Lab Workshop: 01/15/2019
Performing A Content Audit – Step-by-step
Transcript

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Intro

Welcome guys, to our workshop here this afternoon. It's not a big turnout here in terms of live. We might have some more people pile in as we're doing it, but being that this is a workshop and everybody knows this is recorded, anyway, that's totally fine. I always have more people who go to these workshops as a recording than I do live, and that's totally cool. I understand too, that I don't do this at the most opportune time for a lot of people because it's more about my schedule.

It looks like we are having a few... "I got here from email but denied access on messenger link." Yeah, I don't know... I got to look into that; anyway, I'm not sure what's going on there. But being that we're on the air here, I don't have time to debug it at the moment.

So today we're going to be talking about doing a content audit. We'll get to that in just a little bit.

Do I have any announcements here with regard to the Lab first...? I just got published the brand new Quick Win video; you might have gotten the email on that, having to do with using advanced customer fields in order to customize WordPress. So I'm going to be talking a little bit about that here on this workshop as well, but just so you know, that video is inside the Lab now as a Quick Win for you. I have got some other ones that are in the works; I'll be getting those out to you soon.

Another thing with regard to the Office Hours Calls in terms of the recordings is that my assistant is in the process of going back into the archives and bringing all those Office Hours up to the present standards in terms of recordings. And the big thing there is that she is setting up the video jumplinks, and so you will be able to actually click on any question or any topic and it will jump forward in the recording and will start showing right there.

And so, by having that setup; first of all, when you run a search using the Blog Marketing Academy search engine at the top of the site and plug in the keyword for questions that were addressed in the Office Hours will now show up in search results. The Office Hours will actually be searchable, but the other thing too is that you'll actually going to be able to click on just the things that you are interested in; it will jump right to it in the video, you won't have to wait for the entire thing and find it, whereas before, it was just a bunch of bullet points. Now it's actually going to be clickable links and I'll update you guys via the email list once we have all those things processed and the new setup in place.

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So we're going to go ahead and go to screen; we're going to go ahead and get started here with our workshop. We're going to go ahead and go fullscreen here. As we do, typically when I go fullscreen I am not actually going to see the chatroom. And so, if you have any questions about anything that I'm talking about here, just either type it in to the chat and I'll get to it after the fact or just hold your horses and ask me at the end. ☺

Today, we're going to be talking about doing a content audit for your blog. It is something that I am actually in the process of doing now, here at the Blog Marketing Academy and I have not done one at all, ever. And it really does show because I have got my work cut out for me. I'll show you a little bit about I'm doing...

So if you have been blogging for a while, you are going to have a rather large collection of archives.

You are going to have a lot of posts sitting back there that you have probably wrote a long time ago, you really haven't looked at them since.

Now, my personal blog archives here at the Academy went all the way back to the year 2006. So that gives you an idea just how large the archives "were" here at the Blog Marketing Academy. I'll give you some exact numbers coming up here, but there was massive. And depending on how long you've been blogging and stuff like that, your archives might be quite large.

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Most of the times once you publish a blog post, you tend to just move on, and you rarely will re-visit it. And something that I do encourage a lot of people to re-evaluate and maybe change their ways because you guys have probably seen me talk about the redwood strategy a lot; there's a whole course here inside the Lab on doing the **Redwood Strategy** --- but it had to do it with re-updating posts over time, periodically and really turning each one into a big resource that really excels in terms of SEO and traffic and social visits and things like that. But you can't do that if you are just constantly churning out new stuff and you never come back to the old stuff. **So after a while of doing it this old way, it really does make sense to go back into your archive and do a little bit of a spring cleaning on those posts in your archives. And this is what is often referred to as a content audit.**

It's kind of like getting a tax audit, although a tax audit will be a lot less pleasant... ☺ But going back and doing a content audit just means you're going back into your archives, you're re-evaluating each post, and you're doing a number of different actions on that post depending on what you think of it. And we will be going over that in just a minute.

Why Do An Audit?

So why would you want to do one of these things?

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- First of all, the big thing is that it's really going to give your blog a cleaner footprint when it comes to Google. And there are other search engines obviously, but you know, we pretty much have to do with Google here because they do dominate search.

  Well, if you have a cleaner blog footprint, then basically Google is spending a less time indexing garbage. (We'll go over that in just a bit) But when you clean up the weeds, it allows the larger trees that are once that really excel to perform better.

- Now, when you do that; when you present that cleaner footprint to Google, this can result in you getting more traffic, which means you can actually delete a bunch of content from your blog and increase your traffic by doing it. Less content but higher quality and get more traffic because you're presenting a cleaner footprint to Google.

- Also, when you go back and do a content audit, you can optimize the performance of your pre-existing content. Most likely you've got a lot of content back in your archives that is just not optimize. It doesn't have lead magnet it and it's maybe even linking to crap that doesn't exist anymore and it's just not working for you.

  I mean, you can imagine with my archives, going back to 2006, I had a lot of embarrassing crap out there. Not embarrassing as in what I was talking about, but just in comparing that crap to my current standards with the type of content that I create, it was embarrassing.

  I mean, they're just really, real junk and there are still some more back there that I am dealing with now. But when you go back and you revisit these things, it gives you an opportunity to apply what you know now and how your business works now to your older content in order to bring everything up to speed.

- It also will reduce the load of creating brand new content from scratch because blogging has a reputation for being very high maintenance and it is a mistaken reputation; it doesn't have to be that way. But it becomes even easier when you realize that you don't have to constantly churn up new stuff, but that you can just simply spend time updating the old stuff. It makes things easier and it reduces the workload with regard to blogging.

So there are a few reasons why this is actually important. The first thing I want to come back to is the idea of the cleaner footprint that we're presenting to Google. There's something that is known in the world of SEO as a "Crawl budget"

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Crawl budget:

Crawl budget is a term invented by the SEO industry to indicate a number of related concepts and systems that search engines use when deciding how many pages, and which pages, to crawl. It's basically the attention that search engines will give your website.

lab

And the Crawl budget is just a term that was invented by the SEO industry to indicate a number of related concepts and systems that search engines use when deciding how many pages and which pages to crawl. It is basically the attention that search engines will give your website.

So let me break this down into more plain English...

These search engine spiders only have so much attention that they can pay to you. Now, if you take that available budget of search engine spidering energy, so to speak, and you presented them a bunch of garbage that's really not worth their time, then what is going to happen is that those spiders are going to see low quality, low value garbage that is probably not going to ever rank in search. And you're using up your crawl budget on that stuff. Whereas if you clear out the weeds, it will present a cleaner footprint and it can spend time on the content that really matters.

So in short...

Spiders only have so much attention to give your site. And if it is taken up crawling low quality crap, (Crap here is not a technical term) it means your best stuff is less likely to be indexed and perform well in search.

So removing the weeds means your crawl budget can be well spent. And this is a bigger deal, the bigger your archives are.

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As you can imagine, with me, my crawl budget was probably being very well wasted because I was presenting so much crap to Google. It was showing up in my site map and stuff like that; it was being presented to Google as something to be indexed, and it was a low value and low quality stuff that I wrote over a decade ago.

The other thing too is that each blog post is a marketing asset and should be optimized as the asset that it is. Large archives usually have a lot of unoptimized post. Fixing all that is just going to mean that you're going to get more opt-ins and more sales and all the stuff that we want from true, blog-based marketing. But you probably have gotten better at what you do over time. You're probably a better writer now than you were back when you started. Or maybe you just know more about how to optimize and tweak a blog post that you did when you first got started and so if you go back and apply those standards to the old stuff or just hose it all together, it's going to mean that your archives has a much higher likelihood of converting to list opt-ins and sales than it would before.

Depending on the size of your archives and how long it has been since you've done this, this could be quite a big project; and I speak from experience here because this is definitely a big project with me. It's not about it's been a long time since I've done an audit; it's just that I had literally never done one before. And here I am, doing this for a living; doing this professionally and I had never actually sat down and done a full content audit of the Blog Marketing Academy. And it really did show.

So if it's been a while for you, then you just need to work this into your ongoing content strategy. This is not something where you're going to probably be able to do a content audit in a day (unless you just got started). If you've been doing this in a long time, then this is just going to be an ongoing project and you'll **just whack away at it a little bit over time; doing a little bit over time, and then when you sit down to do your next blog post, spend a little time going back into the old archives and bring things up to speed.**

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Doing An Audit

So let's talk about actually doing an audit here...

What we're going to be doing here...

- We're going to be analyzing the performance of your content. We're actually going to be looking at the stats of each individual blog post; we want to see if that blog post is actually doing anything for us.

- We want to update any content that is outdated.

- We want to delete content that is irrelevant or low quality. And that idea of quality is something that you're going to provide a little bit of judgment to. Certainly, if it is irrelevant to what you do, then get rid of it because you need to keep your sight on topic here. But that idea of quality; you want to look at things like - how many words are in that content in terms of links, because we all know that Google is going to tend to have that sweet spot on the articles that it indexes and ranks well.

  The sweet spot tends to be in the 1500, maybe 2000 word length of a blog post. A lot of mine tend to be a lot more than that, actually. But the higher length post typically are going to be a sign of higher quality, if you do it right.

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You also need to have images and headlines and links... It needs to be a well-crafted piece of content, but you'll know the ones that are not good quality because it is usually super-short; it's just not anything of value, there.

- You're going to also consolidate posts that discuss the same thing. If your archives are big and you have been doing this a while, you might have talked about the same things several times. Well, why? So what you can actually do is make a note of those and you can consolidate them into one that is more updated and optimized.

- You can also redirect old posts to more modern optimized posts that you might have and there's a lot of cases where I've been on that... For example the income reports. I actually used to do income reports like Pat Flynn or some of these people, but I stopped a long, long time ago. But I have some of those old income report posts from like 2009 and 2010 and stuff that were... They're actually pointing at a little bit of traffic; not much, they were trickles, but they were there. And so what I did is that I wrote a more modern post on why I don't like income reports and I redirected all those old income reports to the new one and basically expanded the whole darn thing. So that would be an example of what you could do there.

Example: My Own Ongoing Internal Content Audit

So as an ongoing example of doing an audit, we're going to use my own internal project here at the Blog Marketing Academy as an example. I'll give you a few numbers and in a minute I'm also going to take you into my own WordPress admin panel and show you a little bit about how I have got things set up and sort of what I'm doing in there.

Now, before November of 2018; so this is actually when I got started on this project... Believe me, it's not like I'm spending an enormous amount of time that I'm doing this. It's just an ongoing effort that I've got and I started it in November of 2018. Before that though, I have never done an actual content audit. I know... **It's a real shocker, there**. I have been doing this a long time and I just had a lot of crap back there that had not been looked at.

At the time, my blog archive had 1,448 blog posts. That's what how many published posts I had in the archives when I started. And it went all the way back to 2006. So there was a LOT of crap back there and it really was crap. I had some blog posts in there that have like 2 or 3 paragraphs.

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I mean, it was just like total low value/low quality crap because that time that I first started all these, it was actually called "webyonline.com".

Sharron here that's on the call, live, might be the only one that ever remembers that domain. None of the rest of you probably ever heard of it. And then I went from that to davidrisley.com and then from that into blogmarketingacademy.com. So this site has been around to two identities even before it was ever known as Blog Marketing Academy, but the archives all fold on. And so there was a lot of crap.

So that garbage was still sitting there as "published" which means it has showed up in the XML site map that gets used by Google to index. And it presented a much cluttered trash-filled footprint to Google.

Now, as of this particular presentation; as on today, I am now down to 885 published posts in the archives. So I've deleted 39% of my archives, so far.

Many of them were just outright hosed; many of them were also rerouted to other posts in the archives. And that's so far… In fact, it's possible; if we go into the admin panel in a little bit, I'm a little less than 885 now. I don't really know, but that was the number as of yesterday, anyway.

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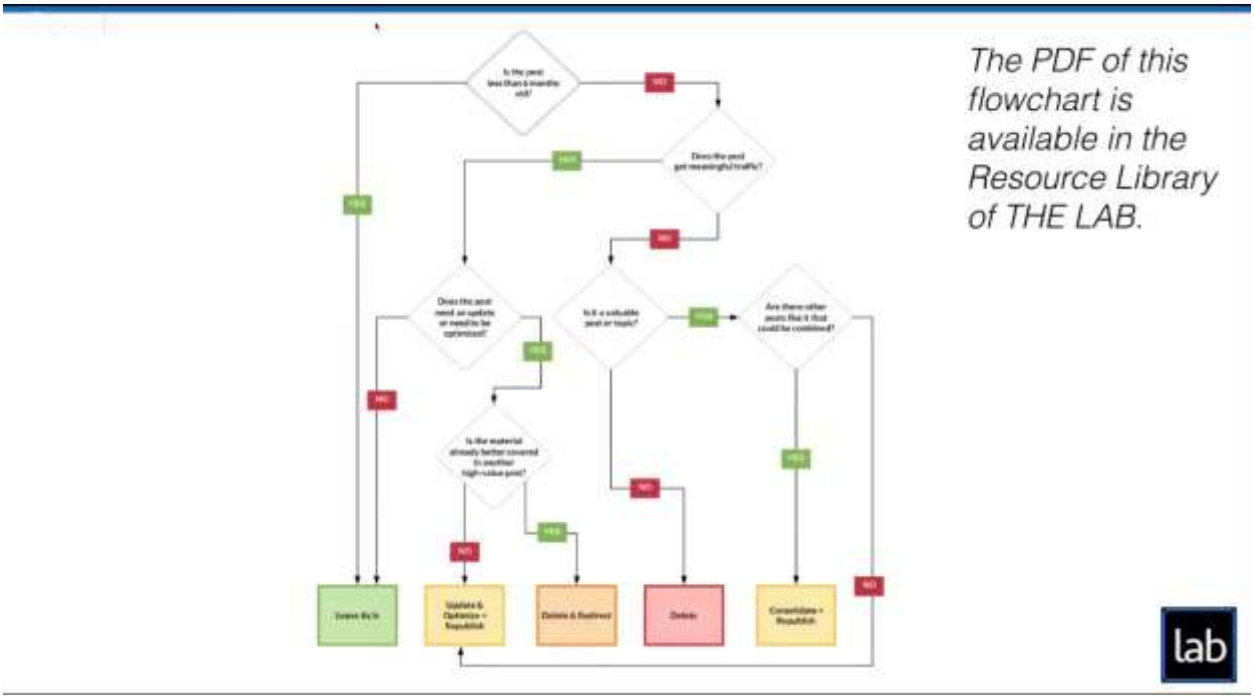
The Basic Process

So here's the basic process that I'm following and I actually have a flowchart to show you here.



Now, I will have you know that this flowchart is currently available as a download in the Resource Library of the Lab. I just put it up there this morning, in fact. So it's just called The **Content Audit Flowchart**. So we'll just walk through this. And it's pretty simple, really.

First of all what I started with is the post less than 6 months old. Now, if it is less than 6 months old, I pretty much don't even do a darn thing with it because it's a pretty current thing. In fact, you might even be able to up that decision up to maybe a year; if it's a pretty recent post, just don't do anything with it. However with older posts, then I go and I actually look at the traffic. Like, "Does the post get any meaningful traffic?"

Now, you're going to find some interesting scenarios there. Depending on how old your archives are, you are going to have a lot of posts back there in the early days of your blog, that just don't get traffic; just zero. And what you want to do is you want to look at the last 90 days or so. And if you get just a flatline; just zero, you know that nothing is happening in that blog post.

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Now, if you get a few little up ticks on the graph and you got a handful of people that are looking in that blog post, you then are going to other decision points. Decide whether you're going to delete anyway or whether you want to reroute it.

So if it is getting meaningful traffic, then you want to look at "Does it need an update or does it need to be optimized?" If not, if it's good to go, then you basically just leave it as it is. If it does need to be updated, then of course you're going to move forward into actually updating it.

Now, you want to ask the question; if it does need to be updated, you want to first look at "Is that same, basic material already being covered in a better way in another post of your archive?" And if it is, then you want to delete the old version and redirect it to the new version. And I will give you a couple of tools coming up here on how to manage those redirects. But that's what you want to do. You want to centralize any of that link juice or any of that traffic onto the one version of it that actually discusses the same topic but is more updated.

Now, if you don't have another post in the archives that covers the same thing, well then you just go and update that post. You're going to bring up speed, you're going to optimize it and you're going to republish that blog post. So, pretty simple.

Now, if the post is really not getting that much traffic, if it's just a little bleep on the radar or it is just flatlined zero, then you want to look at "Is it still a valuable topic?" Like does that material have any value for you in any way? If not, obviously we're just going to delete it. And depending on how old your archives are then in the early days you're probably going to have a lot of that.

That 39% of posts that I have so far deleted out of the Blog Marketing Academy, most of them got no traffic or just a couple of bleeps over a 90 day period and it was also just a crappy blog post. In that case, I just hose it. I mean I'm not even going to waste my time trying to update it or anything.

Now, if it is valuable material or something that can be repurposed in some way, worked into a lead magnet, worked into an email to your list; if there's any other way that you could utilize that content, then you want to save it somewhere or you would might want to consolidate it into another post that you're going to create. So you actually can take several of these things, create one new version that is really updated and optimized and you combine several of these things into one brand new post and then you republish that.

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But one thing; and I can probably add this to the flowchart as a version 2, would be that if there's any other way that you could use that content, that is not a blog post, you might want to consider that as well because you know, maybe you wrote something that it might be interesting but it's not getting any traffic, it's not really high value in terms of SEO, but maybe it might make a decent email that you can insert into your autoresponder sequence. Maybe it might make something valuable that you could add into some content in some other format. And if that's the case; and I think I have 2 or 3 posts that I did this with, I actually saved the post to my Evernote; just so I didn't completely lose the content and then I deleted it. That way I don't have to re-invent the wheel later.

So that's the basic idea there. It is a manual process and there's definitely judgment that comes down on how you want to play this. Now, one thing that you're probably going to do as you are going through this process is you're going to find weak spots in your content. You're going to find things that maybe you're writing about that really should be covered better. Maybe you'd find things that you're like "Oh I really should be talking about this topic, but it's just very little in my archives that really address it." In that case, you just insert those things onto your content calendar so that you know that you're going to fill in those gaps with new content. And then if you have really old content that talked about it but in a weak way, then you can redirect to the new version once that is done.

So you're probably going to be putting a lot of things on your to-do list when it comes to future content creation as you're doing this audit. And that's okay, but you are also probably going to be deleting some stuff, too, in order to get that cleaner footprint.

So what I do to apply this process; I start with the oldest post and I move forward.

I go to the post archives in WordPress and I go all the way back to the very first page, to my earliest post and that's where I start. Then I move forward from there.

And I start by checking the traffic levels to the post in the last 90 days. Does the post get any traffic worth speaking of? In a lot of cases, you're going to find that it just doesn't. It just gets nothing. And that's going to be a prime candidate for probably just deleting the post because it's just not doing anything for you.

Now once I have checked the traffic level, I then also obviously check the post itself.

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You never ever want to let traffic "only" dictate what you do with any blog post. You need to look at the actual post; you need to make some judgments on it. **Is it any good? Is it high or low value? Is it something that might have the initial spark of something that could be a really good post but it's just needs to be updated?** Maybe back in the day it performed really well, maybe it got a lot of comments or something but now it's just kind of sitting there and running. Well, the fact that it performed then might mean that it performs half-decent now. And in fact, I'll give you an example right now...

I think it was Thursday or Friday last week, I re-published an old post that was originally posted in 2009 and it basically talks about "Reality check, a blog is not a business". This is an idea that I have hammered home many, many, many times over the years, but back then when I published it, it performed pretty well. I think it got a hundred and something blog comments; this is back when blog comments were more of a frequent thing, and so it performed reasonably well and it did get a little bit of traffic. It wasn't like really high numbers, but if I look at 90 day traffic, it was something that I did not want to just delete. And so I updated it and I re-published it. It wasn't as if this is a 2k or 3k post; I think the post is less than 1k words, but because it actually showed some signs of life, I kept it and I updated it and I brought it up to date. Now, as I'm evaluating these things...

If it gets no traffic and is low value and just kind of a crappy content, then I just delete the thing. I mean, why keep it? I don't feel bad getting rid of that.

Now, if it gets a trickle of traffic and is low value, then I delete and I redirect to another post which is of higher value. This is a judgment call because you need to look at (like) how much traffic is there? I am not going to sit here and give you any thresholds here, but if you see a couple of... 1 or 2 or 3 page visits over a 90 day period, well that might not be something that you need to think about keeping so you just delete it anyway.

If it's a traffic that's like, "I might not want it", get rid of that traffic and maybe you can redirect it into something else.

In fact, there is one blog post right now that I could think of that I just evaluated that actually gets on the Blog Marketing Academy like, I think 59 or 60 visits in the last 90 day period; so it wasn't exactly a trickle... 60 people. However, it was still low value because those 60 people were coming in and it was a blog post that is really has nothing of value to do with my current business. It was some conversation starter that I blogged about why a lot of bloggers tend to use Macs.

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And it was just me kind of like get starting a conversation and getting people to comment. Because back then I blog in a very different style than I do now. And so, I evaluated it, I said "Well, it's roughly getting 60 people roughly every 90 days" but that traffic doesn't matter to me because they're never going to do anything here at the Blog Marketing Academy. So I hosed the post or at least it's flagged to be hosed... I don't think I hosed it yet.

Now, if it's been a while since you've done this and there's a good chance that you're going to be deleting or redirecting a lot of stuff there in the beginning, I'll admit going back to 2006 in my archives, it was really easy to make judgment calls on that stuff because it is just like a quick look and I delete it, look at the next one; "Ah, sucks", delete it. And so, that 39% of content that I've hosed was pretty easy for me to do because it was almost all junk.

Now, despite traffic levels, judgment is definitely going to be required on whether the topic is valuable or not.

Only you can make that call. Only you know the type of content that you have, the kind of content that performs for your people and you'll need to execute that judgment call.

One example would be that **I had several old posts in my own archives that were discussing various aspects of Twitter.** Anyhow, Twitter is still a thing, it's not really what it was back when I wrote those posts, though, but I was getting some traffic to them. Not a lot, but it was getting some long term traffic.

However, **each one of those posts was outdated and was of low value. However, I know that the TOPIC of Twitter to bloggers is definitely still worth covering** because it's still relevant. So what I did is that **I added a new post to my content calendar and it's now in the blog as "10 Best Practices To Actually Make Twitter Work To Boost Your Site Traffic".**

So you could see what I did with the headline; obviously, it's about Twitter because I want that stuff was the whole idea from a content audit perspective, I talked about boosting your site traffic because that is what a lot of my people want and then it's a standard list post - 10 best practices. And so I worked that into the headline and it's actually done fairly well.

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And then what I actually did is that I went back to every low value post that I had in my archives that was talking about Twitter, I deleted it and I redirected it to this new version of the post. And so **now, all referral traffic that was going to any of that old crap that talked about Twitter, now goes to this new optimized post** which addresses Twitter preferably.

Sometimes you're going to find several posts all covering the same topic could then be combined into one optimized post. So one example that I had was that I had a six part series that I ran 2-3 years ago, I forgot when this was, but it had to do with pricing strategy.

And so, what I did instead of having those 6 things in the archives, I combined them into one optimized, updated guide. And that guide is now available in the blog called "Pricing Strategy: The Non-Marketer's Guide To Figuring Out What To Charge For Your Digital Product."

The majority of that blog post was made up of the content from that 6-part series. It's just that when I combined them, I brought everything up to date, I kind of re-evaluated everything and made a few tweaks and I republished it and then I redirected everything.

So as you go through your archives, you're going to inevitably end up with a growing content to-do list, as I mentioned. And doing the updates to these posts is going to definitely take you a lot longer than it does to make the judgment calls. I mean, you can look at a blog post and you can go "Yes... It's low value or high value... It's getting some decent traffic..." And you can sort of determine pretty quick what you need to do with it, or what you think you might want to do with it. But doing that takes more time. It actually takes longer to update them. So, I'm not saying that you need to hold up here an entire content audit while you create all these new posts or do all these updates... this could be something that goes on your to-do list.

So you what you want to just do is add those things to your content calendar and remember that a content audit can be a long term project. But once you've caught up and you've done it, then as long as you do it more frequently; like maybe once a year or so, it is going to take a lot less time to do that again.

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Now, you might be thinking, "Do I need to go back and update each and one of these things once a year?" No, might not have to, but you just want to go back and review it and see if anything needs to be done and you also want to check your traffic levels on a routine basis so that you'd know if a post is still performing for you or it's not.

Let's talk about a few useful tools that I have used along the way here and then as part of this, we're going to jump into the Blog Marketing Academy itself and kind of show you what I've been doing here...

Some Useful Tools

Yoast SEO is a very popular SEO plug-in for WordPress. There's a good chance that you might be using it. I use the Pro version of this, so I actually pay them for it. Now, one of the things that the Pro version can do is easily manage all of your redirects on one screen. The other great thing I like about Yoast is that when I'm doing the content audit and I go and trash a blog post, it will present the option right of the bat of do I want to redirect it or do I want to put what's kind of a 410 Error which is basically telling Google that the content has been deleted. And so it takes care of that automatically. And then if I want to redirect it, I just type the URL to the page I wanted it to go to and it's done.

Now, what I do is I maintain a list of each of my redwood posts; the posts that tackle a topic in a very thorough way and I typically redirect to those. Like for example, I have got one post in my archive that is **The Ultimate Guide To Web Traffic** or something like that. (I forgot what the topic is) And it is my signature post for the topic of organic traffic for your blog.

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So any of the old-school, low value crap having to do with traffic, I'll typically redirect it to the flagship post. If I have anything talking about various ways to making money but it's just not getting any traffic or maybe a trickle or it's low value, I'll redirect it to my signature post on blog monetization.

So you know, I have those big mega-guides; you're always going to have certain pillars in your archives that tackle subjects in a better way than others and those are typically going to be the ones that you redirect to.

Now, if you do not have the Pro version of Yoast SEO, all is not lost. There's a plug-in out there called **"Redirection"** which you can download; it's free and it will allow you to manage redirects.

And in fact, if you do; just search Google for re-direct, plug-in, WordPress, you're probably going to find a ton of these things. But I checked out the Redirection... I have never personally used Redirection, but I like what I saw. It looked like you can manage everything in one central way which is pretty similar to what Yoast does, so it works out pretty well.

One other thing I want to mention here; and I want to mention too that with these tools, I am not trying to mention a bunch of paid ones because you know, when you start doing content audits and you start Googling around about these stuff, you can easily get into some really premium priced tools, SEO Tools, things that go out and look into social media; all these things. Things that can do exports and look at backlinks and all that, but you can spend a lot of money and really get deep into it. I like to keep things simple.

So one thing that you might want to look into is the **Google Search Console**. It is obviously free because it came from Google. Just search for it. You'll find it. But **what you can actually do with this thing is that you can actually monitor the Google Spider activity on your website, monitor the search performance on those things and it will also show you indexed backlinks to your content.**

And in fact, I wasn't planning on doing this, but let me...

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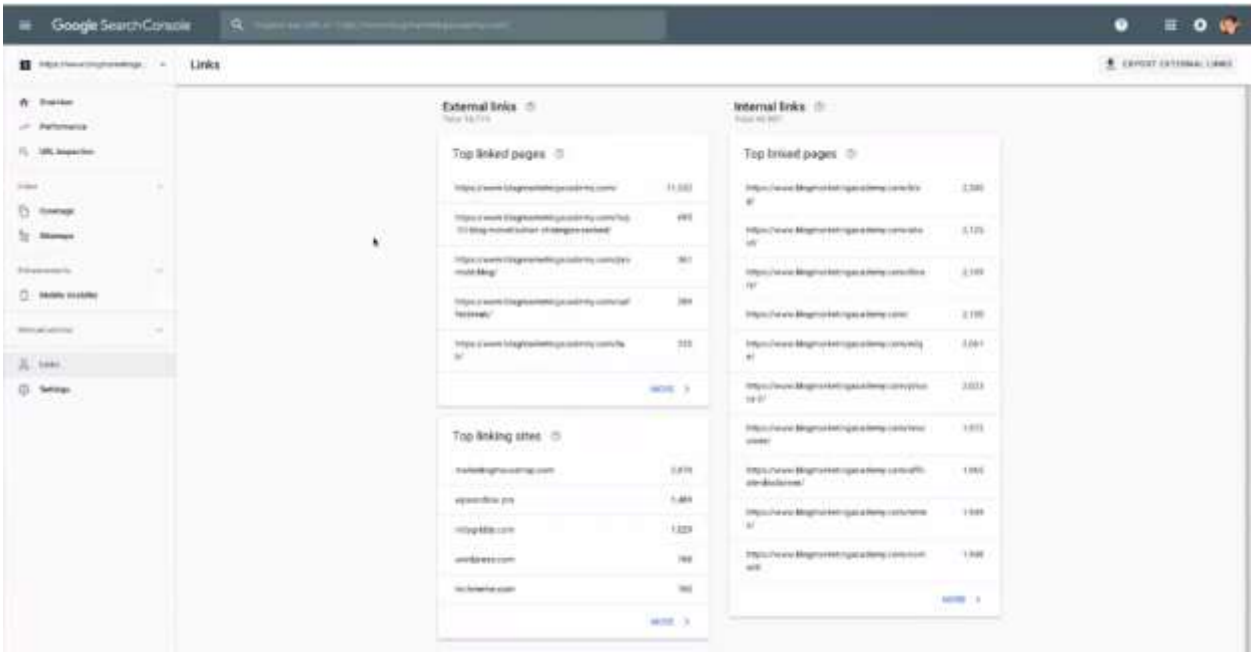
Yeah, it was already in my screen because I was playing around with my own content audit in here... But this is the Google Search Console for the Blog Marketing Academy...

And if you are under Manual Actions and Links, you can actually go and look at different links.



External links are what you would probably most want to go to, so you click on "more" and you're going to have all kinds of indexed URLs from your blog and then it looks at the number of incoming links that are coming to that page.

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Here's one on promoting a blog; this is one of my flagship posts...

Links > Top linked pages - externally > https://www.blogmarketingacademy.com/promote-blog/

Target page	Total external links	Total sites
https://www.blogmarketingacademy.com/pr...	361	97

Top sites linking to this page

Site	Links
disqus.com	31
wordpress.com	31
allspecialcoupons.com	30
get-free-coupons-now.com	27
infinite11s.com	14
fewerdeputterings.com	11
wikihow.com	11
diycraftphotography.com	11
virtualassistantorlando.com	10
blogworld.com	8
flit.com.ua	8
followwebsites.com	8
sproutmentor.com	7
gabriellaliberia.com	6
united.com	6
medium.com	6
thomasmckee.com	6
google.com	5
seocopywritingsolutions.com	5

Here it shows me about 97 sites that are linking to this particular blog post; 361 different links... and you can look at those. So the idea would be that if things are working properly with Google regarding your site and it's indexing everything properly, then instead of going out and looking at using one of these expensive paid tools to go out there and look at backlinks, you can probably use Google Search Console and find out what's going on.

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Now, it's not going to sit here and tell me much about the quality of these things, I mean, I can see two right here... It looks like a couple of coupon sites, so most likely these are not very high quality for me but they are there and it is what it is. I would obviously never delete this post as I do my content audit. This is one of my signature posts. However, you would also want to look at something like this before you make a "trash" or "update" decision. Do you have backlinks to that particular post...? Now, obviously, if you have got a bunch of backlinks to a post, you're probably be getting a little bit of traffic, too, so it probably will show up in your traffic stats. But it doesn't hurt to look first before you hose something that might have a little bit of link juice to it.

So you can use Search Console to check posts for backlinks before you delete it. And there are also plenty of paid tools that can do far more than that. I'm just not bringing them to the forefront here in this presentation because I don't want to encourage you to make you feel like you have to go out and pay for those things to do a content audit. You don't. A lot of the data that you need to get to make this decisions, you can get using these free tools.

A few more tools here, I found one that's called SharedCount.com that allows you to get the number of Facebook and Pinterest share counts on any post.

So you can look at a post and you can see how many times it got liked or shared on Facebook and the same thing with Pinterest.

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Once again, if you're evaluating a blog post before you delete it or determining whether you need to update it, you might want to look into whether it has any fuel out there on social media. So you can use something like **SharedCount** to just check.

Another one for Twitter is called **TwitCount.com**.

This is a workaround to find out retweet counts for blog content or any other URL really, because Twitter stopped sharing that information as part of their retweet button. And so TwitCount.com is one way that you can get some of that information.

Another tool that is pretty well-known is called **BuzzSumo.com**.

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It is also a paid tool; however there is some stuff that you can do for free. And if you plug-in a URL you can generally get some share count information. In fact, this screenshot is my blog post on the Anatomy of the Perfect Blog Post and you could see that it's got some activity on Facebook and Twitter, but it's done pretty well on Pinterest; 295 Pinterest shares. But you can find that information on a tool like BuzzSumo.

So one thing I want to talk about here is managing a content Audit, in-house.

Managing A Content Audit; In-house

This is the way that I'm doing it, which means I'm doing it internally inside of WordPress. I'll go over this in just a minute. **But if you go and start Googling around for doing content audits, you're going to find a lot of stuff out there. And there are a lot of different ways that you can do a content audit. However, one thing that you're going to find many times is that a lot of those ways end p setting up a bunch of complicated spreadsheets.**

You'll end up using a bunch of different tools; often those are paid tools, they export a bunch of information and then they have to get all fancy-pants inside of excel in trying to merge things together and blah-blah-blah, exporting CSV files... It can get really complicated. And I just don't prefer to do it that way. It doesn't mean there's not something to it, but you'll end up spending so much time trying to assemble that spreadsheet where you could just kind of get in there and start the process without having to make a bunch of fancy spreadsheets.

So personally, I'd rather manage the basics in-house and I rather track what I have to do in-house, without having to go and use all those fancy-pants tools or mess around with Google Sheets or Excel. As far as I'm concerned, if you can avoid the spreadsheet, do it.

So what I did is that I built a basic tracking system inside of WordPress to help me track my content audit. Now I'm going to show you this in just a second, but there are 2 requirements to make it work and both of them are WordPress plug-ins, however they are not both free.

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2 Plug-ins for In-house Content Audit That I Use

- The first one is called **Advanced Custom Fields**. It's a really, really awesome plug-in. It allows you to take the built-in capability of WordPress to do custom fields, but puts an interface on top of it so it allows you to really control it and manipulate it. Advanced Custom Fields, I believe is a free plug-in, however if you want some of the fancier stuff, you will have to upgrade in the paid version. It's not expensive, but even the free version is going to allow you to do some really cool things using Custom Fields that you can't do now. And I'll show you that in just a minute.

- The second one is called **Admin Columns Pro**. The plug-in called Admin Columns; which you can find at admincolumns.com is actually a free plug-in and you can install this and it gives you some really cool capabilities controlling what shows up in your list of posts or any other post type inside of WordPress. I think you can also control the widths of those columns on the free version. But the Pro version, I actually use because it allows integration with Advanced Custom Fields. And I'll show you how I utilize this in just a minute.

So those are the 2 plug-ins. But you can buy both of this plug-ins as a one-time thing much cheaper than a lot of these paid tools that allow these content audit tutorials we're talking about. And then you can use these tools in a number of different ways; not just content auditing.

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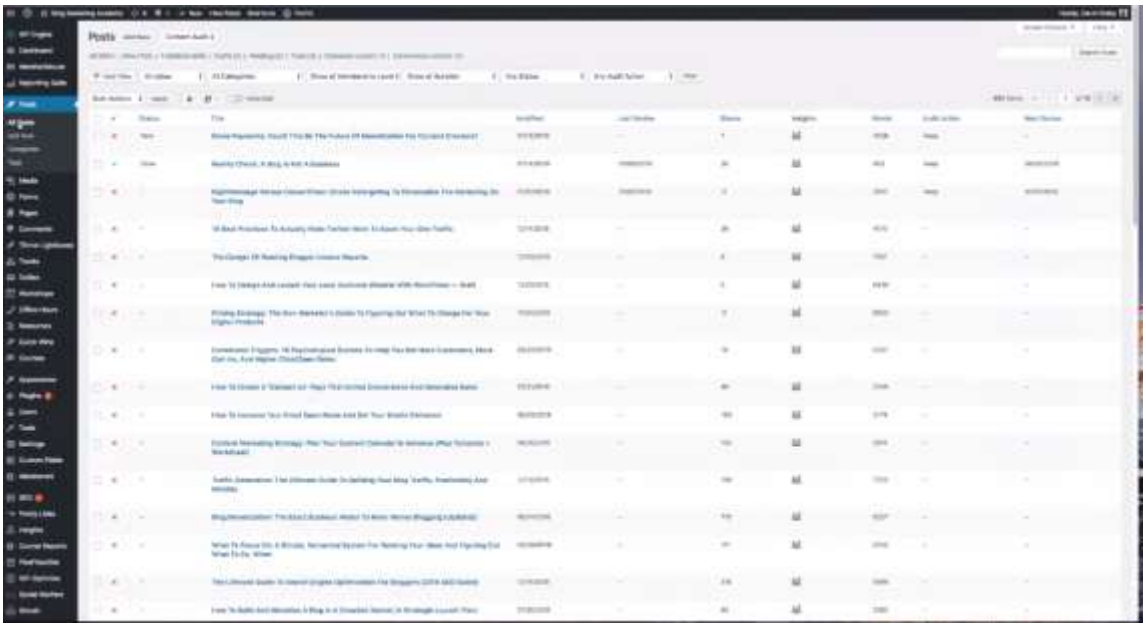
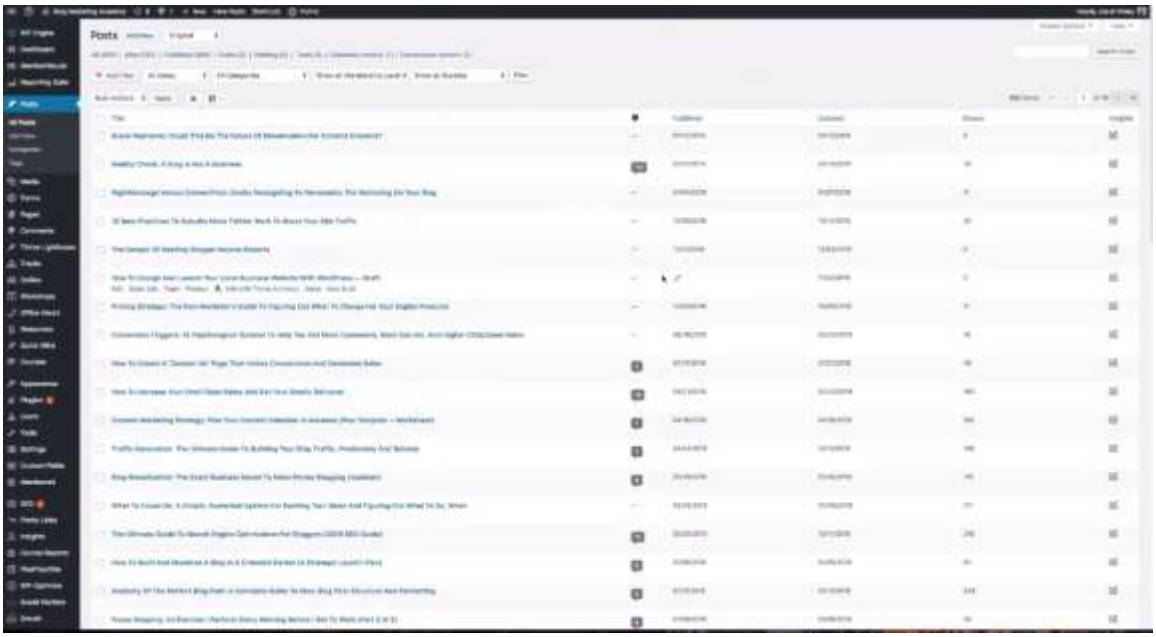
Let's go over to my screen; I want to show you kind of how this is working. In fact, I probably have some stuff on my screen now because I was actually working on this before we started. So this is obviously, WordPress. But this is my post screen for content audit.



This is the original... (Below)



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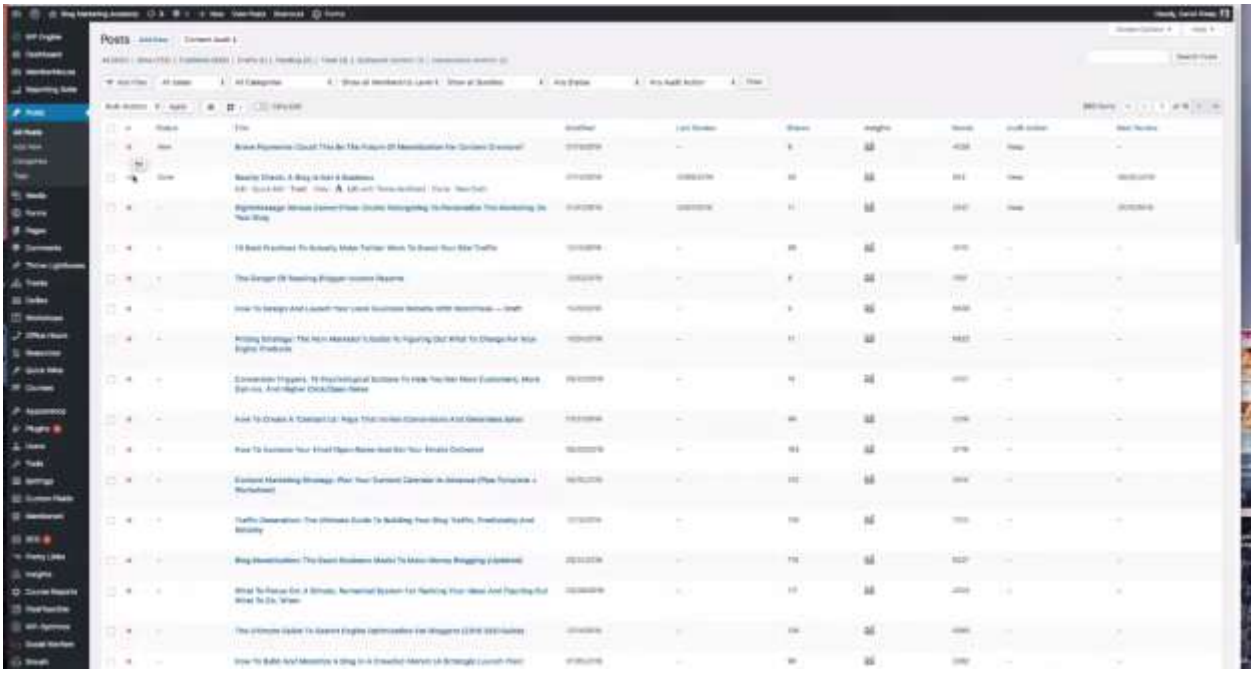
Standard post... Now, the thing is it is a little bit customized in my case because I actually show the date it was last updated, the date it was published and I can control the width thing and I do that using the Admin Columns plug-in. Pretty awesome plug-in. But with the Pro version, I can actually set up different versions of the same screens where I can pull in different columns based on what I am doing and I created a new view specifically for a content audit using a bunch of custom fields... I'll show you this in just a minute.

So here is my version of my blog archives in the Admin, bringing in a bunch of custom fields that I use for content audits.



And this is all to-do items, whether I've done it or not and the X means I haven't done anything to it. The green mark means it's done. I can track a status on it; I can track the date of the last review of that blog post. This data for "shares" is coming from the **Social Warfare** plug-in, but I have it in here because obviously if a post some social activity, I'm a less likely to delete it. The insights column is actually from the Monster Insights plug-in. So it's a Google Analytics for WordPress plug-in but it got acquired by the same people who were on **WPBeginner.com** and is now known as **Monster Insights**. And so I have that plug-in, I think I even paid for it, and it allows me to do things like look right inside of WordPress for traffic.

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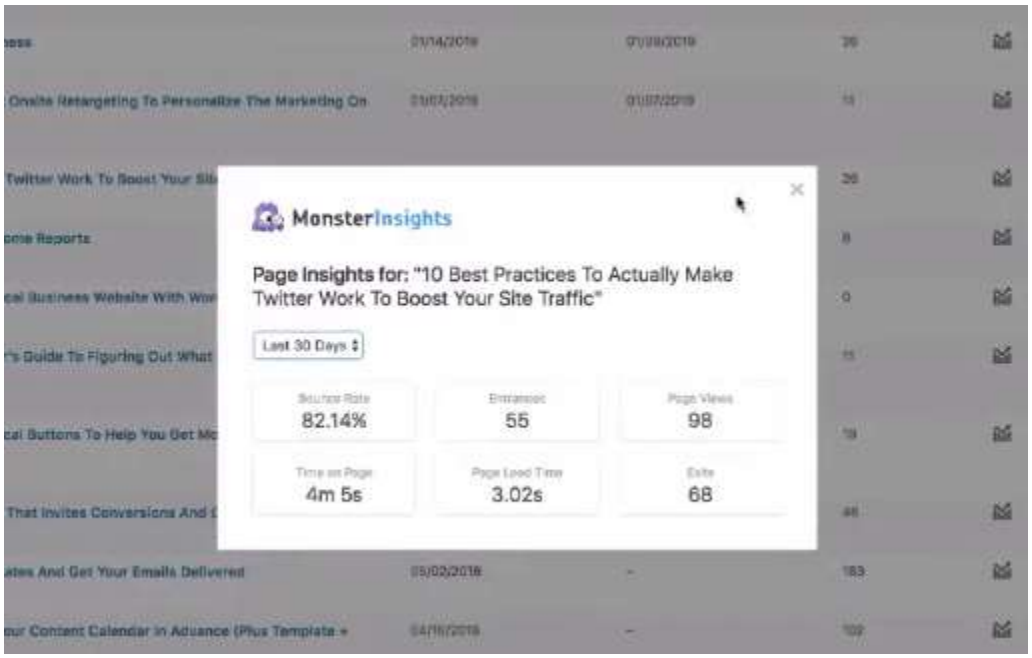
So I can click on this and here's the last 30 days and this is just some blog post, I don't even remember what it was about.



And I can pull it up without having to go into Analytics. Because you can go to Analytics and you can look at reports and plug-in a URL... This below is a 90 day graph...

You could see that this is a perfect example of a blog post that has got a little bleep here, but otherwise it's a big fat zero. But it's more work to have to go on there and check Google Analytics, so I can do it here.

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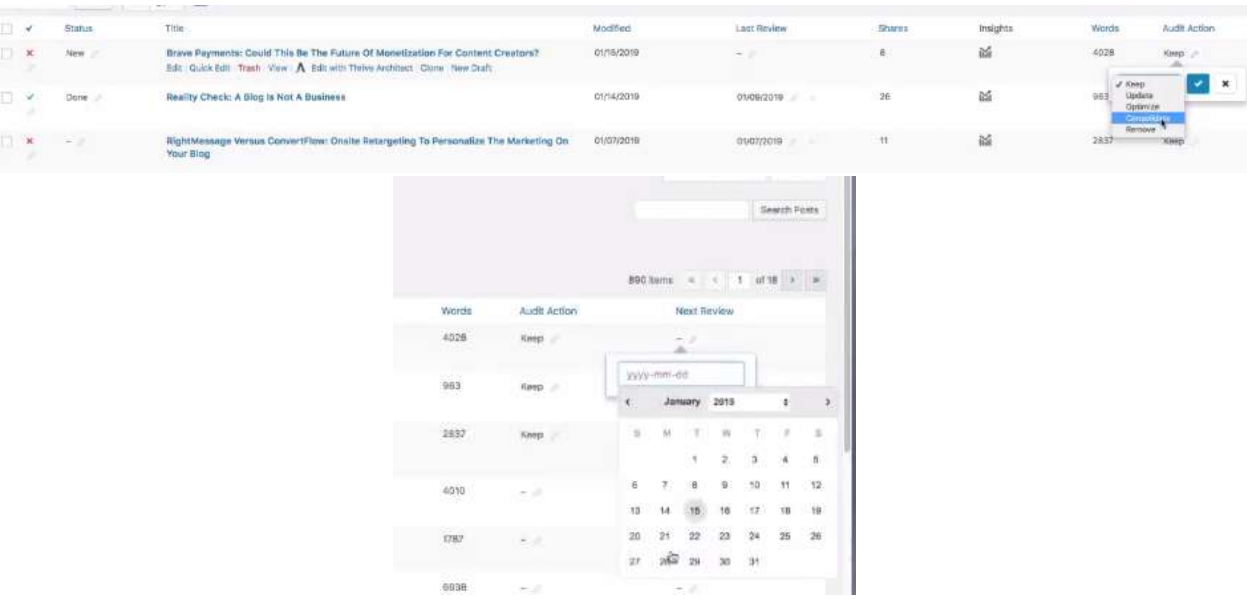
And then I got my word count. So "word count", in my case it's coming from... It's the same one that has the little "read time" thing. Since I know people might wonder, let me go back and find it... (The site is a little sluggish at the moment). It's called "**Worth The Read**"... So that's the plug-in that I use for having a little width link progress bar as one scrolls down any particular blog post and stuff like that. And so it also saves the number of word counts as a custom field.

Now, typically it's hidden and it's just using it for calculation purposes. However, using the Admin Columns plug-in, I can actually pull that word count right into my listing and so I can do things like make a judgment call on whether a blog post or super-shorty or whether it's longer. Now, we've got "keep", like this is the added action of whether I want to keep it, consolidate it, update it... This is another one of my custom fields. And then the date of the next review which is when I can set a date to say that I need to go back and re-evaluate that post at some point in the future. And I can sort the table by this in order to find out what I need to go back and do as an ongoing content audit.

Now these things using the Admin Columns Pro version, I can actually do inline editing on these things by putting this little toggle. For example, the audit action is that I can go ahead and change this from update or optimize, I need to consolidate it or I plan to remove it and I can update it without actually visiting the post. Same with "next review" I can pull up the calendar thing and set that stuff without visiting it again.



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Let me go back to my really old post because these are all my recent ones. Let me go all the way back to the beginning and show some of these in play then I'll show you how these things were built.

So these are my really old posts and you could see here the oldest posts that I have got a bunch of statuses inside. This is the old series that I did back in like forever-ago... But I haven't flagged to consolidate into one new post. I have got a bunch here that I am going to be going back and removing. And you could see that just by the word count, these are really short because I did a lot of really short posts back then.

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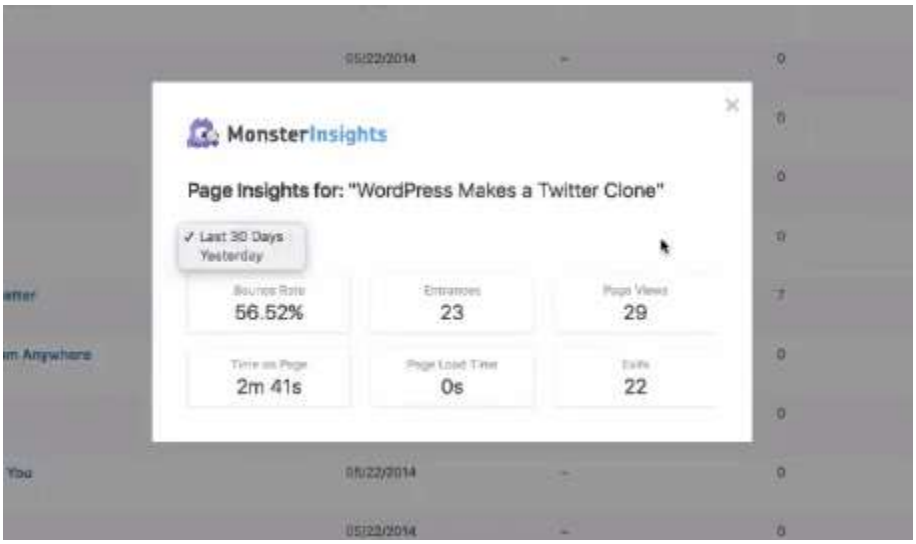
This one I decided to keep because WordPress makes a Twitter clone; like it's some old blog post that I did like way back in the day, but when I look at the traffic numbers, It has got something like 29 page views in the last 30 days.



If I check Analytics, the number was higher than that because I can go back as much as I want. And so I decided to keep it. I did a little update to it and I keep it and I marked it as done so that when I'm scanning this, I know which post I had already looked at and which ones I still need to do something on.

Now let me show you the post when I'm actually editing something... This is a really old post... And over here at the sidebar, I have got the audit status, whether it's a new post, whether I'm doing something, whether it's in progress or whether it's done.... Down there I have got the date of last review... This is the next review so I can set time in the future that I need to come back and look at it. The action that I intend to do with it as part of my content audit...

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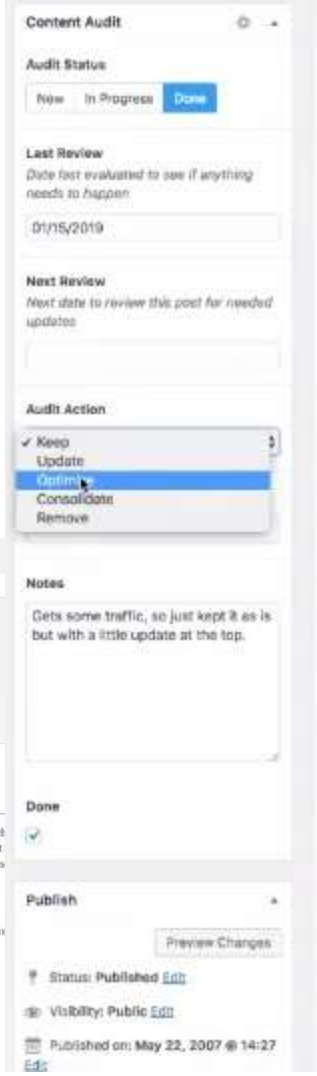
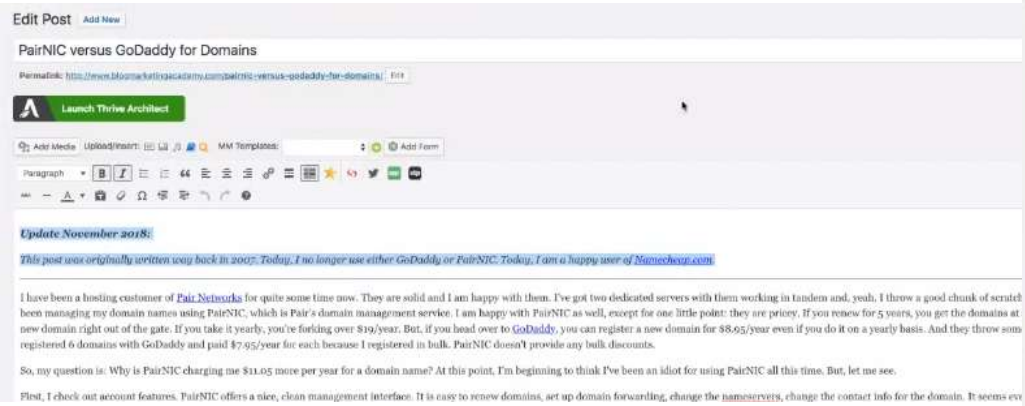
So I am either going to keep it, I'm going to update it, I'm going to optimize it which is basically just tweak it for marketing purposes; consolidate it into a grouping of them into a new post or I plan to hose it. The call to action, this is just an internal note field on whatever I intend to promote, whether it be a webinar or a lead magnet download or something like that; random notes so I can type to myself on what I need to do and then the checkbox is for just marking something as done or not.



This was a post; PairNIC versus GoDaddy for Domains, that is a real pretty much a low quality post, to be honest with you. However it was getting some traffic, like people are searching for it. And so I decided to keep it and I just simply put a little update notice at the top and said so; I kept it as it was. So sometimes, you make those judgment calls.



So that's essentially how that works.

Now, how I built that is... Under Custom Fields... This is all Advanced Custom Fields stuff. You go at Content Audit; which is a field group. I have different field groups. Some of them for Lab content like Quick Wins and Office Hours and Workshops and stuff like that... then a Content Audit.

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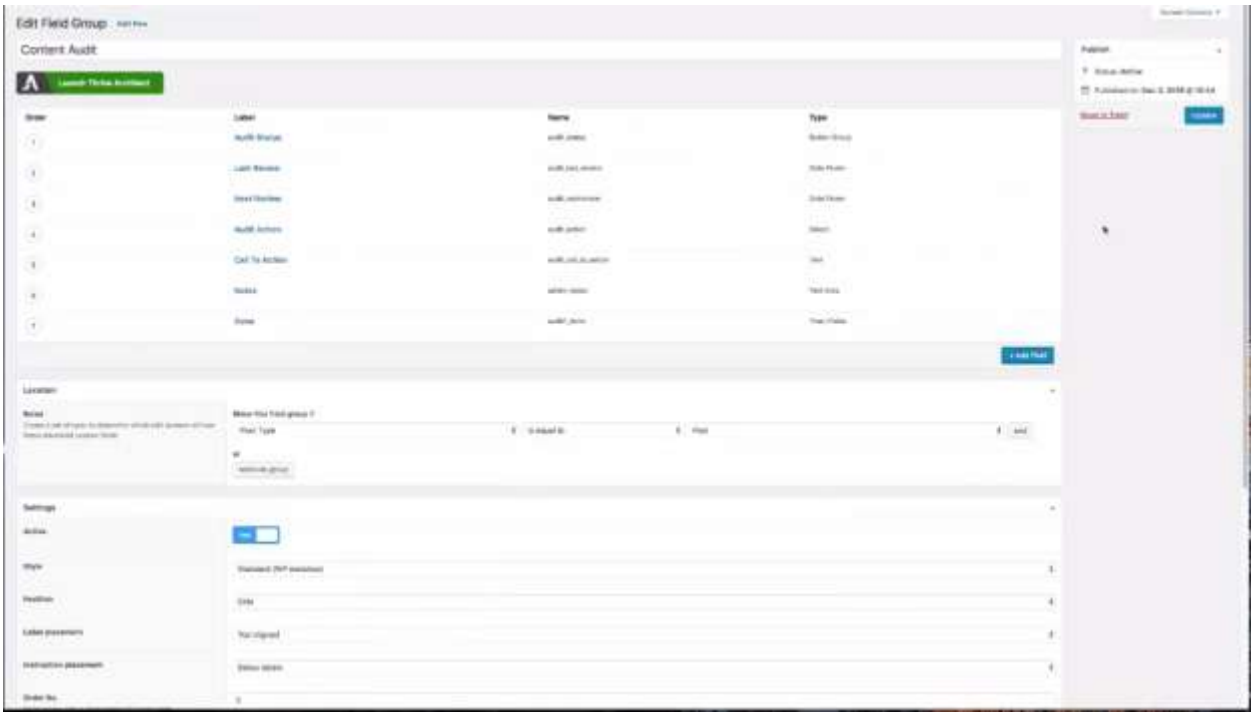
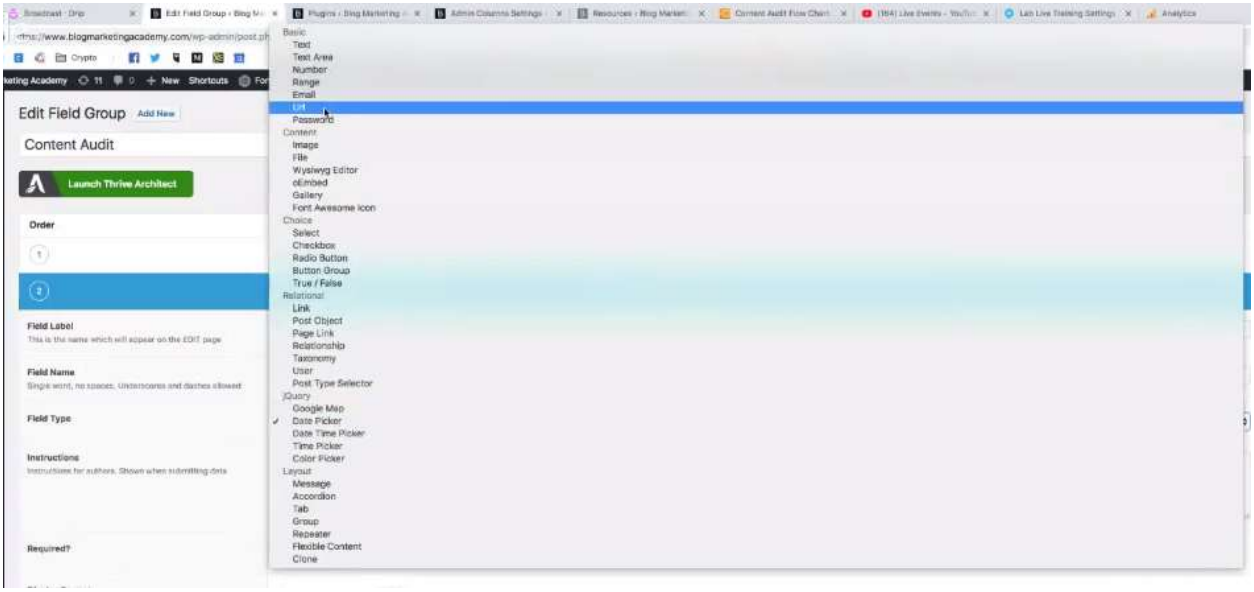
You can create any field type that you want here...



These are all date pickers; if you go and create a new one, you can create your own fields in here that are specific to whatever your needs are.



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And so you can build your own tracking system for your content audit or quite frankly, anything else that you want. Like I said, I have got a Quick Win video now inside the Lab on using Advanced Custom Fields, but using this and using the Admin Columns, I can set up a tracking system where I can do all these in-house and not have to go use any fancy paid tools.

So that's essentially how that works. I'll be happy to get into more details on Advanced Custom Fields, if you guys want; but I know I'm getting a little bit on the geeky side of things there and I don't want to trounce anybody. But that's essentially how I do that.

And like I showed you; I'm just going back to the beginning and re-evaluating each one and making judgment calls on them. And many of them I am still flagging to remove because they're just old and low quality crap. But essentially that's what I'm doing. I'm going up to here like "Why Should Bloggers Start a Mailing List"... I have talked about that topic like 4k times now, probably. But you can tell that this is a really short one; we checked the traffic stats from 30 days, it's getting a big goosey, so this is going to be probably a very good candidate for deleting it. I always check the post itself and evaluate to see if there's any worth...

I mean, I'm linking to FeedBlitz and Feedburner which isn't even really a thing much anymore... It does get 12 comments, but I don't really care about the blog comments, honestly. And so, this is probably one of those things that being that it's getting no traffic, then I would go back to it and so I will flag this one as "remove" and there it is. And then later on, down the road, when I want to actually remove these things I actually can filter by it so I can filter for all the posts that I've said I'm going to remove and then I can just either delete them or I can decide if I want to redirect them to another URL or what have you. So that's sort of how I manage that stuff internally.

So using Advanced Custom Fields, you can actually build your own tracking system for managing and auditing your own content and keeping you tracked on your to-do and marking them done and stuff like that so kind of keep track of where you are.

In the end, doing a content audit can be a long and fairly tedious project. I'm not going to lie. It's going to be a bigger one **depending on how big your archives are and how long it's been since you've done it. But it will prove worth it** because when you present that better footprint to Google, you're just going to get indexed better, you're going to get more traffic, but you're also going to get more marketing bang for your buck out of that content because you'll be putting in lead magnets, you're going to be actually optimizing that stuff so that it actually propels your business.

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Remember too that blogging doesn't always have to be about just posting the next post and then moving on to a new one. A full content strategy is often going to involve post updates and doing regular audits.

It's essentially doing the Redwood Strategy, but instead of only talking about a select handful of posts that are considered to be your Redwood Posts, **we're sort of applying the redwood strategy to the entire blog.** Now this doesn't mean that you're going to develop each post to the same degree, however that idea of going back and revisiting these things periodically is basically the essence of the redwood strategy. And it should be done to your entire blog on a periodic basis and that's essentially what we're talking about when doing a content audit.

So with that being said... I'm happy to answer any questions about doing content audits. There's only so much that we can cover on a workshop like this that is not going to have some specifics to your individual site. And so there's always going to be some lose ends there that you're going to have to fill in with some judgment call. But if you guys have any other questions, I'd be happy to answer them for you.

Q&A Time! ☺

Does an XML Sitemap help the spiders…?

55:59 - Sharron: "Does an XML sitemap help the spiders regardless of article quality?"

Yes, the XML sitemap is a big way that Google finds the content, to begin with. And so, you go into the Search Console for Google and you can actually enter in the path for the sitemap. In a lot of time, Google will find it anyway. And then every time you publish something, it updates the sitemap, and Google sees that; it tells Google spiders that that content exists. And so, it is part of the way it's working, but obviously if you have a sitemap that's full off... in my case, 1448 URLs and a lot of them were crap, then the spiders are sitting there looking at it. Now, it doesn't mean it's going to rank any better; no. It just means that it's part of that footprint that Google is seeing and it can take away from that crawl budget.

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Auditing Redwood posts in comparison to other posts

56:59 - There's a difference in auditing Redwood Posts in comparison to auditing regular standard posts…?

Well, I mean, from the perspective of doing a content audit, you would want to do an audit on all of them. Now, the Redwood Posts; it's probably going to be more of a consistent part of your strategy to keep those ones up to date because those are going to be your flagship posts, also those are the ones that you're going to redirect a lot more marketing resources into. Whereas some of your other posts, maybe you won't really try to rank it, but it doesn't mean that you want to have a low quality/low value things in your archive. And so, at least as part of your content audit, you still want to go back and look at even the crap posts; the non-redwood posts and bring them up to speed; it just doesn't mean that you're going to do it on a constant, repetitive basis.

Consolidating posts: How to handle permalinks?

57:55 - Deb: "If you can consolidate posts, how do you handle the permalink going from two to one post?"

So that's where the redirects come in. And Deb, also you're asking "How do we redirect it to a new post?" You're going to use a plug-in. So I mentioned the 2 in the presentation; one is Yoast SEO, but you need the pro version. The other one was called "Redirection" which is just a plug-in for managing redirects. So all these redirects can be done right inside of WordPress; it has the old URL and it says "Redirect it to the new URL". And so, what you would do is you would grab the URL to the post that you plan to delete and set that up as the old URL and then you would actually delete that post so it no longer exists in your database. However, the URL will still redirect to the new version. And that's how you can do that.

So like for example, my Pricing Strategy Guide, I took those 6 original pieces and redirected them all into one using the redirects.

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Twitter for marketing; does it still make sense?

59:08 - "Is there any point for using Twitter for marketing anymore?"

It's funny... I think I wrote an article at The Edge like 2 or 3 months about that. I mean, at the end of the day, Twitter will only be as valuable to you as a traffic source as the work that you put into it. If you're one like me, quite frankly, that just kind of sends it out on Twitter and then I kind of move on with my life, it's probably not going to do a whole heck of a lot for you. But like any social network; Facebook's the same way, if you're engaged with the network, then your followers are going to be more engaged with you. And in that case, it makes more sense to put stuff out on Twitter and also do it repetitively. I mean, you cannot tweet something out once and expect it to work. I mean, Twitter is a firehose; so you have to send out the same basic thing multiple times for it to land.

But from the bird's eye view on whether Twitter can still have a positive impact, I mean it absolutely still can. You just got to work it. If you're being lazy about Twitter, it's really not going to do very much for you. And I speak as somebody who is pretty lazy about Twitter. I really don't use it that much. Most anything that I send out on my Twitter account is usually automated and I just don't spend a lot of time messing with it. But obviously, if you see how Twitter influences current events these days, Twitter is still very much relevant. And so if you want to actually work it and use it, it can have that impact. Another thing too, with Twitter is you never want to discount the idea of actually using the paid version in terms of promoted tweets or sponsored tweets because it's just like Facebook... Like you can pay to magnify your message out on Twitter in a number of different ways and it doesn't matter if those people follow you or any of that stuff; you're paying for it. So if you're going to utilize Twitter, you probably would need to do so using the paid stuff as well and just run some experiments to see if it works for you. And if the ROI is there, great. If it's not, stop.

Cathy says "I get traffic from Twitter from my evergreen posts."

Yeah. I mean, Twitter can still work. I still get traffic from Twitter also. But it's not usually because of my activity. It's usually because of my readers tweeting my stuff out. But yes, it can definitely still serve as a traffic source. But if you want more information on that, go to the blog; The Blog Marketing Academy blog. Scroll down a little bit; it's probably 4 or 5 posts old now, but I actually have that whole article on there on the 10 Best Ways To Use Twitter For Building Your Traffic.

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Is An Ongoing Evergreen Content Audit Feasible?

62:11 - "Is an ongoing evergreen content audit feasible?"

Good question.

It really just depends on the size of your site. Right now, I am focused on doing my first content audit. It's going to take a while. Once I've done that, I probably will not do it very often; maybe once a year. And I'll use those tracking fields that I set up and showed you as a way to track when I should look at it again.

Now, when I look at the post; like for example that PairNIC versus GoDaddy post, I am not going to go back and re-evaluate it. I only kept it in there because it was still getting some search traffic and stuff like that. But I am leaving it there for that purpose. However, I'm not going to go back and revisit it. Other posts that you might have, you might think "Oh, maybe I should revisit this and add something to it" because it's a hotter topic, it's got more marketing value to you... And so you got to make that judgment call as you go. That's why I did those tracking fields so that I can make those judgments every time that I look. Right now I am looking at the really early posts and before Blog Marketing Academy was even Blog Marketing Academy. A lot of them; I just deleted them, flagged them to be removed because they're just low quality crap. But I know that as I go a little bit closer to present time in the archives, it is going to take a little longer because the posts are going to be higher quality, a little bit more relevant and it's going to take me a little bit longer to make those decisions and do something about it. And so, it's more of an ongoing thing from that perspective. But as far as doing like an annual content review type of a thing, it's really just could kind of depend on the size of your archives.

Question on Training Room video on 1080p

64:13 - "Is it possible to make the video here on the Training Room viewable in 1080P?"

I don't know, it's kind of a function of YouTube because this is a live presentation. And so, generally YouTube will dump down the quality a little bit in terms of a live stream just so it can livestream. I think the recordings themselves are a little higher quality, but I don't remember. I know that it's been good enough for us, though...

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Wrapping up

So that is the topic of doing a content audit. Oh like I said, I do have a Quick Win video that I just put up this morning that goes in a little bit more details with regard to **Advanced Custom Fields** and the use of Admin Columns. And there's another one which is called ACF, which is Advanced Custom Fields, but ACF Theme Code; so it's another plug-in that it will actually help output the PHP Code that you can use in your theme if you want to actually output custom fields into your site. Because I know that not all of us here are PHP programmers so you probably wouldn't know how to do that. So that ACF Theme Code can give you a massive headstart because it just generates copy/paste PHP code and if you just put it on the right spot, you can start outputting custom fields to your site. And so, like here with the Blog Marketing Academy, if you go to (say) an Office Hours presentation, the video embed is a custom field, all the download links are custom fields, the video jumplinks are custom fields. I make use of a lot of custom fields, internally. And some of them are output to the website such as those and then other ones are used internally for tracking; like the ones I showed you for content audits so I don't output those anywhere. But Advanced Custom Fields, when I found that plug-in and then the Admin Columns, I felt like I just hit the motherlode in terms of customization for WordPress.

Okay guys, and so if you have any other questions; and also questions do not have to be tied to the content audit. If you have questions about anything else, you can drop it in. And then when we're out of questions; which I am as of now, I got to check the support desk; we will end off for today.

Our next Office Hours Call is going to be in 2 weeks. I believe it's on the 29th of January and that one will be full Q&A, no topic in advance.

Let me pull something up here...

I didn’t' look first because this isn't the Office Hours; however I want to see if there were any questions that were submitted in advance...

I've got a request here to do a blog evaluation for him; we'll probably go ahead and do that one on the next Office Hours because that could take a little bit more time to do a walkthrough.

Deb, I said the 29th... Let me check my calendar, but I'm pretty sure it's set for the 29th. Yes, 2 weeks from today, so it will be on the 29th of January for the Office hours and I will be reminding everybody in advance of that because it works really nicely when people submit questions in advance, but of course I'm happy to do them here on the live chat as well.

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Okay, I guess we'll make this the final call for any last minute questions you guys want to drop them in the chat; otherwise we're going to end this bad boy off. And I will probably spend a little bit more time on my content audit today. I've already got several that I flagged to hose them. And it's easy when you're looking at blog posts that were written back in like 2008 and stuff... it's like "Pffftt!" ☺ It's probably going to be crap, especially if it's only 300 words long.

And also, I will keep you guys up to date, especially if you guys remind me... I'll keep you guys up to date on any changes that I see to my traffic levels depending on what I'm doing here with the content audit. It will be interesting. I've read many people's reports about their traffic going up. Sometimes I've seen like 50% traffic increases after doing a content audit. Right now, my traffic is showing that it's up, but it's comparing to the holidays, obviously the traffic usually sucks over the holiday week. So I have to pull up some other reports here, but it will be interesting to see how it all comes together.

Alright guys... I guess we're going to go and end this bad boy off. So I will be in touch with you guys, well before then, with regard to the Office Hours and there'll be some additional videos and some other things coming in the Lab between now and then, but we'll be meeting up here at the Live Chat again on the 29th of January for a full Q&A and I will see you guys, then!

See you guys!

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