



# Digital Web Services Network

Bringing together digital product managers, designers, and engineers.

# DWSN Quarterly Forum

Thursday, Aug 22, 2024

[cdt.ca.gov/technology-innovation/dwsn](https://cdt.ca.gov/technology-innovation/dwsn)



California Department of  
**Technology**

# Digital Web Services Network

- Welcome to the DWSN forum, we will begin shortly.
- For the best experience, please use your computer to join the meeting.
- Mute your audio.
- Turn off your video.
- Use the raise hand button or the meeting chat for comments and questions.



Opening remarks

# Koji Kumpulainen

State Web Services Manager | California Department of Technology

# DWSN Forum Agenda

Opening Remarks.....	Koji Kumpulainen (10 minutes)
Search Indexing Demystified: Boosting Visibility and Accessibility.....	Carter Medlin (20 minutes)
CAWeb updates.....	Greg Duncan (10 minutes)
Accessibility update.....	Linda Tracy (5 minutes)
Big ideas.....	Harvey Dhillon (15 minutes)
Suggested Future Topics / Closing Remarks.....	Koji Kumpulainen (10 minutes)



# Search Indexing Demystified: Boosting Visibility and Accessibility

## Carter Medlin

Information Technology Spec II | Web Development | California Department of Technology



# Search Engine Optimization (SEO)

SEO is the practice of improving a website to increase the quality and quantity of traffic from search engines like Google and Bing.

- Quantity: More traffic to your site.
- Quality: Users finding what they want on your site.

# Why is SEO important?

Crawl budgets are limited

Searchable sites are accessible sites.

Smarter indexing can help people

Less reliance on menus

# Crawl budgets

- How much attention you will get from search crawlers
- Based on popularity
- Important not to waste
- Don't re-crawl old content

Total crawl requests

791K



Office of Governor  
Edmund G. Brown Jr.



About



Newsroom



Issues



Appointments



Contact



Search

Governor Brown Signs 100 Percent Clean  
Electricity Bill, Issues Order Setting New  
Carbon Neutrality Goal

More Information



# Searchable is accessible

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Many accessibility practices align with SEO best practices

- Alt text for images
- Header tags (H1,H2, etc.)
- Readable Content
- Semantic HTML and ARIA
- Mobile-Friendliness
- Structured data

# Smarter indexing can help people

- Voice assistants
- Chatbots
- Copilot

# Less reliance on menus

**Speed and Efficiency**

**User Experience**

**Handling Large Websites**

**Personalization**

**Accessibility**

# SEO Best practices

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## On-page SEO

Optimizing individual web pages to rank higher and earn more relevant traffic. This includes content creation, keyword optimization, and meta tags.



## Off-page SEO

Activities outside your website that impact your rankings, such as backlinks from other sites and social media marketing.



## Technical SEO

Improving the technical aspects of a website, like site speed, mobile-friendliness, and crawlability, to help search engines better understand and index your site.

# Robots.txt

---

- Most important file
- Include sitemap
- Allow everything at first
- Disallow outside of production
- Test on SEO console
- Allow necessary files (IMG/JS/CSS)

User-agent: \*

Allow: /

Disallow: /ads.txt\$

Disallow: /app-ads.txt\$

Sitemap: <https://www.ca.gov/sitemap.xml>

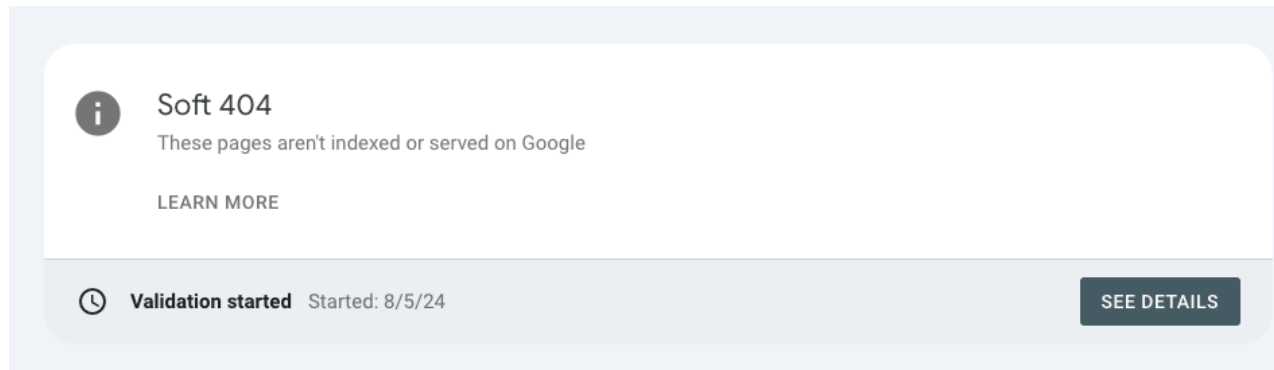
# Sitemap.xml

- Put everything you want users to find in here
- Use lastmod for immutable content
- OR changing content if you know it
- Max 50MB

```
▼<url>  
  <loc>https://archive.gov.ca.gov/archive/gov39/2011/01/03/news16865/index.html</loc>  
  <lastmod>2019-01-04</lastmod>  
</url>
```

# Avoid Soft 404s 🙄

- Caused by "missing" or duplicate content
- SEO won't trust you
- Bad 🙄



The screenshot shows a notification card from Google Search Console. At the top left is an information icon (i). The main heading is "Soft 404" followed by the text "These pages aren't indexed or served on Google". Below this is a "LEARN MORE" link. At the bottom left, there is a clock icon, the text "Validation started", and "Started: 8/5/24". At the bottom right is a dark button with the text "SEE DETAILS".

# HTTP Status code 410

- Gone
- Elegant removal
- Faster response from SEO
- Server Only

Request Method:

GET

Status Code:

 410 Gone





## Page with redirect

These pages aren't indexed or served on Google

[LEARN MORE](#)

First detected: 8/16/22

Done fixing?

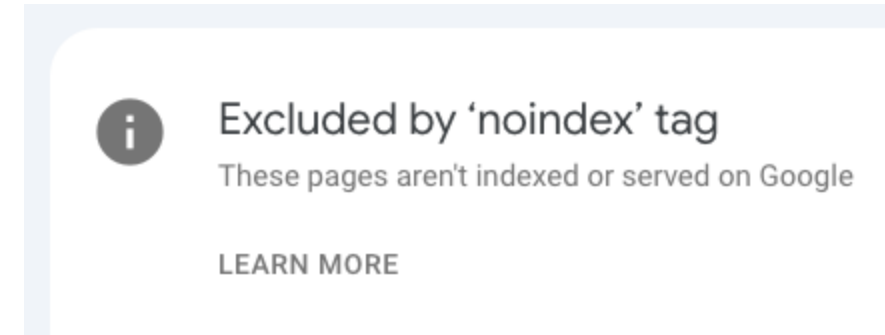
[VALIDATE FIX](#)

# HTTP Status code 301

- Permanent Redirect
- Carries index history to new location
- Removes old location from index
- Don't confuse with 302-Found

# "noindex" meta tag

- Prevents unwanted indexing
- Can be enabled in JavaScript
- Great for "no results" search



```
<meta name="robots" content="noindex" />
```

# Canonical tags

- Prevents duplicate indexes
- Can be used to redirect
- Can be set in JavaScript



Alternate page with proper canonical tag

These pages aren't indexed or served on Google

[LEARN MORE](#)

```
<link rel="canonical" href="https://www.ca.gov/service/?item=find-your-local-school">
```

## Indexing

User-declared canonical



<https://www.ca.gov/service/?item=find-your-local-school>

[INSPECT](#)

Google-selected canonical 

Same as user-declared canonical


# Avoid AJAX Content Lag

- Use "noindex" while content loads
- Prevent duplicate blank pages
- Verify your AJAX pages!


# Structured data

- Improved Visibility
- Higher Click-Through Rates (CTR)
- Faster Indexing
- Enhanced User Experience
- Rich Snippets!

```
<script type="application/ld+json">
{
  "@context": "https://schema.org",
  "@type": "GovernmentOrganization",
  "name": "Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV)",
  "description": "The California Department of Motor Vehicle's
  vision is to be a recognized leader in public service. To
  accomplish this vision our mission is to serve the public by
  providing quality licensing and motor vehicle-related services."
  ,
  "url": "https://www.dmv.ca.gov",
  "logo": "https://stateentityprofile.ca.gov/Uploads/logo-220-DMV
  .png",
  "areaServed": {
    "@type": "State",
    "name": "California"
  },
  "contactPoint": {
    "@type": "ContactPoint",
    "contactType": "customer service",
    "telephone": "800-777-0133",
    "url": "https://www.dmv.ca.gov/portal/contacting-dmv/",
    "email": null
  },
  "sameAs": [
    "https://www.facebook.com/pages/Sacramento-CA/California
    -Department-of-Motor-Vehicles/76429183804",
    "https://www.twitter.com/Ca_dmv",
    "https://www.youtube.com/CaliforniaDMV"
  ]
}
</script>
```



# Working in Google Search Console

- 
- Temporary removals
  - Request indexing
  - Sitemap resubmit
  - Submitted vs unsubmitted
  - Crawl stats

# Temporary removals

## New Request

TEMPORARILY REMOVE URL

CLEAR SNIPPET

Block URL(s) from Google Search results for about six months and clear the snippet the next time Google reindexes the page. For permanent removal, either block pages from indexing or remove them from the site. [Learn more](#)

Enter URL

All URL variations (www/non-www and http/https) will be affected

- Remove this URL only
- Remove all URLs with this prefix

Removals of other URLs leading to this content must be requested separately

CANCEL

NEXT

- Only affects one search engine
- Removes from search results
- Does not remove index

# Request Indexing

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- Only 10 requests per 24-hour period per user
- Unlimited use of "Test Live URL"

Page changed? REQUEST INDEXING

Testing if live URL can be indexed

This might take a minute or two

Cancel

✓ Indexing requested

URL was added to a priority crawl queue. Submitting a page multiple times will not change its queue position or priority. [Learn more.](#)

Dismiss




# Sitemap resubmit

Sitemaps

Add a new sitemap

<https://www.ca.gov/sitemap.xml>

Submitted sitemaps 

Sitemap	Type	Submitted ↓	Last read	Status	Discovered pages
/sitemap.xml	Sitemap	Aug 20, 2024	Aug 20, 2024	Success	404

- Instant page count
- Validates sitemap
- Sitemaps organize pages

Page indexing

- All known pages
- All submitted pages
- Unsubmitted pages only
- Filter to Sitemaps
- /sitemap.xml

All submitted pages

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Not indexed	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Indexed
16	390
6 reasons	

Unsubmitted pages only

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Not indexed	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Indexed
131K	9
11 reasons	

## Submitted vs unsubmitted

- Can filter by individual sitemaps
- Submitted pages are easier to manage
- Unsubmitted can be huge

# Crawl Stats (Settings)

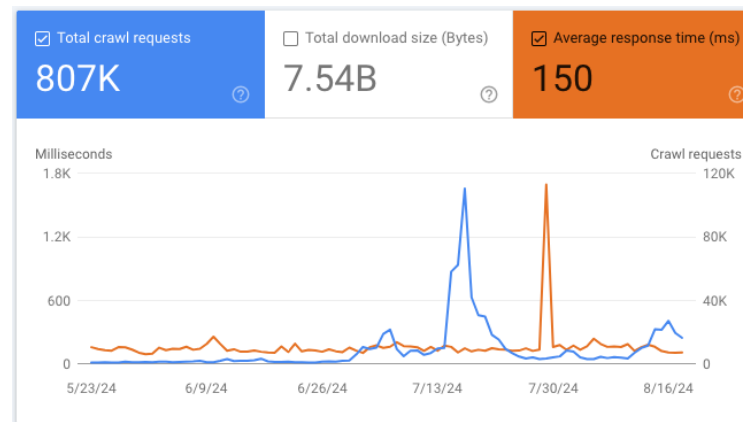
- Watch your crawl budget
- Check your server responses
- Track uptime

## Crawl requests breakdown

### By response

OK (200)	76%	
Not found (404)	17%	
Moved permanently (301)	5%	
Not modified (304)	2%	
Other client error (4XX)	< 1%	

Rows per page: 5 1-5 of 7



## Examples

Time ↓	URL	Response
8/16/24, 3:07 PM	<a href="https://www.ca.gov/Services">https://www.ca.gov/Services</a>	Moved permanently (301)
8/15/24, 3:07 PM	<a href="https://www.ca.gov/Working">https://www.ca.gov/Working</a>	Moved permanently (301)
8/14/24, 4:57 PM	<a href="https://www.ca.gov/service/?item=get-a-visitors-guide">https://www.ca.gov/service/?item=get-a-visitors-guide</a>	Moved permanently (301)
8/11/24, 10:08 PM	<a href="https://www.ca.gov/Working">https://www.ca.gov/Working</a>	Moved permanently (301)
8/11/24, 3:21 PM	<a href="https://www.ca.gov/service/?item=Get-a-Fishing-License">https://www.ca.gov/service/?item=Get-a-Fishing-License</a>	Moved permanently (301)



# Questions?





CAWeb updates

# Greg Duncan

Web Consulting Manager | California Department of Technology

[cdt.ca.gov/technology-innovation/dwsn](https://cdt.ca.gov/technology-innovation/dwsn)



California Department of  
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# CAWeb Updates

- Sun setting v5 for CAWeb customers by the end of 2024
  - We are currently adding and testing legacy items from v5 into v6 of the state template.
  - We're making the updates as easy as possible.
  - Frees us up to create a new CAWeb v2.0 in early 2025
  - Communication for updating sites will start at the end of September
- Reminder, please make sure you have Statewide Analytics Tag on your site
  - If you need the Tag please email: [analytics@state.ca.gov](mailto:analytics@state.ca.gov)



## Accessibility

# Linda Tracy

Senior Digital Accessibility Specialist | California Department of Technology

# Certification 2025

- Website certification is a 2-year cycle
  - **Year 1:** Certification year (June of even year to May of odd year.)
  - **Year 2:** Accessibility maintenance year (June of odd year to May of even year.)
- Year 1: Certification Year started June 2024
  - Agencies are required to post their certification by July 1, 2025.



# Accessibility Policy

We've made updates to the existing:

- [State Administrative Manual \(SAM\) 4833: Information Technology Accessibility Policy](https://www.dgs.ca.gov/Resources/SAM/TOC/4800/4833) (https://www.dgs.ca.gov/Resources/SAM/TOC/4800/4833)
- [SAM 4833.1: Exceptions to Accessibility](https://www.dgs.ca.gov/Resources/SAM/TOC/4800/4833-1) (https://www.dgs.ca.gov/Resources/SAM/TOC/4800/4833-1)
- [Statewide Information Management Manual \(SIMM\) 25A: Information Technology Accessibility Resource Guide](https://cdt.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/SIMM-25A-Accessiblity-Resouce-April-2023-FINAL.pdf) (https://cdt.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/SIMM-25A-Accessiblity-Resouce-April-2023-FINAL.pdf)

Once our Policy team finalizes changes, the updates will be posted.



Big ideas

# Harvey Dhillon

Web Consulting | California Department of Technology



# Suggested Future Topics

## Closing Remarks

# Koji Kumpulainen

State Web Services Manager | California Department of Technology

# Thank you

Post conference materials will be published on the [DWSN Website](#).

For questions, please write to: [DigitalWebServicesNetwork@state.ca.gov](mailto:DigitalWebServicesNetwork@state.ca.gov)



## Digital Web Services Network

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Next DWSN Quarterly Forum  
Thursday, October 17, 2024