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Domain with us, site somewhere else: what changes and what does not

Nameservers & Pointing

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Domain with us, site somewhere else: what changes and what does not

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This is the reverse of the other cases: the domain is registered with us and the site is going to live somewhere else. A page builder, a shop hosted by its own provider, a server at another company. It works, it takes minutes, and there is one thing to understand before you start.

The two ways, and only one of them fits most cases

	What you do	When it fits
The zone stays with us	The nameservers stay ours and you change **one record** inside the zone, in cPanel: the A record for the bare domain and the `www`.	**Almost always.** Mandatory if the e-mail is ours. It is reversible in one line and puts nothing at risk.
The zone goes to them	You switch the nameservers to whatever the other service gives you. The whole zone becomes theirs.	Only if they handle **everything**, mail included, and only after copying the MX and TXT records across.

If the e-mail is with us, do not hand over the nameservers.
The second the delegation changes, the MX records pointing at our mailboxes stop existing for the world, and the messages from that window do not come back. To put the site out there, an A record is enough. Handing over the zone is never required.

What changes and what stays the same

	After the site moves out
The A record for the bare domain	**Changes.** It takes whatever address the other service gives you.

	After the site moves out
The `www`	**Changes.** Either an A record with the same address, or the CNAME they specify.
Who answers for the content	**Changes.** It becomes them. Outages, slowness and site errors are now theirs, not ours.
The site certificate	**Changes.** Whoever serves the site issues the certificate. Ours stops being used, even though it still exists.
The domain	**Stays.** Still registered in your name, with us, and renewed with us. See **domain renewal**.
The DNS zone	**Stays.** Still in cPanel, and that is where anything is edited. That is what gives you the way back.
The e-mail	**Stays**, as long as you leave the MX records alone. Mailboxes, passwords and messages stay exactly where they are.
The subdomains	**Stay**, each pointing wherever you set it. You can have the main site out there and a members area in here at the same time.

The records you do not touch

When only the site moves, these stay untouched. If one disappears, mail breaks, and not always straight away: sometimes only sending breaks, or only messages to certain recipients, which makes the cause hard to see.

Record	What it holds up
MX	Where mail sent to you goes. Without it, nobody can write to you.
TXT with SPF	Says which servers may send on your behalf. Without it, your mail lands in other people’s junk folders.
TXT with DKIM	The signature on your mail. See **SPF, DKIM and DMARC**.
TXT with DMARC	The rule that says what to do with mail failing the two checks above.
The mail access names	The names phones and mail programs use to connect. If they change, every device stops syncing at once.
Verification TXT records	Proofs you gave other services that the domain is yours. Deleting one can lose you a whole service. See **TXT verification records**.

What the other service will ask you for

1. **An IP address, for an A record.** The simplest case: open Zone Editor in cPanel, change the address on the A record for the bare domain, done.

2. **Or a name, for a CNAME.** Many builders and shops give you a name instead of an address, because their address changes. That is fine, with the care described in the box below.

3. **A verification TXT record.** They give you a line of text to prove the domain is yours. You add it, you replace nothing, and you do not delete it later without asking them.

4. **Sometimes a CAA record.** It says which authorities may issue certificates for your domain. If they ask for one, add theirs without removing what is already there, or our certificate stops renewing.

5. **Check at the end, from outside:** `dig A asuaempresa.ao` for the site, and `dig MX asuaempresa.ao` to make sure the mail has not moved.

> **!** **A CNAME on the bare domain does not work.**
> A CNAME cannot coexist with other records of the same name, and the bare domain always carries mandatory records that cannot be removed, MX among them. Put a CNAME there and the panel may even accept it, but **e-mail stops working**. If the other service only gives you a name and not an address, use `www` as the site's main address and have the bare domain redirect to it. Tell us and we will set that up with you.

If the site moves out *and* the e-mail too

Then handing over the nameservers may well make sense. Before you do, save the current zone: `dig MX asuaempresa.ao`, `dig TXT asuaempresa.ao` and `dig A asuaempresa.ao`. Once the delegation changes, those values can no longer be read anywhere. The same care, written out in detail for one concrete case, is in **moving the whole zone without losing records**.

And if your question is the other way round, e-mail in one place and site in another, the dedicated article is **e-mail with us and the site elsewhere**.

Two things that surprise everybody

The hosting is still there	Pointing the domain outwards **does not cancel** the hosting account, and it keeps being invoiced. If you do not want it, cancel it on purpose, and only once you are sure you no longer need the files or the mailboxes. See **how to cancel a service and keep only the domain**.

Coming back takes a minute	Because the zone stayed with us, bringing the site back is putting one address back on the A record. As long as you do not hand over the nameservers, you never lose control of the domain.

NEED A HAND?

Tell us which service you are going to use and what they asked for. We will write the records with you and confirm the mail has not moved.

Open a support ticket →

SEE ALSO

- Hosting plans and what each one includes →
- Professional e-mail →
- Domain renewal →
- Support Policy →

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