

Account Data Transfer Procedure

The following article intends on providing an explanation related to questions clients will be asked, as well as the workflow we use when performing an account data transfer upon client request. Within we will explain information requests you will receive from our staff upon submission of your account data transfer, as well as the procedure our team will follow when migrating your account data. Further we explain the importance of information being provided at the beginning of the transfer process as requested to ensure your web hosting configuration is transferred properly.

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Importance of Obtaining Dedicated IP, SSL, and DNS Info

We need your help to ensure your data is moved properly, and no custom settings are misplaced due to not knowing the specifics of your web hosting configuration.

If your cPanel account has a domain name that uses a SSL, you may also be using a dedicated IP address. We need to know if you use a SSL and/or have a dedicated IP address assigned to your current account so we can ensure that the account gets placed on a dedicated IP address (which you may also need to purchase from us) and the SSL certificate is correctly linked to your site. Failure to provide this info might result in the domain getting placed on a shared IP address without your SSL certificate.

If any of your domain names hosted on your cPanel account have any kind of custom DNS records, this needs to be noted to ensure that it is properly migrated with your account. cPanel handles DNS zone conflicts differently between product versions, and can completely overwrite your custom settings with default DNS entries in some cases.

Should you use any software with an IP address dependent license, please ensure you update your IP address in that software's licensing system once your domain points to the new server. Neglecting to do so may cause the software to fail after the transfer is complete. If you have purchased software through HostDime, please make sure to check with our Sales team for assistance with licensing changes, or simply let our Support team know of your software configuration to ensure we make our Sales team aware of the changes needed. If you have any questions about software you did not purchase from us, please contact the commercial product developer directly to see if there is anything special that needs to be done when transferring the software. Examples of this kind of software would be WHMCS, Softaculous, WHMExtra, or Fantastico.

Limitations of Data Transfers

There are some limitations to our data migration service that you should be aware of.

Interacting with your site post-transfer, prior to DNS propagation

Until you change your domain's DNS and your domain points to the new server, you may not be able to 100% reliably view your site and its contents. Depending on the PHP handler your server is using will determine if you can use temporary links to view the site before DNS completely propagates. The reason PHP handler's matter is because certain handlers utilize modules that take away the ability to use the `mod_userdir` (temporary link) function, if you would like to learn more about this you can refer to the following article on [PHP Handlers](#). Another factor for whether your site is accessible via `mod_userdir` (http://server_ip/~cpanelusername) during DNS propagation is directly tied to the software being used on your website, and should it be a CMS such as Joomla or WordPress, you will see 404 errors (or other sorts of problems) on pages when loading your website through the temporary URL due to the way redirection and URL structuring are handled by the software in question. You can use your [local PC hosts file to create a record to point your domain to your new server IP for your PC alone](#) to see the site contents before changing domain DNS to ensure your site data is present and in working order (because then you will be able to locally use your domain name to access the site on the new server).

Time to completion of data transfer

The transfer process usually takes from 24-48 hours, but this process can take anywhere from 30 minutes to an entire week to transfer all of your data. Numerous factors can cause slowness, such as poor processing power on the source server, slow network speeds between the source and destination servers, and systems administrators stopping backup processes due to server load issues caused by large cPanel accounts being backed up en masse. The only factors HostDime can control are servers within our network, and ensuring prompt updates are being provided to clients as to the status of their transfer.

Size restrictions on cPanel backups

Single cPanel accounts over 50G in size can and will cause system load issues that many system administrators will stop from causing overload issues to their entire user base by stopping the backup process in an unfinished state.

Any account data transfer involving a cPanel account over 50G in size requires full root (administrator) access to the source and destination systems.

If you have a current full cPanel backup of your account that you would like transferred, you can alternatively place this on the destination server and let us know where it is located and we can restore this as the final transferred account. This can prevent any issues on the source server's end for failed transfers. To take advantage of this, this must be a [full cPanel backup created through the Backup Wizard in cPanel on the source server](#).

Disk space shortages on the source and destination systems

Failure to have adequate disk space on the source or destination systems can result in an entire disk being filled during the account backup process or during the restoration process. This will cause problems for the server. The general rule is to have a bit more than double the amount of disk space your account is using available on your disk for the backup on the original (source) server. If you have a 5 GB cPanel account and are looking for web hosting services you would want to have over 10 GB of space allocated for the account at minimum to ensure a backup of the account can be made and saved to the source server, then pulled to the new server for restoration. This minimum disk space requirement on the destination server is triple the space required for the uncompressed cPanel account. If you don't have enough disk space, we reserve the right to refuse to handle the transfer ourselves.

Here is an example explaining the disk space allocation required to package, then restore accounts.

If you have 30 accounts on one server for example, and they all use in total 40G of space, you would then need 80G of total space, 40G free on the source server and about 120G total free space on the destination server. Shortage of disk space during account packaging, or restoration, may result in data loss and failure to deploy cPanel accounts properly.

Further, if a cPanel backup is initiated and an account has a full disk quota due to the backup taking up the previously free disk space on the account, the account will be over quota and will cease to function properly until space is cleared on the source server for the account in question.

Changes Made to Accounts After Data transfer is Initiated

After a transfer request is placed it is extremely important to refrain from making any changes or updates to the site(s) or account that is being transferred. Changes made to an account, after we have packaged a cPanel account for transfer, will *not* be included in the backup we take. If we are provided with root level access to the source and destination systems we can dump data on the source server to resync with the destination upon request. If we are working with strictly non-root access and are using cPanel backup files for transfer, the process of refreshing a previously transferred account becomes exponentially more difficult due to clients requesting singular files or directories to be updated. This would cause us to extract the singular files or directories from the full cPanel backup to then manually place in to proper locations upon request.

Changes to an account include SQL database updates, web file updates, emails, and any other account changes made such as generation of new email or FTP accounts.

Refresh/re-sync post transfers

We can re-run a transfer after initial completion in order to ensure you have all of the latest data from the source account. We call these sorts of transfers "refresh" or "re-sync" transfers. Refresh transfers can take longer than the initial transfer depending on the type of refresh being requested. Root level refresh transfers can be speedy when we are dealing with root level access and can use RSYNC or SCP to move individual files upon request and is very fast when moving entire directories providing network speeds are not slow between servers. If we are asked however to pull a single file or directory in a transfer that we do not have root access for, we must first package the entire account on the source server, transfer it to the destination server, unpack the account backup to a safe location, and then manually move the file or directory as requested.

Domain or Username Conflicts

Should a domain already reside on a destination server and an attempt is made to restore an account backup that contains that domain within it, the backup restoration will fail and report this being due to the domain already existing on the server. Further to this point; if an account backup contains a domain name that another cPanel account on the destination server owns and an attempt to restore the account backup is made, the backup restoration will fail and report this being caused by the domain existing on the destination server already and it being owned to a different cPanel user.

If the cPanel username of the account being migrated conflicts/matches with a username already in use on the destination server, the restoration will fail and report the reason as being due to the username already existing.

Process of Account Data Transfers

Here is how we handle the data migration process, in general.

Account is backed up

We attempt to package the hosting account on the source server utilizing the cPanel tools for packaging accounts. If we have root access to the source server we will use the option to create homeless backups in order to package just the cPanel user account information, MySQL databases, and home directory structure.

If we do not have root access to the source server, we utilize the built in cPanel backup system to passively FTP a full account backup, including the home directory, from the source cPanel server to the destination cPanel server. This will be an entire backup of the cPanel account being moved via FTP and does have caveats depending on the size of the account being transferred. Larger accounts may have troubles being transferred in such a manner.

As we do not have root access to the source server in this second work flow, we cannot ensure the backup is completed properly and have to rely on the systems administrator of the source server to keep the source server functioning properly and allow the backup process to complete without stopping it due to system overload caused by the backup generation.

If we find our passive FTP backups are failing, we will ask you, our client, to contact the source server web host to have full cPanel backups generated for our staff to use FTP clients to obtain for restoration. We cannot control servers outside of our network, and cannot fix any server issues on servers not under our managed support services umbrella.

Account backup is moved to destination server

If we have full root access to the source and destination servers, we will use SCP or RSYNC to copy your homeless backups to the destination server for restoration. Depending on the size of the accounts being moved in total, we may set your transfer ticket to monitor to be checked periodically to provide updates as to the status of your accounts being moved for restoration.

If we are using cPanel passive FTP to obtain backups of your cPanel account, we will need to wait for the source system to package the account in full, then process the automated FTP commands to place your full cPanel backup on the destination server from the source server. We configure the passive FTP backup system to email our staff to indicate when this backup process completes. This alternate workflow may also have your ticket placed into monitoring. Our staff will check periodically to provide you with updates as to the status of the accounts being migrated to our network for restoration.

Account is restored on destination server

With your full cPanel backup present, we will then attempt to restore your account using the built in cPanel tool sets. Providing the backup present is in good shape, the restoration will hopefully progress without issue. The size of your backup will determine the time needed to process this restoration. We will update you periodically to let you know how this process is coming along.

If we are working with a full cPanel backup via passive FTP, the restoration process will complete once the account backup is finished being deployed to the destination server.

If we are working with root access on the source and destination systems, and have generated homeless backups of your accounts, we will first restore your account(s) to the new system. We then use RSYNC to copy your home directory data, which includes public_html and mail folder data, from the source server to the destination server. This ensures all files within your users home directory, located in /home/USERNAME, are copied exactly the same as they would have been if we used a full cPanel backup via passive FTP. However this process is faster and more efficient than it would be if we attempted to use FTP.

Update DNS at Domain Registrar to Reflect New Hosting

Once your account is restored, and you have verified your site is loading properly via whatever means necessary, it is time to update your domain's DNS at your domain registrar. If we are not your domain registrar, we cannot help you with this outside of general guidance. You need to be aware of who you registered your domain with and ensure you understand their system to change your domain's DNS configuration. You cannot leave your domain alone at your domain registrar if you intend on moving your domain to a new web host if you use the provided web host's DNS and not a DNS host service such as CloudFlare or OpenDNS.

If you do use a DNS service such as CloudFlare or OpenDNS you absolutely must update your domain A records at minimum to reflect the destination server's IP address that your account is assigned to.

It is important that you tell us if your account is using a dedicated IP before the transfer starts, so we can configure things correctly and provide you with the appropriate details so you can update your DNS records at your registrar or CloudFlare or OpenDNS.

Ensure that User's Email Clients are Properly Configured

The following applies only to clients who are hosting their email on the server.

In order to ensure that users are able to access their email through mail clients like Outlook and Thunderbird, we recommend that every client access their cPanel account post-transfer and verify that the settings in their email client of choice match the the settings cPanel provides under **Email Account Set Up Mail Client Manual Settings**. Clients utilizing cPanel-supported email clients can also download a setup script to automatically configure their email client from this same page:

[cPanel Email Accounts Documentation](#)

Generally speaking, the following settings tend to work regardless of email client:

E-mail: YOURUSER@DOMAIN.COM
Username: YOURUSER@DOMAIN.COM

Incoming Server Name: SERVER.HOSTNAME.COM
Incoming Port (IMAP): 993
Incoming Port (POP3): 995
Connection Security: SSL/TLS
Authentication Method: Normal Password

Outgoing Server Name: SERVER.HOSTNAME.COM
Outgoing Port: 465 or 587
Connection Security: SSL/TLS
Authentication Method: Normal Password

If the above settings do not work, you will need to log onto the cPanel account for the user you are configuring and utilize the settings listed therein. If you continue to have issues after doing so, please contact Support.