Launch day runbook and DNS cutover checklist

A timed launch plan from T minus 48 hours to the first week, including a DNS cutover that leaves email alone.

Copy, adapt and send. Replace anything in [brackets] with your own details.

T MINUS 48 HOURS

- [ ] Lower TTL on the records you will change to 300 seconds, at least one current TTL ahead.
- [ ] Export the full DNS zone. Note current A, AAAA, CNAME, MX and TXT values.
- [ ] Confirm the window: early in the week, early in the day, you free for the rest of it.
- [ ] Confirm SSL can issue for www and non-www right at cutover, or via DNS validation.
- [ ] Freeze content edits, or plan a final sync.

T MINUS 1 HOUR

- [ ] Full backup of the new and old sites, stored off both servers.
- [ ] Run wp search-replace staging URL to live URL, --dry-run first.
- [ ] Turn off "Discourage search engines", maintenance mode and staging passwords.
- [ ] Load the 301 redirect map on the new server.

CUTOVER

- [ ] Change only A/AAAA or the website CNAME. Leave MX, SPF, DKIM and DMARC alone.
- [ ] Check dig +short for the bare domain and www returns the new address.
- [ ] Valid certificate on both hostnames. curl -I shows 200, and 301 for variants.
- [ ] Purge page cache, object cache and CDN.

FIRST HOUR

- [ ] Test on a phone on mobile data: key pages, menus, search, checkout.
- [ ] Submit every form and confirm delivery. Send and receive a test email.
- [ ] Spot-check old URLs: one 301 to the right page, no 404s or redirect chains.
- [ ] Confirm analytics records a visit. Submit the XML sitemap in Search Console.
- [ ] Turn on uptime and SSL expiry monitoring.

FIRST WEEK

- [ ] Fix 404s found in logs and Search Console.
- [ ] Confirm scheduled backups run on the new host.
- [ ] Raise TTL back to normal (3600 is common) once stable.
- [ ] Keep the old site at least 7 days. Final backup, then remove it.