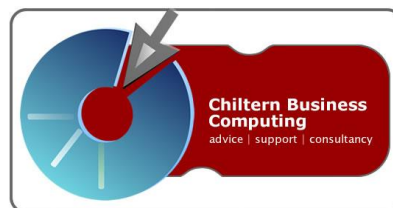


How to change your Internet Service Provider



Introduction

At some point or other, you may find yourself needing to change your Internet Service Provider (ISP). The reasons may be many and include cost, performance or customer service.

This guide gives the main steps to making the change.

One of the most important things for a business is to ensure continuity for incoming email.

e-mail – your own domain name

If you use an email address provided by your ISP, such as john.smith@btconnect.com, then it is likely to disappear when you switch to a new ISP. This is a real headache if you use the address for business, and carries a risk of lost sales and enquiries.

The solution, if you do not do it already, is to use your own registered domain name for business email, e.g. john.smith@mycompany.co.uk. Apart from the fact that a domain name email address looks a lot better for a business, it also makes it much easier to move painlessly from one ISP to another.

To ease the transition between ISPs, the best course is to first create your own domain name. If you have a domain name already, ensure that you know how to access the Domain Name Control panel of the name registrar, and skip to step 7 of the guide below.

If you already have your own domain name and it is registered by your existing ISP, you will need to make sure that it will continue to be active after you switch your broadband – or move control of the name to another name registrar.

Changing your ISP – Step by step

1. Get your own domain name. If you already have a domain name that you are using for email, skip to step 7.
2. In the domain name control panel, set the new email address(es) to forward to your existing email account. Note that newly created domain names take can take several hours to be effective throughout the internet.
3. Start using the new email address: Set it as Reply email address in your mail program (Outlook or whatever)
4. Change your email address on all your publicity material – business cards, website, flyers, brochures, etc. Also change it in any online profiles that may show it.
5. Change any internet logins or subscriptions you may have to the new email address.
6. Allow some time to pass to let people get used to the new email address. Point out the change to anyone who emails you to the old address. Perhaps email key contacts and tell them the new address.
7. Choose a new ISP. www.thinkbroadband.com is a good place to start.
8. Note that some services provided by ISPs (perhaps email accounts) may not work if the same ISP does not also host your domain name. So you may have to move the domain name hosting as well as your broadband service to the new ISP.
9. If you are moving the domain name hosting, you should be able to set up your email accounts at the new ISP in advance.
10. Ask for a MAC (Migration Authorisation) code from the old ISP.
11. Pass the MAC code to the new ISP, who will give you a go-live date.
12. At go-live:
 - a. Change your broadband router login to the new ISP.
 - b. If using ISP email, change the Server and login settings in your email client mail account (Outlook or similar) so that you can send out emails through the new ISP.
 - c. Even if you are not changing email address (because perhaps you have your own domain name) you may need to change some settings in Outlook/Outlook Express for outgoing mail. See below.
 - d. Move control of the domain name to the new ISP (if necessary). This change may take several hours to be effective.
 - e. Change the email settings in your domain name control panel to point to the new email address, if necessary. See Static IP Addresses, below.

- f. If your web-hosting has moved, change the web pointers in your domain name control panel to point to the new web-server.
- g. Check that everything works!

What else do you need to do?

Other, related services

If you have a bundled service, such as broadband combined with phone calls or TV service, you will need to make new arrangements for all the elements.

Web site

If you use web space from your current ISP to host your website, you need to make sure that the website can be moved to another provider (perhaps the one who is hosting your domain name). Check with the website designer if necessary in case there are technical issues. It should be possible to upload the website to the new host ISP in advance of the go-live date, and ensure that it works.

Static IP addresses and your own mail server

If you have fixed (static) IP addresses, perhaps because you run your own email server (such as Microsoft Exchange), the static IP addresses will change when you move to a new ISP. There are therefore additional considerations:

1. When you reprogram your router for the new ISP, you will probably also have to map the new static IP address that you will use for email to your Exchange server. Depending on your site configuration, this mapping may be done in a firewall device rather than the router.
2. Your email is received by reference to an MX (mail exchange) record in your domain DNS (Domain Name Service). If the MX record contains reference to the existing static IP address for your mail server, it will have to be changed.
 - a) If your domain MX entry is in the form of an IP address from your existing static IP range, it will have to be changed to the new static IP address within the range allocated by the new ISP. **Note** that changes to DNS are not immediate – you should allow 2 – 48 hours for the change to be effective worldwide.

- b) If your domain MX entry is in the form of an internet address at your own domain (eg mail.mydomain.co.uk), and that name points to one of your existing static IP addresses, you will have to re-point that name in your domain DNS to the new static IP address for the mail server. **Note** that changes to DNS are not immediate – you should allow 2 – 48 hours for the change to be effective worldwide.
- c) If your domain MX entry points to an external organisation, for example an email spam control or filtering service, the service provider will need to make the change for you. Such a change should be more or less immediate.

Outgoing (SMTP) email settings

Some ISPs restrict the sending of email in either or both of the following ways, as an anti-spam measure:

- a) You may only send email from an address that the ISP is hosting for you, or that has been registered with them. BT Yahoo is an example of this.
- b) You may not be able to send email using your email provider's SMTP servers if the email provider is not also your ISP.

The solution is that you need to reset your Outgoing (SMTP) Mail server in your mail client account settings (eg Outlook, Outlook Express) to use the SMTP server of your ISP. The ISP may or may not require you to authorise the connection to their SMTP server with login information. If your ISP requires you to register additional email addresses (eg BT Yahoo) then you also need to do this.

If you use Microsoft Exchange Server, you need to check with your ISP if any special steps are required to enable it to be able to send email over the ISP network. If you use a Smart Host (SMTP relay server) for outgoing email you may have to change the details if you change ISP and/or mail host.

If you have any questions arising from this guide, or to discuss the computer systems for your business, please contact:

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