Preview a site before it resolves using the Windows Hosts file

If you cannot access the site using the temporary IP address, you can modify your Windows hosts file instead.

A) Opening the hosts file

Windows XP
To modify the file in XP, go to the Start menu then in the search box type "Notepad" then you see notepad come up in the search results, click on File > Open and open the file called C:Windows\System32\drivers\etc\hosts

Windows Vista, Windows 7, Windows 8 and Windows 10
To modify the file in Vista go to the Start menu then in the search box type "Notepad" then you see notepad come up in the search results, right click on it and select "**Run As Administrator**"

Note that notepad is opened up, go to the file menu and browse to
C:Windows\System32\drivers\etc\

Once in this folder, find the file called "hosts." If you do not see this file, make sure you have selected the option to view "All Files" instead of the default option which is normally set to "Text Documents (*.txt)" - You will find this option right above the "Open" and "Cancel" buttons in the lower right hand corner of the file explorer within Notepad. Once you see the hosts file, double-click on it to begin editing.

Linux
In most Linux distros including CentOS and Ubuntu, the hosts file can be edited directly in the terminal using Vim, Nano, or your favorite text editor. Please note that in order to edit the hosts file you need to open it as **root**. For example:

```
user@system:~$ sudo vim /etc/hosts
```

B) Editing the hosts file

Now that you are editing the hosts file, go to the last line of the file and add the following line:

```
111.111.111.111     somedomain.com
```

111.111.111.111 is the IP address for your website, found in your welcome email. somedomain.com is your domain name that you wish to preview.

Please note that these values are examples, and our support staff may have given you a different IP address or domain from this example or your welcome email.

Now when you visit somedomain.com in your browser (or any other application that uses DNS) you will be looking at the new server.

When you are done testing you should comment out the line from the hosts file using the # symbol before any other characters in this line, so that this line is skipped when Windows reads the file.
(example)

```
# 111.111.111.111     somedomain.com
```

Or, if you are done testing, you can simply remove the 111.111.111.111 somedomain.com line from the hosts file and save.

Related articles

- Run a traceroute on Windows XP/Vista/7/8/10/11 and MacOS
- Operating System Tools and Browsers
- What is my IP Address?
- Disable DNS Cache on Windows Permanently or Temporarily.
- Preview a site before it resolves using the Mac Hosts file