Migrating from Aleyant email services to Zoho

This article documents the steps I took to migrate a domain with 5 email accounts from the Aleyant email server to Zoho. Zoho provides up to 10 accounts on a domain for free. Each account is given 5 GB of storage. You'll notice that I put a red box over any identifiable information.

I started by clicking the "Sign Up" button on https://www.zoho.com/mail/zohomail-pricing.html. After entering in the domain name for the domain I was migrating over, I received this confirmation:

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I clicked the link to verify the domain ownership, and was brought to this wizard which started to guide me through the process:

This first step is to verify the domain ownership by creating a DNS entry that Zoho can read. If you use Aleyant for DNS hosting, please open a support ticket (http://support.aleyant.com) to request the DNS entry. You can send a screenshot of the page to the support team, or just give them the instructions. In the example above, the requirement is to create a CNAME entry of zb14283433 to point to zmverify.zoho.com.

If you host your own DNS, zoho provides some instructions for some of the major providers on what to do.

After the DNS entry has been made, you can click the button at the bottom page to continue. Zoho will confirm that the DNS entry exists and then prompt you to begin creating users. You can create the first one immediately on the page:
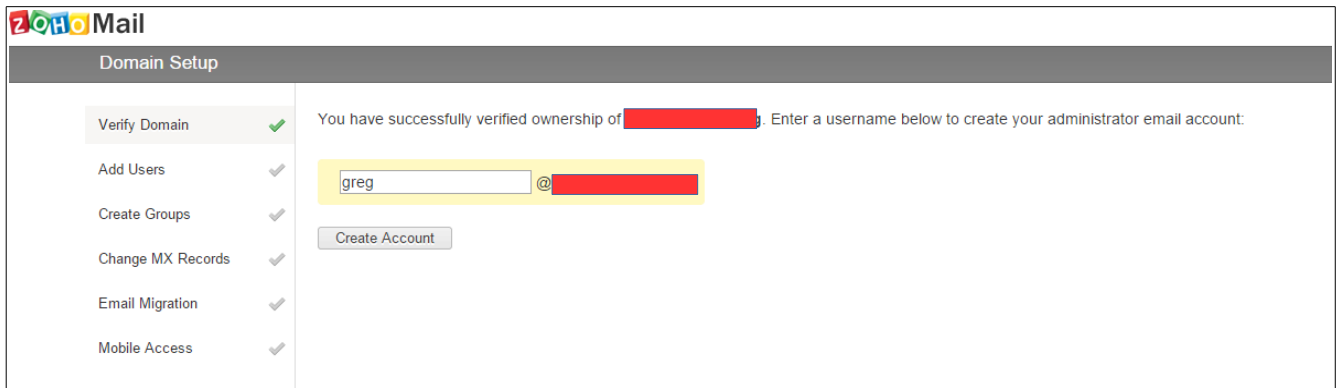
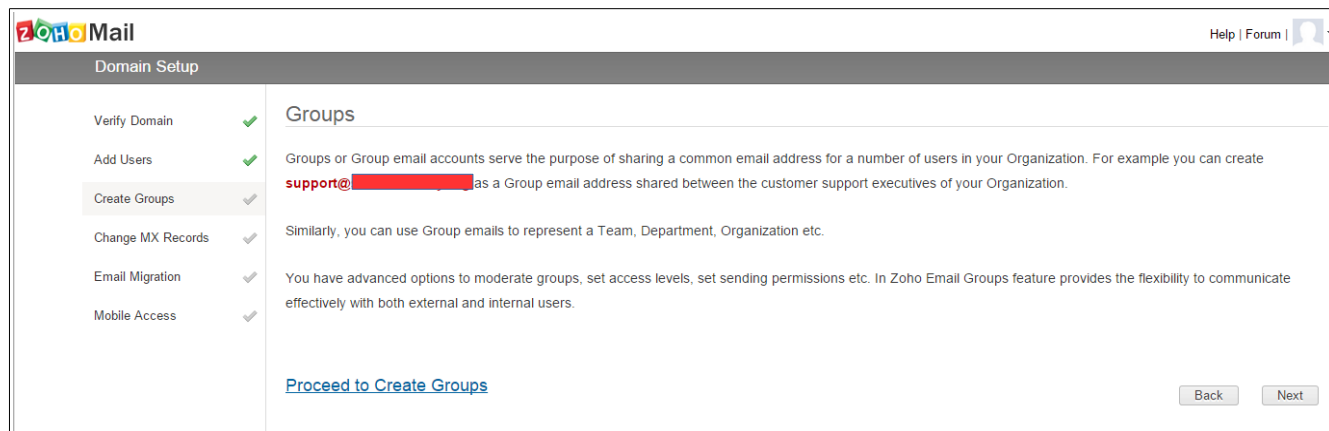After you create the first user, you can either continue with the wizard or click the link to add more:
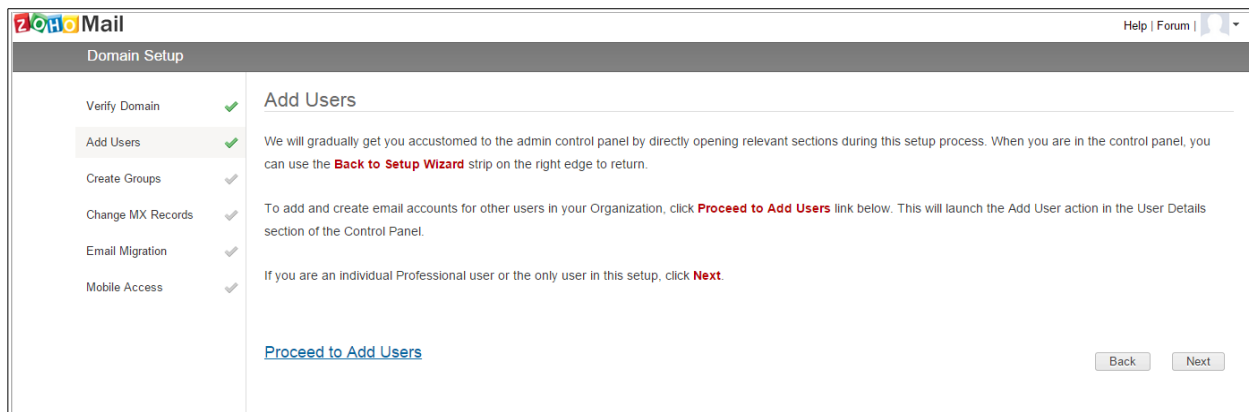
If you click the link to add more, you are brought into the control panel and can add more users. I noted that there is an option to import using a .csv file, however, I entered the users manually since I only had four more to worry about:
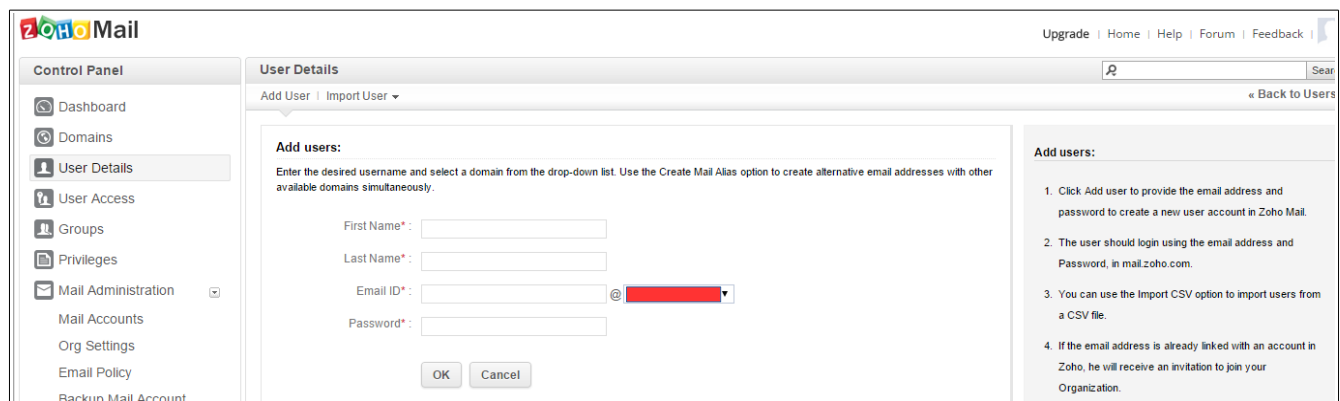
You'll notice a link on the right side of the screen that allows you to return to this helpful wizard. The next step is setting up Groups. This is similar to Aliases in the Smartermail system that Aleyant has been using. In this example I did not create any Groups.

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After all the email accounts have been created in Zoho, it's time to make another round of DNS changes to tell the domain to begin using the Zoho servers for any new email that might arrive. I recommend you do this at a time when you will not interrupt normal business activities. At the end of the day on Friday is often a good time.

Click on the link to proceed to Point MX:

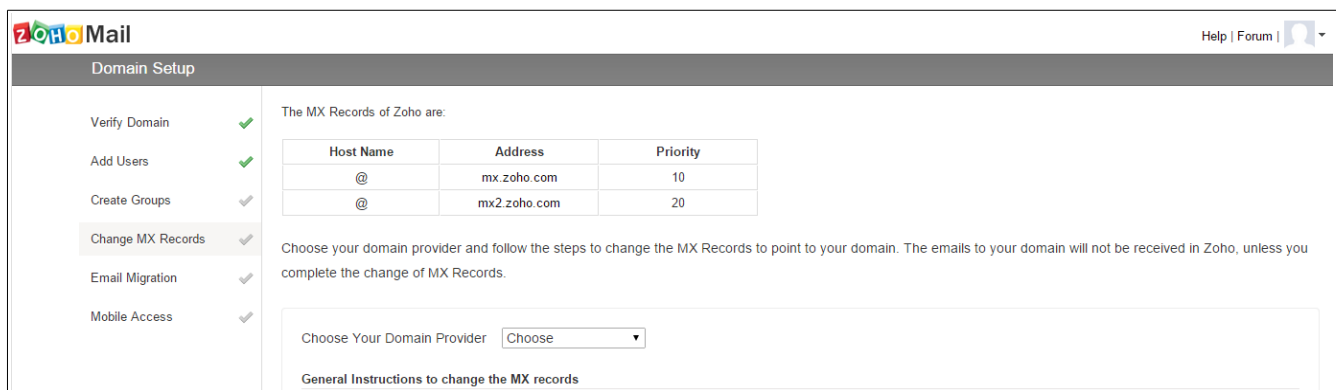This next screen provides the new DNS information for your domain. "MX Records" are the entries in DNS that tell other email servers on the internet where to route your mail to. When you make these changes, it's critical to remove old MX Records.

Similar to the previous DNS changes made, you can contact Aleyant support if Aleyant hosts your email. Otherwise you can follow the instructions provided by Zoho.

It may be helpful to delete other DNS entries related to the Aleyant email server that may exist, such as mail. & webmail. This will prevent devices and programs already configured for email from continuing to use the Aleyant email server.

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The next step is to migrate any email messages that might be on the Aleyant email server over to Zoho. Click the link to Proceed to Migrate.
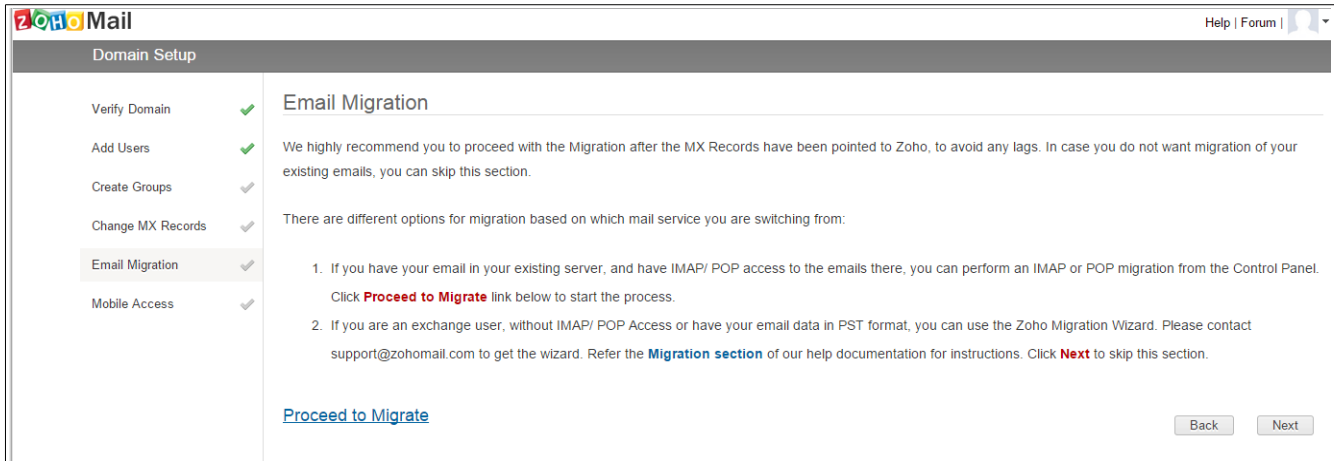
In the Migration area, click the "Add Migration" link.
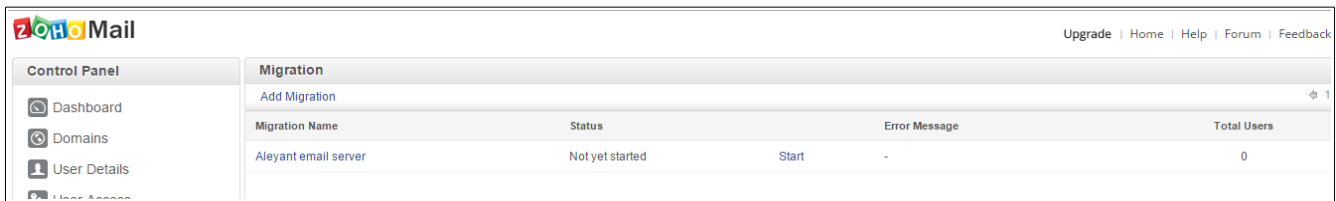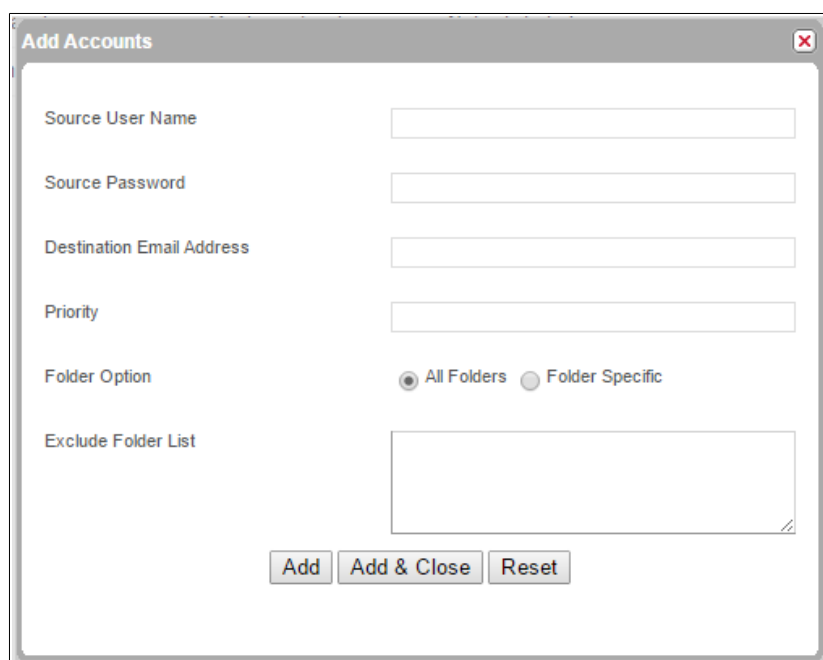
This opens a small window:
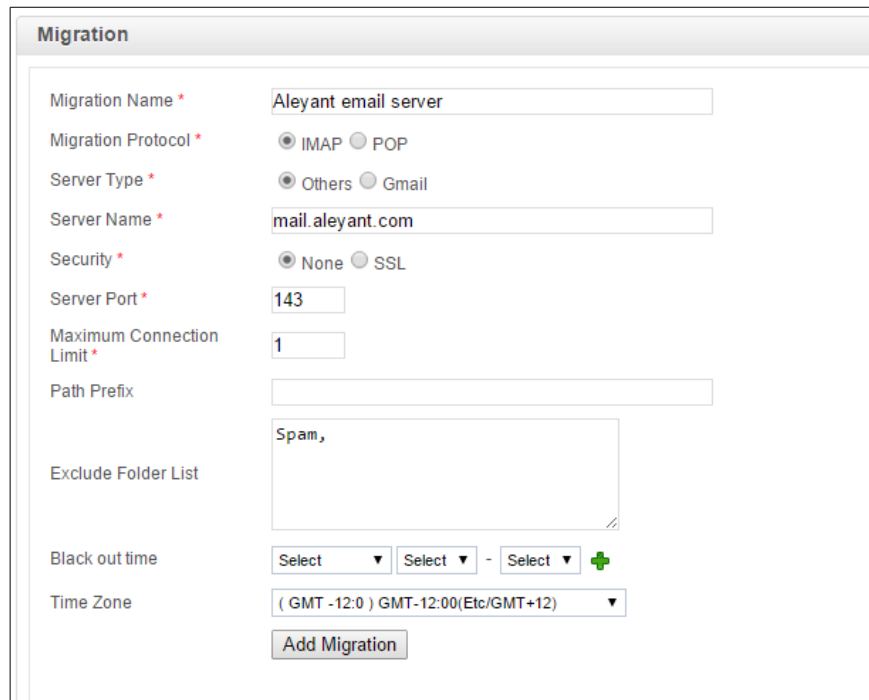
You can use the same settings as what is show above. You may wish to increase the maximum connection limit, but please do not enter a number larger than 5.

After adding the migration, you now need to explicitly set which accounts to add to the migration plan. Click on the migration, and then on the "Add Accounts" link:

For each account that you want to move mail messages over from, add in the full email address and password as the source settings, and the email address you created for this same user in the destination area. Most likely the "source user name" and the "destination email address" will contain be the same.

After the migration starts, you can monitor the progress by clicking on the migration, and then the "More Info" link next to the account in the Status column.

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I prefer to use IMAP rather than POP whenever possible. You need to manually enable IMAP for each account. To do so, click on "Mail Administration" in the control panel, and then on Mail Accounts. Click on an email account to manage it. You can then click on the IMAP Access option to enable or disable it:
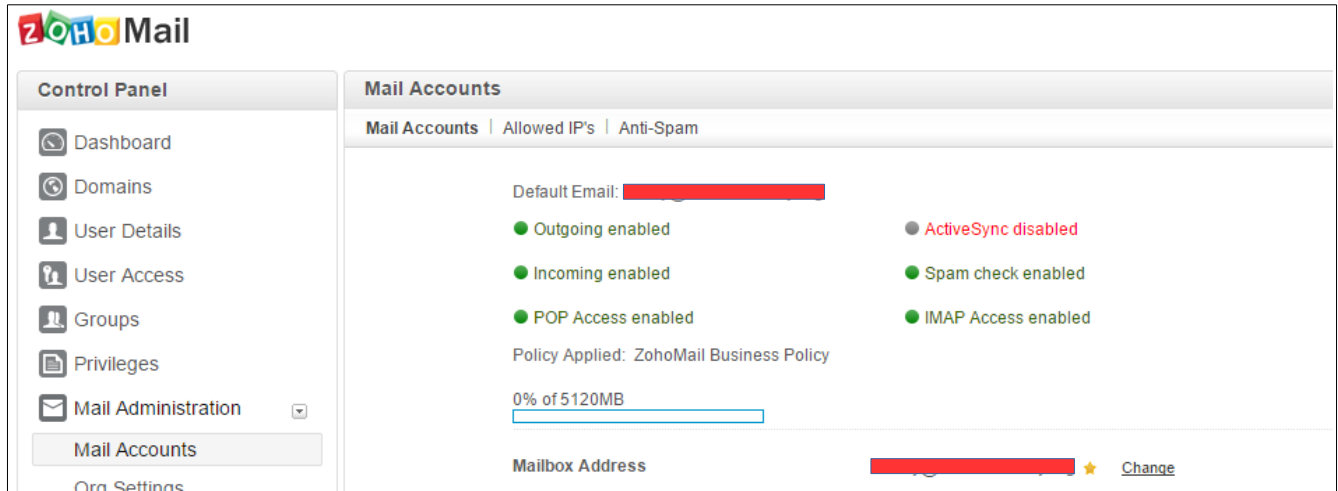
To access email from the web interface, you should go to http://mail.zoho.com and login.

You may need to update any devices or programs that access email. Here are two helpful articles that not only include the server information needed, but also have links on how to configure clients like Outlook, Apple iMac Mail, Android, iPhone/iPad, etc.

https://www.zoho.com/mail/help/imap-access.html
https://www.zoho.com/mail/help/pop-access.html
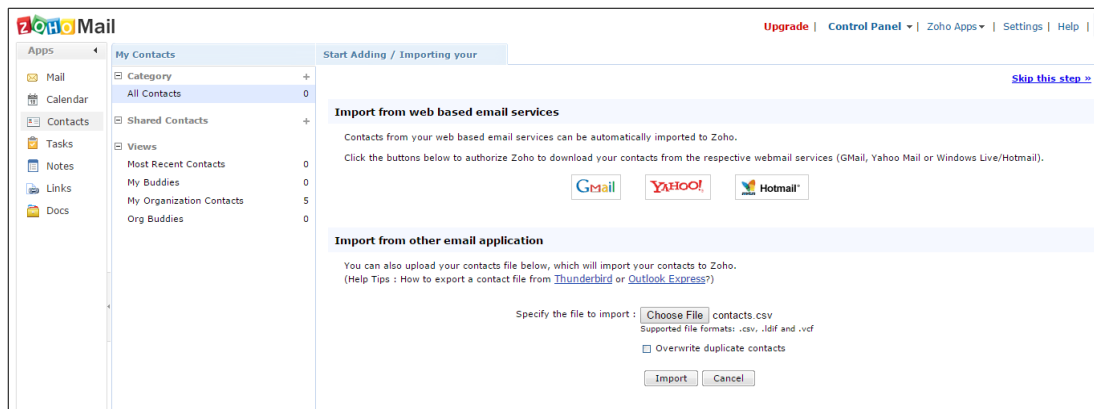
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Some users have contacts stored in Aleyant's Smartermail server. They will need to export the contacts from SmarterMail and import them into Zoho:

To export:
- Login to the Aleyant Smartermail server (http://webmail.aleyant.com)
- Click the contacts link on the left.
- Under Actions, select Import/Export → Export All to CSV
- File will be created and saved as contacts.csv

To import:
- Login to Zoho (http://mail.zoho.com)
- Go to contacts
- Under "Import from other email application" click the "Choose File" button.
- Select the contacts.csv file that was created.
- Click the "Import" button.

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Important!

After you email has been migrated, it's important to remove your email domain from the Aleyant server as soon as possible. This will prevent any incorrect routing of email to the wrong server. Please put a request into Aleyant support (http://support.aleyant.com) to remove your old email domain.