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How to migrate a site without downtime

Backups & Migration

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How to migrate a site without downtime

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Changing hosting provider does not have to take your site offline. The trick is simple: **set everything up here before pointing the domain**. While you prepare the new account, the old site keeps serving your visitors as normal.

Rather not do this yourself?
We have a **Migration Department**. Open a **support** ticket under that department, tell us where the site is hosted today, and we will handle the move for you.

The right order

The most common mistake is changing the nameservers first. Do that and the domain starts pointing at an empty account, so the site disappears for hours. The correct order is this:

1. **Order the plan and leave the domain alone.** The account is created immediately and you can start working in it. The domain keeps pointing at your old host.
2. **Copy everything across.** Files (via File Manager or FTP), databases (export from the old phpMyAdmin, import into the new one), and the e-mail accounts, recreated with the same addresses.
3. **Test before pointing.** You can open the new site without touching the domain, by editing your computer's *hosts* file so only you see the new copy. If you prefer, ask us and we will show you how.
4. **Only now point the domain.** With everything tested, change the nameservers to ours. Because both copies are identical, visitors see the same site whichever one is serving them.
5. **Do not cancel the old hosting yet.** Keep it for at least a week. While the change propagates, some visitors are still being served from there.

E-mail is the delicate part

The website is easy: both copies show the same content. E-mail is different - during propagation some messages reach the old server and others the new one.

Create the e-mail accounts here **before** pointing the domain, using the same addresses. For the first few days, check both mailboxes - old and new - so nothing is missed. If you use Outlook, keep both configured side by side during that period.

Before you start, make sure

- [ ] You have access to the old hosting panel, to copy the files
- [ ] You have access to where the domain is registered, to change the nameservers
- [ ] You noted the current DNS records - especially MX, if e-mail is with another service
- [ ] You have a full backup before touching anything

NEED A HAND?

Rather we handled the migration? Open a ticket under the Migration Department.

Ask for migration help →

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