

# Onboarding DNS Cheat Sheet

Here is some helpful information on terms that are used during onboarding client information.

## Terminology

**Website:** A collection of files, media, and database that displays your information on the internet

**Domain or URL:** The name of your site you type in to go to the site

*Example:* MicheleLJones.com

**Host or Hosting:** A Host or a hosting provider is the place you use to house your files and database to make your site work online.

**Files:** Like on a computer, your website uses folders and files to house the code and media to make your website work.

**Database:** While files hold how to make your site work and look, the database holds all of your content and settings for your website.

**Server:** A drive that holds your website at the host. On your computer you call it a file drive.

**cPanel:** A cPanel is a type of dashboard that some hosts use to access your server.

**WHM:** Some hosts use a WHM (Web Host Manager) which is the administrative access panel to your collection of websites that are on a cPanel style of hosting.

**Managed Hosting:** This is a type of hosting provider that handles all of the backend duties like installation, configuration, and updating so you do not need to have a sys-admin to work on your server.

*Examples of managed hosting:* WPEngine, Nexcess, and Pressable.

**FTP or SFTP:** File Transfer Protocol or Secure File Transfer Protocol is a way to log into your files without accessing the whole server. Access will include either a URL or IP address, a username, a password, and a port which to access the files.

**SSH (Secure Socket Shell):** SSH is another and more secure way to access files in a server. It is an encrypted data transfer that uses Terminal or the Command Line.

**WordPress:** A free content management system that is installed on a server that assists in building and maintaining a website. Currently WordPress powers 43.1% of the web.

**Domain Registrar:** The website you purchased your domain through

**IP Address:** A set of numbers given by the hosting company to point your domain in the right place

Think of the IP Address like your address on your mailbox. If there were no numbers, you would not know which mailbox belongs to which house

**Nameservers:** Determines which servers will communicate DNS info for a domain. You usually have a primary and secondary.

This is for if you want to move all records over to someplace else. Cloudflare uses nameservers to point your site.

## DNS (Domain Name System)

Basically it is a phone book for the web. When you try to go to a domain (e.g. google.com) in your browser, the domain name system tells your browser where to find that domain, usually an IP address.

**A Record (Address Record):** Points a domain to a specific IP address

**Example:** Your "home" IP is typically 192.168.1.1

**CNAME (Canonical Name Record):** This is an alias of one name to another.

**Example:** A CNAME of www.mysebsite.com to mywebsite.com tells the server to look for the WWW version wherever the non-WWW version's A record resides. CNAME records must always point to another domain name, never directly to an IP address.

**MX Record (Mail Exchange Record):** Direct's a domain's email to the server hosting the accounts.

**TXT or Text Record:** This is used often by Google to verify domain ownership when using the domain registrar

**@ or Self-referential character:** You don't use the actual domain name in your DNS settings. Instead, you use the @ symbol to indicate the domain name.

**TTL (Time To Live):** How long it will take any change you make now to go into effect

**SSL (Secure Socket Layer):** This is an encryption that helps secure your site.

## Where to find out information about Domains/DNS/Nameservers

Who.is - Will show you the domain registrar, Nameservers, DNS, and sometimes who owns the domain if not blocked.

<https://www.whatsmydns.net> - This will give you a showing of the A record around the world to ensure a site is showing on the correct IP (Great for migrations and site launches)

## Why do we need your domain Registrar information?

We like to keep it on hand for if there ever becomes an issue with your DNS

If you move to our hosting or have a site build with us, we will need it to make the site go live.

## Domain Companies

- GoDaddy - DOMAINCONTROL.COM
- Namecheap - registrar-servers.com
- Enom
- Network Solutions
- Their current hosting company

## Where to find out information about Hosting

WholsHostingThis.com - As long as the site is not using a service like Cloudflare or Sucuri Firewall to hide the IP, you can use this site to see where a site is hosted. Often, when a site is hosted by Flywheel, WPEngine, or another managed WordPress host, the hosting company will show as "Fastly" but if you take that IP and drop it into your browser, typically a 404 page will show that states what hosting company it is.

*Example:* 104.198.46.84 will lead you to a WPEngine 404

23.185.0.1 will lead you to a Pantheon 404