

REPORT 1

Finding and Analyzing Expired Domains

The Beginner's Guide to Finding and Researching Expired Domains

Introduction

Did you know you can purchase some expired domains for about the same price as a new one... even though the value of the expired domain is much higher?

Let me explain...

Oftentimes when you purchase something that is “used,” its value is decreased. For example, a used car is going to always be worth less than a new car of the same make and model.

Quality domains are different in that their value actually increases as they age. In that sense, a good domain name is like a fine wine or an antique. The older it is, the more value it has for those who are interested in search engine optimization (SEO).

Sure, you can buy an older domain from someone who’s been sitting on it for a while. But when you buy these sorts of domains directly, you’re going to have to cough up some money. Domain flippers often want a few hundred to a few thousand dollars, depending on the domain.

But you don’t always need to pay that much in order to get an older domain.

You see, every day there are older domains with expiring registrations. In other words, the person who owned the domain didn’t renew it. And you can buy these valuable expired domains for relatively good prices (especially when you consider their value)!

Why Buy Expired Domains?

As mentioned above, an expired domain is more valuable than a new domain, IF it has a clean history and a good link profile. That’s because it

possesses the one desirable search engine optimization factor that you can't get in any other way except with time: age.

Google and other search engines like older domains. If you have two sites that are equal with regards to other SEO factors (such as quality links, keywords, and high-quality content), the older domain is going to get the edge in the search engines.

Here's what this means to you: when you purchase a quality expired domain, you get an instant SEO boost. It feels a little like cheating!

So, how do you use expired domains to your advantage? Check out these ideas...

Create a Website

You may have heard of the Google Sandbox. This is where Google doesn't immediately rank new websites until they've built some trust and authority. You can skip the Sandbox by purchasing a quality expired domain and building your new website on it.

Here's another idea...

Build and Flip

The idea here is to build a niche website, and then sell the entire site to someone else. Not only does the buyer get the benefit of a domain with authority already built in, they also get a "business in a box" that's ready to go.

Resell the Domain

Still another way to take advantage of an expired domain is to buy it, and then resell it for a profit. This works particularly well when you find a good

domain name (memorable and brandable) that also has plenty of authority (with quality backlinks).

Create a Network

Here's another idea: you can utilize expired domains by finding ones in your niche, and then building a network of sites on these domains. You can then link all these sites to your main site, which should help with your main's site link profile (and boost your visibility in the search engines).

Utilize a 301-Redirect

One more way to benefit from an expired domain is by redirecting the domain to your website. The key here is to use a 301 redirect, which passes on some of the "link juice" to your website. Bonus points if the expired domain is still getting traffic, as you'll then get that traffic as well.

The bottom line here is that there are several really good ways to take advantage of expired domains. If you have any interest in improving your search engine rankings, then your eyes should really be lighting up right now. You too can give yourself an unfair advantage by using expired domains.

Which brings us to the next point...

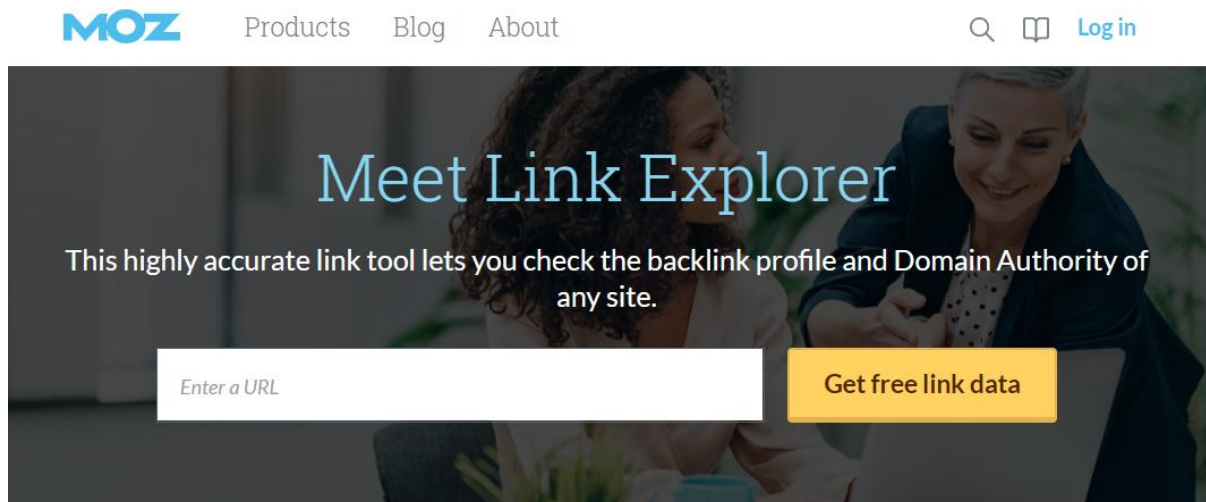
How to Find High-Quality Expired Domains

The big key to this strategy is that you can't just pick any old expired domain. In order to get all the benefits mentioned above, you need to pick a quality domain. In general, this means:

- **It has a clean history.** In other words, the domain shouldn't have any sort of a spammy history.
- **It's relevant.** You can't buy a dog domain and expect it to be valuable on your gardening site. Be sure to pick niche-relevant domains.
- **It has high-quality backlinks.** The key here is "high-quality" – because if the links aren't coming from good sources, then it won't do you much good to buy the domain.

So as you can see, you have some research and due diligence to do. With that in mind, let's take a look at some good ways to do this research...

Check Moz



Moz has a tool called Link Explorer, which provides two metrics:

- Page Authority
- Domain Authority

Domain Authority is a predictor of how well a particular website is likely to rank in the search engines. Scores range from 1 to 100, with higher scores being better. Sites with higher scores tend to have a high-quality link profile.

For example, a site like Wikipedia is going to sit at the top of this scoring system, while a relatively new site is going to sit at 1 (and go from there as it grows its links and authority).

Just aiming for the highest possible score shouldn't necessarily be the goal. Instead, you want to aim for a score that's higher than your competitors' scores. So, if everyone in your niche is sitting around 30, then you aim for something higher such as 35 or so.

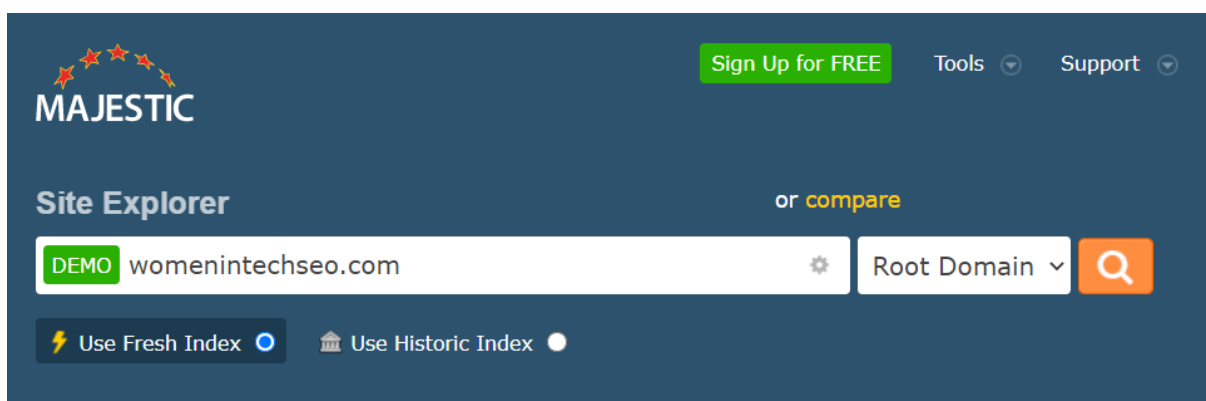
Page Authority is a similar measure, except instead of looking at entire domains, it looks at how well a specific page might rank in the search engines. Page Authority, like Domain Authority, creates a score from 1 to 100, which is based on the link profile.

Both Page Authority and Domain Authority use logarithmic scale, which means it's harder to increase your score the further you go up the scale. For example, it's easier to go from 20 to 30 than it is to go from 70 to 80.

Note that both the Domain Authority and Page Authority will fluctuate over time, so you want to use them as comparative measures rather than absolutes. As mentioned, your goal should be to beat a competitor's score.

Here's another way to research a domain...

Research Using Majestic



Majestic.com is another tool that helps you gauge a domain's quality. Majestic has two measurements that go into their Majestic Flow Metric algorithm:

- Trust Flow
- Citation Flow

Citation Flow is a metric with scoring from 1 to 100, that measures the quantity of links coming into a website. Trust Flow is a metric (also ranging from 1 to 100) that measures the quality of the links coming into a website. Ideally, you want a domain with both a relatively high Citation Flow and Trust Flow.

If you get a domain whose inbound links have a high Trust Flow, then some of that “juice” is passed on to your domain, so that your domain will have a relatively high Trust Flow as well. Of course the opposite is true too: if you have a high Citation Flow (lots of links) but these links have a low Trust Flow, then your site will likely have a low Trust Flow score as well.

Your ultimate goal is to have a high Trust Flow (ideally higher than your competitors' Trust Flow rankings). Generally, high-ranking Trust Flow sites with plenty of quality, authoritative links will have a higher ranking in Google too.

Majestic also gives you a Trust Ratio. This metric is Trust Flow divided by Citation Flow. A perfect score is “1.” For example, if you have a site with both a Trust Flow and Citation Flow of 100, then 100 divided by 100 is “1.”

Of course you're unlikely to find a site with a score of exactly 1. As such, what you're looking for is a score in the neighborhood of 1, so look for a Trust Ratio of .6 to 1.4.

Why do we look at this range specifically?

Because a low Trust Ratio indicates a lot of spammy links, which you obviously don't want. However, a high Trust Ratio can be problematic too, as it indicates a relatively small amount of high-quality links. The problem with having a small number of high-quality links is that removing even one link could drastically affect the domain's authority. If you aim for the range stated above, then the domain should have a good amount of high-quality links.

Now let's look at another tool...

SEMrush

Domain Overview

Get instant insights into strengths and weaknesses
of your competitor or prospective customer.

<input type="text" value="Enter domain name"/>	<input type="button" value="Worldwide ▼"/>	<input type="button" value="Search"/>
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Domain examples: [ebay.com](#) [shopzilla.com](#) [amazon.com](#)

This tool provides a variety of information on a domain, including an Authority Score. The Authority Score ranges from 1 to 100, with a higher score being better.

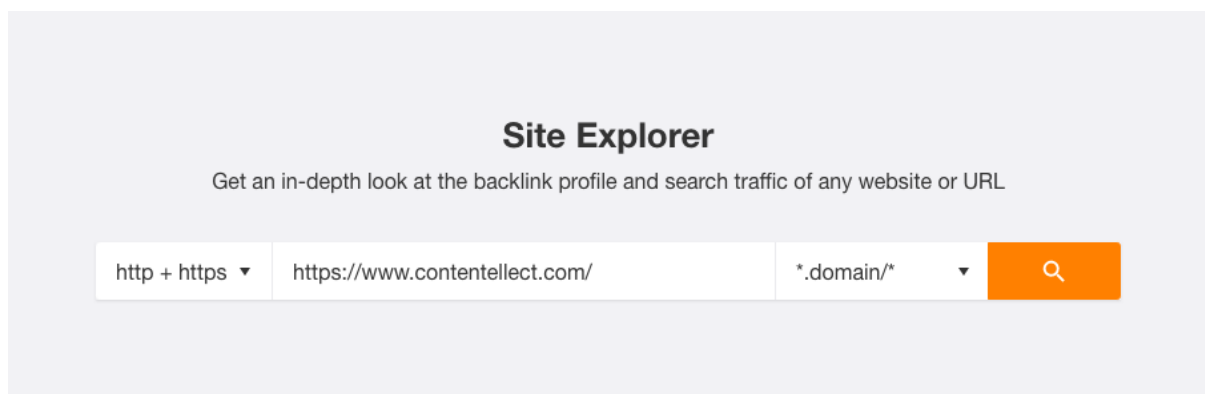
SEMrush's Authority Score is based on a variety of factors, including the number of backlinks, the quality of backlinks, whether the links are follow or nofollow links, and other factors. A domain that has plenty of links coming in from other high-quality sites (with high Authority Scores) will also have a high Authority Score.

As always, think in terms of comparative rather than absolute scores. You want a domain with an Authority Score that's higher than your competitors' domains.

Note that SEMrush also helps you estimate how much traffic a domain might be getting. Without actually checking the traffic logs, there's no way to know for sure how much traffic is flowing into a site. However, SEMrush provides a decent estimate that's based on a database with 6 million users and 814 million domains.

Here's a similar tool to check...

Check Ahrefs Metrics



Ahrefs provides a tool similar to those mentioned above called Domain Rating, with a score running from 0 to 100. As with the other tools, a higher score indicates a "stronger" domain.

The Domain Rating score is largely based on how many unique sites link to the domain, and the authority of these inbound links. So, getting links from high-authority sites will push your score higher than getting a lot of links from low-authority sites. And like other metrics, the Domain Rating is relative. Your goal is to get a domain with a higher Domain Rating score than your competitors' Domain Rating score.

Take a look at Archive.org



The next step is to run the domain through Archive.org, which will show you what sort of site was originally built on the domain, and how that site evolved over time. Here you are looking for two things:

1. How long the domain has been in existence (The longer, the better)
2. What type of site was on the domain

You want to avoid any sites that had questionable content on them, such as:

- A link farm
- Content that's stuffed with keywords
- A porn site
- A hate site
- A hacking site
- A phishing site
- A "get rich quick" site

...Or any other site that housed anything illegal, spammy, or otherwise low-quality/questionable content. These types of sites are often penalized by Google (perhaps not even appearing in their index), so you definitely don't want to get a domain with this sort of bad history.

Check the Incoming Links Manually

It's also a good idea to do a manual check of the inbound links on an expired domain. First, you want to be sure that the links are coming from quality sites. If you see links coming from spam sites, porn sites, hate sites and similar bad sites, then you'll generally want to avoid that domain.

Secondly, you'll also want to be sure that the inbound links pointing to the expired domain are relevant. For example, if you're looking at a dog-related expired domain, then you want the inbound links to be coming from other dog-related pages.

Third, check the anchor text on the inbound links. Ideally, you want the anchor text to include your keywords (such as "organic gardening tips"), rather than words such as "click here."



TIP

Tools like Ahrefs' [backlink checker](#) shows you the sites linking to a particular domain. You can manually check out these links to see what sort of site they lead to.

Next...

Which Metrics Should You Focus On?

You just learned about some of the top ways to score a domain, including using tools from Ahrefs, SEMrush, Majestic and Moz. But which tools and metrics should you use?

The answer: In order to ensure you're getting a high-quality domain, you need to run multiple checks, which should include both automated checks (using the tools mentioned) as well as manual checks (such as checking Archive.org and manually checking links).

What makes a domain "high quality"? Primarily, you're looking at the following factors:

1. The intrinsic value of the name
2. The domain's history
3. The backlink profile

The intrinsic value of the domain is a bit subjective, but the idea is that some domain names are simply better than others.

For illustrative purposes, let me give you an exaggerated example: DogTraining.com is an inherently better name than TheBestDogTrainingSite.info. It's more memorable, it includes valuable keywords, it's descriptive, and it's a .com, which is desirable. (TIP: To understand what makes a domain valuable, study tutorials on domain appraisals.)

The second item is the domain's history. With all else being equal, domains that have been in existence for a longer amount of time are more valuable than those that are recently registered. In addition, you want a clean history, meaning the domain shouldn't have housed a spammy link farm, a porn site, or some other low-quality site.

The other thing you're looking at is the domain's backlink profile. This means you want a domain with a relatively high number of backlinks coming from relevant authority sites.

For example, a handful of links coming from low-quality sites like "Bob's Tire Repair and Sandwich Shop" don't do much to help the backlink profile (and

may even hurt it). On the other hand, multiple links coming from relevant, quality .edu sites, .gov sites and other high-authority pages (such as Wikipedia) are going to help boost the expired domain's backlink profile in a positive way.

The reason for running multiple tools is because these tools pull data from different places and in different ways, which at times can create contradictory results. For example, Majestics tends to find a lot more links than Moz. As such, running multiple tools along with manual checks is definitely the safest solution when it comes to finding a quality domain.

While running all of these checks can be a bit time-consuming, fortunately there is a tool that does the automated checks all in one place, which just leaves you to do the manual checks. You'll get the scoop on this tool in just a few moments.

But first, let's look at the issue of pricing...

How Much Should You Pay?

Prices for expired domains are going to vary depending on when they expired and their potential value to the owner (both in terms of links as well as the intrinsic value of the name itself).

When the person who currently holds the domain lets the domain registration lapse, they get a grace period of about 30 days where they can potentially reclaim the name.

During this time, you can potentially backorder the name. This gives you a shot at getting the name if you're either the first to backorder it, or if those before you changed their mind and no longer want it.

If the name isn't renewed during this grace period, and if there aren't any backorders on the name, then it usually goes to auction (at which point you

can bid on it). If no one bids on it during the auction, then it's returned to the registry. At this point, anyone can register the name, although oftentimes resellers are the first to grab these "dropped" domain names.

Obviously, it's awesome if you can find a suitable name that's already been returned to the registry, in which case you can pick it up for about \$10 or so. In many cases, however, the in-demand names will have more bids at auction or be available directly from someone who just purchased it with the intent to flip it.

So the question is, how much should you pay for these names?

The answer: it depends on what you're going to do with the domain name.

Are you going to flip it directly? Are you going to invest in it by building a site and then flipping it? Are you going to make it part of your private network? Are you going to use it for a 301-direct?

Secondly, you need to consider how valuable the name is as well as how valuable the link profile is and whether it's getting any targeted traffic. You may need to visit some domain auction sites and do some research in order to determine how much people pay for these sorts of domain names.

For example, let's suppose you've found a domain through a reseller or auction that you can get for \$100. Is it worth it?

If your research shows that a similar domain with a similar link profile can be sold for \$200, then you might grab it if you're doing a quick flip.

But what if this domain seems to be worth exactly the asking price: \$100? In that case, you won't be able to flip it for a profit. However, it may be worth building a site on it and then flipping it. Or it may be worth it to you to add it to your network, if the SEO benefits are worth at least \$100 to you.

For example, if you're jumping on a trend in your niche, you may not want to deal with the Google Sandbox. So, you buy a related domain name to get your site ranked immediately and start bringing traffic. In that case, \$100 is well worth the investment just to avoid having to wait around in the Sandbox while others cash in on a trend.

The bottom line here is that there is no "one size fits all" answer as to whether a domain is worth buying at a certain price. It depends on what the domain is worth to you (if you're going to use it in your business), or its value is exactly how much others will pay for it (if you're going to flip it). You need to make your assessments and calculations based on your own unique situation.



NOTE

You need to remove your emotions from this process, especially if you intend to flip it. You may love the domain and think it's worth a bundle of cash, but it's only worth what others will pay. This means you need to honestly assess it from a logical standpoint, based on what others are paying for similar domains. Check sites like Flippa.com, DNJournal.com, and Sedo.com to see what others are paying.

Which brings us to the next point...

Where to Buy Expired Domains

At this point, you can see that a quality expired domain can be a really good investment. But the question is, how and where do you buy these domains?

Let me give you a few different options:

- Check [GoDaddy Auctions](#). Some domains include both auctions and “buy now” options. If no one bids, it will go back into the registry
- Another popular auction site is [DynaDot](#)
- Try [SpamZilla](#), which is an expired domain tool
- [Domain Coasters](#) is another expired domain tool

Those are just a few examples, but there are plenty of other places to buy expired domain names if you do some research.

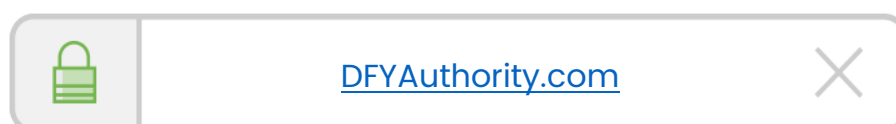
However, here’s the problem with using these sites...

When you find a name you like on these sites, then you have a lot of research and due diligence ahead of you before you can bid on or buy the name. And, as you might suspect, logging in and out of a bunch of research sites (such as Majestic and Moz) ends up being a very time-consuming, tedious process.

In some cases, the required research takes so much time that you could potentially miss out on the name entirely. And yet you absolutely need to do the research, otherwise you risk getting a bad (spammy) domain name that could sabotage your SEO efforts.

The second problem with these sorts of sites is that there is a lot of competition for the best domains, which means you end up paying a lot for expired domains.

So, what’s the solution? This:



This tool seeks out high-quality domains for you, and gives you all the automated checks in one place, including:

- Moz metrics, including total link count, Page Authority, Domain Authority and Moz Rank.
- Majestic metrics, including total link account, Trust Flow, Citation Flow and Trust Ratio. You also get additional information such as referring domains, the numbers of links coming from .gov and .edu sites and more.
- Social media information, such as the number of Stumbles, Pinterest Pins, and Facebook shares and comments.
- Information about when the domain first appeared in the Way Back Machine (Archive.org).

Of course when you use DFYAuthority, you still need to do your manual checks (such as checking Archive.org and checking inbound links). There's no way to get around that, as you should never purchase a domain without the manual checks. However, this tool saves you a whole lot of time because it gives you all the automated checks in one dashboard – no more logging in and out multiple tools.

The second difference between this tool and some of the other sites mentioned above is that the vast majority of the domains inside the DFYAuthority tool have already expired and can be registered for the normal registration fee. This potentially saves you hundreds or even thousands of dollars!

Learn more by checking out this awesome tool now at: <https://dfyauthority.com>

And then use it to grab an awesome expired domain that will help you vault over your competitors in the search engines!