![Smart Passive Income logo]

SPI Podcast Session 200:
How Deleting a Third of Your Content Can Triple Your Traffic—
How to Do a Content Audit with Todd Tresidder

Show Notes: http://www.smartpassiveincome.com/session200

Introduction: This is the Smart Passive Income Podcast with Pat Flynn Session #200. Welcome to the Smart Passive Income Podcast where it's all about working hard now so you can sit back and reap the benefits later. And now your host. He can sing songs from Frozen with the best of them, Pat Flynn!

Pat: What's up everybody? Thank you so much for joining me today. In this episode, 200 episodes since July 2010. It's incredible and to think we have surpassed 20 million downloads. So 20 million downloads over the course of 200 episodes. Like this is incredible and I want to thank you guys so much whether this is the first episode you're listening to or you've listened to all of them or anything in between. I just want to thank you so much because this show wouldn't exist without you. Obviously I absolutely just love to death what I do, but I love it even more knowing that you're there on the other end and you're listening and thank you for all the shout outs and the thanks and the letters and the emails and just everything that you guys do for me. I am here for you and especially now that we're in 2016 and now that my book is out, I'm just so stoked and thankful for all of you. I'm not going to talk about my book today. If you do want to check it out go to WillItFly.com, but this is about this episode and what Todd Tresidder has to bring to the table.

Yes it's episode 200 and I want to make a huge deal of it. I think episode 300 will be a big deal where I'll do like some spa time, sort of like announcement, but this is episode 200 and we're gonna get right into the content. Todd is a fellow mastermind member with me and Jamie Tardy and Roderick Russell and Josh Shipp and we all talk every single Monday, but I love Todd for several different reasons, but I loved him even more after I watched him present about this exact content that we're talking about today. I invited him to talk about the exact same thing he talked about at FinCon last year, the Financial Blogger Conference and it blew everybody's mind. I actually Periscoped this and had over 800 people catch that live and just say nothing but positive things and if you read the title of this particular podcast episode, you might be surprised and it is actually counter intuitive how Todd deleted a third of his content and tripled his traffic. Now why would you even delete content in the first place? Isn't it supposed to be evergreen and all this stuff?

This is actually a trend that's happening, this sort of content audit and I'm actually in the middle of it right now because come next month or the month after you're gonna see the brand new Smart Passive Income design, which is gonna blow your minds. It's already blown mine. I'm working with a great team and we are doing some stuff that I've never seen on any websites before, but one of the things we're doing also is a content audit. We're actually deleting stuff and changing older content and the way that Todd explains this, he actually walks you through step by step how to do this. It's amazing and like I said in the beginning, it doesn't sound like it would work, but once you understand the principles behind it, it makes sense that it completely works. So without further ado, let's welcome Todd Tresidder from FinancialMentor.com. Here he is.

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Pat: What's up everybody? Pat here with my good friend and fellow mastermind group member, Todd Tressider from FinancialMentor.com. Todd, welcome to the SPI podcast. Thanks for being here.

Todd: Thanks for having me on the show Pat.

Pat: We've been friends for a long time. We've been in the mastermind group together and I've never really seen you speak before so when I got the chance to watch you speak at FinCon this year, I got really excited. I was sitting there and your content blew me and also everybody else in that room away, which is why I wanted you to come on the show and I even filmed that on Periscope and everybody on Periscope was like "you need to have this guy on your show because his content is exactly what we all need to hear" so I am excited for you to share what it is that you're gonna talk about. So what is it that we're gonna be talking about today Todd?

Todd: I stumbled into something a couple years back only because my site was such a ridiculous mess. I did what we'll call a content audit and we'll kind of re-frame that in a second as we start talking and it turned out that because of that it put me on the leading edge of something the big brands are all doing now and so what I did in my presentation was called "How I Tripled My Traffic By Deleting 1/3 Of My Content".

Pat: It's a great title by the way.

Todd: As we know as content marketers and writers the title is everything.

Pat: Yeah, but how you tripled a third of your traffic by deleting a third of your content, so literally you deleted content that you had already published on your website and I think the first question people are gonna ask themselves or ask you is why in the world

would you want to delete content that you've spend so many hours putting into your website? Why would you even consider doing that?

Todd: Because it's off brand, irrelevant, poor quality. You know, quality is the new SCO. I mean Google has come a long, long, long way and you know in the old days, in the days of long tail keywords and all of that, you could just publish a bunch of stuff. You could put out 250-500 word blog posts and you'd capture some long tail keywords and there's all the tricks and all this old stuff. Well, Google has come a long way and you want to create a high quality experience both from Google for ranking because clearly they want the best experience for their users as well as for your users. You want to create the best quality experience for your users and you do that no different than you would by editing an article or editing a post. You've got to edit your site and that's why it's not necessarily a content audit. It's a content edit.

Pat: I like the analogy you used in the presentation where you talk about your website is almost like a book essentially because it's made up of all these different pieces of content, but you would never publish the first draft of a book.

Todd: Yeah, yeah so that's the analogy I try to draw since you know who I was presenting to was all content marketers in the financial space and writers and I was trying to draw an analogy that would make sense because people are really intimidated by the idea of an audit. You think of an IRS audit or anything like that. It sounds like a lot of work and it's gonna be cumbersome and it is, but edit makes a lot more sense to people when they hear it because a post, you would never just publish the first draft of a post, right Pat?

Pat: Right. You'd go through it, you'd edit it, read it out loud, fix mistakes and maybe through doing that you add more points or stories or take some out.

Todd: Yeah and so now you're writing a book and it's kind of the same thing times ten, right? So you do a rough draft of a book. You start at one point. You draft it out. You get your ideas down and then you go back through and you think "this is terrible" and so then you come up with some more concepts. You rework the whole book. You start getting excited about it. Then it goes to a formal edit where somebody does some content edit and then it goes through a couple and then it goes through line edits and on and on and on and that's what creates a great reading experience for the buyer and it's the same thing with your website. If you think about your website, you started on day one and you started publishing content and then you've published it in chronological order. That's what a blog does and so over time you've built this conglomeration if you will of content on the site and it's been built piece by piece by

piece, no different than you would write pages in a book and so a content edit is the same thing or content audit is the same thing in a book where you go back, you reorganize, you delete the old stuff that's out of date, you tighten it up, you kill your darlings according to Stephen King. You just go through the whole thing and really tighten up and it creates a great reader experience and it just happens that Google can detect that. They can detect the quality of the site, the tightness of the site, the focus of the site and as a result they reward that.

Pat: I thought about this initially. I was like "really? Like this doesn't make sense" and then I thought about it more and actually from a user's perspective, I have because I'm actually doing this content audit/edit right now. My team, as we are coming up for a new redesign, we are going back into our old content. We are deleting content, we're doing sort of redirects and we'll talk about some of the strategies in terms of the audit in just a sec, but you know some of those old posts are totally irrelevant. Some of them are very much based off of stuff that was happening that week and that's it. If for whatever reason people landed on that particular page they would immediately leave and that means the time on the site is less, the bounce rate is high, which is all an indication to Google this is not a site that they should be on.

Todd: Exactly and there's even more reasons why it works. I mean it sounds a little hokey at first. Delete your content and your traffic goes up, but there are a lot of other reasons why it works too. For example, another one is that you're consolidating your link juice, so if you're deleting content but then you're redirecting it through a 301 redirect, redirecting it through other related content, key point there, related relevant content, then you're consolidating all that link juice, all that social media juice into fewer, better posts so there are a lot of reasons why it works, but yeah it's counterintuitive at first to think getting rid of stuff actually increases the value of your site, but it does.

Pat: And you said you accidentally stumbled upon this.

Todd: Yes, so what happened, you know this Pat from us being together for years in the mastermind is I've had a lot of different business plans and as I go to develop them I kept running into what I'd call "yeah buts". Every time I was gonna do something because my site was such a mess. If I'm gonna go implement this plan I'd go "yeah, but I need to get this done first", "yeah, but I need to fix this", "yeah, but I gotta get this all worked out" and I finally just threw up my hands at one point and got sick of my "yeah buts" and said "I just need to get this foundation correct" and I think you remember at the beginning of the mastermind year last year, when we set our goals. I set the goal of just getting this thing cleaned out and getting that foundation set for all

the business plans I had going forward and so I just dug into it with fury and went through what I teach today and lo and behold, I had no idea it was gonna result in increased traffic because again I was kind of on the leading edge of this. I fell into it by accident and it worked. Once I did all this and suddenly my traffic jumped; I went "whoa, where did that come from" and just in recent times the bigger brands are getting into this. You know, major brands and we can talk about it and they're showing similar statistics so it's not just me. A lot of people are having this same experience.

Pat: What other brands and people are experiencing this or doing these audits too?

Todd: Okay, well Hubspot has been doing republishing and constant content consolidation and they've documented 106% increase in traffic on those posts and they've more than doubled the leads coming in from them. Moz.com showed some studies on their site where they both increased traffic and they 8x'ed, you know eight times their lead generation. Some names that people may not be familiar with, like there's another site, the Natural Space, that I'm friends with. Robert Farrington over at thecollegeinvestor.com. He purged about 30% of his posts and documented a jump in traffic. I had a client, a coaching client from my business, Talane Miedaner. Her site is LifeCoach.com and she had a similar pile of "yeah buts" and site problems because obviously to have the URL LifeCoach.com you've been in the business for awhile and so she had kind of a hodge podge of site platforms and content spread here and there and we went through a massive content audit process and she reduced her total articles by about 50% and in the first two months she doubled her traffic.

Pat: Wow, that's insane. I mean so this works, but like how does one go about, I mean this is a huge task. You can't just say "this works. Go do a content on it". I mean that's obviously much harder than it is said. So is there a step by step process by which somebody could do a content audit on their own website?

Todd: Yeah there is. Let me give you a 30,000ft overview and then we'll dig into it chunk by chunk. Like we said it is a big task. First let's understand how we map it out and then we'll go through the actual steps of implementation. Does that sound alright?

Pat: Sure, let's do it.

Todd: Alright. So 30,000 ft overview, what you're gonna do is you're gonna go over your entire archive of content from your oldest stuff to your newest stuff so everything, every page, every post. What I did was I had my tech guy literally send me a database dump and if you've ever seen a WordPress database dump, they come out as numbers. It doesn't even have URLs in it, but the nice thing about doing a database dump if you can get somebody to do it for you is that it misses nothing because if it's in the

database it will be in the dump and what you do is you go through and you check off each one and you categorize it according to one of four different categories. The first one is keep. So you keep the post as is and you do that because it's high quality evergreen content and it reinforces your brand so that would be the first one, keep. The second category is improve so what you're doing is you're categorizing everything. The second category is improve and that's something that's good and on brand, but it needs some updating, it needs expanding, it needs to be improved. The third category is consolidate and consolidation is reserved for, you probably noticed Pat in the old days in blogging. You didn't do this and I didn't do this, but a lot of people did. There was kind of this belief that you should have 250-500 word posts. You and I both kind of been long content guys, but anyway if you have a lot of short content that's in a similar subject matter, then you can consolidate it into a single pillar post and so that would be another category you would mark off as consolidate and then the final one is remove. That's because it's off brand or irrelevant.

Pat: Yes. The hard one I think is the consolidate one I think and also the remove one obviously because it's like "that's my baby. I worked so many hours on that" and again you published a first draft from the moment you started your blog to the moment where you're at now. Now is the time to start cutting out the weeds I guess you could say. The consolidation part is interesting because yeah I never did any of the short term stuff, the short form content, but I have read studies about the parallel between more words and better engagement. More words and better you know more time on site for obvious reasons and it's hard because people always ask me "Pat, how many words should my blog post be" and my answer is always "as long as it needs to be to convey the content in the way that you can do that and get your audience to take action", but the longer it seems the better so that's why I think the consolidation part is hard, but also very important too.

Todd: Yeah, there's no question this is hard because you're killing your darlings. You've put work into this stuff and some of it gets in traffic and it's hard to wrap your head around at first. Once you've done it, it's a no brainer. Once you've gone through and you've deleted this stuff, you've done the redirects, you've consolidated the small posts, it's so obvious that the site provides an improved user experience and then assuming Google rewards it for you too like they did for me, the whole response is so clear. It's easy once you get it, but when you're actually doing it and you're deleting your content and you're consolidating content and stuff, it's really hard.

Pat: Yeah, like I said I'm in the middle of this now and it is hard, but I'm also very excited to share the results and at the moment that we are recording this, I'm still on

the old site. When the new one comes about, it's gonna include this audit and so I don't know when this podcast episode is gonna go live Todd, but if it goes live after and I have some time to gather some results, I might follow up and put a second half to this or maybe even do that if we publish it sooner, I'll come back and add more later or at least an update in the show notes on what has happened since so look out for that everybody. It's coming if it hasn't already. I will share the results of the upcoming or previous if you're listening to this in the future content audit using a lot of these strategies and we did the same thing. We did a content dump, we ranked and categorized the posts in that same way. We also used that opportunity to re-categorize the posts in terms of blog categories and tags and all those sorts of things too. We're doing a big overhaul and it is a lot of work. I'm lucky enough to have other people do it for me.

Todd: You know what we should do Pat? You just kind of started something, which is what is the criteria by which you decide this. So maybe it would be good if we gave the listeners kind of a list of deadly sins, a checklist of deadly sins so they can kind of think about what are they looking for when they go through this.

Pat: Okay, yeah. Let's do this. That's great.

Todd: So a couple of things like old articles that are no longer related to your brand. Okay or possibly you've narrowed the focus of your writing and so writing has to get reworked and so it's on brand, but it's still good stuff. You could have old sponsor posts that need to be deleted. You could have old content that's good stuff, but it needs to be updated, it's out of date. You could have multiple small posts that need to be combined into a single pillar post. You could have some of your best stuff that was written years ago and it's buried in like a date order hierarchy inside the blog. You could have content in the wrong location. That was the thing that got me going. You were just saying you had content in the wrong location. I had the same problem. I had some of my best stuff was all in the wrong place. I had pages instead of posts. You might have menus that are jumbled because you've been adding stuff and changing stuff over time. Inadequate internal linking on your old posts because they don't link to your newer stuff because obviously it didn't exist back then. Your database can be cluttered with a bunch of old stuff. It just needs to be cleared out because it's slowing your site down. I mean, do you want me to keep going?

Pat: Yeah, keep going with the list. This is, some people are going "yep that's me, that's me, that's me".

Todd: Yeah, just keep checking it off. They can come back and listen to it and slow and just kind of get this check list. It can be old content that's not structured properly. You know, H1s, H2s. You know, short paragraphs, bullet points, stuff so your content is scan friendly. Another one that I had was I had a lot of old content without Pinterest friendly images.

Pat: Pinterest stuff?

Todd: Yeah, so Pinterest stuff because it didn't exist back then you know or images that didn't have the alt tag or title tag in them you know because I didn't know the SCO stuff back then or maybe I had inconsistent SCO. Another thing that you see a lot on sites is inconsistent image designs because they had one VA doing some and they designed some and so there's not a consistent brand and what happens is when you look at your category pages and you see all these different images from different generations of designers, it's just not professional. So that's another thing, inconsistent image designs. Another one that's really new right now is inconsistent social media conventions with your images. So if somebody's pinning a Pinterest image make sure they get the Pinterest friendly image. If they're going to Facebook they need one that matches the specs and the same thing for Twitter and so all that can be done within your site, but that all has to be coded in properly. You could have dead links. How long has it been since you searched the site for dead links and they need to be cleaned out. Off brand articles and another one I had a lot of, I had a lot of old in line HTML formatting. It was before I became savvy using short codes and CSS. So these are just a lot of different things you can consider as you're going through stuff. You want to look for to clear out and clean out and errors and problems in your site that are causing a bad user experience.

Pat: Okay so from this point forward, we've categorized all these things. We've gotten the criteria obviously. There's keep, there's improve, there's consolidate and there's remove. Which one do we do first? Is there an order of operations here?

Todd: Yeah, there's an order of implementation, but it's backward from the order of thinking about it. So let's start from the top of the list and then when you implement, you go from the bottom of the list up to the top.

Pat: So delete first.

Todd: Yeah when you implement, but let's start with keep and improve as we discuss it okay.

Pat: Okay, cool.

Todd: So keep and improve, the reason I combine those is because they're essentially the same process and they're very similar. It's just kind of the degree to which you're working on it, but both of them are kept essentially so that's the key point, is both of those articles are kept and so the keep criteria is the content is still valid and it's relevant for your brand and the article is reasonably optimized through your focus key words so you're not having to rewrite it for SCO. It's complete as is so it fully covers the topic. You don't have to expand on it and it gets decent traffic in social media. It's a good asset for your site. Now if you contrast that with improve, improve is pretty similar, but the difference is improve is gonna require more work on your part. So an improve article, you're still keeping it per se, but it's off brand. You're gonna have to rework it a little bit or maybe it's a really good topic for your site, but it's bad quality. You wrote it years ago, you weren't the writer you are today or maybe the focus of your site has changed a little. The other one too is it could be like a review post that needs updating. A lot of people have review posts if they're affiliates so that would be an improve article. So when you have a keep and improve, the key point is you're keeping it, but now you have to go through and clean it up and rework it because even the keep and improves get reworked and so your action check list is you start, you've got to edit it with new info, right. Then another thing that came up a lot like with Clay Collins with LeadPages in your [interview with Clay](). You know you talked about you could put in a lead magnet, you know, an opt in magnet that is specific to that article when you do that.

Pat: Oh yeah, I mean that's a great point. I just came out with a couple lead magnets recently, emailthesmartway.com and also affiliatemarketingthesmartway.com and I have a whole batch of articles that were written a long time ago on those topics so you're saying I could go back or I should go back and now that I'm saying this, I will go back and include those links or those opt in forms to get those lead magnets on those old articles?

Todd: Exactly. So that's kind of a bonus thing. You don't have to do that, but if your primary goal is email opt in conversion, which yours is,

Pat: That's gonna be huge.

Todd: Yeah and that's a huge thing to do right because you're gonna dramatically improve your conversion rates so go in and edit it. Possibly create a lead magnet for that article, focus on the quality. Is it current? Is it relevant? What needs to be rewritten? Look at the headlines. You know, typical article writing stuff. Look at the headlines. Look at the opening paragraph. Is it grabby? Does it pull you through? Look at the images according to the checklist I just went through. Does it have the proper

SCO, the proper feature, is everything in place? You know, make sure you've got that Pinterest friendly image so it's real easy for people to pin. Look at your formatting, what I went through with formatting, H1, H2, subheads, scan friendly. Make sure you've got all that. Look for duplicate content on your site. Is there duplicate content where you really should combine them rather than just keep or improve. Maybe it really should be a combine. Update any affiliate links. Check it for dead links and then another one you could do is you could update your tags. I don't know about you, but when I started blogging, I had no clue how tags worked and so you know to me it was just a glorified category. I really didn't understand it so I ended up with this massive tag clutter on my site and so when I went through my keep and improve stage, I was clearing out a lot of the tag clutter as well, just getting a much more focused tag grouping. Another thing you can do is update your internal linking, especially for your older posts, looking for new stuff that might not be linked up and then make sure you've got the [Yoast SEO](#) plugin green light if you're using that. I don't know if you want to jump in here with the YoastSEO plug in and talk about that for a second.

Pat: I mean we could. What do you have to say about it?

Todd: Well it's just kind of the industry standard plug in that makes SEO pretty much a no brainer and it's free. So if you're not using it, I felt funny recommending something on your podcast. I think it's kind of the industry standard. I don't know if you agree.

Pat: No, I agree.

Todd: Okay. Another one you can do is if you're gonna republish it, we'll go into republish versus 301 redirects and all that, but you can delete the old comments at that point so that it looks fresh and the dating is up to date on it. They don't see a bunch of old comments and that's about it. So that would be kind of your action steps on the keep and improve.

Pat: Quick question before we move on to the next one.

Todd: Sure.

Pat: How long do you feel a blog should be up before it could go through this process?

Todd: Great question! Yeah I think it's relevant at a couple years. You know, it depends on your blog frequency, how frequently you write articles and how many you've got on the site and how much change you've been through. For me, I was way over due because I just had—

Pat: As am I.

Todd: So many mistakes and so much learning. You know, you're saying you're over due.

Pat: Cause you could get too much on this. You could do this every week if you wanted to and kind of just clean things up. Obviously that's too much.

Todd: Okay, that's a great point. What happens is once you've been through it, you're gonna keep your site fairly clean going forward because for me anyway, it's completely changed how I manage my site.

Pat: You've gone through like a cleanse, like a juice cleanse with your site.

Todd: Yeah so I've permanently changed my diet based on a cleanse diet. I've permanently changed my content diet as well. Like I don't put anything up on my site that isn't evergreen, that's on brand, that isn't extremely high quality, that doesn't completely kill the category or the topic that I'm trying to talk about. You know to me, it's changed how I publish and how I manage my content, so yes I will, the one thing I've also learned through this is the strategy of republishing and if you want to, we can go into that or we can stay on track and do the consolidate and delete and then come back.

Pat: Republishing, that's taking an older article and writing a completely article that's essentially the same thing or actually just changing the date on that?

Todd: Yeah, so republishing I learned from peers because I hadn't been doing it. It's a really powerful strategy. That's the one you've seen Hubspot do a lot and you're seeing Copyblogger and media also doing it now. They'll take old posts, they'll update them, they bring in new images, they change stuff around and then they republish it on the same URL and you can only do that if you don't have dates in your URLs.

Pat: It's the same URL?

Todd: Yeah, so you're keeping the same URL, but what it does is it moves it up in the feed and it sends it out to all your subscribers, right and so what happens is, if you have stuff that's three years old, none of your subscribers are gonna remember it and if you bring it up and make it current and republish it, now what happens is you're double downing on all the link juice and social media juice right because it's already a powerful article, but now it goes out to everybody. Everybody links to it, everybody talks about it. It gets a lot of activity again and suddenly that article climbs in the rankings and there's several reasons why it's effective. It's also, now it's got a fresh date on it and I don't know about you, but when I'm searching in Google and I look at different dates

when I'm deciding what I'm gonna click on and so when you have a fresher date, you get a higher click rate.

Pat: That makes sense. So technically, without getting too technical, how would one go about publishing an article in this, fresh with the same URL? If I were to for example create a new blog post, copy and paste that article into that blog post, change it up a little bit, add new images, maybe the same title, maybe not, but have the same URL, would it tell me "sorry, this slug is already taken" or would it be okay to just kind of replace the one that was already there?

Todd: Well in WordPress you just change the date on it. In other words, there's a date listed for publishing and so when you change the date,

Pat: So you go back into that older one, redo that one, just update the date?

Todd: Yeah, exactly. I'm still learning Pat. This is the one thing I'm not an expert on. As I said, this one guide, I got turned onto this by my peers as I was developing this presentation and I was going through a process.

Pat: This is super interesting though.

Todd: So I've only republished one so this would probably be a great thing for people to chime in in the comments and add to this because I've only republished one post. It did move up in the RSS feed, but my email provider did not send it out to all my subscribers so for some reason they didn't treat it as new so I'm missing one piece as to how I make it so it's new so that it goes out to my subscribers.

Pat: Because you have that automated.

Todd: Yeah, it's an automated process so it's blog to broadcast over the web and they didn't pick up on it or I've seen copy blogger and I've seen Hub Spot sending them out and republishing old content and it does go out to the subscribers, so I'm missing one little chunk of that piece so hopefully your subscribers can comment on it and bring us up to date.

Pat: Yeah, the one thing about that, I haven't gone back into older posts and then change the date on them and you had mentioned earlier too to kind of wipe out the comments and just still fresh essentially, but I have republished content that is essentially the same material in a new blog post. I recently did this actually with my affiliate marketing stuff and I mean the one concern I think a lot of people might have is "well people already read that. Aren't they getting the same thing twice". I've not had

one person complain about that. Actually I've had people say "I remember when you talked about this awhile ago. Thank you for bringing it back and actually updating it".

Todd: Well I haven't even heard that. You know I've actually had people take some of my most popular posts and long time subscribers and turn and say "that was an amazing article" like they've never seen it before.

Pat: Right, like they didn't even know it's something you previously published.

Todd: Yeah and so this is an example of what you want to learn by going through the content audit strategy is that what I have learned is I'm going to make republishing part of my ongoing content strategy, that I'm gonna be constantly updating, like I'm gonna create an update schedule for my content, bring stuff up to date, rewrite it, keep the whole site current that way, plus it takes writing pressure off of me. Here's the thing that people need to realize. There's like a content explosion out there. There's way more content than anybody can consume. Take your site as example. It would take what, a year or two to read your whole site? I mean you've got massive files of content.

Pat: Oh I've got over a thousand.

Todd: Yeah, yeah, over a thousand posts and pages. That's amazing. It will take readers a long time to get through that so what you want, you want it focused on just the best stuff so the reader has an amazing experience when they're there.

Pat: That's why I created my "best of" page and also my "getting started" page so as not to confuse those people, but Google still sees all of it and people do find their way into the things that don't matter at some point so I think you're absolutely right. So we've talked about a lot already, but we still have a few pieces of the puzzle remaining. Let's talk about consolidation and deletion and kind of implementation strategies for those.

Todd: Yeah, these are relatively simple compared to the earlier two. Consolidation is just where you have a bunch of short posts and you look at them and say "this is really one topic. Let's combine them and make a pillar post". Let's make something that really kills that category and really knocks it out of the park and then what you do is you place that pillar post on the most active, you know, the one that gets the most traffic and the most social media attention is where you post that pillar post and then you 301 redirect all of the deleted posts up to that one pillar post location.

Pat: Now 301 redirect, I know what that is. I've done that. That's what saved me when I got a nice little letter from the US Green Building Council having me redirect or actually change my domain name from InTheLeed.com to GreenExamAcademy.com. So I know what a 301 direct is, but can you explain really quick for people who may not know what that is what it is?

Todd: Yeah, so 301 redirect is just, it's a redirect that says the content that used to exist here now exists over here and so it's providing a URL where Google should look to find the new content.

Pat: It doesn't just redirect the user. They will be redirected to that site that you say or that URL that you established as the one people should look at, but it also redirects Google too, which is obviously a big component of it too so that you keep all the link juice and everything flows into that one article.

Todd: Yeah and there's some questions on 301 redirects for implementation that came up in the presentation, so we should probably address that, which was how do you do it and so it depends on your platform and some things like apparently in YoastSEO they have 301 redirect built right in on the paid version where you can do it. I know from where I have my site hosted, it's on an NGINX server, which is beyond my pay grade to explain, but basically because of how it's configured, they want it done at the server level and so I have to provide them with pre-formatted text files of all my 301 redirects. They load them in at the server lever and apparently that's like the fastest, most efficient way to do it, but again this is gonna depend on your configurations so you're gonna have to figure out how it's done for your specific site and how it's configured and what software you're using.

Pat: Right.

Todd: But there's a fun story I should tell on the 301 redirect Pat about how I did a 301 redirect from mine. I deleted probably 150 posts in a day and then sent to the hosting company the 301 redirect file all in one day and the very next day I vanished from the search engines. Like it was mind blowing. I thought I was gone. I thought I totally blown it. Terms that I was on page one for for a decade, literally a decade, I was suddenly on page 12. Terms that I was on page four for, I vanished because I track certain key terms and

Pat: That's kind of scary.

Todd: Oh I was freaked. I was absolutely freaked because I was really coming from a good place. I'm trying to create a great user experience. I'm trying to do the right thing

here and I thought "oh gosh, maybe I really blew it here doing a big batch of all these 301 redirects". It was amazing. It was exactly a week to the day later my site reappeared in the search engines stronger than ever, like if I was middle of page one, I went to like top three. If I was in top three I was back there. If I was on page two I was on page one. If I was on page five I was on page 2. Like I mean huge jump within a week and so I'm guessing I triggered a manual review of some sort and they looked it because the key thing on a 301 redirect, the key criteria for doing it right is you've got to send it to highly relevant content. So in other words, you don't want to be 301 redirecting to your home page as an example. The key way you do a 301 redirect is it's got to be an equivalent piece of content, a proper equivalent so when a user is clicking on something and they go to it, they feel like they found the right thing. Right, does that make sense?

Pat: Yeah.

Todd: So there's a 301 redirect and that's what you do with content and for me and probably for you, there's hardly a piece of content on your site that doesn't have a relevant equivalent so for somebody who has been at this game for awhile, they should be doing mostly if not all 301 redirects. I did not do anything that did not have a 301 redirect, but there are two other forms. There's a 410 and a 404 and so 410 is an actual delete. That means there's no equivalent whatsoever. You truly deleted it and the good thing about doing a 410 is it really signals Google that this piece of content is gone and they get it removed fairly quickly.

Pat: You want a quick and easy way to see what a 410 looks like?

Todd: Sure.

Pat: You go to InTheLeed.com, which was my original URL. It literally says gone. The requested resource is no longer available, blah, blah, blah, 410 error was encountered while trying to use an error document to handle the request. The reason this is not a redirect, even though I always ask to not use my URL anymore, I was in the first path of trying to resolve that, I did a 301 redirect and they came back a few weeks later and said "no, we told you you couldn't use it and that includes redirect", but luckily I had done the 301 for enough time that all that link juice to had passed onto GreenExamAcademy.com and at that point that 410 error was placed on InTheLeed.com and that's still been there, that's been there for the last I don't know, seven years now.

Todd: So that's signifying to Google it's truly gone, that the content doesn't exist somewhere else so 301 tells Google the content exists somewhere else. That's why it

has to be highly relevant whereas a 410 says it's gone and so that tells them to remove it from the search engines. A 404 is just the content isn't found and so in my opinion, that's just sloppy web management because you're giving a lousy user experience by sending people to a 404 page and so really you should be looking primarily at 301s and 410s.

Pat: Sometimes a 404 is not your fault though.

Todd: Correct.

Pat: Because somebody else who may be linking to you might be linking to you with the wrong URL or maybe there's a misspelling or something. So there are things and we don't have to get into the hard core strategies because I think that I've written on 404 pages before. You want to make that experience, you don't want people to end up there, but if they do, you still want that experience to be great and just say hey guys, sorry. You can say what you were looking for was here, but maybe this is what you were looking for or here's how you can find that information. Those are just some things to keep in mind in terms of a 404.

Todd: Yeah on my 404 I have some fun little opening line in the headline like "oops, we have a boo-boo here" error or something and then it offers the four main categories. If you're interested in these click here and it will give you a directory of my best stuff or maybe you want to start here. Maybe you want to start here and it takes them to my start here page so I just try to give them a couple of logical choices to get improved user experience.

Pat: Okay, cool.

Todd: So anyway, there's the 301, 410 and 404 of what you're doing when you're deleting content, which takes us, we were talking about consolidate when we got into that and that takes us to deleting. So why would you delete content? The reason is because it's out of date, it could be irrelevant, it could be off brand, it could be really low quality or maybe it's just not getting any traffic or attention and so why have it there. It could be a short post that you re-purposed in the consolidation strategy we earlier talked about. It could be old sponsored post that you don't want to keep around anymore. I mean, there's a lot of reasons why you would get rid of it, but a lot of people also had a round up post. You don't see them as often, but there used to be a lot of old round up

Pat: Carnivals.

Todd: Yeah, blog carnivals. There's a lot of stuff that just shouldn't be on your site anymore and so those are all things you can just delete.

Pat: And then you just go and continue on on your merry way after that, right?

Todd: Yes. I think the relevant question here is how do you do all that? How do you actually go through this process and put it together? Do you want to cover that now?

Pat: Yeah I guess because we've covered a lot and we've covered even the individual pieces, but how do we put it all together?

Todd: So the starting point as I said earlier is you get a database dump from your tech guy. If that's kind of beyond your pay grade or you don't have somebody who can do it for you, you can go into web master tools and they have a fairly comprehensive list of your posts and pages. It might be a little bit off. You can try Google Analytics. There's different tools you can go to that will give you a pretty good list or you can go to your, I'm trying to think of the file the bots go to.

Pat: HTA Access?

Todd: Yeah, it's not the HTA Access. It's the one that is actually where the search engines go that lists every post and page on the site.

Pat: I don't know. I have my guy figure it out.

Todd: So there's another file that you can look at that will have that stuff. It's for the robots; they find it. There's other ways to do it, but the best way is to get a database dump. Once you get the database dump, you put it in a spreadsheet. More to be clear, this is a really complicated process. You're dealing with a lot of content and you have to manage it. The only way I know to do it and not lose track of it all is in a spreadsheet and so what I did, first I did the database dump; and then I started adding columns. You just need to add the columns that are relevant for you so I added, the first column was the actual URL because the database dump just gives you a number and your URL and I put the title of the post so I could tell what it was and then I took all of them and rearranged them because the database doesn't organize them by categories. So then I structured the whole thing in the spreadsheet so it was all organized by categories so I could make sense of it so it matched how I think of the site being organized. So once I got everything moved around and organized, then you just start going through it according to that criteria list and deciding. Now this is where you can go a couple different paths. If you study content audit online, you'll see that there's a lot of techno babble about it where you can get really complicated with a lot of data. I didn't find

that was necessary. For me, once I get clear on what my brand is and what it's about and what do I stand for in my site, it was pretty easy to tell what didn't belong there and so I started with kind of my quality criteria first and then I added columns for how much traffic a site was getting or a page was getting and how much social media attention it's getting and to me the quality combined with the traffic and social media attention pretty much told me what to keep, what to get rid of and what to rework and so I had another column in there where I entered the keep, improve, consolidate and delete and I started doing all that. When I did the consolidates, then what I would do i s I would move them in the spreadsheet all together so I could see at a glance what all the articles were that were being consolidated and then I created another column called notes. So like if I was consolidating them all, I could note which one was the final recipient that the main new pillar article would get published on. So again, it's gonna be different. Everybody's spreadsheet is gonna be different, but the idea is that you start with the database dump and then you just start adding columns of information as you go through the process to keep it all organized and then when you're ready to implement, you start from the bottom up as I said earlier. So you start with the deletes because it's the single easiest thing to do and it has the biggest impact. My big traffic jump came after the delete and consolidate phase and so you go through and you delete because it's easy. You're gonna have a whole column listing the deletes and so you put them together and you do your 301 redirects and bam, it's done. Instantly your site is much cleaner and quieter and then you go back through and you do your consolidates, which is the next easiest thing to do where you're consolidating all of your articles into a single pillar and that's fairly quick to do and then the longer process, which I'm almost done with. I'm 24 articles away from being done as we record this, is the keep and improve where you go through every piece of content and rework it as necessary according to your checklist so that everything is up to date and your entire site is up to a new higher standard.

Pat: And I think by the end of this or even just the process of putting that spreadsheet together you as a by-product will have this amazing understanding of what has all happened on your website and you said that birds eye perspective of everything that's going on and you can better make decisions moving forward and I think that's something that I found, not as we were doing the content audit, but even before that when I had Janna come on board and even Mindy to help with Ask Pat. I mean, we ended up creating spreadsheets to keep track of certain components of each of those episodes and these are the pieces of content, just for the purposes of working together as a team and by doing that and having those spreadsheets and essentially an archive that's so easy to look at and look back on of everything I've already published and how

it's categorized and who has been featured, emails related to those guests that I can easily reach out to them, it's just, man it's making life so much easier.

Todd: Yeah, yeah. You know again, the thing about this is it's a lot of work. If you listened to what I just said, it's a lot of work, but where else are you gonna get the kind of impact. Is it easier to become the next Pinterest superstar? Is it easier to publish 2-3 times as many pillar posts? Even if you did those things, have you really improved the site user experience? You know, this is giving you a double whammy. You're dramatically improving the user experience at your site and you have a high likelihood of increasing your traffic as well.

Pat: And you're not just pumping new content in. You're actually taking stuff away.

Todd: Yeah, you're taking stuff away and then the other real benefit that came for me out of this is it completely transformed how I view my role as the web master and you know content marketer, which is kind of what you're getting towards here. Like how do I actually run my site going forward so I don't create new messes? That's where I got into like, now I've adopted a republishing strategy. I didn't have that before, but that's gonna constantly clean and that's now part of my ongoing strategy. I didn't have that before I went through this process.

Pat: Man, this is gonna open up a lot of opportunities for people and so Todd did we miss anything or did we pretty much cover the whole ground?

Todd: I think we nailed it Pat.

Pat: I think you nailed it Todd. Just, man this is awesome. If anybody has any questions or concerns, I know Todd is deep into it. I'm into it too. Some of you are probably working this or thinking of doing it too. Head on over to the comment section and I'll give the URL right after this, right after I hang up with Todd here, but Todd thank you so much for your time and for sharing this and I hope this becomes one of those evergreen pieces of content that we can rehash over and over and over again because this is something that's gonna be useful now and way into the future too.

Todd: Yeah, it becomes a centerpiece of how you run your site. I mean I just had to go through the process in order to open up my mind to it, but now that I see it, it's just like you never publish a book without editing it. Once you see it and once you do it, the whole thing is obvious that this is just a part of how you run your site and how you manage your brand going forward.

Pat: I love it. I think a lot of us needed to hear that and Todd thank you for being the one to tell us.

Todd: Alright, thanks for having me on the show Pat.

Pat: Before you go, where can people find out more about you?

Todd: My site is FinancialMentor.com and so what I do, I do advanced retirement planning, advanced investment strategy, how to build wealth, how to become financially independent. So I give away a free book, "18 Essential Lessons of a Self-Made Millionaire" and I have a free e-course "52 Weeks to Financial Freedom" and no, it's not get rich quick. What it does in 52 weeks is it gives you a kind of overview and teaches all the principles and all the steps you go through and I give all that away for new subscribers. I'd love to have you people come over.

Pat: Awesome. Thanks Todd. We appreciate you and looking forward to sharing the results of this audit if I haven't shared them already.

Todd: Yeah, I'm looking forward to it. I hope it comes out good for you.

Pat: Thanks man.

Alright. I hope you enjoyed that episode with Todd Tresidder. Again you can check him out at FinancialMentor.com. One of my favorite people in the world. He's such a cool guy. I mean he goes to Burning Man every year with his wife. He's just an awesome, awesome, awesome dude and every time I get to hang out with him in person he's just so fun, but also he's one of the smartest guys I know too as you can tell from the content here. So again, if you want to check him out, go to FinancialMentor.com. If you want to get the show notes and links and resources mentioned in this particular episode, head on over to smartpassiveincome.com/session200. Yes we are on episode 200. I can't believe it! It's been, I don't know, six years almost and I just want to thank you guys for all the support over the years, all the reviews and everything. I'm just so thankful that this has turned out the way it did and you know what? I'm just getting started. Like I said in the beginning, it's going to be a redesign of the Smart Passive Income blog that you're gonna see in the near future and man, it's gonna be amazing.

I also want to thank a couple of sponsors that have helped to put the show together. First of all, Freshbooks.com. You've got to check them out. They are serving over 3

million small business owners, including myself with helping us manage our finances, our books with money coming in and money going out and also invoicing. If you have any students or you do any consulting or coaching, you need to bill your people to get paid and Freshbooks makes it super easy and professional to do it so you can get paid faster and continue doing what you need to do. They are an amazing company. I've talked with them in person and I've gotten to know them and I trust them and I use them to help me manage my books and I recommend that you do the same thing and it's really cool because they also are offering a 30 day free trial. If you want to check it out, if you're doing your books by hand like I was in the beginning, you're eventually gonna get to a point where you're gonna need some software to help automate things and to make it easier, especially come tax season. I mean it's February now. Tax season is right around the corner or actually right now for a lot of people and so it just makes a push button easy to get those reports. Those profit/loss statements, the balance sheets and everything you need to make your taxes easier and just know what's going on in your business. So if you want to check out this 30 day free trial from Fresh Books, go to getfreshbooks.com and enter SPI in the checkout area. Again that's getfreshbooks.com, enter SPI when they ask you how you heard about them. Again, getfreshbooks.com, enter SPI.

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I want to thank you again so much for listening in. I appreciate you. Again the show notes are available at smartpassiveincome.com/session200 and here's to the next 200 episodes. I hope you'll be there with me too. I've got some great stuff coming up, including some more success stories, some more consultation calls, coaching calls, you'll be able to sit inside of some of those and a lot more great content coming your

way too. Again if you want to check out my new book "Will It Fly", head on over to WillItFlyBook.com. It's going very well right now and I thank all of you who have gotten it so far. I appreciate you and your support and love. I love you guys too. Cheers. Take care and I'll see you in the next episode. Bye now.

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