When your website person disappears

How to find out what you own, get your domain back, and make sure it doesn't happen again.

FIND OUT WHAT YOU ACTUALLY HAVE

Do all of this before you contact anybody. Walking in knowing the answers changes the whole conversation.

- [ ] 1 **Look up who holds your domain** — 10 MIN
  Run your domain through our free check at internetcrafters.com/learning-center/tools/domain-check. It shows the registrar even when the contact details are private. That company is who you'll be dealing with.
- [ ] 2 **Find out where the site is hosted** ◆ — 10 MIN
  Sometimes the same company, often not. Our domain check shows where your name points, which usually tells you the host. Or we can find it in a couple of minutes.
- [ ] 3 **Check whether you have any logins at all**
  Search your email for the year the site was built. Setup confirmations and receipts have a way of still being in there.
- [ ] 4 **Find the last invoice you paid**
  Whoever took the money tells you who to chase, and gives you a record that the arrangement was real.
- [ ] 5 **Gather your documentation**
  Receipts, invoices, your business license, screenshots of the site, and any emails with your web person. The registrar will ask for proof that the domain and the business are yours. Keep it all in one folder.

IF YOU CAN'T REACH YOUR WEB PERSON

- [ ] 6 **Send one clear written request, and keep a copy**
  Dated email, asking specifically for domain access, hosting access and a copy of the site files. Keep it civil. It may end up being read by somebody else.
- [ ] 7 **Give a deadline and mean it**
  A week is reasonable. Say what you'll do after, and then do it.
- [ ] 8 **Know where the real leverage is**
  The domain is the thing that matters. A website can be rebuilt in a few weeks. A domain you can't recover costs you every customer who knows your old address, and every search result you ever earned.
- [ ] 9 **Don't let it lapse while you're arguing** — TODAY
  An expired domain can be bought by anybody, including people who watch for exactly this. Pay the renewal even if you're in a fight about it. If you can't log in, call the registrar. Most will take a renewal payment while you sort out access.

Want us to handle any of these? Call for a quote before any work begins.

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GETTING BACK IN

Expect this to take two weeks or more. The registrar will ask for proof that the business is yours, and every step waits on someone else's reply. We can manage the whole process for you.

- [ ] 10 **Contact the registrar directly, not the web person** ◆ — WEEKS
  Registrars deal with this constantly and have a documented process. Expect to prove who you are and that the business is yours.
- [ ] 11 **Ask for the domain to be unlocked and an auth code issued** ◆
  That code is what lets you move the domain somewhere you control. Registrars call it different things: auth code, EPP code, or transfer code. Get this code first. Without it, the domain can't be moved.
- [ ] 12 **Move it to an account in your own name** ◆
  Once the domain is in an account you own, no one else can hold it back.
- [ ] 13 **Change the email on every account to one you control**
  An old address on the account means password resets go to somebody who isn't you.

ONCE YOU'RE BACK IN

- [ ] 14 **Put everything in your own name**
  Domain, hosting, email, analytics, the lot. Add anybody who helps as a user on your account rather than the other way round.
- [ ] 15 **Auto-renew and registrar lock, both on** — 5 MIN
  Two switches, five minutes, and this whole sheet stops applying to you.
- [ ] 16 **Write down who has access to what**
  The “Where your domain actually is” box on page 2 has room for it. Do it while you still remember.
- [ ] 17 **Take your own copy of the site files** ◆
  Even if you never open it. It's the difference between a bad week and starting over.

Where your domain actually is, right now

Write this down now so you know exactly who to call if something goes wrong.

REGISTRAR _____ ACCOUNT EMAIL ON FILE _____

RENEWS ON _____ AUTO-RENEW AND LOCK ON? _____

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WHAT YOU FOUND

Names, dates, who you spoke to and what they said. If this turns into a dispute, a written record is worth more than a good memory.

Not sure where your domain is registered? Call us and we'll look it up while you're on the phone.

Want us to handle any of these? Call for a quote before any work begins.