Connecting an MIT URL to an Outsourced Website

Context

If you've outsourced your web hosting, and you're working on behalf of an official DLC, you can request that we do a DNS mapping so that your site can be made visible under an MIT name.

If you've already got a website in your MIT name, and you're working on transferring it to new hosting, you will want to use Hostname Migration - Validation ahead of DNS change to validate this carefully ahead of time.

MIT will not delegate name server control (so no NS records) but we will provide CNAME and A records.

In general, look for language like "connect a domain" in your vendor's documentation or service descriptions to find out more about their offerings and processes for connecting an MIT URL to their web hosting services.

SSL/https certificates

Many commercial web hosting providers will also request an appropriate https certificate from Let's Encrypt, once your DNS has been transferred over - the process will often take about 30min to complete. We'll try to note below if we encounter any providers who don't do this smoothly.

Providers

- Github Pages (github.io)
  
  You should establish a something.github.io hostname for the entire site; we will not be able to work with a requested path that is something.github.io/somethingelse.
  
  Note also that we do not provide Github Pages functionality on our internal github (github.mit.edu) - you must use the externally hosted github if you wish to host web content there.
  
  We will provide a single CNAME record:
  
  CNAME <mit sitename> something.github.io
  
  See also: Using GitHub to Manage or Host an MIT Website
  
  We've had some additional issues with spammers managing to claim URLs mapped to github.mit.edu; as a post-setup task, please consider also asking for the TXT record validation described here:
  
  Github.io Verify Custom Domain

- Heroku

  There's several possible formats, but we will usually provide a CNAME to sitename.herokuapp.com.
  
  Please follow through enough with Heroku to get https certificates installed; this requires customer intervention.

- Netlify

  You need to add a configuration in "Site settings -> Domain management" then we need to add a CNAME, usually just with a target of the
**Squarespace**

Connecting a Domain to Your Squarespace Site

Squarespace requires multiple A records, for the primary name, plus a CNAME record for www.something.mit.edu plus a verification code that will be [hd:some string of characters],something.mit.edu as a CNAME to VERIFY.SQUARESPACE.COM. We need to be told what the unique verification code is, but everything else is stock. Client MUST supply the verification string as copied text - screen captures are not acceptable.

⚠️ **No Email Sending**
Please be advised that Squarespace's email sending service is something we won't support/allow with mit.edu email addresses; please use Squarespace as a website provider only.

**Vercel**

We will provide a CNAME record and a validation record that looks like:

```
TXT _vercel.mit.edu vc-domain-verify=something.mit.edu,nnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnn
```

Where you should copy and paste the exact code given.

**WebFlow**

We will add a single CNAME record:

```
TYPE NAME VALUE
CNAME <mit sitename> proxy-ssl.webflow.com
```

**Weebly**

You will need a paid level account, and we will need to request an A record, plus the www.something.mit.edu record. Weebly "How to use a domain you purchased elsewhere"

**Wix**

Wix Connecting a Domain You Purchased Elsewhere

Additionally, we won't provide NS records, so from there you will need this option:

Connecting a Domain to Wix Using Pointing

Wix can provide the following information: an A record for something.mit.edu, and a CNAME record for www.something.mit.edu - the CNAME data is particular to the site in question and will be something like WWWnn.WIXDNS.NET, where nn is a two digit number. This information can be checked Escalatons team and by then relayed to IDE for an update of MIT's DNS records.

**WordPress.com**

We will add a single CNAME record to wordpresssitename.wordpress.com, but you will need to first follow the instructions here:

Wordpress Steps for Mapping a Domain

**wpengine**

We will add a single CNAME record to wordpresssitename.wpengine.com, you will need to follow these instructions:

wpengine Add Domain Site
• **Microsoft Azure (azurewebsites.net)**

Free (F1) tier is not sufficient, need to upgrade to a paid tier. But name mapping by CNAME is available per:

* Azure Custom DNS Tutorial

• **GoDaddy**

⚠️ **Don't use GoDaddy**

We have had trouble getting this information from GoDaddy. Please avoid using GoDaddy, or proceed with extreme caution.

• **Other outsource providers not listed**

Look for documentation that matches to "connect a domain you already own" and "map a hostname". Steer away from a vendor who requires that they manage your DNS for you (or instructions for transferring your domain over to them). We're happy to update this documentation if you've successfully worked through this and have the links you used.

**Making the request**

We will need:

- Staff or faculty member's contact information and permission/sponsorship.
- A cost object (which won't be billed) to track it under.
- The technical DNS details.

Let us know at servicedesk@mit.edu with all of the technical details in an organized manner.

⚠️ **Copy and Paste**

Sometimes a screenshot helps us clarify the context of a situation, but if the vendor is asking for a validation string, please make sure that you also copy and paste that into the text of your question. It's not accurate or convenient to ask us to transcribe data out of a screenshot.

**Copy and Paste**

MIT owned web pages should comply with MIT's accessibility agreement; please take care of this on the remote website before making your request.

**Follow Up**

Leaving an MIT hostname attached to a broken or absent website is not acceptable. It's your responsibility to:

- Complete any setup steps to attach the name fully in a timely manner
- Keep your hosting account organized and paid up
- Hand off hosting management to a suitable successor when you leave MIT
- Comply with MIT's branding and accessibility policies
- Inform us when you are done with the project.

**Escalation information for Service Desk Staff**

⚠️ Service Desk staff must login to access internal links.

Overview and request template: [Can I have mything.mit.edu pointing to this other web site?]