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AICPA. It's an exciting thought, but how might it impact your firm?

**Becky Livingston • Dec. 29, 2020**



You may have heard some buzz about the top-level domain “.CPA” promoted by the [AICPA](#). It’s an exciting thought, but how might it impact your firm?

## Why would I change my domain name?

There may come a time at your firm when moving to the next level may require a change to your online presence. Maybe you've:

- Merged with another firm locally or even in another state, thereby changing the firm's name.
- Added another top-level partner at your firm who deserved top billing.

- Expanded services and want to rebrand. There are many reasons to consider a

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According to [Search Engine Watch](#), “Moving domains can do a serious number on your search engine rankings. Not because your brand virtually disappears for a short while, but because top search engines, such as Google, determine rankings through metrics based on both domain level and page level. When you decide to switch to a new domain, you basically reset these domain metrics back to zero.”

[Ignite Visibility](#) said this about making the shift, “No matter the reason for wanting to change a URL, it will likely result in a drop in traffic while Google indexes the changes, even when performed correctly.”

### Additional Side Effects

- If you sold the old domain name, the previous link equity will nosedive and its existing domain authority diminishes.
- If a redirect from the old domain to the new one is not in place, you will also experience an immediate loss in traffic.
- There may be a temporary page-load delay. [Pingdom](#) says, “An ideal website load time should be no more than 2 seconds. The probability of bounce rate increases by 32% if the page load time increases from 1 to 3 seconds.” Bounce rate is tracked when someone enters your site and leaves from the same page without visiting another page.
- You may lose previous referral traffic and its boost in “rank factor.”
- In some cases, you may experience a duplicate content issue if the search engine had your old domain content indexed and is now also indexing the new one, it will see that the content is the same on both sites. When that happens, consider implementing “a [canonical URL extension](#) to remove duplicate content issues,” says Search Engine Watch.
- If the redirect is implemented incorrectly, it could create an email link failure, increasing the chances the firm's email meets the spam filter.

## Technical Remedies

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- Enable a 404 page on the old domain that links to the new one.
- In a development environment, test the redirects. When successful, implement them.
- Fix any errors the Bing and Google Webmaster Tools diagnostics identify.
- Add a [broken link checker plugin](#) to your WordPress site and fix any broken links.
- Download the [Screaming Frog SEO Spider tool](#) to view, analyze, and filter the crawl data and examine backlinks on the site.
- Use the [SEMrush website crawler](#) to inspect incoming links and anchor text.

## Further Impact

In addition to the technical aspects, there are also several non-technical areas to consider, such as:

- Updating the URL on the website's terms and conditions, privacy policy, and disclaimer pages.
- Ensuring website forms are using the new domain email address.
- Sending notices to other resources like the Chamber of Commerce or "lists" your firm may be on.
- Revising all social media profiles using the old URL.
- Modifying print and online advertising.
- Changing email signatures and email service provider settings, such as MailChimp or Constant Contact.
- Correcting anything else with your URL on it, such as brochures, business cards, company clothing, promotional items, conference banners, presentation templates, and more.

Initially, the change to a new domain might sound simple, but in reality, it's quite a complex undertaking. When done well, the impact on your search ranking should be minimal.

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