

Improve the structure of your URLs

Simple-to-understand URLs will convey content information easily

Creating descriptive categories and filenames for the documents on your website can not only help you keep your site better organized, but **it could also lead to better crawling of your documents by search engines**. Also, it can create easier, "friendlier" URLs for those that want to link to your content. Visitors may be intimidated by extremely long and cryptic URLs that contain few recognizable words.

URLs like (1) can be confusing and unfriendly. Users would have a hard time reciting the URL from memory or creating a link to it. Also, users may believe that a portion of the URL is unnecessary, especially if the URL shows many unrecognizable **parameters**. They might leave off a part, breaking the link.

Some users might link to your page using the URL of that page as the anchor text. **If your URL contains relevant words, this provides users and search engines with more information about the page than an ID or oddly named parameter would** (2).

URLs are displayed in search results

Lastly, **remember that the URL to a document is displayed as part of a search result in Google, below the document's title and snippet**. Like the title and snippet, words in the URL on the search result appear in bold if they appear in the user's query (3). To the right is another example showing a URL on our domain for a page containing an article about the rarest baseball cards. The words in the URL might appeal to a search user more than an ID number like "www.brandonsbaseballcards.com/article/102125/" would.

Google is good at crawling all types of URL structures, even if they're quite complex, but spending the time to make your URLs as simple as possible for both users and search engines can help. Some webmasters try to achieve this by rewriting their [dynamic URLs](#) to static ones; while Google is fine with this, we'd like to note that this is an advanced procedure and if done incorrectly, could cause crawling issues with your site. To learn even more about good URL structure, we recommend this Webmaster Help Center page on [creating Google-friendly URLs](#).



(1) A URL to a page on our baseball card site that a user might have a hard time with.



(2) The highlighted words above could inform a user or search engine what the target page is about before following the link.



(3) A user performs the query [baseball cards]. Our homepage appears as a result, with the URL listed under the title and snippet.

Glossary

Crawl

Exploration of websites by search engine software (bots) in order to index their content.

Parameter

Data provided in the URL to specify a site's behavior.

ID (session ID)

Data provided for the identification and/or behavior management of a user who is currently accessing a system or network communications.

301 redirect

An HTTP status code (see page 12). Forces a site visitor to automatically jump to a specified URL.

Subdomain

A type of domain used to identify a category that is smaller than a regular domain (see page 6).

Root directory

Directory at the top of the tree structure of a site. It is sometimes called "root".