

Topic | Website

Tutorial 9

Domain Name Advanced

This tutorial complements the previous tutorial about registering a domain name.

Reading time: 10 minutes | Prerequisites: Tutorial 8

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1. How do I link my new domain name and my new site?

In order to match your site's files to your site's address, you will need to let your domain name know where to find the files (your website) to be displayed at www.mytrendyhotel.com.au.

This process may not be required if your host and domain name registrar are the same company as it is done automatically. However, if you are not working with a web developer and need to learn how to do it yourself, it is very simple even though the technical term "delegating domain names" makes it sound complicated. It will take you 5 minutes.

When you organise hosting for your website, your host will send you confirmation emails which include your email addresses, the login details to access your hosting account as well as their domain name servers. These domain name servers (DNS) have a format similar to this and come in twos (primary and secondary) or in threes (primary, secondary, tertiary)

- **Primary DNS server: ns1.qnetau.com**

IP Address: 202.146.202.1

- **Secondary DNS server: ns2.qnetau.com**

IP Address: 202.146.202.2

- **Tertiary DNS server: ns3.qnetau.com**

IP Address: 202.146.214.3

What you need to do with these is:

- First log into the control panel (the place where you can manage your settings) of your domain name registrar (not your host's).
- Find menu which allows you to manage (sometimes called delegate) your domain names
- Replace the existing DNS or blank fields with the DNS provided to you by your host. Make sure you enter the DNS server names and the IP address if required by your domain name registrar. Note: they might not always ask you for both the names and the IP address.

Once this is done, it might take up to 72 hours for you and the rest of the world to see your new site. This is purely because it takes time for all Internet providers (such as Bigpond, IINET or other in Australia) to be updated with the new location of your website's files. This phenomenon is called domain name propagation. If nothing has changed after 72 hours there may be a problem. Contact your host to ensure you have done things properly.

2. How do I link my existing domain name and my new site?

Unless you start a new business, you will probably already have an existing domain name. Remember, domain names are independent from web hosting. Unless you have purchased your hosting and your domain name with the same provider, you will need to link your domain name to your website's files that reside with your host (your web developer may of course do this on your behalf).

- **If you are going to host your new site on the same server as your old site, there is no need to redelegate your domain names.** All that is required is that you replace your old site files with your new ones, using (secure) File Transfer Protocol (FTP). Your web developer will normally do this for you.
- If your new site is going to be hosted on a different web host (for instance, your old hosting package didn't meet the requirements of your new website) you will need to delegate your domain name to the new host. This process is done at your domain name registrar, by changing the DNS (domain name servers) settings to the ones provided by your new web host (Read paragraph 1 for step by step guide on how to delegate a domain name).

If you are hosting your new site on a new host, you will also need to re-create all your email addresses using the control panel (using the login and passwords you were provided) of your new host. This is because the email addresses are set up at the website host and not the domain name registrar. You may also want to consider Google Apps to become your email host. Their standard service is free (<http://www.google.com/apps/intl/en/group/index.html>) and allows you to have more than 7GB of email storage per user. Furthermore, if you change hosts again you won't have to recreate your email addresses again.

3. Redirecting a domain name

If you have more than one domain name, such as www.mytouristbus.com and www.mytouristbus.com.au, you need to decide which one is the main one (the one holding the website's content) and which one is simply going to redirect the user to the main one.

If you would like your web developer to do it, inform them that you need to redirect one or more domain names using a 301 redirect. If you are willing to do it yourself, you will need access to your site's control panel (the area where you manage your hosting options).

Redirecting a domain name is done using what is called a 301 redirect. **If you do it any other way (for instance using a 302 redirect) you will have issues of duplicate content which risks to negatively affect your search engine ranking.**

301

The following webpages, www.theinternetdigest.net/archive/301-redirects-seo.HTML and www.theinternetdigest.net/articles/add-on-domains.HTML will explain to you in depth how to do so by creating an "add-on domain" on your host server.

Another advantage of using an add-on domain will allow you to have both email@mytouristbus.com and email@mytouristbus.com.au email addresses, which comes in very handy when people can't remember if your website is a .com or .com.au .

4. How do I check if my redirects are correct?

To check if your redirects are 301 redirects, all you need to do is visit this website www.seoconsultants.com/tools/headers.asp. The process is called “checking server heads”. Simply enter the URL of your website that is being redirected to your main one (e.g. www.mytouristbus.com) and if the result is a 301 the redirect has been done properly.

If you ask your web developer to redirect a domain name, it is always wise to check for yourself if they have done it properly using a 301 redirect. Unfortunately many web developers are unaware of the search engine implications of domain name redirection and could use a 302 redirection instead that is unfortunately unsuitable. Simply point them to the links in the above paragraph and they will be able to easily set up a 301 redirect for your site.

5. Key learning outcomes

- If you are getting a new website built and that website is hosted on a different server (host) than your existing website you or your web developer will need redirect the domain name to display the content that is now hosted on the new server. Your web developer will require your login and password to your domain name registrar to do so.
- Your web developer will also require to redirect every page of your own website to the respective page on your new website. If this is not done you risk losing search engine rankings. Do not expect your web developer to do this for you as many don't do it by default. Ensure you request it is done.

6. Related material

a). Related tutorials

- Registering a domain name
- Organising hosting for my site
- Security and backups

b). Related websites

- 301 redirects: www.theinternetdigest.net/archive/301-redirects-seo.html
- Add-on domains: www.theinternetdigest.net/articles/add-on-domains.html
- Google Apps: www.google.com/apps
- administrator need to know: www.auda.org.au/pdf/needtoknow.pdf