

A website migration: what to check before, during and after.

For anyone whose site is about to move platform, host, domain or structure. Work down it in order. The preparation section is the one that decides whether the rest is dull, which is what you want a migration to be.

General guidance, not a guarantee. Prices named here are Adam Roe's own as of September 2026. Every site is different and a large or unusual one needs the list adapted rather than followed.

BEFORE ANYTHING MOVES

- ☐ **You know which of the four kinds this is**
A new platform, a new host, a new domain or a new structure. Most projects are two or three at once, and naming them is most of the scoping.
- ☐ **Every existing address is listed**
Export from the sitemap, from analytics and from Search Console, then merge. A page missing from the list is a page nobody redirects.
- ☐ **Every old address has a new one written against it**
This is the redirect map, and it is the highest-value hour in the project. Pages that move without one go back to zero in search.
- ☐ **The existing DNS records are written down**
Website and email are both directed from here. This one line prevents the most expensive failure on the list.
- ☐ **Analytics and Search Console are exported**
A new domain is a new property and the history does not follow. Take the snapshot while you still can.
- ☐ **Redirects you already had are collected**
Old redirects from previous moves need carrying across. This is the step almost everybody forgets.

TESTED BEFORE YOU GO LIVE

- ☐ **Redirects tested somewhere that is not your live site**
A staging site, with the map applied. Spot-check the busiest twenty addresses by hand as well as running the list.
- ☐ **Forms submitted for real, not just looked at**
A form on a new platform sends to whatever the platform defaulted to, usually the account of whoever built it.
- ☐ **The new structure is agreed while it is still free to change**
A migration is the one moment you get to fix a page structure that has been wrong for years. After launch it costs redirects again.
- ☐ **A written list exists of what to check in the first hour**
Not held in somebody's head. The person checking may not be the person who moved it.

ON THE DAY

- ☐ **Cutover in a morning, with people around**
Never a Friday afternoon. If something needs deciding, you want the people who can decide it awake and reachable.
- ☐ **Email sends and receives, tested within the hour**
Mail stops with no bounce and no warning. Nobody finds out for three days unless somebody checks deliberately.
- ☐ **The certificate is valid on the real address**
Not on staging. If it has lapsed, browsers show a full page warning instead of your site.
- ☐ **The old site is still reachable**
Until the new one is proven. Turning it off is the last step, not the first.
- ☐ **Search Console reconnected on the new address**
It only collects data from the day it is connected, and there is no way to backdate that.

THE WEEK AFTER

- ☐ **Redirects rechecked against real traffic**
Server logs and Search Console will show addresses being asked for that were not on your list. There are always some.
- ☐ **A ranking wobble is expected, not panicked about**
A week or two of movement while the new addresses are taken in is normal. A month of decline is not, and means checking the map again.
- ☐ **The redirect map is saved as a file you hold**
Yours and checkable, rather than something that happened inside a supplier's account.

Keep the old site reachable until every box below is ticked on the new one. adamroe.co.uk/blog/what-website-migration