

KNOWLEDGE BASE · PUBLIC DOCUMENT

Relative or absolute links: what breaks when a site moves to another domain or folder

Support & Account

CODE

RLX-MZ-KB-2180

VERSION

v2026.10.16

COUNTRY · LANGUAGE

Mozambique · English

Interweb Mozambique

RLX Holdings, S.A. · Group RLX Holdings

Tax ID (NUIT) 401 191 607 · Legal entity no. (NUEL) 105 045 974 · Economic activity code (CAE) 62022

<https://www.meu.interweb.co.mz/knowledgebase/2180>



The short answer: a link or an image can name its target in four ways: **absolute** (`https://asuaempresa.co.mz/img/logo.png`), **protocol-relative** (`//asuaempresa.co.mz/img/logo.png`), **root-relative** (`/img/logo.png`) and **relative to the page** (`img/logo.png` or `../img/logo.png`). The browser completes the incomplete ones from the **address of the page it is on**, not from where the file sits on the server. Each form survives a different kind of move, which is why a site that worked perfectly breaks on some pages after changing domain, switching to https or moving into a folder.

The four forms, and what breaks each

Form	Survives	Breaks when
Absolute: <code>https://asuaempresa.co.mz/img/logo.png</code>	Being copied outside the site: e-mails, social networks, other sites.	The site changes domain (it keeps pointing to the old one) or folder. If written with <code>http://</code> , it causes mixed content after the switch to <code>https</code> .
Protocol-relative: <code>//asuaempresa.co.mz/img/logo.png</code>	The switch from <code>http</code> to <code>https</code> .	The site changes domain. Today, with everything on <code>https</code> , writing <code>https://</code> is simpler.
Root-relative: <code>/img/logo.png</code>	A domain change and the switch to <code>https</code> .	The site moves into a folder (<code>asuaempresa.co.mz/new/</code>): it keeps looking at the root.
Relative to the page: <code>img/logo.png</code> , <code>../img/</code>	A domain change, <code>https</code> , and the whole site moving into a folder.	The page address changes depth. With friendly URLs, on <code>/blog/my-post/</code> the browser looks for <code>/blog/my-post/img/logo.png</code> .

Finding and fixing the links that broke

1

See what the browser asked for: open the page, press F12, go to the **Network** tab and reload. Red lines with a 404 show the exact address the browser tried. Compare it with where the file really is.

2

Search for the old domain and the old folder in the theme code and the files. WordPress stores addresses in full in the database: **replacing old addresses in the database** and **changing the WordPress site address**.

3

In your templates, use a single rule: root-relative for internal resources, if the site lives at the root of the domain; or addresses built from a single configuration value (the base address), so a move is a one-line change.

4

Mind the CSS: a `url(...)` inside a stylesheet is relative to the **CSS file**, not to the page. Moving the CSS to another folder breaks background images and fonts; moving the page does not.

5

Look for a `<base href="...">` tag in the page source (Ctrl+U). It changes the reference for every relative link; if it still holds the old domain, everything relative goes there.

6

Where absolute is mandatory: the canonical tag, the sharing image (og:image), the sitemap, newsletters, RSS feeds and links you give to other sites. There a relative link has no page to resolve against and does not work.

An old domain that still works hides the problem. Images and files loaded from the old address appear normally until the day that domain or the old hosting account is cancelled, and then everything breaks at once. In the Network tab, make sure no request goes to the old domain before you let it go: **after moving a site**.

When switching to https, absolute links written with http:// cause nearly all mixed content: **mixed content after moving to HTTPS**.

Moved the site to another domain or folder and some pages lost their images or link to the old place? Send us an address that fails and the site's old address.

[Open a support ticket](#)

SEE ALSO

Mixed content after moving to HTTPS: the padlock that will not turn on

Replacing old addresses in a WordPress database without breaking it

Moving WordPress to a new domain without losing anything

After moving a site: the checklist for the first day

Subdomain or folder: where to put a blog, a shop or a test site

The parts of a web address: scheme, domain, port, path, query and fragment



Online version of this document

Interweb is a leading internet services company, with a mission to help businesses to be born and prosper through technology.

2020

FOUNDED

37,000+

CLIENTS

130+

SIGN-UPS A DAY

Interweb Mozambique

RLX Holdings, S.A. • Group RLX Holdings

TAX ID (NUIT)	401 191 607
LEGAL ENTITY NO. (NUEL)	105 045 974
ECONOMIC ACTIVITY CODE (CAE)	62022
REGISTERED OFFICE	Bairro 7 de Setembro Vilankulo 1304 • CEP 0411-02, Inhambane, Mozambique
CONTACT	info@interweb.co.mz • +258 84 635 1111 • +258 86 635 1111 • www.interweb.co.mz
OPENING HOURS	Monday to Friday - 08 AM to 04 PM Saturday & Sunday - Closed