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Crawl errors in Search Console: 404, soft 404 and server errors, one by one

Google Search & Indexing

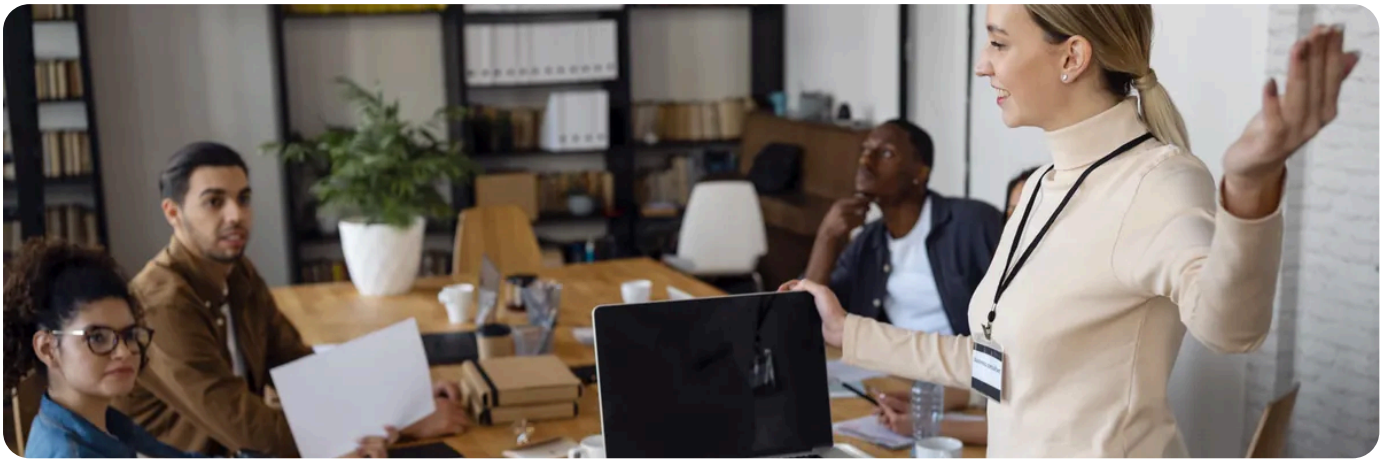
CODE	VERSION	COUNTRY · LANGUAGE
RLX-AO-KB-1182	v2026.10.10	Angola · English

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Crawl errors in Search Console: 404, soft 404 and server errors, one by one

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In Search Console, the **Pages** (indexing) report lists what Google tried to read and could not, or read and decided not to keep. Not everything there is a problem. The job is to separate what is **normal** from what **needs action**, and to treat each type its own way.

What each error means

What the report says	What it means	What to do
Not found (404)	The page does not exist at that address.	If it was deleted on purpose and nobody looks for it, leave it. If it has links or visits, create a 301 redirect to the closest match. See **301 redirects**.
Soft 404	The page answers “all fine” (200) but looks empty or says “not found”.	Either put real content on the page, or make it return 404 or redirect. Common with empty internal searches and categories with no posts.
Server error (5xx)	The site failed when Google tried to read it.	If it is a one-off, ignore it. If it repeats, the server or a plugin is failing: see **errors 500, 403, 404 and 508** and talk to us.
Redirect error	A loop, a chain that is too long, or a destination that fails.	Follow the redirect with `curl -I` and leave a single hop to the final destination.
Blocked by robots.txt	A robots.txt file forbids the robot.	If you did not mean it, correct the rule. See **robots.txt and sitemap.xml**.
Access denied (401 or 403)	The server refused the robot.	It may be a firewall or security rule. See **checking that Google can see your site**.

The method, in order

1. **Open the Pages report** and look first at the “not indexed” reasons with the most addresses. Do not start with the smallest.

2. **Click a reason** and look at a few addresses. Open them in the browser, in a private window, and confirm what Google saw. URL Inspection shows the current status.

3. **Ask: should it be on Google?** A thank-you page, an internal search address or a duplicate should not. Those “errors” are normal.

4. **Fix those that should.** Make them answer 200, link to them from other pages, or redirect the old address to the new.

5. **Request validation.** After fixing a group, use the button to validate the fix. Google visits those addresses again, and the check can take a while. It notifies you when done.

A 404 is not a penalty.
Every site has pages that stopped existing, and Google knows it. What hurts is having 404s on pages with links or lots of demand, and broken internal links. Do not redirect everything to the home page just to make the report look clean.

If 5xx errors repeat, the crawl stats report
(in Settings) shows the time and frequency. Compare with the site’s logs in cPanel. And if a site protection is blocking the real robot, fix that rule rather than switching it off. See **visitor statistics**.

NEED A HAND?

Does Search Console show server errors on your pages? Send us the address, the error type and the date.

Open a support ticket →

SEE ALSO

Checking that Google can see your site →

- **Website errors 500, 403, 404 and 508 explained**
- **301 redirects**
- **Why your site does not show on Google**

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