

What is a 301 redirect?

When you migrate your website into the USF CMS, you'll notice that many of your web page URLs will change. Content that used to be found on a page with a specific URL (example: it.usf.edu) will now exist on a page with a totally new URL (example: usf.edu/it). This situation results in broken links that create frustration for your website visitors.

This problem can be mitigated by redirecting URLs. Redirection is the process of forwarding one URL to a different URL. For example, if someone types in it.usf.edu into their web browser, then they will automatically be taken to usf.edu/it instead once a redirect is implemented.

There are multiple redirects that can be used. In most instances, the 301 redirect is the best method and is preferable for both users and search engines. A 301 redirect indicates to both visitors and search engine crawlers that the page has moved permanently. Think of it as a virtual version of forwarding your mail through the post office.

Redirecting requires IT assistance and cannot be done by a content manager or content contributor.

Will IT redirect all of my old URLs?

Unfortunately, IT cannot redirect every single page of every single website on campus; there are millions of pages! But we can cut down on the number of broken links. You have two options.

Option One

We can redirect your old website (every single page) to either the homepage of your new website, or to a site map page on your new website. This way, site visitors who try to visit one of your old URLs will be redirected to a page that helps them quickly navigate to the information they need.

To choose to send all redirects to your homepage, simply inform your CMS liaison, who will ask IT to set this up for you when they build your directory.

To choose to send all redirects to a custom site map on your new website, inform your CMS liaison, who will ask IT to include a site map page when they build your directory, and will provide guidance about how to set up your site map page.

Option Two

Departments that have a technical resource available are welcome to maintain a redirect index within the current (pre-CMS) web environment. IT Web Services (webservices@usf.edu) can assist your resource with implementing the best method for accomplishing the task. With this option, the department is responsible for maintaining the redirect index at all times.