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The slash at the end, capital letters and index.html: one page at several addresses

SEO & Marketing

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The short answer: to a browser and to Google, `/contact` , `/contact/` , `/Contact` and `/contact/index.html` are four different addresses. On the server they may open the same page, give a 404 or redirect, depending on whether the path is a real folder, a real file or an address built by an application such as WordPress. If more than one answers 200, you have duplicate pages; if one gives a 404, somebody's link is broken. The domain name does not care about capitals; the path, on a Linux server, does.

The variants, and what usually happens

Variant	What usually happens	What you want
A real folder without the slash: <code>/gallery</code>	The server answers 301 to <code>/gallery/</code> (Apache and LiteSpeed do this for folders).	Fine. Link to the version with the slash and save a hop.
A WordPress page with or without the slash	WordPress redirects to the form its permalink structure uses.	Fine. Internal links in that same form.
Capitals: <code>/Contact</code>	On a Linux server it is another file: a 404, or two copies if both exist.	Lower case always. Redirect the capitalised addresses already out there.
The index file: <code>/index.html</code> , <code>/index.php</code>	Opens the home page again, at a second address.	301 to <code>/</code> and never link to index.html.
Double slash: <code>/shop//shoes</code>	Often opens the same page.	Fix the template or code that builds the link (a base address ending in <code>/</code> joined to a path starting with <code>/</code>).
Domain in capitals: <code>WWW.asuaempresa.ao</code>	Same address: the browser lower-cases the name.	Nothing to do.

Choosing one form and enforcing it

1

Test each variant in a terminal with `curl -I`

`https://asuaempresa.ao/contact` , then the same with the slash, with capitals and with index.html. Two variants answering 200 are duplicates; a 301 to the right form is fine; a 404 on a variant people use is a broken link.

2

Pick the form your platform already uses: in WordPress, the permalink structure decides; on a site made of files, folders take the slash and files do not. Do not try to force the opposite.

3

Use that form everywhere: menus, internal links, sitemap and canonical tag. See **internal links** and **the canonical tag**.

4

Send index.html and index.php to the folder. Take a copy of the

.htaccess and add, above other rewrite rules: `RewriteEngine On`
`RewriteCond %{THE_REQUEST} ^(GET|HEAD)\s/(.*)?index\.`
`(html|php)[\s?] [NC]`

`RewriteRule ^(.*)?index\.(html|php)$ /$1 [R=301,L]` The condition on the original request stops the rule from looping with the index file the server itself serves. Test in a private window.

5

Capitals: lower-casing everything automatically needs server-level configuration, which cannot be done in a .htaccess. On shared hosting, fix the links and redirect, one by one, the capitalised addresses already shared, with lines such as `Redirect 301 /Contact /contact` (this kind of rule is case-sensitive).

6

Check Search Console for the duplicate-page and redirect statuses:
crawl errors in Search Console.

Do not add a rule that adds or strips the slash on top of what WordPress already does. Two rules that disagree (one strips the slash, the other adds it) make an endless loop: **ERR_TOO_MANY_REDIRECTS**. And test any new .htaccess rule with a 302 first, because the browser remembers a wrong 301.

File and folder names in lower case from day one avoid half of these problems. Anyone bringing a site from a Windows server, where capitals do not matter, meets this surprise first: **moving a site between Linux and Windows.**

Not sure which form of the address your site should use, or did the rule cause a loop? Send us the domain and two variants that behave differently.

[Open a support ticket](#)

SEE ALSO

The canonical tag: duplicate pages, www or not, and which address Google keeps

What a good page URL looks like, and how to change a bad one safely

301 redirects when you change a page or a domain

ERR_TOO_MANY_REDIRECTS: when the site redirects in a circle

Moving a site between Linux and Windows servers: the differences that break it

Internal links: how to link your own pages so nothing stays hidden



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