Affect / Effect

The majority of the time, these types of misspellings occur purely by accident. However, it doesn't take away from the fact that they're distracting and can lead people to question your credibility and professionalism.



How do they impact your company?

Reputation & credibility

When you see misspellings on a website, chances are that you'll give them the benefit of the doubt. But think about this: Would you trust a law firm to properly represent you in court if they had a website riddled with misspellings? What about enrolling at a university or college that didn't know the difference between "your" and "you're"? Honest mistake or not, it might give you a reason to second-guess their qualifications.

Customer experience

The first thing misspellings do is interrupt a customer's experience with your website. The reader stops to take notice before continuing on. Even if only for a moment, the reader is removed from connecting with your brand. During that fraction of second, they're deciding whether or not to continue reading, if they should consider your organization for a solution to their problem, and whether or not they should begin looking elsewhere.

Loss of sales, future business

Customers may be willing to overlook an error on the first occasion, but they're likely to remember it the next time around, especially if the error hasn't been fixed. Misspellings and broken links may seem trivial by themselves, but they can quickly add up to derail a user's experience with your digital presence if you're not monitoring for them consistently.

Act With Digital Certainty

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