The SEO way to safely redirect a Page or folder using 301 redirects

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In a recent project we are restructuring a site to be more intuitively architected. But what impact will moving the directories or pages have on all that hard earned Search Engine Ranking Optimisation work?

This article deals with how to safely redirect users from an old page or folder to the new URL, and keep Search Engine's informed of your changes without leading them to dead content (Dead content is bad and will adversely affect your Site rankings).

The most Search engine friendly way to redirect a user from an old page to a new one is using a 301 redirect. Search engines (Google in particular) will 'hard' remember the 301 redirect when they crawl your site. They will actually update their indexes with them, rather than 302 redirects (Moved Temporarily) which they will simply follow.

301 Redirects are handled on the server side, so a user's browser will never actually hit the old URL, meaning that all your analytics and tracking will naturally report on the new redirected URL.

I am using a few different technologies, so I thought I'd work out the best way to implement 301 redirects in each of them.

Isapi ReWrite

Isapi ReWrite is a URL re writing engine that uses Regular Expressions to create more interesting URL's http://www.isapirewrite.com/

The first example will redirect an entire domain (mysite.com to www. mysite.com).

```
          RewriteCond Host: ^mysite\.com
    RewriteRule (.*) http\://www\.mysite\.com$1 [I,RP]
```

The next example will redirect specific page URL's:

```
RewriteRule /old-template.cfm http://www.example.com/new-template.cfm [I,O,RP,L]
```

I wont go into the specifics here, but the site link above has extensive documentation.

IIS

Using Internet Information Services it is possible to do this at a server level.

In internet services manager, right click on the file or folder you wish to redirect
Select the radio titled 'a redirection to a URL'
Enter the redirection page
Check 'The exact url entered above' and the 'A permanent redirection for this resource'
Click on 'Apply'

Coldfusion

You could also do this in code, I guess either in your default document, or in the 'application.cfm' file.

```
    <cfheader statuscode="301" statustext="Moved permanently">
    <cfheader name="Location" value="http://www.mynewdomain.com">
```

This feels a bit more like a hack to me, and I think this sits squarely in the servers remit, so I think I'm going to use IIS to handle all my 301 redirects.

You can test your redirects online with various tools, one that I have always found accurate is here: http://www.webconfs.com/redirect-check.php