

A page that returns a 410 status code is telling browsers and search engines that the URL is gone and is not expected to come back. That can be the right response for a retired campaign, expired offer, or outdated resource. It can also be a problem if a page was removed by mistake, a redirect was skipped, or a server rule is returning the wrong status.

To check your site for 410 errors, combine a crawl, Google Search Console data, and server log file analysis. Then investigate each affected URL before deciding whether to keep the 410, restore the page, or redirect it. The status code alone does not tell you whether the removal was intentional—or whether it is costing you valuable organic or paid traffic.

What Does a 410 Gone Error Mean?

HTTP status code 410 means “Gone.” The server has confirmed that the requested resource has been permanently removed. Unlike a temporary server problem, a 410 is an explicit signal that the URL should no longer be available.

For example, you might return a 410 for an expired event page when there is no replacement event, or for a discontinued product that has no close substitute. If a useful page was simply moved to a new URL, however, a 301 redirect is usually more appropriate.

A 410 should be returned with the actual HTTP response—not just displayed as a message on a page that returns status 200. That latter situation is sometimes called a “soft 404.” You can check a response with a browser-based HTTP header checker, a crawling tool, or the command line.

```
curl -I https://example.com/old-resource/
```

Look for a response line like HTTP/2 410 or HTTP/1.1 410 Gone. A page’s appearance is not enough to verify its status; the HTTP response is what matters.

410 vs. 404: What Is the Difference?

A 404 means that the server cannot find the requested resource. It does not necessarily confirm whether the page has been removed permanently. A 410 is more explicit: the page is intentionally and permanently gone.

Status code	What it communicates	Typical use
200	The requested page is available.	A current article, product, or landing page.
301	The resource has permanently moved.	A URL change with a relevant replacement page.
404	The resource was not found.	An unknown URL or a page that is missing without a confirmed removal plan.
410	The resource was deliberately removed permanently.	An expired page with no suitable replacement.

For SEO, neither a 404 nor a 410 automatically means a penalty. Search engines can drop URLs that no longer exist from their index. A 410 can communicate that removal more directly, but it is not a magic way to improve rankings or erase every trace of a URL immediately. The practical priority is making sure the status accurately reflects what happened and that important links or traffic are not being abandoned unnecessarily.

How to Check for 410 Errors

1. Crawl for 410 responses

Start with a site crawler that can request URLs and report HTTP status codes. Configure it to crawl the pages you care about, including key sections such as blog posts, product pages, and landing pages. Then filter the results for

status code 410.

A crawl can find 410s linked from your site, but it may miss removed URLs that no longer have internal links. For a more complete check, add known URL lists from your CMS, XML sitemap history, analytics, paid campaigns, and backlinks. This is especially useful if you need to crawl for 410 responses across URLs that have disappeared from navigation.

For each result, record the URL, the page linking to it, the status code, and the next action. <https://www.marketing91.com/investing-in-specialist-google-ads-management> Do not redirect every 410 automatically. First decide whether the page has a genuinely relevant replacement.

2. Review Google Search Console

In Google Search Console, inspect the URL Inspection tool for individual URLs and review the indexing reports for patterns. Google's reporting labels and screens change over time; older references may call this the "Coverage" report, while newer interfaces organize similar information under Page indexing. If you are looking for search console coverage, check the current indexing report and inspect examples rather than relying on an old screenshot or a single summary count.

Search Console is useful for seeing how Google has encountered or indexed URLs, but it is not a live, complete list of every 410 on your site. Its data can lag behind a recent change and may not include URLs Google has never crawled. Pair it with a site crawl and server logs, and confirm the current status directly.

3. Use server log file analysis

Server logs record requests made to your site, including requests from search engine crawlers. Log file analysis can reveal whether Googlebot or other visitors are still requesting URLs that return 410, how often they do so, and whether requests come from search results, external links, or old campaign traffic.

On a server running Apache on Ubuntu, access logs are often stored under `/var/log/apache2/`, although paths and file names can vary by setup. If you have permission to inspect the logs, a basic search might look like this:

```
sudo grep ' 410 ' /var/log/apache2/access.log
```

Rotated or compressed logs may need separate commands and permissions. Also check that the log format includes the status code and that you are examining the correct virtual host. For a large site, export the relevant data and group requests by URL, status, date, and user agent. Verify suspicious bot traffic rather than assuming every request claiming to be Googlebot is genuine.

Logs answer a different question from a crawl: a crawl tests what the server returns now, while log file analysis shows what was requested in the period covered by the logs. Use both when diagnosing a sudden increase or a 410 that appears only for certain visitors or crawlers.

How to Decide What to Do With a 410 URL

Before changing a status code, ask what changed last week. A deployment, CMS migration, redirect update, plugin change, or campaign cleanup may explain a sudden spike. Then use a consistent checklist for each affected URL:

- Was the page intentionally removed, or is this unexpected?
- Does the URL still receive organic visits, paid clicks, referral traffic, or conversions?
- Does it have meaningful internal links or external backlinks?
- Is there a replacement page that satisfies the same visitor need?

- Does the URL appear in a sitemap, ad, email, or active campaign?

If the page was removed intentionally and has no suitable replacement, keeping the 410 may be the clearest choice. If it was removed by mistake, restore it or return the correct page. If it moved, use a 301 redirect to the closest relevant destination. Avoid redirecting unrelated URLs to the homepage: that can confuse visitors and fail to preserve the intent of the original page.



How to Replace a Dead Marketing Resource

A marketing resource can attract links and visitors for years after it was published. Think of an old calculator, downloadable template, research report, webinar recording, or guide. When it is no longer available, do not assume the best fix is to leave the URL dead—or to send everyone to a generic page.

1. **Identify the original purpose.** Review the page, its title, backlinks, analytics, and any campaign records. Find out what users expected to get from it.
2. **Choose the closest useful replacement.** Update the resource if its core information is still valid. If it is outdated, publish a current version or a clearly related alternative.
3. **Redirect only when the replacement matches intent.** A 301 from an old guide to a substantially equivalent new guide is often helpful. If nothing relevant exists, a 410 can be more honest than a misleading redirect.
4. **Update links you control.** Fix internal links, navigation, sitemap entries, email links, and active ads. A redirect is not a substitute for cleaning up your own site.
5. **Check the result.** Test the old and new URLs, confirm the intended status and destination, and monitor traffic and conversions after the change.

For instance, if a retired marketing checklist is referenced from an article, replace the link with a current checklist if it serves the same task. A general marketing glossary, such as a relevant explainer from Marketing91, may help readers understand a term, but it is not automatically a suitable substitute for a specific downloadable checklist. Match the destination to the promise made by the original link.



Check Google Ads Before Removing a Landing Page

A 410 can disrupt paid campaigns as well as organic search. If an ad still points to a retired URL, visitors may land on an error page, and the campaign may waste spend or stop serving. Before retiring a landing page, review active ads, extensions or assets, tracking templates, and any final URLs used in experiments. Confirm that the replacement page meets the ad's promise and that conversion tracking still works after the change.

When the URL change is tied to a campaign, compare the landing page's traffic and conversions before and after the update. Do not judge the fix only by whether the page loads. Confirm the relevant conversion action fires once, records the correct value where applicable, and appears in the right account. A broken tag can make a repaired page look like a performance failure—or hide a real one.

How to Evaluate Google Ads Specialists and Agencies

If an agency or specialist is managing the site's paid traffic, ask how they handle landing-page removals and URL errors. Look for specific steps, not broad promises about "protecting performance." A capable partner should be able to explain their process and show dated, contextual evidence.

- Do they check final URLs and test landing pages before launch?
- Do they monitor destination errors and review change history?
- Can they explain which conversion actions are verified and how?
- Will they coordinate redirects or page updates with whoever manages the website?
- Do their reports identify the date range, source, and action taken?

Ask for a recent example of how they handled a broken destination, including what changed, when it was detected, and how they verified the correction. Be cautious of claims that a specialist can guarantee a particular ranking or conversion result without discussing your tracking, traffic, offer, and landing page. Clear scope and evidence matter more than impressive-sounding terminology.

A Practical 410 Audit Checklist

- Crawl important site URLs and filter for 410 responses.
- Check Search Console's current page indexing reports and inspect representative URLs.
- Use log file analysis to identify requests to gone URLs and their frequency.
- Confirm each status directly with an HTTP request.
- Decide whether to keep the 410, restore the page, or redirect to a relevant replacement.
- Remove dead URLs from internal links, sitemaps, ads, and active campaigns.
- Test redirects, landing pages, and conversion tracking after changes.

The goal is not to eliminate every 410. It is to make each one intentional, useful to visitors, and consistent with the page's actual status. A crawl helps find the responses, Search Console adds search indexing context, and log file analysis shows whether people or crawlers still request the URLs. Together, they give you a reliable basis for deciding what to fix—and what to leave gone.