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brightonSEO.
United Kingdom

Migrations without the traffic cliff dive



Dena Warren

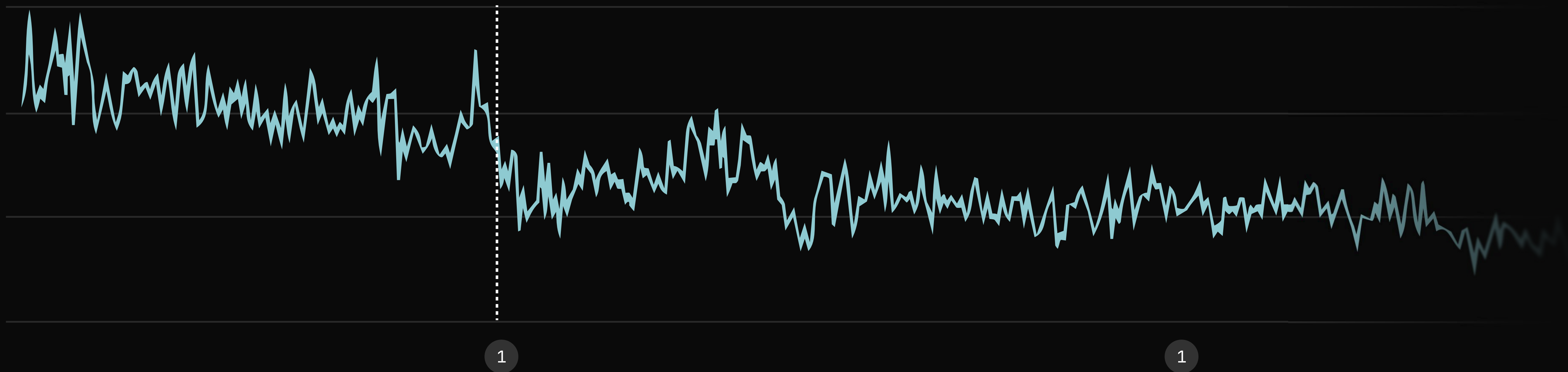
Techquity

[linkedin.com/in/dena-warren](https://www.linkedin.com/in/dena-warren)



Hi! My name is Dena, I've got 6 years ecommerce experience. I'm the SEO lead at development agency Techquity.

Migrations without the traffic cliff dive

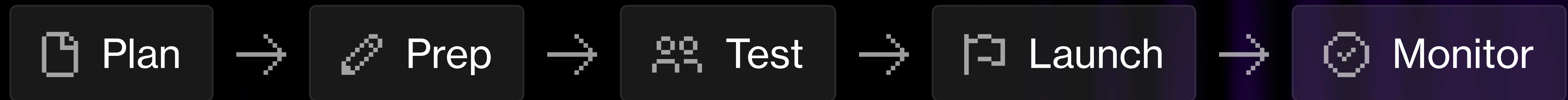


We did the redirects.

So why did traffic fall?

Migrations are much more
than just a launch day.

A migration is a process



* This five-stage structure is borrowed from a talk Rebecca Yu gave on Moz's Whiteboard Friday - <https://moz.com/blog/how-to-communicate-site-migration-to-clients-whiteboard-friday>

Redirects

A redirect map that
survives in practice

What we're given

Old URL	New URL	Type	Status
/mens/jackets/style-4471	/mens/outerwear/style-4471	301	Verified
/womens/shoes/product-8823	/womens/footwear/product-8823	301	Verified
/category/sale-items	/collections/sale	301	Verified
/blog/how-to-guide-old	/guides/how-to-guide	301	Verified
/mens/accessories/belts	/mens/accessories/belts-1	301	Verified
/womens/bags/tote-556	/womens/bags/tote-556	301	Verified
/category/new-arrivals	/collections/new-arrivals	301	Verified
/product/id-7783	/products/id-7783	301	Verified
/blog/returns-policy	/guides/returns-policy	301	Verified
/mens/jackets/style-5582	/mens/outerwear/style-5582	301	Verified
/womens/shoes/product-8823	/womens/footwear/product-8823	301	Verified

What we find

Old URL	Issue Type	Issue Priority	URLs	% of Total
Response Codes: Internal Blocked by Robots.txt	 Warning	 High	226	0.27%
Directive: Noindex	 Warning	 High	225	1.4%
Canonicals: Canonicalised	 Warning	 High	117	1.1%
Response Codes: Internal Client Error (4xx)	 Issue	 High	70	0.08%
Response Codes: Internal No Response	 Issue	 High	23	0.03%
Pagination: Non-Indexable	 Warning	 High	4	0.02%
Canonicals: Non-Indexable Canonical	 Issue	 High	1	0.01%
Page Titles: Over 60 Characters	 Opportun...	 Medium	13,759	85.83%
Page Titles: Over 561 Pixels	 Opportun...	 Medium	13,743	85.73%
Images: Over 100 kB	 Opportun...	 Medium	1,147	1.78%

Where maps **fail**

Chains and loops

 Old URL →  URL A →  URL B →  Actual New URL

Parameters, filters and faceted URLs



← → ↻ 🔍 example.co.uk/shoes?colour=black&sort=price%high%low

The image shows a browser address bar with navigation icons (back, forward, refresh) and a search icon. The URL 'example.co.uk/shoes?colour=black&sort=price%high%low' is displayed. The parameter '?colour=black' is highlighted with a red background, illustrating how filters are implemented in URLs.

Mapped but never implemented

Action		Example	Issue Priority
☐	Trailing slash	/shoes/	 High
☐	Uppercase	/Shoes	 High
☐	Special Characters	/café	 High
☐	Staging Domain	staging.examp...	 High

Out of stock & discontinued products



Sony WH-1000XM5 Wireless Noise Cancelling Headphones



Example Store

<https://www.example.co.uk> › Example › Example

Sony WH-1000XM5 Wireless Noise Cancelling Headphones

Enjoy immersive sound with Sony's wireless noise cancelling headphones. A comfortable over-ear design, . clear hands-free calls and everyday wireless listening. ... [Read more](#)

£52.95 · ● Out of stock



Example Electrical

<https://www.example-electrical.co.uk> › ... › Example

You have 3 options:



Redirect

To closest equivalent



Keep Live

Temporarily out of stock



Remove

404 or 410

Test the map

Old URL	Type	New URL	Hops
/mens/jackets/style-4471	301	/mens/outerwear/style-4471	1
/womens/shoes/product-8823	301	/womens/footwear/product-8823	1
/category/sale-items	301	/collections/sale	1
/product/product-2412	200	/product/product-2412	0
/blog/how-to-guide-old	301	/guides/how-to-guide	3
/mens/accessories/belts	404	-	-
/womens/bags/tote-556	301	/womens/bags/tote-556	1

Prioritise

① Revenue

② Links

③ Clicks

Monitoring

Reading Google Search Console before you need it

Baseline **before** launch

What we wished existed

titles

canonicals

hreflang

robots

internal links

What we have to rebuild from instead

Cached Pages

Wayback Machine

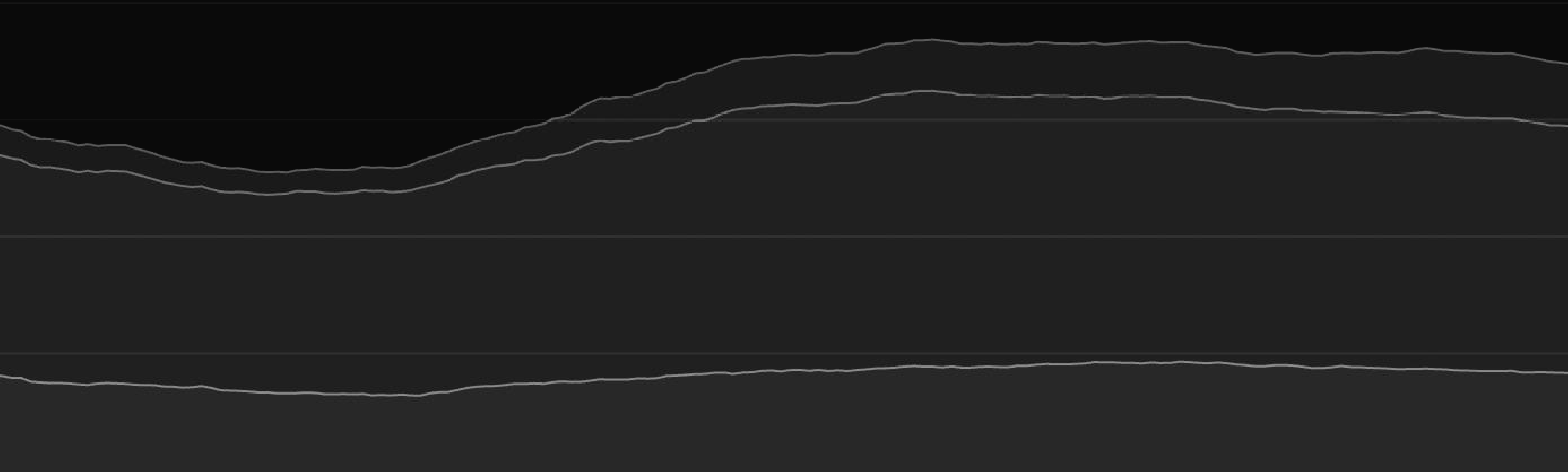
GSC History

Old Sitemaps

Alarm or Noise?

Settled on its own

* real keyword ranking data from ahrefs



Alarm or Noise?

Needed action

* real keyword ranking data from ahrefs



The checkpoints that would
have caught it sooner

✓ Errors

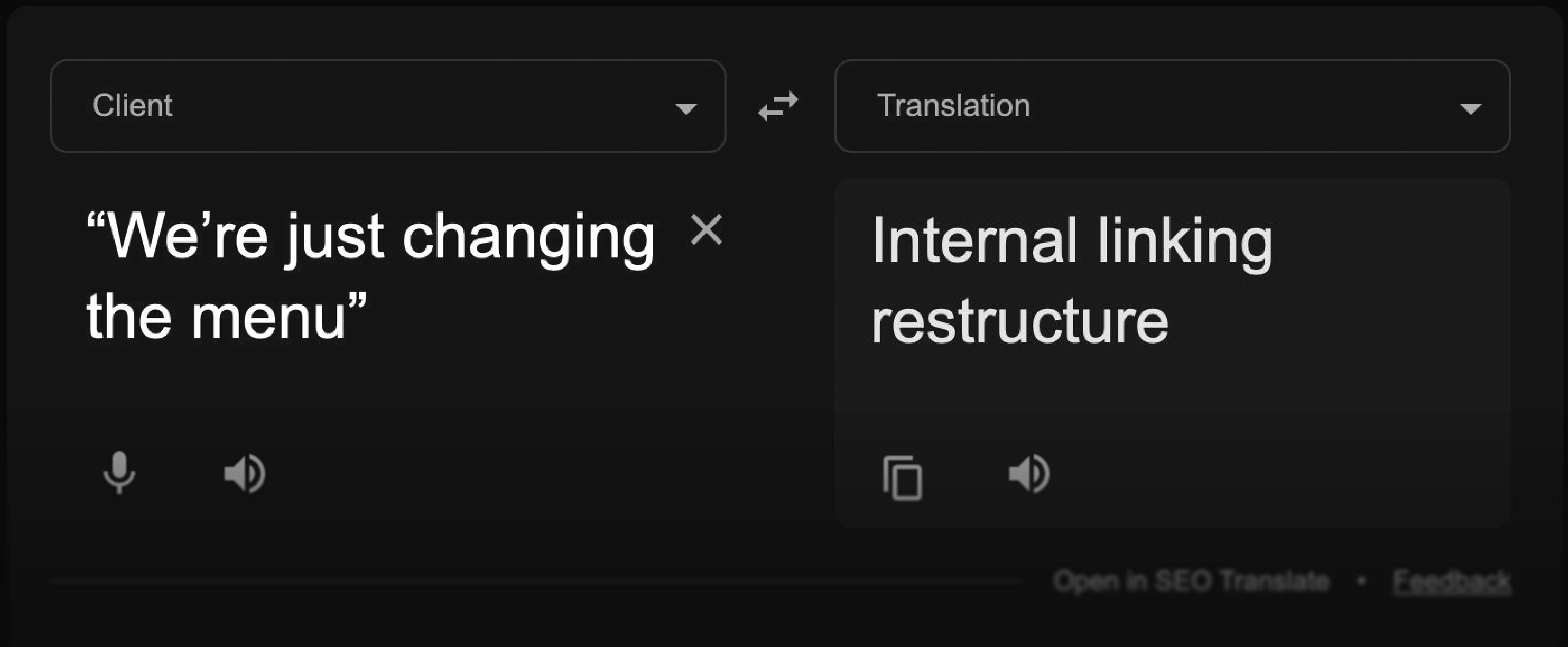
✓ Indexing

✓ Ranking

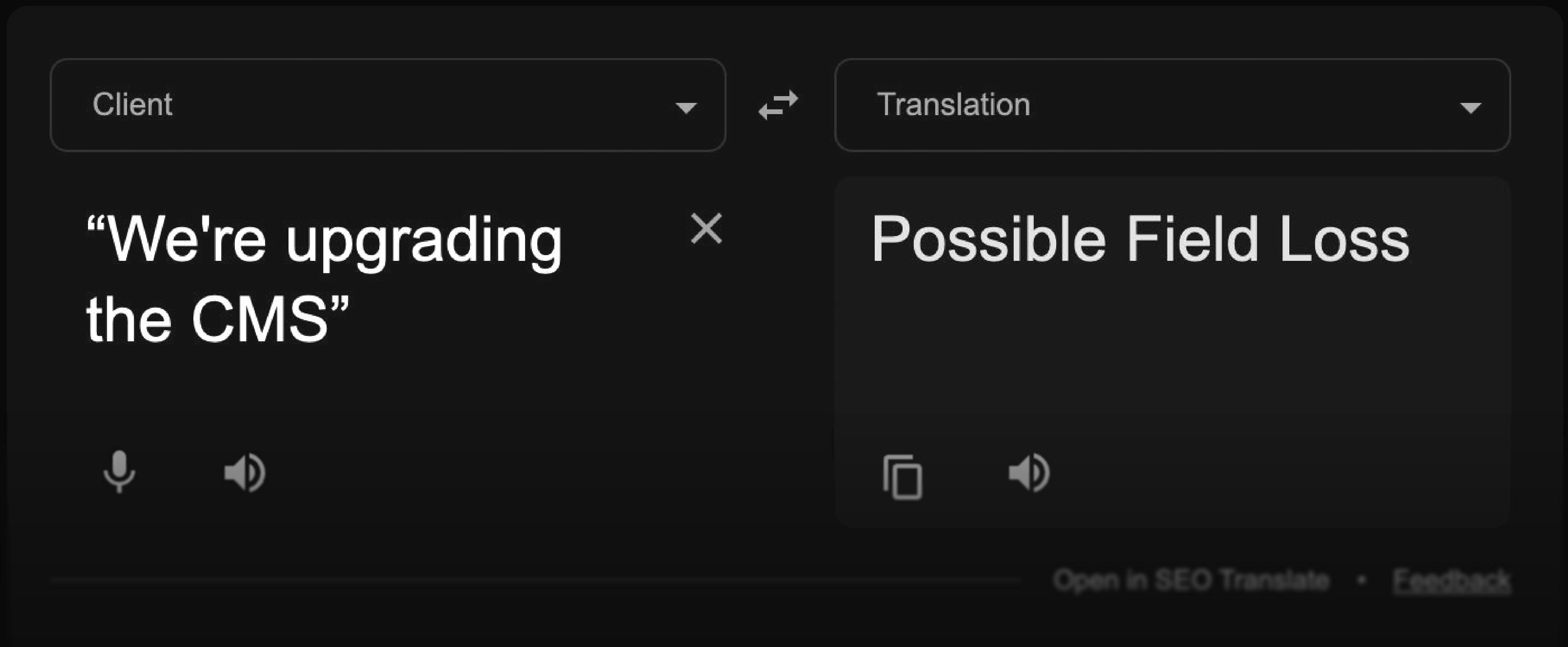
✓ Traffic

“Why are there **40,000**
non-indexed pages?”

They didn't call it a migration



They didn't call it a migration



What we wish had been said on day one

iMessage
Encrypted

Today 15:13

Quick heads-up before launch — you may see the number of indexed pages fluctuate while Google processes the changes.

We'll be checking redirects, whether key pages are being indexed, and organic traffic daily. We'll send you an update after the first week explaining what's settling and anything that needs attention.



Not Delivered

Why is Search Console showing 40,000 pages as not indexed? Has something gone wrong with the new website?

The framework we use now

- What we see
- What it means
- What we're doing
- When we'll know

What that actually sounds like

Today ▾



Dena Warren 16:42

Quick update on the **40,000** non-indexed URLs in Search Console:

The sample we've checked is **mainly old URLs redirecting as planned**. Those exclusions are expected, but we haven't checked enough yet to explain the whole number.

We're **checking the replacement pages next**, starting with the categories and products that brought in the most organic traffic before launch. [@dev](#) will investigate any unexpected exclusions with us.

Next update **tomorrow at 3pm**, covering what's confirmed, anything that needs fixing and whether traffic to those pages has changed. (edited)

B I U | 🔗 ☰ ☷ | ☰ ☷ </> 📎

Message @website-launch

+ 📎 😊 🌐 📺 🔍 📎 ➤

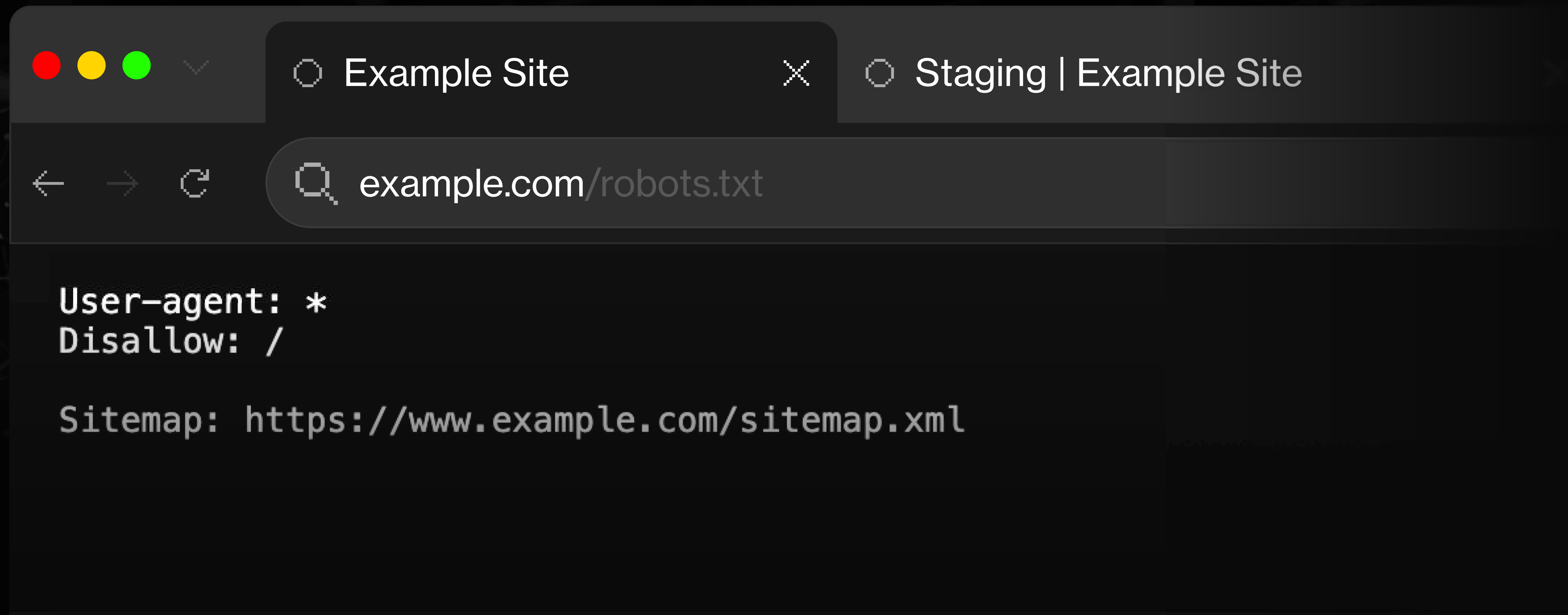
When you're brought in late,
this is what you can still do



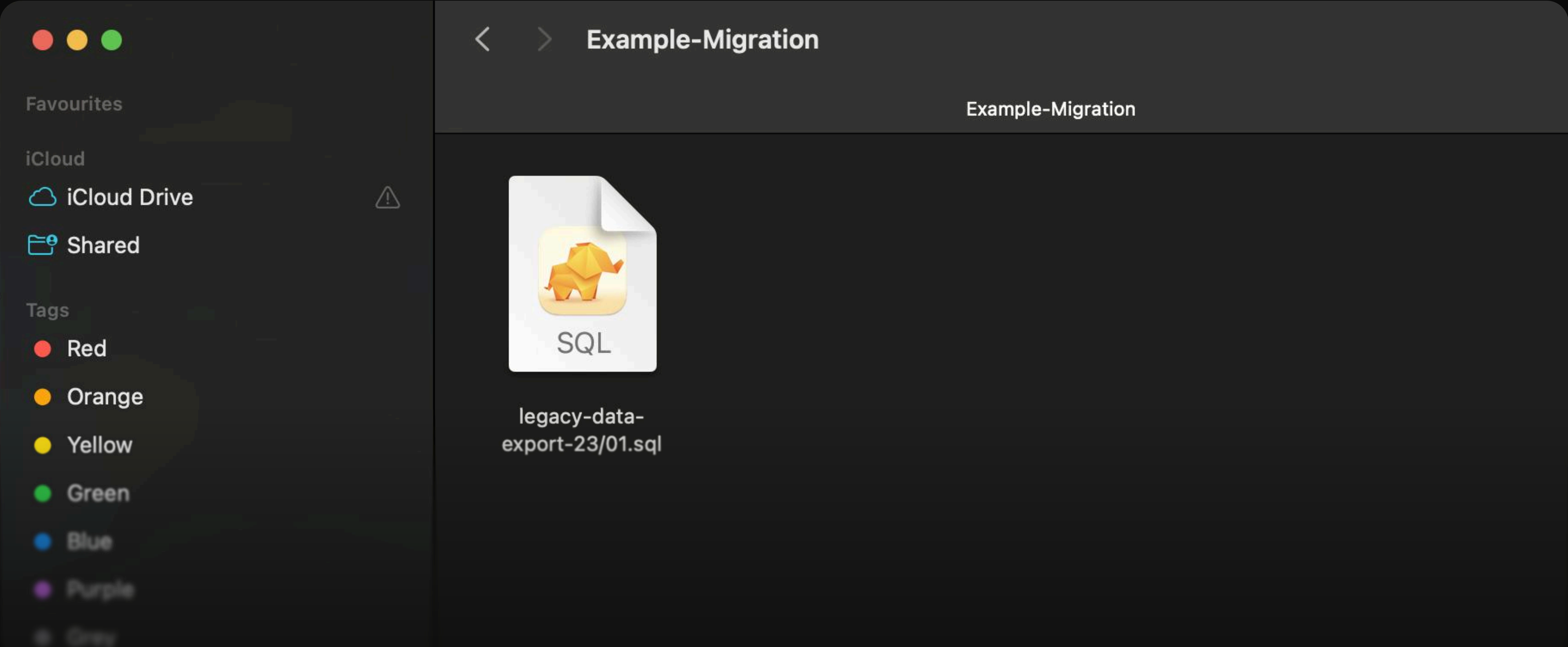
Launch Lessons

Nobody skipped these
on purpose

The staging leak



Frozen export, live edits



Manual in the old CMS, automated in the new one

Search Engine Optimization (SEO)

Example

Example

Page Title

Example | Example

Meta Description

optional

Canonical

✓

Self

Parent

Custom

No index

Save

Not in the ticket, not in the build

1

DW

Migrate product pages to new template

▼

🚩

No priority

☰

Backlog

Update product page template to match new design. Make sure SEO is fine and redirects are set up.

Details

Custom fields

Dependencies

Tickets

Proofs

▼

Acceptance Criteria

1

✕

✓

DW

Page displays correctly on new template.

↑

Not in the ticket, not in the build

Update product page template to match new design, using the URL and metadata mapping in [linked sheet].

Details Custom fields Dependencies Tickets Proofs

▼ Acceptance Criteria 4 ✕

- ✓ DW QA: crawl a 20-page sample post-deploy and confirm canonical, robots and content match the source ↗
- ✓ DW Content fields (title, description, price, stock status) are pulled from the live database at build time, not from the export ↗
- ✓ DW Canonical tag on each page matches the mapped URL exactly, with no query parameters appended ↗
- ✓ DW No noindex tag or robots.txt disallow rule present on any live product URL ↗

+ Add a subtask

Time logs

“We covered the basics”

The migration checklist



The post-migration checklist

Post-live
checks



Regular
checks



Completion

Download the checklist





Dena Warren

eCommerce SEO Specialist | Helping Brands
Win in Google & AI Search | Technical SEO, C...





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