BILL'S HOME TECH
Home & Small Business Tech Solutions

BILL'S COMPLETE MANUALS

Your Website & Domain Name

Domains, renewals, logins and website builders — explained in plain English, one step at a time

A plain-English guide for small business owners

Take your time — you can't break it

Written for you by Bill — Bill's Home Tech

(330) 200-8042 · BillsHomeTech.com

For Squarespace, Wix, GoDaddy & other registrars · facts current November 2026

What's Inside

This is your guide to the two things behind your business's address on the internet: your **domain name** (the yourbusiness.com part) and your **website**. Read it in any order and at your own pace. The most important chapters are the ones about who holds the login and how renewal works — those are what keep a business from losing its name. Website companies move their buttons around now and then, so when a label on your screen doesn't match exactly, look for the closest word. The idea stays the same.

Part 1 — Getting Started

1 A Note from Bill
2 The Four Pieces: Domain, Registrar, DNS and Host
3 Words You'll See
4 Find Out Where Your Domain Lives

Part 2 — Who Holds the Keys

5 Who Should Own the Login
6 Giving a Helper Access the Right Way
7 Getting Back a Lost Login

Part 3 — Squarespace, Wix and GoDaddy

8 Choosing a Website Builder
9 Squarespace Basics (and the Google Domains Move)
10 Wix Basics
11 GoDaddy Basics
12 What a Website Really Costs

Part 4 — Renewals: Keeping Your Name

13 How Renewal Works, and Turning On Auto-Renew
14 What Happens If a Domain Expires
15 Keeping Contact Details and Payment Current

Part 5 — Connecting the Pieces

16 DNS Records, Explained Simply
17 Connecting a Domain to Your Website
18 Moving a Domain to a Different Company

Part 6 — Email and Security

19 Email on Your Own Domain
20 The Padlock: SSL and https
21 Two-Step Sign-In and Safe Passwords

Part 7 — Keeping Your Site Current

22 Updating Hours, Phone Numbers and Photos
23 Backups and Undoing Mistakes

Part 8 — Scams, Help and Your Cheat-Sheet

24 Domain and Website Scams
25 When to Call Bill
26 Your Website & Domain Cheat-Sheet

PART 1

Getting Started

What a domain name, a registrar, DNS and a web host are, in plain words, and how to find out what your business already has. Start here.

CHAPTER 1

A Note from Bill

Hello, and welcome. If your business has a website — or even just an email address that ends in your business name — then somewhere out there is an account that controls it. Many owners have no idea where that account is, whose email it uses, or when it renews. Everything works fine for years, until one day the website disappears or the email stops arriving, and nobody can remember the password.

I'm Bill. I've spent more than 30 years working with technology, and these days I help people here in Portage County feel at home with theirs, including small business owners who are terrific at their trade and would rather not think about servers and settings. I wrote this guide the way I'd explain it sitting across the desk from you: patiently, in plain English, and without trying to sell you anything.

What this guide will do for you

- Explain the four pieces behind every website — the domain, the registrar, DNS and the host — so the words stop being confusing.
- Help you find out where your domain is registered and who holds the login, in about ten minutes.
- Make sure **you** own your domain, even if a web designer or family member set it up.
- Walk you through renewals and auto-renew, so your name never lapses by accident.
- Cover the basics of Squarespace, Wix and GoDaddy, the three website companies small businesses ask me about most.
- Show you how to give a helper access without handing over your password.
- Point out the scam letters and emails aimed squarely at website owners.

The big promise: you can't break it

Almost everything you'll do in this guide can be changed back. Typed the wrong hours on your website? Fix them. Turned on auto-renew and changed your mind? Turn it off. The few steps that are hard to undo — deleting a domain, letting it expire, or moving it to a different company — I'll flag clearly, every time.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Why this matters

Your domain name is the address printed on your truck, your cards and your invoices. Knowing who controls it and when it renews protects years of word of mouth — and it takes one quiet afternoon.

And I'm only a phone call away

If anything here leaves you unsure, call me at **(330) 200-8042**. There's no such thing as a silly question. Most owners I meet simply never had a reason to learn this part. That's what I'm here for.

Let's start with the four pieces that make a website work.

— Bill

CHAPTER 2

The Four Pieces: Domain, Registrar, DNS and Host

A website feels like one thing, but it's really four separate pieces working together. Once you can picture them, almost every website problem becomes easier to understand. A storefront makes a handy comparison.

Piece	What it is	Storefront comparison
Domain name	Your address on the internet, like *smithhardware.com*.	The street address on your sign.
Registrar	The company you rent the domain from, year by year. GoDaddy, Squarespace and Wix are all registrars.	The county office that records who holds the address.
DNS	The settings that tell the internet where to send visitors and email for your domain.	The directions that send the mail carrier to your door.
Web host	The company whose computers store your website and show it to visitors.	The building itself.

You rent a domain — you never buy it outright

Nobody owns a domain forever. You **register** it for a year or more at a time, and you keep it as long as you keep **renewing**. Miss the renewal and, after a grace period, someone else can take it. That's why Part 4 of this guide is all about renewals.

Often one company does it all

If you built your site on Squarespace, Wix or GoDaddy and bought your domain there too, one company is your registrar, your DNS and your host. That's simple, and simple is good. But it's also common for the domain to live at one company and the website at another — for example, a domain at GoDaddy pointing to a website on Squarespace. Neither way is wrong. You just need to know which you have.

GOOD TO KNOW

Email rides on the same domain

If your email address ends in your business name, it depends on that same domain and its DNS settings. When a domain expires, the website *and* the email can stop working together. Chapter 19 covers email on your own domain.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

When something goes wrong, you'll know which of the four pieces to look at — and which company to call — instead of being bounced from one support line to the next.

CHAPTER 3

Words You'll See

Website companies use a handful of words over and over. Here they are in plain English. Come back whenever one trips you up.

Word	What it means
Domain name	Your web address, such as *yourbusiness.com*.
Extension (TLD)	The ending: .com, .net, .org, .us and so on. TLD stands for top-level domain.
Registrar	The company you register and renew your domain through.
Registrant	The person or business the domain is registered to — the legal holder. This should be you or your business.
DNS	Domain Name System: the settings that point your domain at your website and email.
DNS record	One line of those settings. Common types: A, CNAME, MX (email) and TXT.
Host / hosting	The company that stores your website files and shows them to visitors.
Website builder	A service such as Squarespace or Wix where you design the site in your browser and they host it for you.
Auto-renew	A setting that renews your domain or plan automatically using the card on file.
Expiration date	The day your current registration runs out unless it's renewed.
Domain lock	A safety switch that stops your domain from being moved to another company.
Auth code / transfer code	A one-time password needed to move a domain to another registrar. Also called an EPP code or Transfer Authorization Code.
SSL / https	The security that puts a padlock next to your address in the browser.
Privacy protection	Hides your personal contact details from public domain lookups.

TIP

One word, many names

The transfer code alone goes by at least four names: auth code, authorization code, EPP code and transfer code. They all mean the same thing. Treat it like a key to your front door.

CHAPTER 4

Find Out Where Your Domain Lives

Before you can look after your domain, you need to know which company it's registered with. If you don't remember — or someone else set it up — there's a free public lookup run by **ICANN**, the nonprofit that coordinates domain names worldwide.

Look it up in about two minutes

1. On a computer or phone, open your web browser and go to **lookup.icann.org**.
2. Type your domain name — just *yourbusiness.com*, without *www* — and choose **Lookup**.
3. Look for the **Registrar** name. That's the company your domain is registered with.
4. Write down the **expiration date** and the **creation date** too.
5. Note the **name servers** if they're listed. They hint at which company runs your DNS.

> GOOD TO KNOW
>
> **Why your name probably doesn't show**
>
> Most lookups today hide the owner's name, email and phone number for privacy. That's normal. You'll still see the registrar and the dates, which is what you need. ICANN's tool now uses a newer lookup system called **RDAP**, which replaced the old WHOIS service for most domains in 2025.

Then write down your website inventory

With the lookup in hand, answer these questions and keep them with your business papers:

- Where is my domain registered? (the registrar)
- Where is my website built and hosted? (often the same company)
- Where does my business email come from? (Google, Microsoft, the website company or the registrar)
- What email address signs in to each account — and do I still get mail there?
- When does the domain expire, and is auto-renew on?
- Whose credit card pays for each one?

HEADS UP

If the registrar is one you've never heard of

Sometimes a web designer registered the domain at a company they like. That's not a problem by itself, but it means the account may be in the designer's name. Chapter 5 explains why that matters and how to fix it calmly.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Ten minutes with this lookup tells you exactly who to call when your website or email misbehaves, and shows you whether your renewal date is coming up soon.

PART 2

Who Holds the Keys

The single most important thing in this guide: making sure your business controls its own domain and website accounts, letting helpers in safely, and getting back in when a login is lost.

CHAPTER 5

Who Should Own the Login

Here's the most common small-business website emergency: the domain was set up years ago by a web designer, a former employee or a relative, using *their* email address and *their* credit card. Then that person moves on, the card expires, and the renewal fails. The business finds out when the website goes dark.

The rule: the business owns the account, helpers get access

- The **account** at your registrar and your website builder should be signed in with an email address **you** control and will still have in ten years.
- The **registrant** listed on the domain should be you or your business, not your designer.
- Your web designer, nephew or office manager should get their **own** access as a helper (Chapter 6), not your password.
- The payment card on file should be a business card you'll keep current.

Which email address to use

Use an address you'll always have, such as a Gmail or Outlook.com address the owner controls. It's tempting to use your business address (you@yourbusiness.com), but think it through: if the domain ever expires, that email stops working too — and that's exactly the email the registrar would use to warn you. A separate address avoids being locked out by the very problem you're trying to fix.

> **TIP**
> **Turn on two-step sign-in**
> Every website and domain account should have **two-step verification** turned on, so a stolen password alone can't get in. Look for it under the account's security or login settings. Chapter 21 walks through it.

If a designer holds the account now

Most designers are happy to help you take ownership; many prefer it. Ask kindly, in writing, for one of these:

1. **Move the domain into your own account** at the same company. GoDaddy, Squarespace and Wix all have ways to move a domain or site between accounts.

2. Or **make you the owner** of the website and add the designer back as a helper.
3. Ask them to confirm the **registrant** contact on the domain lists you or your business.
4. Change the payment card to yours, and turn on auto-renew.

HEADS UP

Don't start with a fight

If someone is slow to hand things over, stay friendly and keep it in writing. A calm email that says "I'd like the domain in my own account so I can keep it renewed" usually does the job. If you hit a wall, Chapter 7 covers what the registrar can do.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

When the account is yours, a designer retiring, an employee leaving or a card expiring becomes a small chore instead of an emergency.

CHAPTER 6

Giving a Helper Access the Right Way

Each of the big website companies lets you invite another person to work on your site or domain using **their own** login. You stay the owner. You can take their access away at any time, and you never share your password.

Squarespace: contributors

1. Sign in and open your site.
2. Go to **Settings**, then **Permissions**.
3. Choose **Invite contributor**, type your helper's email address and pick a role.
4. For a designer, **Administrator** is usually what they need. For someone who only updates text and photos, a more limited editor role is safer.
5. Send the invite and ask them to accept it from their email.

An Administrator can do nearly everything you can, except transfer ownership of the site. Plans differ on how many contributors you can add.

Wix: collaborators

1. Sign in and open your site's **dashboard**.
2. Go to **Settings**, then **Roles & Permissions**.
3. Choose **Invite Collaborators**, enter their email and choose a role.
4. Send it. Until they accept, their name shows **Pending**; you can resend the invite from there.

GoDaddy: delegate access

1. Sign in to GoDaddy, select your name at the top, and open your account settings.
2. Choose **Delegate Access**.
3. Under **People who can access my account**, choose **Invite to Access**.
4. Enter their name and email and pick a level. **Products & Domains** lets them manage your products without seeing payment details or buying anything.
5. Choose **Invite**. You'll be notified when they accept.

Delegates can't see or change your payment methods or password, and they can't invite other people. There's also a **Domains Only** level if they should touch nothing but your

domains.

TIP

When the job is done

Return to the same page and remove the helper once the project is finished. You can always invite them back.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Your designer can do their work without ever knowing your password — and if you part ways, one click ends their access instead of a scramble to change every login.

CHAPTER 7

Getting Back a Lost Login

Forgot the password, lost the email address, or the person who set it up is gone? Take a breath. Registrars deal with this every day, and there's an orderly way back in.

Step 1: find the right company

Use the lookup in Chapter 4 to see which registrar holds your domain. Search your old email for messages from that company — receipts and renewal reminders often show the account email or a customer number.

Step 2: try a normal password reset

1. Go to the company's sign-in page and choose **Forgot password** (or similar).
2. Try each email address you might have used. Check spam folders.
3. If the reset email arrives, set a new password and turn on two-step sign-in right away.

Step 3: if you no longer have the email

If the sign-in email belonged to a former employee or an old internet provider, you'll need the company's **account recovery** process. For example, GoDaddy's Account Recovery asks you to upload a color copy of your government-issued photo ID (and business documents when a company holds the account), and to use a *working* email address that isn't the one already on the account. GoDaddy says it reviews requests and responds within about 48 hours.

Other companies have similar processes. Contact their support through the help link on their own website and be ready to prove the business is yours: an invoice, a business license, the card that paid, or access to the domain's DNS.

Step 4: if a former designer won't respond

- Gather proof that you're the business: paperwork, past invoices for the domain, your business filing.
- Contact the registrar's support and explain that you are the business the domain was registered for.
- Keep copies of every message.

- If the domain is registered to someone else entirely, it may take a formal dispute; that's a question for an attorney.

SCAM ALERT

Beware "we can recover your domain" offers

People sometimes reply to forum posts or social media offering to get your domain back for a fee. Only the registrar can do it. Never give a stranger your ID, passwords or a payment.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Knowing the steps turns a panic into a short to-do list — and once you're back in, two-step sign-in and a current email keep it from happening again.

PART 3

Squarespace, Wix and GoDaddy

The three website companies small businesses ask about most: what each is like, where things live, and what they really cost.

CHAPTER 8

Choosing a Website Builder

A **website builder** lets you make and update a website in your web browser, by picking a design and typing into it, without writing any code. The company also hosts the site and usually sells domains. For most small businesses — a shop, a contractor, a salon, a church — a builder is plenty.

What to look for

- **Easy to update yourself.** You should be able to change your hours or a phone number in five minutes.
- **Looks good on phones.** Most visitors will see your site on a phone. All three big builders handle this.
- **An honest renewal price.** First-year prices are often discounted. Look for the regular price.
- **The features you'll really use.** Booking, a simple store or a contact form — don't pay for an online store you'll never open.
- **A way to leave.** Know whether you can take your domain with you if you switch later. You almost always can (Chapter 18); the website design itself usually can't move between builders.

	Squarespace	Wix	GoDaddy
Feel	Polished designs, fewer choices	Very flexible, lots of add-ons	Fast, AI-assisted setup
Good for	Shops, studios, portfolios	Owners who like to tinker	Getting a simple site up quickly
Domains	Sells and manages domains (took over Google Domains)	Sells and connects domains	One of the largest registrars

GOOD TO KNOW

There's no wrong choice among the big three

All three are established companies with millions of sites. The best one is usually the one you already have and know how to update. Switching builders means rebuilding the site, so it's rarely worth doing just to save a few dollars.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

You'll pick (or keep) a builder for the right reasons — easy updates and an honest price — instead of features that sound good on a sales page.

CHAPTER 9

Squarespace Basics (and the Google Domains Move)

Squarespace is known for clean, professional-looking designs. If you had a domain with **Google Domains**, it's now at Squarespace too, and this chapter explains why.

What happened to Google Domains

In 2023 Google sold its Google Domains business to Squarespace. Domains were moved over in batches in 2024, and Google says all of them had moved to Squarespace by July 2024. Your domain and its DNS settings came along, but billing and management now happen at Squarespace.

1. If you used Google Domains, go to **squarespace.com** and sign in with the email address you used for Google Domains. If you're not sure of the password, choose the forgot-password link and use that same address.
2. Open the **Domains** dashboard and find your domain.
3. Check the **renewal date**, the **payment card** and whether **auto-renew** is on.
4. If your business email is Google Workspace, check who is billing you for it now.

HEADS UP

Renewal prices may have changed

Domains that moved from Google now renew at Squarespace's prices, which may differ from what you paid Google. Look at the price shown in your Domains dashboard before the renewal date.

Where things live in Squarespace

To do this	Look here
Edit pages	Open your site, choose **Pages** (or **Website**), pick a page and choose **Edit**.
Domains	**Settings** > **Domains**, or the Domains dashboard in your account.
Helpers	**Settings** > **Permissions** (Chapter 6).
Billing	**Settings** > **Billing**.

Plans and prices

Squarespace's current website plans, as of November 2026, are **Basic** (about $19 a month), **Core** (about $29) and **Advanced** (just under $50), billed yearly. Paying month to month costs more — about $25, $39 and $65. Older accounts may still be on earlier plans such as Personal or Business, which new customers can no longer choose. Check the plan shown under **Settings** > **Billing** for what you actually pay.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

A five-minute check of your Squarespace dashboard tells you exactly when you'll be charged and for how much — no surprise renewal on a card that expired.

CHAPTER 10

Wix Basics

Wix gives you a lot of freedom to drag things around the page and add extras from its app market. That freedom is great if you enjoy it — and a little overwhelming if you don't.

Where things live in Wix

To do this	Look here
Edit the site	From your **dashboard**, choose **Edit Site**. Make changes, then **Publish**.
Domains	Your account's **Domains** page lists every domain you have with Wix.
Helpers	**Settings** > **Roles & Permissions** (Chapter 6).
Undo big changes	**Site History** lets you go back to an earlier version (Chapter 23).

HEADS UP

Nothing changes until you choose Publish

In Wix, your edits are saved as a draft. Visitors don't see them until you choose **Publish**. If you fixed your hours and they still look wrong, that's usually why.

Plans and prices

Wix's paid plans, as of November 2026, are commonly listed as **Light** (about $17 to $19 a month), **Core** (about $29), **Business** (about $39) and **Business Elite** (about $159), billed yearly. Monthly billing costs more. A free Wix site works, but it shows Wix ads and can't use your own domain, so most businesses use a paid plan.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Knowing about Publish and Site History takes most of the worry out of editing a Wix site: nothing goes live by accident, and nearly every mistake can be rolled back.

CHAPTER 11

GoDaddy Basics

GoDaddy is one of the biggest domain registrars in the world, so there's a good chance your domain is there even if your website is somewhere else. GoDaddy also sells a website builder, email and hosting.

Where things live in GoDaddy

To do this	Look here
Your domains	Sign in and open your **domain** list (sometimes called your Domain Portfolio).
Auto-renew	Open a domain's settings and look for **Auto-renew**, or check **Renewals & Billing** in your account.
Helpers	Your account settings > **Delegate Access** (Chapter 6).
DNS	Open the domain and choose **DNS** (Chapter 16).

Website builder prices

GoDaddy's website builder plans start at roughly $10 a month as of November 2026, with higher tiers for online stores. Like many companies, GoDaddy often shows a lower first-year price and renews at a higher regular price. Before you buy, look for the words **renews at** on the checkout page.

HEADS UP

Extras at checkout

Checkout pages at most registrars offer extra items — privacy, email, extra domain endings, website security add-ons. Some are useful; many aren't needed. It's fine to uncheck anything you don't understand and ask about it later.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Even if you never build a GoDaddy website, knowing where its domain list, auto-renew and delegate access live lets you protect a domain that's sitting there quietly.

CHAPTER 12

What a Website Really Costs

Website costs come in a few separate pieces, and they often renew on different dates. Adding them up once helps you budget and spot anything you're paying for twice.

Piece	Typical cost (as of November 2026)	Renews
Domain name	Varies by ending and company. Many builders include the first year free with a yearly plan.	Yearly
Website plan	Squarespace about $19 to just under $50/mo; Wix about $17–$159/mo; GoDaddy from about $10/mo (yearly billing)	Monthly or yearly
Email on your domain	Google Workspace Business Starter about $7.00 per person per month on a yearly plan	Monthly or yearly
Designer help	Set by your designer	As agreed

Questions to ask before you pay

- Is this the first-year price, or the regular price? What does it **renew at**?
- Is the domain included free only for the first year?
- Am I paying for email twice — once at the registrar and once at Google or Microsoft?
- Do I still use every add-on I'm being charged for?

TIP

Make a one-line list

Write each piece, the company, the price and the renewal date on one sheet. The cheat-sheet in Chapter 26 has blanks for exactly this.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

You'll know your real yearly cost, and you'll catch the forgotten extras that quietly renew every year.

PART 4

Renewals: Keeping Your Name

How renewal works, what happens step by step if a domain expires, and the small habits that keep your name safe for good.

CHAPTER 13

How Renewal Works, and Turning On Auto-Renew

Your domain is registered until a certain date. Before that date, your registrar will try to renew it — if auto-renew is on and the card on file works. If either of those fails, the clock starts running toward expiration.

Check your auto-renew today

1. Sign in to your registrar (Chapter 4 tells you which one).
2. Open your list of domains and choose your domain.
3. Look for **Auto-renew** and make sure it's turned **on**.
4. Check the **expiration date** and the **card** that will be charged. Update the card if it has expired or been replaced.
5. While you're there, check the **contact email** on the account. Renewal warnings go there.

TIP

Register for several years at once

Most registrars let you renew for more than one year at a time — often up to ten. Paying for a few years at once means fewer chances for a missed renewal. Auto-renew is still worth keeping on as a backstop.

The reminder emails you should expect

ICANN rules require registrars to send renewal reminders before a domain expires — ICANN's guidance for owners describes reminders about one month and about one week before the expiration date — and at least one more notice within five days after it expires if you haven't renewed. Those emails go to the address on your account, which is why that address needs to be one you read.

SCAM ALERT

Real reminders come from your own registrar

A genuine renewal reminder comes from the company you actually use and sends you to your account to pay. A letter or email from a company you've never heard of, with its own invoice, is almost always a sales pitch or a scam. Chapter 24 shows what they look like.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Five minutes of checking auto-renew, the card and the contact email is the single best protection against losing your domain.

CHAPTER 14

What Happens If a Domain Expires

Let's say the renewal didn't happen. Don't panic: a domain doesn't vanish the moment it expires. There's an orderly series of stages, and in the early ones you can simply pay and carry on. The exact number of days at each stage depends on your registrar and the domain ending, so check your registrar's renewal terms.

Stage	What it looks like	What you can do
Before expiration	Reminder emails arrive.	Renew at the normal price.
Just expired	Your website and email may keep working for a short time, or may stop. The registrar may show a page saying the domain has expired.	Renew from your account. Service comes back once it's renewed.
Late in the renewal window	ICANN rules require the website and email to be interrupted for at least the last eight days you can still renew.	Renew right away — sometimes with a late fee.
Redemption grace period	The domain has been deleted, but for 30 days only you (the previous registrant) can get it back.	Ask your registrar to **restore** it. Expect a restoration fee.
Released	The domain is available for anyone to register.	Try to register it again quickly, or contact Bill or an expert.

If your website or email just stopped working

1. Look up your domain at **lookup.icann.org** and check the expiration date.
2. If it's expired, sign in to your registrar and renew it.
3. Update the payment card and turn on auto-renew.
4. Give it some time. Service usually returns soon after renewal, though it can take a few hours.
5. If the registrar refused to let you renew or restore a domain in its grace period, ICANN has a **Domain Renewal Complaint** form on its website.

HEADS UP

Act fast once it's expired

Some people watch for expiring domains with good reputations and try to grab them. The sooner you renew, the cheaper and simpler it is.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

If the worst happens, you'll know there's almost always time to recover — and exactly which button to press.

CHAPTER 15

Keeping Contact Details and Payment Current

Most lost domains aren't stolen. They lapse because the email address or card on file stopped working. A short yearly check keeps that from happening.

Your yearly domain check-up

1. Pick a date you'll remember — your business anniversary or tax time works well.
2. Sign in to your registrar and website builder.
3. Confirm the account email address is one you read.
4. Confirm the registrant name is you or your business.
5. Confirm the card on file is current.
6. Confirm auto-renew is on and note the expiration date.
7. Confirm two-step sign-in is on (Chapter 21).
8. Remove helpers who no longer need access (Chapter 6).

GOOD TO KNOW

Privacy protection

Many registrars hide your personal details from public lookups automatically, often at no cost. Your registrar can still reach you through the email on file, which is one more reason to keep it current.

HEADS UP

Changing the registrant can lock a domain for a while

When you change the registrant name or organization, some registrars put a temporary lock on moving the domain to another company. That's a safety feature, not a problem — just don't plan a transfer the same week.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

One quiet half hour a year means renewal reminders reach you, the payment goes through, and your name stays yours.

PART 5

Connecting the Pieces

DNS settings in plain English, connecting a domain to your website, and moving a domain to a different company safely.

CHAPTER 16

DNS Records, Explained Simply

DNS is the set of directions that tells the internet where to send people who type your domain, and where to deliver email addressed to it. Each direction is one line called a **record**. You'll rarely need to touch them. But when a website company or email provider says "add these records," it helps to know what you're looking at.

The records you're likely to see

Record	What it does
A record	Points your domain to a website's computer, using a number called an IP address.
CNAME record	Points one name to another name — often used for the *www* part of your address.
MX record	Tells the internet where to deliver your **email**. Change these and email moves.
TXT record	A note used to prove you own the domain, and to help your email avoid spam folders.
Name servers	Say *which company* holds all your DNS records in the first place.

Where your DNS lives

Your DNS records live at whichever company your **name servers** point to — usually your registrar, sometimes your website builder. The ICANN lookup in Chapter 4 shows the name servers. If they mention GoDaddy, your DNS is at GoDaddy; if they mention Squarespace, it's there.

Before you change anything

1. Open the DNS page for your domain at the company that holds it.
2. Take a **screenshot** or photo of every record, or print the page. This is your undo button.
3. Change only the records your website or email company asked for. Leave the rest alone.
4. Save, then allow time. Changes often work within an hour but can take up to 48 hours to reach everyone.

HEADS UP

Leave the MX records alone unless you're moving email

The most common DNS mistake is deleting or replacing MX records while connecting a website. Your website and your email use different records. If you only want to change the website, don't touch the MX lines.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

With a screenshot of your records saved, any DNS change can be put back exactly the way it was — so you can follow a helper's instructions without worrying.

CHAPTER 17

Connecting a Domain to Your Website

If your domain is registered at one company and your website is built at another, you **connect** them by adding DNS records. The domain stays where it is; it just points visitors to your website. Every builder has a guided way to do this.

Connecting a domain you already own to Squarespace

1. In Squarespace, open your **Domains** panel.
2. Choose the option to use a domain you already own, type your domain, and choose **Connect Domain**.
3. Squarespace shows the records to add — usually A records and a CNAME record.
4. In a second browser tab, sign in to your registrar and open the DNS page for your domain.
5. Add or edit the records exactly as Squarespace shows them. Keep your MX (email) records as they are.
6. Return to Squarespace. It checks the connection; it can take up to 48 hours to finish.

Wix and GoDaddy

Wix and GoDaddy work the same way: look for **Connect a domain you already own** in the builder's domain settings and follow the on-screen steps. Some builders can sign in to well-known registrars for you and add the records automatically, which saves typing.

TIP

Connect, or move it?

Connecting leaves the domain at its current registrar. **Transferring** moves it to a new company (Chapter 18). If things work and you're happy with where you renew, connecting is simpler and safer.

GOOD TO KNOW

The padlock may take a little while

Right after you connect a domain, the security padlock may not appear right away. Website builders set it up automatically once the connection is confirmed. Chapter 20 explains more.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

You can keep your domain at the company you trust and still use whichever website builder suits you best.

CHAPTER 18

Moving a Domain to a Different Company

Sometimes you'll want your domain at a different registrar — perhaps to keep everything in one account, or to take it away from a designer's company. This is called a **transfer**. It's routine and usually safe, but it's one of the few steps in this guide that needs care.

Before you start

- Make sure the domain isn't about to expire. Renew first if it's within a few weeks.
- You usually can't transfer a domain within **60 days** of registering it or of its last transfer. Some registrars also lock it for 60 days after you change the registrant details.
- Take a screenshot of your DNS records (Chapter 16), especially the MX records for email.
- Make sure the account email works — the transfer approval comes there.

The steps

1. At your **current** registrar, open the domain's settings and turn off the **domain lock**.
2. Request the **transfer code** (auth code). At GoDaddy, open the domain's settings and choose **Transfer domain away from GoDaddy** to see and copy it; it's also emailed to the address on the domain. At Squarespace, look in the domain's settings for the unlock and transfer-code options.
3. At the **new** registrar, choose **Transfer a domain**, type your domain and paste the code.
4. Pay the transfer fee. At most registrars this adds a year to your registration, so you don't lose the time you already paid for.
5. Watch your email and approve the transfer if asked. Transfers usually finish within about five to seven days.
6. When it's done, check your website and send yourself a test email. Then turn the lock back on at the new registrar.

HEADS UP

Moving the domain doesn't cancel the website

If your website stays at Squarespace or Wix, it keeps running after the domain moves. If you're leaving that builder entirely, cancel the website plan separately — and only once the new site is working.

STAY SAFE

Guard the transfer code

Anyone with your transfer code and an unlocked domain could try to move it. Only give the code to the new registrar, never by phone to someone who called you, and lock the domain again afterward.

GOOD TO KNOW

Changes are coming to transfer rules

In 2026 ICANN approved updates to its transfer rules, including changes to the 60-day waiting periods and how transfer codes work. They take effect only after ICANN finishes putting them in place, so your registrar's current rules are the ones that count.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

You can consolidate your domain where you want it, on your schedule, without a gap in your website or email.

PART 6

Email and Security

Email that ends in your business name, the padlock in the address bar, and locking down the accounts that control your website.

CHAPTER 19

Email on Your Own Domain

An email address like *info@smithhardware.com* looks more professional than a free address, and it tells customers the message really comes from you. That email doesn't come from the domain itself — it comes from an email service, connected to your domain by its **MX records**.

The usual choices

Service	Typical cost (as of November 2026)	Good to know
Google Workspace	Business Starter about $7.00 per person per month on a yearly plan, about $8.40 month to month	Gmail with your own address, plus Drive and Calendar.
Microsoft 365 for business	Business Basic about $7.00 per person per month on a yearly plan	Outlook with your own address, plus Teams and OneDrive.
Your website or domain company	Often sold as an add-on; sometimes free for the first year	Check the renewal price after the free period.

Find out where your email comes from

1. Think about where you **read** your business email. If it's Gmail, it's probably Google Workspace. If it's Outlook with a Microsoft sign-in, it's probably Microsoft 365.
2. Look through your card statements for a monthly charge from Google, Microsoft or your registrar.
3. If you're still not sure, ask the person who set it up, or look at your domain's MX records (Chapter 16). They usually name the provider.

HEADS UP

Don't pay for email twice

It's common to find a forgotten email add-on at the registrar *and* a Google or Microsoft plan doing the real work. Before canceling anything, make sure you know which one your mail actually uses — canceling the wrong one stops your email.

TIP

Keep the owner's sign-in separate

As Chapter 5 explains, sign in to your registrar with an address that *isn't* on your domain. If the domain ever lapses, you'll still get the warning emails.

GOOD TO KNOW

Setting up new email walks you through the DNS

When you sign up for Google Workspace or Microsoft 365, each one gives you a guided setup that lists the exact MX and TXT records to add at your registrar. Some registrars can add them for you automatically.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Knowing exactly where your email comes from means you'll never cancel the wrong thing — and you can set up a new employee's address in minutes.

CHAPTER 20

The Padlock: SSL and https

When a website address starts with **https** and the browser shows a padlock or a settings symbol beside it, the connection between the visitor and your site is encrypted. That's thanks to an **SSL certificate**. Browsers warn visitors about sites without one, so you want it on.

Website builders handle it for you

Squarespace, Wix and GoDaddy's website builder include SSL with their plans and set it up automatically once your domain is connected. Squarespace, for example, provides free certificates on every plan; if the status still shows **processing** after 72 hours, Squarespace suggests contacting its support. Look for **SSL** in your site's settings to see the status.

If visitors see a "not secure" warning

1. Check that your domain finished connecting (Chapter 17). The padlock can't appear until it does.
2. Look at the SSL status in your website settings.
3. If you just connected the domain, wait a day — certificates take a little time.
4. If it still isn't working, contact your website company's support. This is their job, and it's included in what you pay.

SCAM ALERT

Nobody needs to sell you an SSL certificate by phone

Calls and emails warning that "your site is not secure" and offering to sell a certificate are usually sales pitches. If your site is on a website builder, SSL is already included.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Customers see a safe, trustworthy site instead of a browser warning — at no extra cost on the big website builders.

CHAPTER 21

Two-Step Sign-In and Safe Passwords

The accounts that control your domain and website are worth protecting as carefully as your bank login. A stolen password could let someone take your site down, change your email or move your domain away. Two simple habits stop almost all of that.

Habit 1: a strong, unique password

- Use a different password for your registrar and your website builder than for anything else.
- Make it long — a short sentence of four or five unrelated words works well.
- Keep it in a password manager, or written in a safe place at the business — not on a sticky note on the monitor.

Habit 2: turn on two-step sign-in

Two-step verification (also called two-factor or 2FA) means that after your password, you also enter a code from your phone. A thief with only your password can't get in.

Wix

1. Sign in and open **Account Settings**.
2. Scroll to **2-Step Verification** and turn it on.
3. Choose how to get codes: by email, by text message or with an authenticator app.

Squarespace and GoDaddy

In Squarespace, select your profile picture or initials and look for **Account & Security**, then **Two-Factor Authentication**. In GoDaddy, open your account settings and look for **Login & PIN** or **2-Step Verification**. Both let you choose a text message or an authenticator app.

> **TIP**
>
> **Save the backup codes**
>
> When you turn on two-step sign-in, many services offer **backup codes**. Print them or write them down and keep them with your business papers. If you replace your phone, they get you back in.

SCAM ALERT

Never read a sign-in code to a caller

A real website company will never call and ask for the code that was just texted to you. Anyone who asks is trying to break into your account. Hang up.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

With a unique password and two-step sign-in, your website and domain are protected even if a password leaks somewhere else.

PART 7

Keeping Your Site Current

Changing hours, phone numbers and photos yourself, and protecting your work with backups and an undo plan.

CHAPTER 22

Updating Hours, Phone Numbers and Photos

The most useful thing a small-business website does is answer simple questions: Are you open? Where are you? How do I call you? Keeping those few facts current matters far more than a fancy design.

The five-minute update, on any builder

1. Sign in to your website builder on a computer. (Phones work too, but a bigger screen is easier.)
2. Open the editor: **Edit** in Squarespace, **Edit Site** in Wix, or **Edit Website** in GoDaddy.
3. Go to the page with the information — often the home page, a Contact page, or the footer at the very bottom of every page.
4. Select the text, type the change, and look it over.
5. Save. In Wix, also choose **Publish** (Chapter 10).
6. Open your site in a new browser window, or on your phone, and check that the change shows.

Places the same facts hide

- The footer at the bottom of every page.
- A Contact or About page.
- A banner or announcement bar across the top.
- Your **Google Business Profile**, which shows on Google Search and Maps and is managed separately from your website.
- Social media pages, printed cards and your email signature.

TIP

Holiday hours

For a short-term change, an announcement bar at the top of your site is quicker than editing every page — and easy to remove afterward. Update your Google Business Profile's holiday hours too.

Photos

Use your own photos of your shop, your work and your team; customers like seeing real faces. Don't copy pictures from other websites or a Google image search — they usually belong to someone else. Website builders include free stock photos you're allowed to use.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Customers get the right hours and phone number the first time, and you stop getting calls asking whether you're open.

CHAPTER 23

Backups and Undoing Mistakes

Website builders keep your site running on their own computers, so you don't need to worry about a server crashing. What you *do* want is a way back if someone deletes a page by mistake — and a copy of the things you'd hate to retype.

Wix: Site History

1. In the Wix editor, open **Site History** (also reachable from your dashboard's website settings).
2. Look through the list of saved versions, with the date and who made each change.
3. Choose the arrow beside the version you want and review it.
4. Choose **Restore**.

A few things don't roll back with Site History, including photo galleries, the content of Wix database collections and your search settings. Change those carefully.

Squarespace and GoDaddy

Don't count on a whole-site undo button anywhere else; check your builder's help pages for what it offers. A safe habit on any builder: before a big change, **duplicate** the page (Squarespace has a Duplicate option in its Pages list), work on the copy, and swap it in when you're happy. And a short pause before deleting something is the best undo button of all.

Keep your own copies of what matters

- The **words** on your main pages, pasted into a document on your computer.
- Your **photos and logo**, in a folder on your computer or cloud storage.
- A **screenshot of your DNS records** (Chapter 16).
- Your list of accounts, logins and renewal dates (Chapter 26).
- If you sell online, export your **product list and orders** from time to time.

GOOD TO KNOW

Your design usually can't move

A design built on Squarespace can't be moved to Wix, or the other way around. Your words, photos and domain can. That's why keeping your own copies matters: they're what you'd use to rebuild somewhere else.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

An accidental deletion becomes a two-minute fix instead of a lost afternoon, and you're never stuck with a company just because your content lives only there.

PART 8

Scams, Help and Your Cheat-Sheet

The letters, emails and calls aimed at website owners, when it's worth calling for a hand, and one page with everything in it.

CHAPTER 24

Domain and Website Scams

Your domain registration is public record, so the moment you have a website, you'll start getting letters, emails and calls about it. A few are legitimate. Many are sales pitches dressed up to look urgent, and some are outright scams.

The fake renewal notice

A letter or email arrives that looks like an invoice: "Domain Name Expiration Notice" or "Final notice," with your domain name and a price to renew. It comes from a company you've never used. Paying it usually **moves your domain to that company**, often at a higher price — sometimes called *slamming*. Small print may say "this is not a bill." The FTC has taken action against companies sending fake invoices like these to small businesses.

Other common ones

What you get	What's really going on
"Someone wants to register your name in Asia"	An email claiming another company is about to register your business name with other endings. It's a pressure tactic to sell you domains you don't need.
"Your website is not on Google"	Search-ranking (SEO) offers promising first place. No one can guarantee that.
"Your site is not secure"	Calls selling SSL certificates or security add-ons your builder already includes (Chapter 20).
Fake account warnings	An email that looks like GoDaddy, Squarespace or Wix saying your account is suspended, with a link to sign in. The link leads to a look-alike page that steals your password.
"We'll get your domain back"	Strangers offering to recover a lost domain for a fee (Chapter 7).

SCAM ALERT

The one rule that stops all of them

Never pay, click or sign in from the letter, email or call itself. Instead, open your browser, type your registrar's or website builder's address yourself, and sign in there. If there's really a renewal or a problem, you'll see it in your account.

Check before you pay any invoice

1. Does the company name match the registrar from your lookup (Chapter 4) and your cheat-sheet?
2. Does the renewal date match the one in your account?
3. Is the price close to what you normally pay?
4. If any answer is no, don't pay. Shred the letter or delete the email.

TIP

Report it

You can report misleading invoices and scam emails to the FTC at **ReportFraud.ftc.gov**. If you clicked a link and typed your password, change it right away and check that two-step sign-in is on.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Once you know the real company and renewal date, these letters lose their power. You'll spot them in seconds and keep your money and your domain.

CHAPTER 25

When to Call Bill

Much of this guide you can do on your own, at your own pace. But some jobs go faster and calmer with an experienced hand beside you. Here's an honest list of when a call is worth it.

Good reasons to call

- You can't tell where your domain, website or email live, and you'd like it sorted out once.
- A former designer or employee holds the account and you need help taking ownership.
- Your website or email stopped working and you think the domain may have expired.
- You're moving a domain or switching email and don't want to lose a single message.
- You got an invoice or warning and can't tell whether it's real.
- You'd like your hours, phone number and photos updated while you watch and learn.
- You want two-step sign-in turned on across every account, with backup codes stored safely.

What working with Bill is like

I'm a local, independent technician serving Portage County, with more than 30 years of professional experience. I work at your pace, explain what I'm doing in plain English, and write down what we changed so you have a record. I don't sell websites or domains, so my only interest is getting yours in order and in your name.

FROM BILL

How to reach me

Help is **$49 remote · $99 in your home**. Call **(330) 200-8042** or book a time at **billshometech.com/book**. Have your domain name and any recent letters or emails handy.

GOOD TO KNOW

Meet Sophie

When you call or visit the website, you may be greeted by Sophie, my AI receptionist. She can answer simple questions and book a time for you.

STAY SAFE

What I'll never ask for

I'll never call you out of the blue about your domain or ask you to pay with gift cards. If someone claiming to be me does, hang up and call the number above.

CHAPTER 26

Your Website & Domain Cheat-Sheet

Everything important on one page. Fill in the blanks once and keep it with your business papers.

The essentials

Task	How
Find your registrar	**lookup.icann.org** > type your domain > Lookup (Chapter 4).
Who should own it	The business — on an email address that isn't on the domain (Chapter 5).
Let a helper in	Squarespace: Settings > Permissions. Wix: Settings > Roles & Permissions. GoDaddy: Delegate Access (Chapter 6).
Keep it renewed	Auto-renew on, current card, contact email you read (Chapter 13).
If it expired	Renew right away; there's usually a grace period and then a 30-day redemption period (Chapter 14).
Moving a domain	Unlock, get the transfer code, start at the new registrar (Chapter 18).
Email	Know whether it's Google, Microsoft or the registrar before canceling anything (Chapter 19).
Security	Unique password plus two-step sign-in on every account (Chapter 21).
Scam letters	Never pay from the letter; sign in to your own account to check (Chapter 24).

Write it down once

Item	Yours
Domain name	_____
Registrar (company)	_____
Registrar sign-in email	_____
Expiration date	_____ Auto-renew on? Yes / No
Website builder	_____
Builder sign-in email	_____
Website plan renews	_____ Price _____
Email comes from	Google / Microsoft / Registrar / Other: _____
Card used for renewals	Ending in _____ Expires _____
Helpers with access	_____
Backup codes kept at	_____

When something's wrong, in order

1. Look up your domain at lookup.icann.org. Has it expired?
2. Sign in to your registrar. Renew if needed and update the card.
3. Sign in to your website builder. Is the plan active and the domain connected?
4. If only email is broken, check the MX records haven't been changed (Chapter 16).
5. Can't sign in? Use the company's forgot-password and account recovery steps (Chapter 7).
6. Still stuck, or unsure if something is a scam? Call Bill at (330) 200-8042.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

One filled-in page means you — or whoever helps you — can solve almost any website or domain problem without hunting for passwords or guessing which company to call.