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Case Study

DELL USES SEOCLARITY SITE AUDITS TO RESTRUCTURE WEB PAGES

SITE AUDITS HELP DELL RESTRUCTURE THOUSANDS OF WEB PAGES IN RECORD TIME

When the web development team at Dell was asked to desegment and restructure Dell.com in less than 12 months, the company turned to seoClarity's site audits to help them save hundreds of hours of manual processing.

"seoClarity as a platform provides a lot for us in terms of actual insights and allows us to know exactly where we need to apply our efforts in order to have the best results for our team, based on whatever goals we set."

–Dell's, Global Online SEO Senior Advisor

Dell is one of the biggest, most recognizable names in the computer technology industry. The company develops, sells, repairs and offers support for its full line of computers, servers, televisions, printers, software and data storage devices, as well as all of their related products and services.

Not surprisingly, a lot of Dell customers use the company's website to research and purchase products, as well as troubleshoot issues, contact customer support, submit repairs and conduct pretty much any other business they may have related to their devices. And so naturally, this means that Dell's website is incredibly huge and complex, with thousands of different pages meant to allow customers to attend to any business that they may have.

For nearly 15 years, Dell had been developing a system for its Dell.com website that intended to segment the user experience for each visitor based on their individual demographic information and purpose for visiting the site in the first place. This meant the company had to find out if a visitor was a business or a consumer, a federal or state customer, etc.

"We were basically interrogating users as soon as they got to Dell.com," explained Dell's Global Online SEO Senior Advisor. "We were asking them to identify themselves and then choose their experiences based on that."

However, this ended up being pretty confusing for many users, who were maybe unsure of what size classification

- The segmented experience of Dell. com just wasn't working for the company or its customers anymore, so the web development team was asked to restructure and desegment the entire site in one year

- This was going to require all of the redirects and broken link on all of the site's web pages (which number high into the thousands), a process that would take hundreds of hours if it were done manually

- Dell turned to seoClarity to utilize the platform's site audit functionality to not only identify all of Dell.com's redirects, but also enlisted the seoClarity team to crawl all of the results of all of those redirects

- seoClarity was able to identify thousands of redirects that were diluting the site's link equity, and Dell's team was able to make the appropriate adjustments necessary to fix the problems

- Since then, the desegmented version of Dell.com has stabilized many areas of the site and even helped increase conversion rates

- All of this was accomplished in less than 12 months using seoClarity

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their businesses may fit into or they were independent contractors hired out to work for federal agencies, etc. This made the Dell.com experience far too muddled and confusing for most users. Dell eventually decided that it was time for a change, and the company tasked its web development department with creating a new, desegmented user experience…and gave them just one year to do it.

Of course, this led to another problem: trying to figure out what will happen with the multiple versions of each page on the site that were specifically created for the segmented experience, and how the company could retain the same page strength and link equity that all of those pages had accrued over time.

"The big question that we needed to make sure we understood first was what exactly the current state of the site was," said Dell. "In other words, how many 301 redirects have we created in the process of building up this site over the past 15–20 years? How many successes through one redirect or serial redirects have we created, and how rampant is the problem?"

Luckily for Dell, they had some previous experience using the seoClarity platform, and knew that it could help his team dramatically streamline and hasten their work. In particular, the platform's site auditing functionality could dive deep into Dell's website to understand where all of its redirects were going and figure out just what kind of mess they had on their hands with their "antiquated, segmented site."

"seoClarity fills that need far better than any other technology, because it does more than just provide us with executive dashboards that show us where we're ranking," said Dell. "All tools do ranking measurement and integer Omniture data – that's nothing special – but not many of them were able to give us actual insights on a broader scale, or even down to a page-specific scale that we felt we needed."

Dell felt that most "SEO tech knowledge tools" were too focused on on-page content—that most of them were behind the times, trying to push a keyword-centric approach to SEO that Google is intentionally moving away from in an effort to focus on quality content that happens to have keyword coverage.

seoClarity was able to step up and help Dell locate all of its site's 301 redirects, something that other SEO tools couldn't handle. However, after Dell's team made adjustments to those redirects, they started seeing a number of other issues, like 302 redirects, broken links and serial redirects that would send all of the versions of a page down to a single one.

"That's where the site audits and the seoClarity team, in particular, really came through for us," said Dell. "The platform identifies that there is a 301 or 302 or 404 or 401, but we were looking for those serial redirects. So, I engaged the seoClarity engineering team to not only crawl the site, but crawl the results, and those results, and then crawl those results."

By taking such a thorough approach to auditing Dell.com, and utilizing the availability of the seoClarity team, Dell was able to identify a large number of serial redirects that were massively diluting their link equity to destination pages. This saved Dell's team from what would have otherwise been a very exhausting manual process that would have required going through every redirect that another SEO tool put out, meaning they would have had to individually investigate redirects to thousands of pages every time they desegmented the site for a different country, with potentially over a thousand links per country.

The new Dell.com was launched first in Australia in January of 2013, with the U.S. version going live in March 2013. These days, seoClarity and its site audits technology have become an essential part of Dell's daily SEO routine. Dell's team uses ongoing audits to determine which pages on Dell.com are missing vital information, such as page titles, H1 tags and much more, including any CMS issues that may exist. And when Dell redesigned a portion of its site, seoClarity site audits were able to identify four-thousand pages that were missing meta descriptions.

In addition, Dell's website desegmentation efforts, which were largely aided by seoClarity's site audits, have helped to stabilize the site in certain areas and increase conversion rates.

Visitors didn't like the segmented user experience of Dell.com, and the Web development team had one year to desegment the site, but in almost 20 years, it had accrued many 301 redirects that diluted link quality. seoClarity's site audits identified every redirect page-by-page, saving the team hours of manual processing.

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