Static HTML sites and Exponential

Moving a hand-made or generated static HTML site into Exponential 6 and back - reading the files or crawling the site, extracting the content area, HTML to XmlText, images and documents, keeping .html addresses, and...

Source file: `doc/eng-us/install/migration/static-html.md` Last changed 2026-11-04
https://doc.exponential.earth/exphelp/viewer/install/migration/static-html.md

A static site is the simplest source: every page is a file you can read. The work is in separating the content from the repeated layout around it, and in keeping the addresses.

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1. Read the files, or crawl

You have	Read
The files (FTP, Git) of a hand-made site	the `.html` files directly
A static site generator (Jekyll, Hugo, Eleventy ...)	the **sources** (Markdown with front matter), not the generated HTML; see JavaScript and Node.js apps, 2 for Markdown
Only the live site	a crawl: sitemap, links, server log; save each page

2. Extract the content

1. **Group the pages by template** (pages that share the same layout).
2. **Per template, find the content area** (a `<main>`, an `<article>`, a `<div id="content">`) and the parts to keep: title (`<h1>` or `<title>`), date, author, meta description.
3. **Clean the HTML**: drop navigation, scripts, inline styles and layout tables; keep headings, paragraphs, lists, tables, links and images. Reduce it to Exponential's simplified input (`<p>`, `<strong>`, `<em>`, `<a href>`, `<h1>`-`<h6>`, `<ul>`/`<ol>`/`<li>`, `<table>`/`<tr>`/`<td>`), which the kernel parses into XmlText (tools, section 4).
4. **Images and documents**: collect every `<img src>` and linked PDF/office file, import them as image and file objects, and replace the references with embeds or links to the new objects.
5. **The tree**: the directory structure usually is the navigation: `/products/widgets/index.html` becomes a folder *Products*, a folder *Widgets*, and so on.

3. Import

Write JSON rows (remote id from the old path, for example `html-/products/widgets.html`), then import with the script skeleton or xrowextract's importer. A folder of images and documents can come in through the upload page's ZIP importer, keeping its folder structure.

4. Addresses

Static addresses end in `.html` or are directories with `index.html`. Exponential's aliases are clean paths (`products/widgets`). For each old address, add a redirecting custom URL alias on the new node, and check what the alias cleaning makes of the dot and the extension; when the old addresses follow one pattern, a URL wildcard or a web-server rule (strip `.html`, `index.html`) covers them all (checklist, 4).

5. From Exponential to a static copy

Exponential can write static pages of its public siteaccesses: `./console exp:makestaticcache` crawls them and generates static pages (`--site`, `--max-pages`, `--max-depth`). For an archive copy of a site you are switching off, a crawl with a mirroring tool of the live site works as well; keep the storage directory for the originals of the images.

6. Checklist

- ☐ Address list complete (files, sitemap, log); pages grouped by template.
- ☐ Extractor per template tested; HTML reduced to the simplified input.
- ☐ Images and documents imported; references rewritten.
- ☐ Tree built from the directory structure; remote ids from old paths.
- ☐ `.html` addresses redirected and tested.

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