

moving a site to standalone from a WordPress Network

Converting a blog from a WordPress Network to standalone is painful.

I've been using a WordPress Network^[1] (Multisite, WordPress MU in older terminology) setup for years. A long time ago, when I still believed I'll run a web business some day, I had a main domain and built a whole environment around it.

The Network is a brilliant piece of software when it comes to shared users and centralized management, especially when you're building sites for less technology aware people and you try to avoid giving them plugin administration rights.

There are issues with multisite setups, for example, domain mapping can be tricky to set up initially (even with the brilliant little WordPress MU Domain Mapping^[2]) and a lot of the plugins have paid only version with multisite support. But the real pain comes when you want to move a site out of the Network.

My reason is simple: I had issues with my base domain last year. Even if I could hack my hosts file to point to the right IP all the time, the plugins and anything using the network access would fail. So I decided to search for a remote management solution (I ended up using InfiniteWP^[3] for now but I do miss the shared users already) and started moving the blogs out of the network.

If it was only this simple...

I've tried everything. Database hacks, copying tables, conversions, backups-imports, but at a certain point, all of them failed. So I went for the most brutal solution.

- export the contents and as many settings you can (WP-SEO has export, Custom fields also allow that, and so on)
- create a folder with a freshly downloaded WordPress core

- since you need to leave the old setup's files accessible from the old URLs, copy the blogs.dir/[blog id]/files folder with all its contents to the new setup's wp-content directory (the Network uses domain.com/files access instead of the single site setup, where the default is /wp-content/uploads, so this way you'll be able to import the files)
- re-point you webserver to the new location for the domain
- create a NEW INSTALLATION of WordPress from scratch
- import the contents (install the plugin and run the import)
- WAIT.... and wait....and wait.... apparently WordPress import take a looooooong time...
- install (or copy) the plugins
- import the plugin settings
- tweak and tune everything as it used to be, including the theme settings

And repeat this for all site, one by one.

WordPress, I do like you, but there has to be a nicer way for this.

At least the database is now clean of leftover options, settings and years of waste.

Links

1. http://codex.wordpress.org/Create_A_Network
2. <http://wordpress.org/plugins/wordpress-mu-domain-mapping/>
3. <http://infinitewp.com/>

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