

How to Transfer Your Web Site to Another Host Without Losing It

By Herman Drost

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You want to change web hosts because you have found a less expensive solution for your web site. You are not happy with the services your host is providing. The response time for technical support is too slow. You make the decision to change web hosts.

Now you are faced with the daunting task of switching web hosts without losing the files and beautiful design of your web site. How do you achieve this? Here are the steps you need to take:

1. Make a complete copy of your web site. Use your favorite FTP utility (I use SmartFTP.com), to download all files to your computer from your web host. Don't assume you already have all the files on your computer - you may have added some scripts from the Net that are on your server but not on your computer.

If you are using Dreamweaver, use the GET command to copy all your files.

If you are using Frontpage, use the import feature to make a complete copy of the old web site.

2. Choose your new Web Host. Choose a new Web Host that meets the needs of your web site (www.isitebuild.com/webhostarticle). If you don't know how much space you need, read the article: "How Much Hosting Space Do You Need"? - (www.isitebuild.com/hostingspace).

3. Transfer your domain name Contact the domain name registrar (place where you registered your domain name) and change the Domain Name Server (DNS) or Name Server information to your new hosts DNS information.

Your site is going to experience a downtime while your DNS record is being changed and propagated through the world's WHOIS

servers. It will take about 24-72 hours for the process to be completed.

Maintain any existing services set up on your old domain name such as email forwarding, web pointing and website hosting until the transfer is complete to ensure continuity of your service.

You can check the progress of your domain name transfer by using a Domain Name Search facility such as Whois.net. You should see the details change from your previous Host to your New Host when the transfer is complete.

4. Upload all files to your new Web Host.

When you are sure your domain name has been transferred, upload the files to your new Web Host.

Dreamweaver - define your site first, and then use the PUT command to transfer all your files and html pages. This will ensure that your whole web will remain intact with the transfer.

FrontPage - create a new Web from the site files you have imported from your old host, then publish them to the new host. Make sure your new host has Front Page extensions installed. This process will transfer your complete site to your new Host.

5. Transferring web pages to the New Host.

Dreamweaver or FrontPage editors make it very easy to transfer html web pages. They keep most, if not all your web site intact for the transfer (as explained above).

Another way to transfer your web pages is to copy the source code by right clicking on the page as you see it when you visit the site and select 'view/source'. It will come up on Notepad. Select 'file/save as' and save to a place of your choice as an HTML file. To do this, at the bottom of the box just before you save it, it will say '.txt'. Change the drop menu to 'all files' and then change the '.txt' at the end of the name you're saving it as to '.html', then save it. You will then have a complete page ready to load to wherever you want. If you have images though, you'll have to save them separately.

6. Amending your web site.

Sometimes your web site may not look exactly the same as on your last Web Host. This is because the html code and/or files did not completely transfer. This may happen more often with the editors. FrontPage will do this more because it uses FrontPage extensions for publishing (extra files for easy publishing).

Make the necessary design changes to mirror the site you had previously hosted. You may have to eliminate or add some code to completely reflect your original site.

7. Testing your web site.

Once the domain name and your web site files have been transferred, you should test that all services are working on the your new Host (i.e. email services, etc). If it's working correctly, go ahead and cancel all your remaining services with your previous hosting service.

Transferring your web site to a new Host doesn't have to be such a nerve-racking task, once you know the exact steps to take. Now you can enjoy the savings and services of a new home for your web site.

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