

Transferring Domains

By Richard Lowe

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Richard Lowe
articles@internet-tips.net

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Author: Richard Lowe, Jr.
Contact Author: <mailto:articles@internet-tips.net>
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Are you getting the service that you require from your domain registrar? Actually, thinking about it for a minute, it might be a better question to ask, do you even know what services are available? Are you aware that you can shop around and get better prices, more features and far better customer service?

Guess what? All domain registrars are not the same.

Okay, let's back up a minute. Way back when the internet was young (maybe 5 years ago) all domain names were handled by Network Solutions, Inc. In those dark, evil days you had no choice. It didn't matter what you thought of the process, it was unimportant that you were not getting service and the price, well, was a standard high fee.

A few years ago the government decided that Network Solutions would no longer be a monopoly. The government wanted to do this to deregulate the industry and encourage competition, and also perhaps to spur a little bit of growth into this thing called the internet.

Okay, so now you do have a choice. In fact, there are well over a hundred different domain registrars at last count. They seem to be springing up all over the place, and the level of support and service, as well as the price, seems to vary greatly.

You may not know it, but you can change domain registrars at any time. It's actually not very complicated at all.

Here are some of the questions that you may have regarding domain transfers.

How much does it cost?

It depends upon the domain registrar. I have found that many will transfer your domain for no cost to get your business. Others will charge a few dollars (\$5 to \$20 or more), but will drop the fee if you extend your domain for a couple of years. Shop around and find a good deal.

What are the advantages of transferring?

You may not like the domain registrar you are currently using - perhaps they have poor support or cost too much. You can shop around and find the best solution for your needs.

Remember, though, that if you are like most people, domain registration is something you will not do very often, so perhaps customer support is not all that important.

What are the disadvantages?

Transferring a domain can be confusing. Also, there is no guarantee that the new registrar will be any better than the old one. Again, remember that domain registration is not something that you should need to deal with very often (if you are like most people) so it may not be worth the effort to change.

Can any domain be transferred?

Yes, any domain registered with any registrar may be transferred to any other registrar.

What does a registrar do?

The registrar manages your domain name. They maintain security and the structures that make the domain work.

Does changing registrars have any effect on ownership?

No. When you change registrars you are only changing managers. You still retain ownership.

Are there reasons why a domain may not be transferred?

Yes. Some of these are listed below.

- The domain name is in a legal dispute of some kind.
- The identity of the domain name holder is in dispute or unknown.
- The domain name holder is in bankruptcy.
- The domain has only been with the registrar for 60 days.
- The registrar refuses to transfer for other reasons.

How is a domain transferred?

This varies from registrar to registrar. Some require a notarized form to be delivered to them, others can do it using a web site form.

How long does the process take?

The registrar will usually take five to ten days to review and validate the request. Once it has been validated and put into action, it will take a couple of days for the change to filter through the internet.

Will the web site associated with the domain be accessible during the change?

Yes. This normally does not effect access to your web site. The registrar is changed, not the web site address and other information.

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