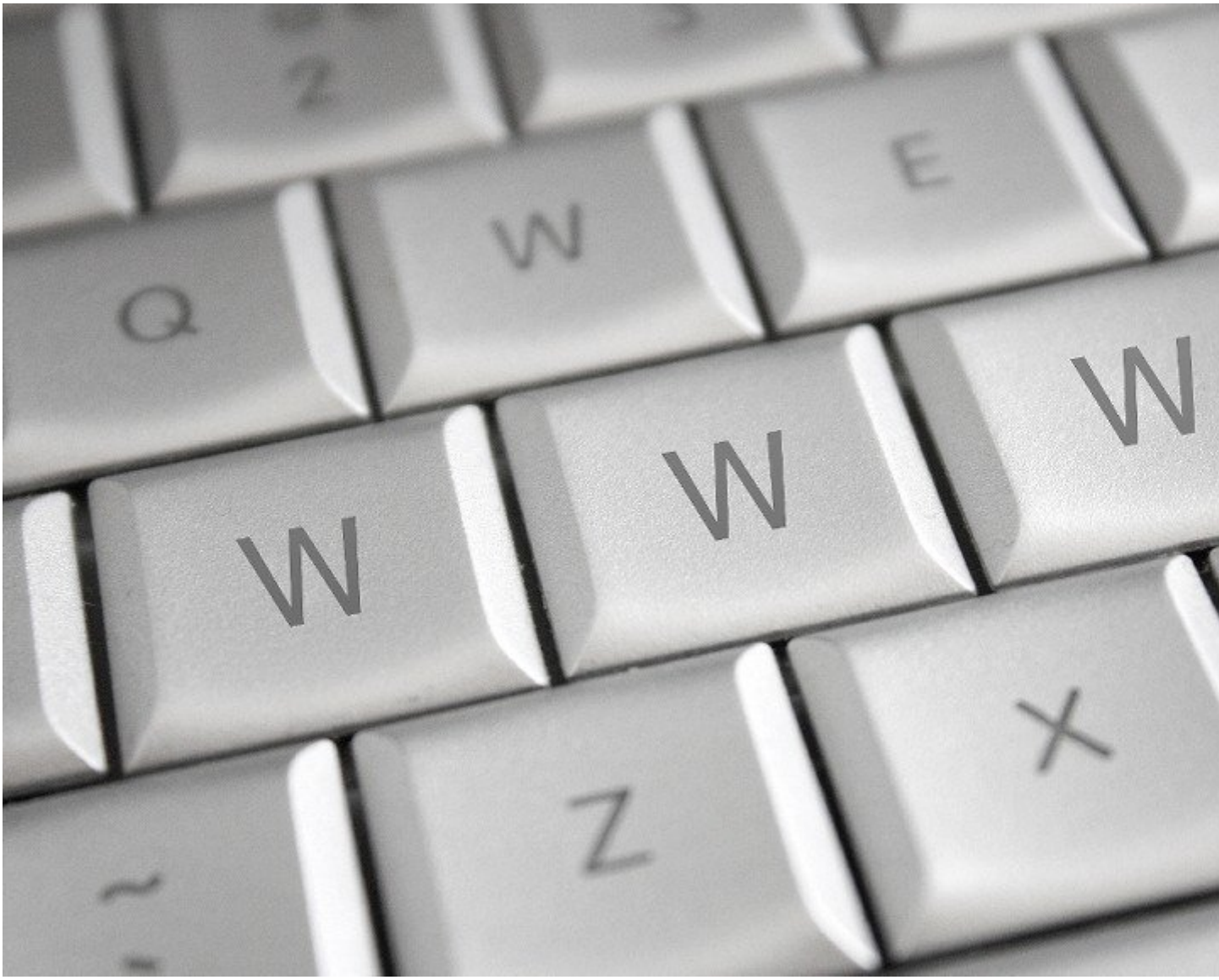
Is it Better to Use the “www” Version of Your Domain Name?



When setting up your domain name and website, one error I see a lot is that both the “www” and the non-www version of the domain works to get to the same website. This isn’t optimal and it’ll put you behind in rankings potentially.

Some Technical Stuff to Go Over

Of course, both versions of the domain should go to your website. For example, both of these URLs should go to the same URL (by using a redirect):

- https://tonyherman.com/
- https://tonyherman.com/

With this website, I have them both pointing to the www.tonyherman.com version of the domain name.

Remember that this is a URL:

> https://tonyherman.com/

This is a domain name:

> tonyherman.com

And this is a subdomain:

> www.tonyherman.com

As is this:

> mail.tonyherman.com

You could have different content on the www version of the domain and the non-www version of the domain. This is why Google and other search engines check both. If both work (no redirect from one to the other) and point to the same content, then you could be suffering from a duplicate content penalty because you have the same content showing up on two different websites (technically).

Here's a great article I found about this:

> Your Guide to 301 Redirects for SEO (searchenginewatch.com)
>
> When it comes to domains, Google practices what's called canonicalization, the process of selecting a "preferred domain" URL that best represents the site. If the site owner doesn't choose one, Google will decide which URL to index.

If Google picks http://example.com but all your links point to www.example.com, then the fruits of your efforts are being diluted, causing a disadvantage to your SEO campaign.

He mixes a URL and a domain name above but you get the idea.

So Which is Better?

Now that I've explain technically what's going on, which is better?

Some people say that shorter URLs are better, so they're in favor of the non-www version of the domain for the website. I've done this with a few sites.

Personally, I think having the “www” in the domain name or URL helps it stand out and it’s more marketable. If people see that in marketing that you do, then it’s obvious what it is, so that’s less that can go wrong or “fewer variables in the equation” as I like to say. I like to be consistent, so if it’s being marketed that way, why not have the URLs be the same? It’s branding.

Facebook uses the www subdomain. So does Google.

It’s up to you but my advice is use the www version of the domain and then make sure the non-www version redirects properly using a permanent (“301”) redirect. I’ve got some advice on redirects here.

-Tony

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