Moving my WordPress Site from Dreamhost to Amazon Web Services (AWS)

by Seth - Thursday, August 31, 2017

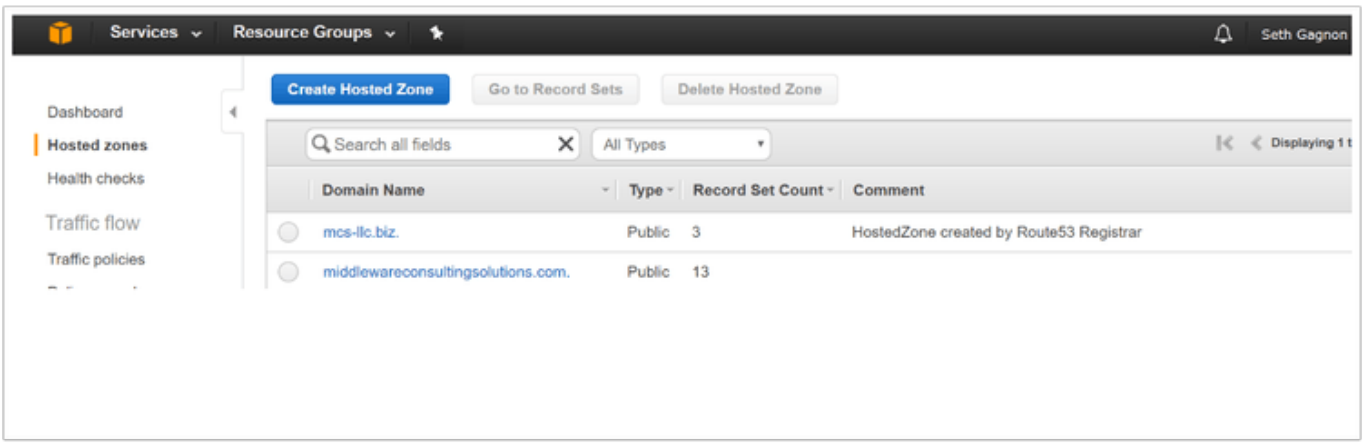
http://sethgagnon.com/moving-wordpress-site-dreamhost-amazon-web-services-aws/

The article will review some of the high level steps I took to move my WordPress site from being hosted on Dreamhost over to AWS.

1. Create a Hosted Zone in AWS that matches your domain name

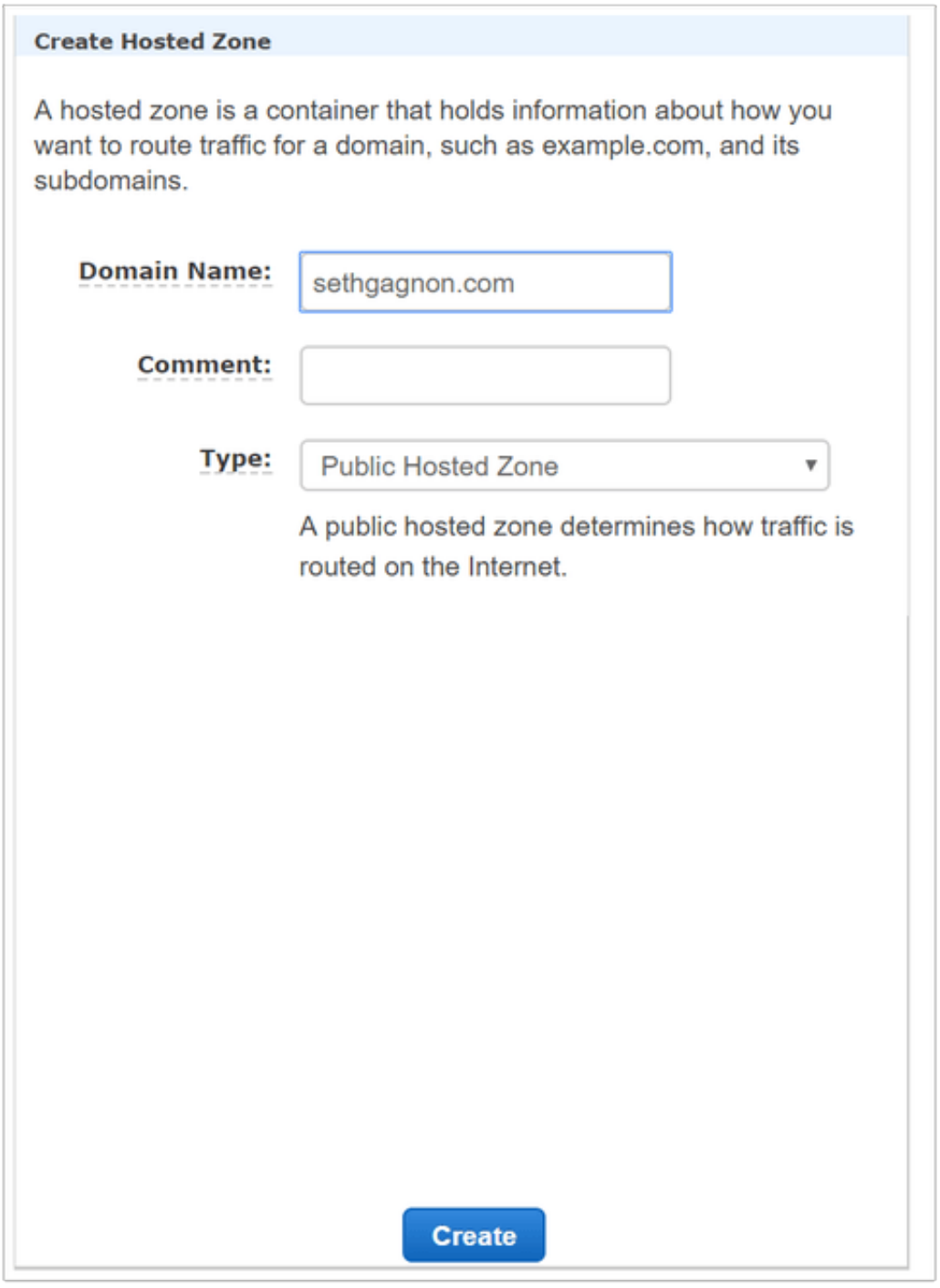
1.1 In the AWS console, navigate to Services > Route53 > Hosted Zones

Here you can see I have a few hosted zones, but for this article, we will be focusing on sethgagnon.com



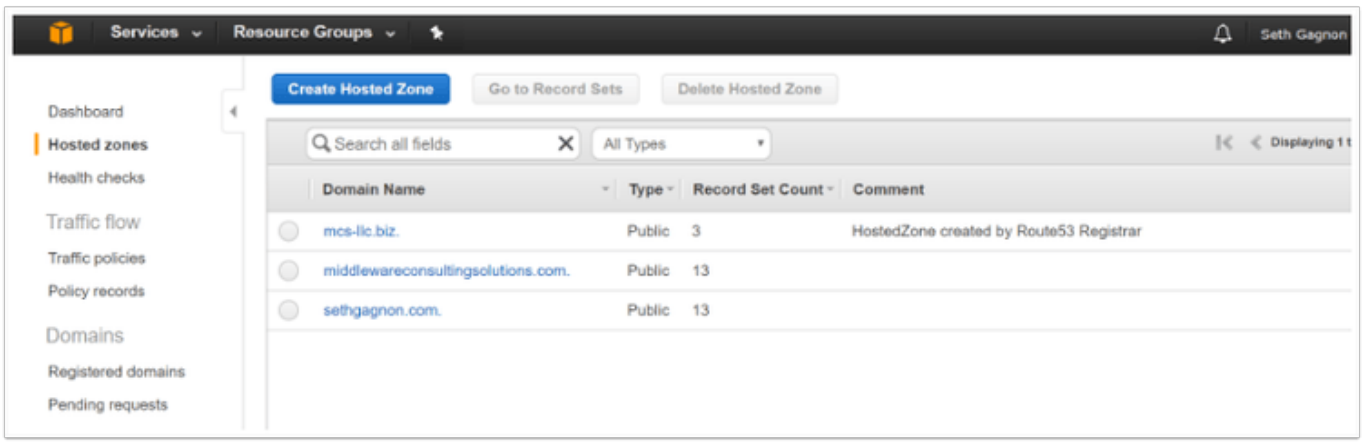
1.2 Click Create Hosted Zone to create the new zone in AWS.

You will want to enter in the exact domain name that you are using today. Keep the defaults for the rest and click Create.



1.3 Confirm you now see your hosted zone in the list.

At this point, you are now ready to move on to updating your DNS records on your existing domain provider.



2. Create record sets in AWS on newly created Hosted Zone to match your existing DNS records.

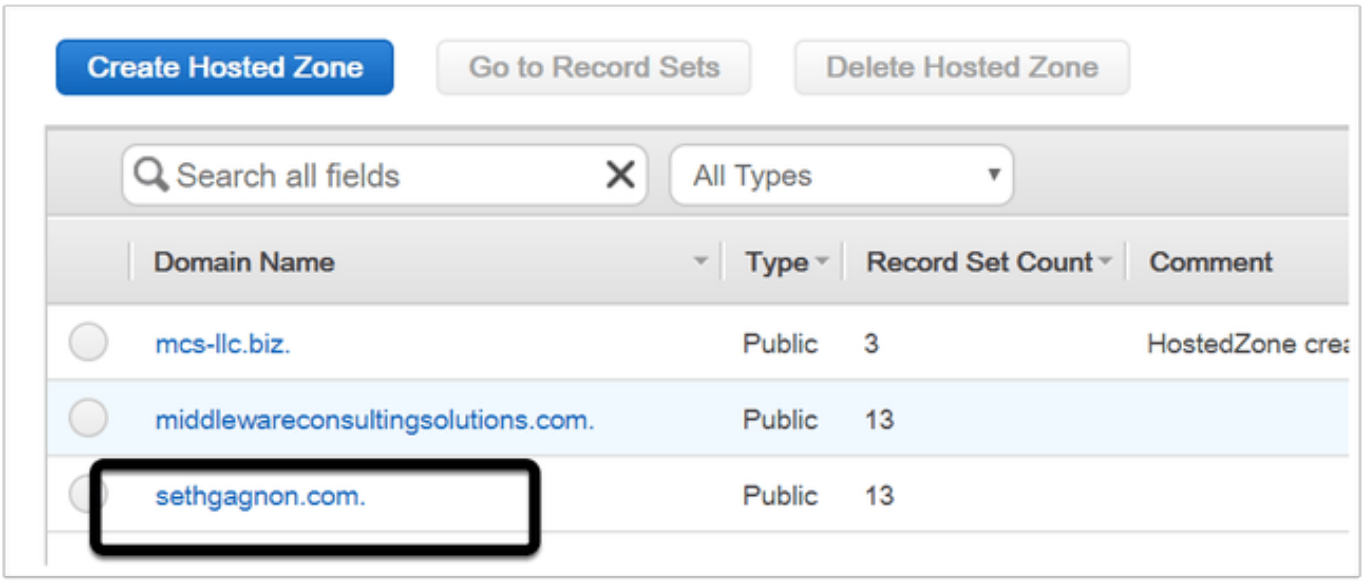
2.1 Obtain your current DNS settings

You will need to login to your existing domain provider and review the DNS settings that are currently in place for your name. Here is a copy of what I observed in Dreamhost.

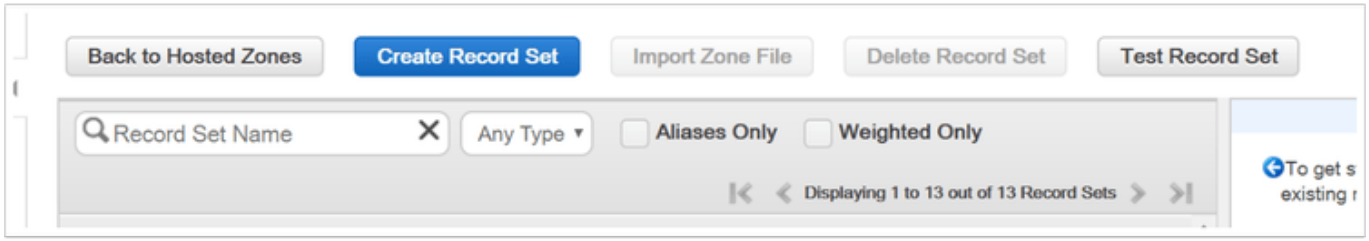
Record (sethgagnon.com zone)	Type	Value
	A	69.163.164.124
	MX	10 ASPMX.L.GOOGLE.COM.
	MX	20 ALT1.ASPMX.L.GOOGLE.COM.
	MX	20 ALT2.ASPMX.L.GOOGLE.COM.
	MX	30 ASPMX2.GOOGLEMAIL.COM.
	MX	30 ASPMX3.GOOGLEMAIL.COM.
	MX	30 ASPMX4.GOOGLEMAIL.COM.
	MX	30 ASPMX5.GOOGLEMAIL.COM.
	NS	ns1.dreamhost.com.
	NS	ns2.dreamhost.com.
	NS	ns3.dreamhost.com.
calendar	CNAME	ghs.googlehosted.com.
docs	CNAME	ghs.googlehosted.com.
ftp	A	69.163.164.124
mail	CNAME	ghs.googlehosted.com.
mysql	A	66.33.202.213
sites	CNAME	ghs.googlehosted.com.

2.2 Select your Hosted Zone

You will now need to create these in AWS for the Hosted Zone you previously created. Click on the domain you created in the Hosted Zone list.



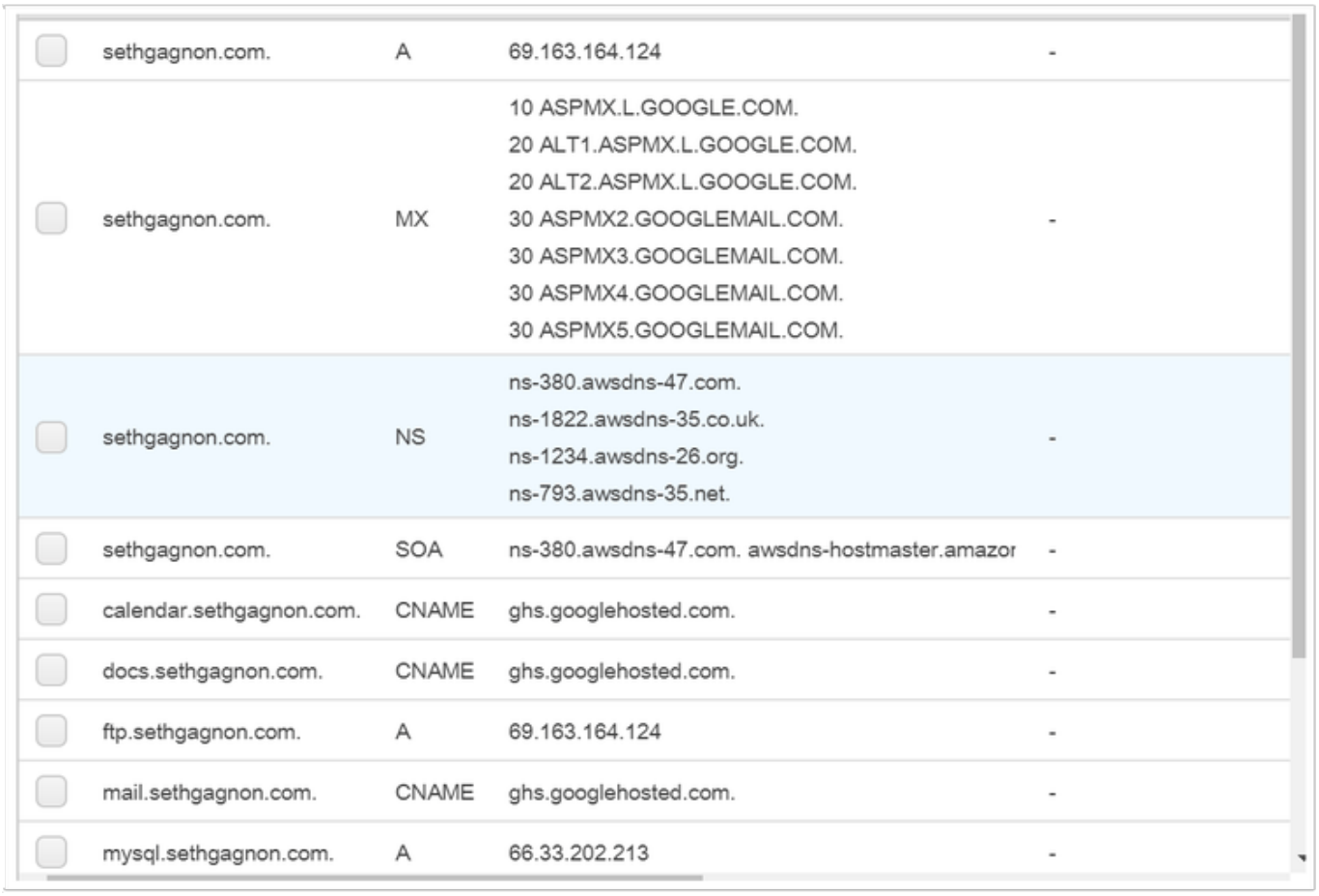
2.3 Then click on Create Record Set



2.4 Create Records Sets

Carefully go through the list you obtained from step 2.1 and ensure you create the EXACT same records

in AWS. The only records you should omit for now are the Name Server (NS) records. Just leave those as is for now in AWS. You should have a list similar to the following (picture doesnt show all the records):



sethgagnon.com.	A	69.163.164.124	-
sethgagnon.com.	MX	10 ASPMX.L.GOOGLE.COM. 20 ALT1.ASPMX.L.GOOGLE.COM. 20 ALT2.ASPMX.L.GOOGLE.COM. 30 ASPMX2.GOOGLEMAIL.COM. 30 ASPMX3.GOOGLEMAIL.COM. 30 ASPMX4.GOOGLEMAIL.COM. 30 ASPMX5.GOOGLEMAIL.COM.	-
sethgagnon.com.	NS	ns-380.awsdns-47.com. ns-1822.awsdns-35.co.uk. ns-1234.awsdns-26.org. ns-793.awsdns-35.net.	-
sethgagnon.com.	SOA	ns-380.awsdns-47.com. awsdns-hostmaster.amazor	-
calendar.sethgagnon.com.	CNAME	ghs.googlehosted.com.	-
docs.sethgagnon.com.	CNAME	ghs.googlehosted.com.	-
ftp.sethgagnon.com.	A	69.163.164.124	-
mail.sethgagnon.com.	CNAME	ghs.googlehosted.com.	-
mysql.sethgagnon.com.	A	66.33.202.213	-

3. Update your DNS records on your existing domain vendor (Dreamhost in my case)

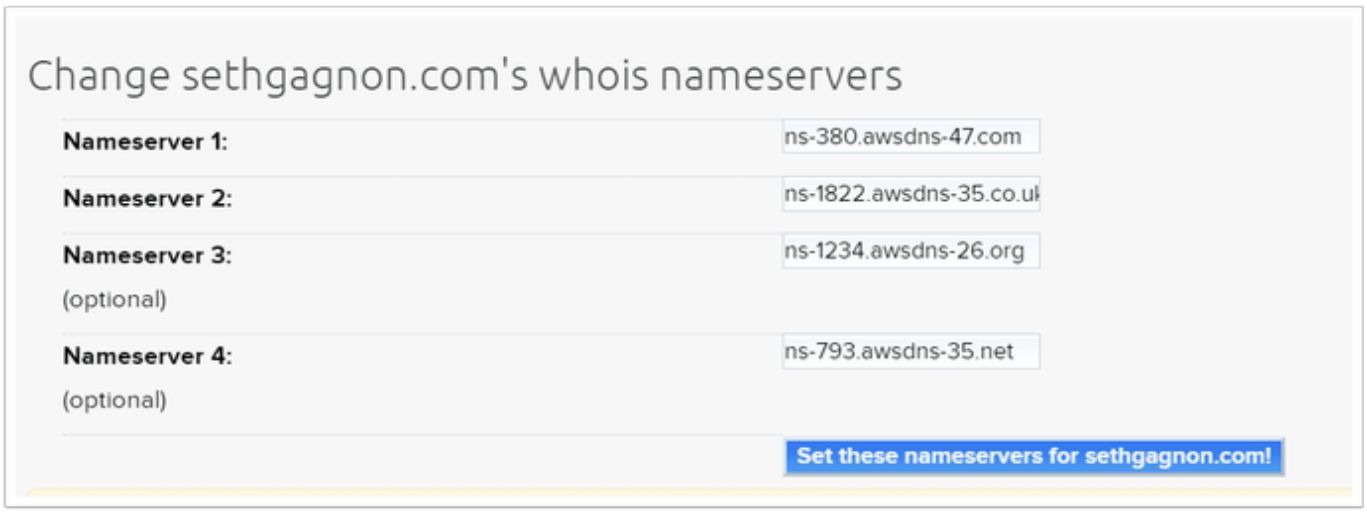
You may now update your domain registration with your existing provider to point to AWS Name Servers.

3.1 Obtain the AWS name servers from your hosted zone you previously created.

Search for the NS record type and obtain those values

3.2 Update your existing DNS settings

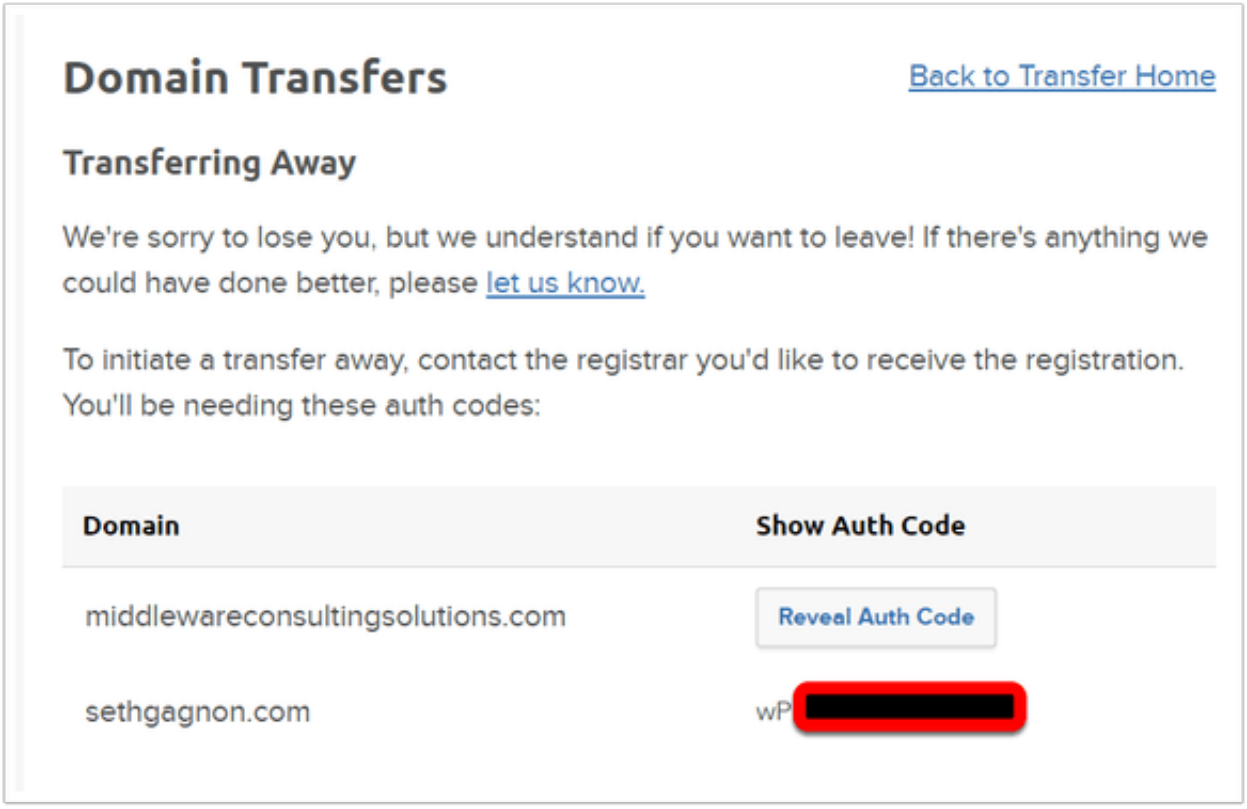
Login to your existing domain registration (Dreamhost for me) and point your name servers to the ones you obtained in step 3.1. Please note this could take up to 48 hours before your DNS settings are propagated. This all depends on your vendor. Please do not proceed to step 4 until you are sure that your DNS settings are using the AWS name servers.



4. Transfer your domain so that AWS has the registration

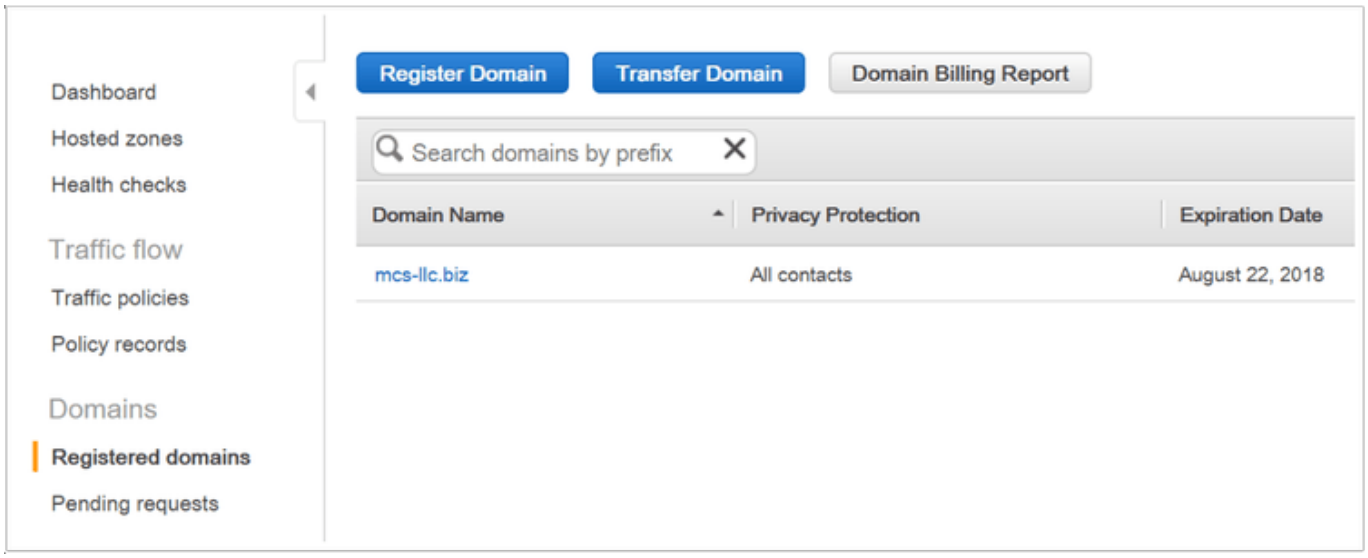
4.1 Obtain the Authorization code from your existing domain provider

You will need to enter an Authorization Code in AWS to initiate the domain transfer. I have masked some of this code out here.

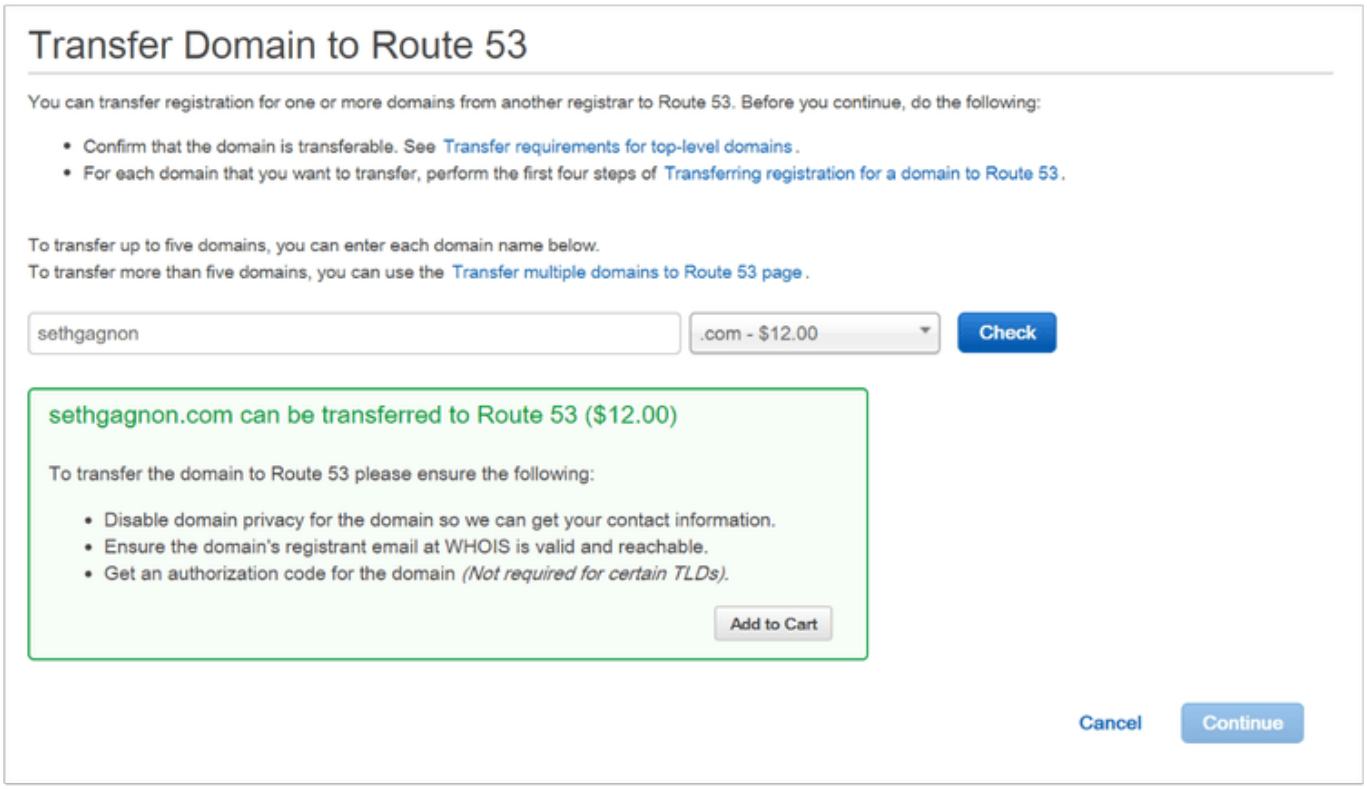


4.2 Initiate Transfer to AWS

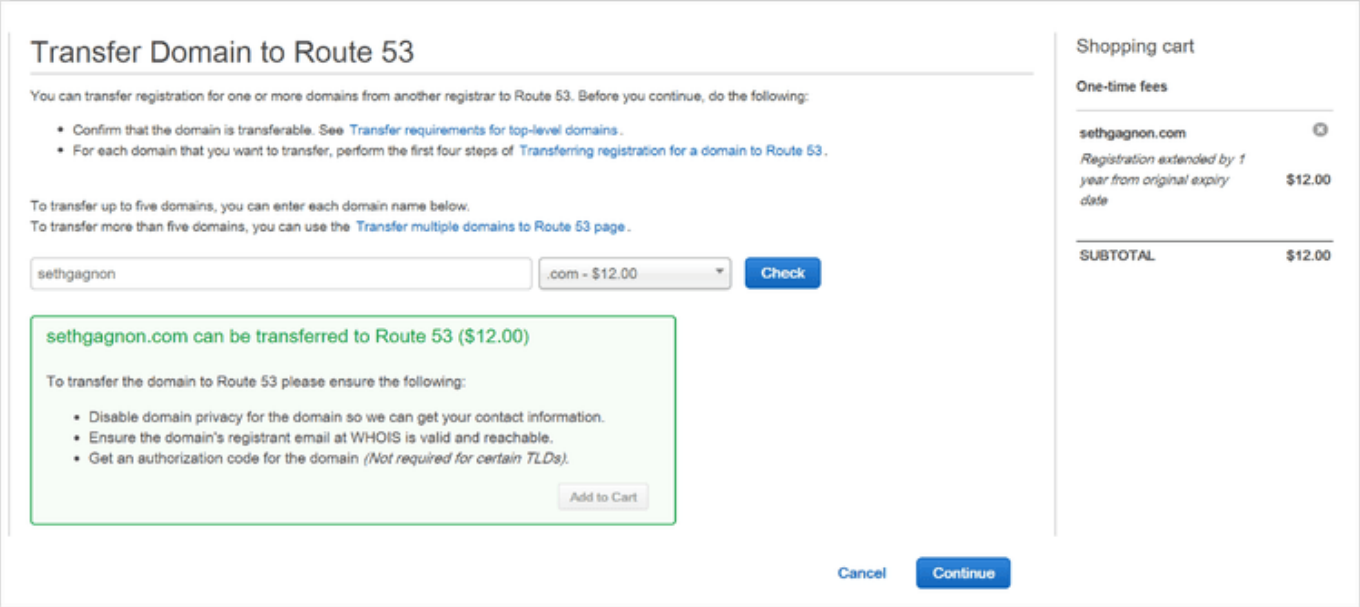
Go to Route53 in AWS console and click on Registered domains in the left menu. Then click on Transfer Domain.



4.3 Enter in the domain name you wish to transfer and click Check.

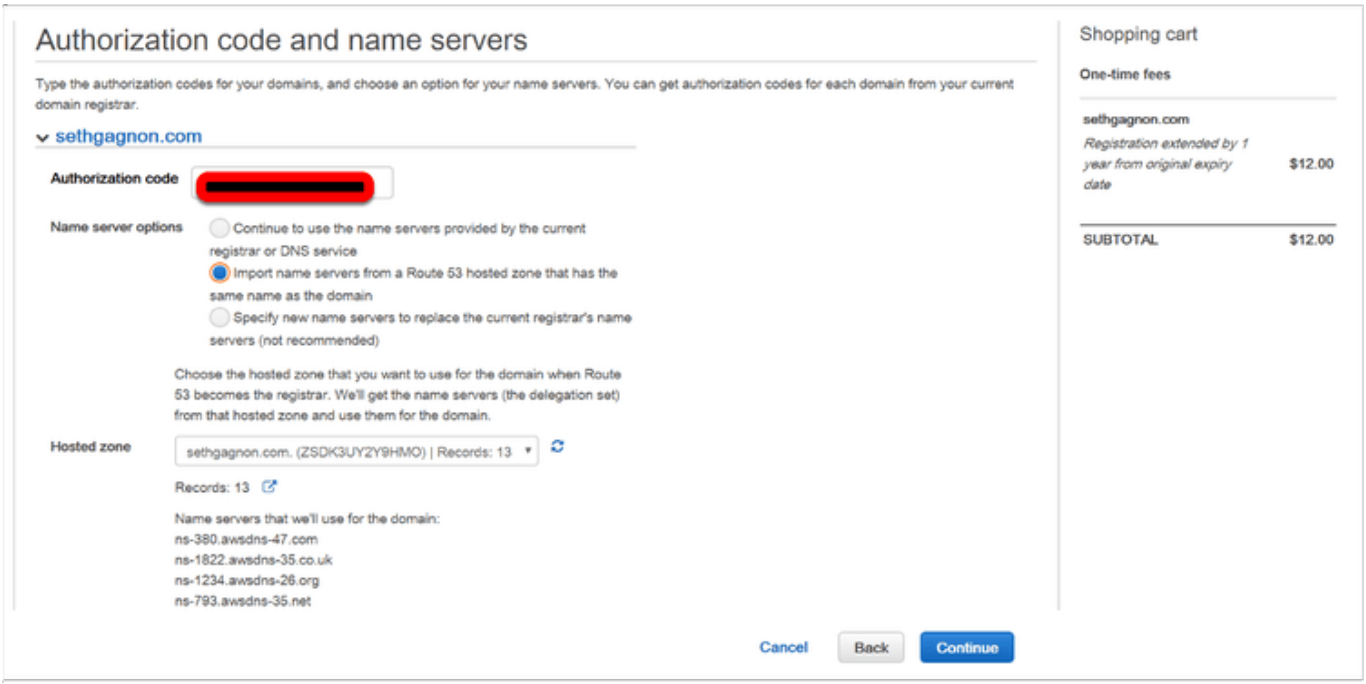


4.4 Click Add to Cart and then click Continue



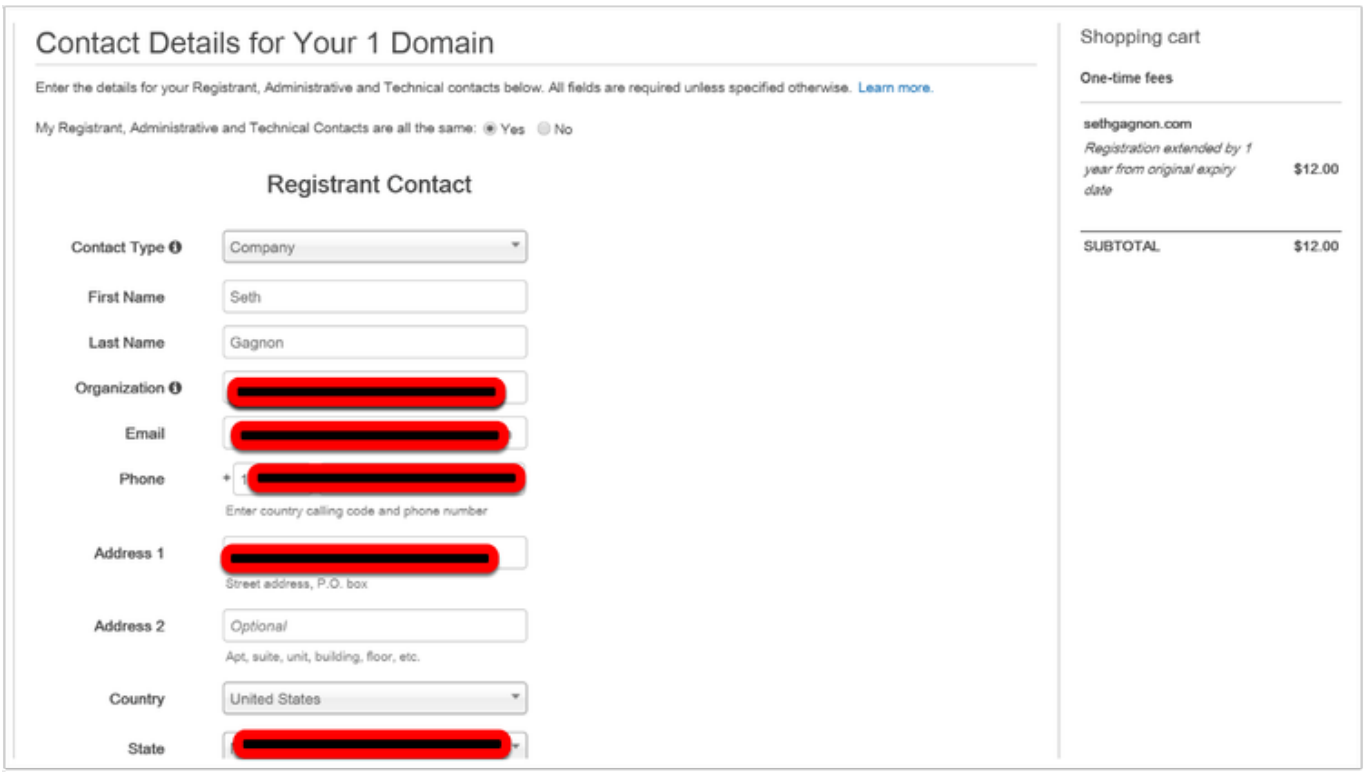
4.5 Auth Code and name servers

Enter in your Auth code you obtained from step 4.1 and then select Import name servers from a Route53 hosted zone that has the same name as the domain. Ensure the hosted zone populates and it is correct. Then click Continue.

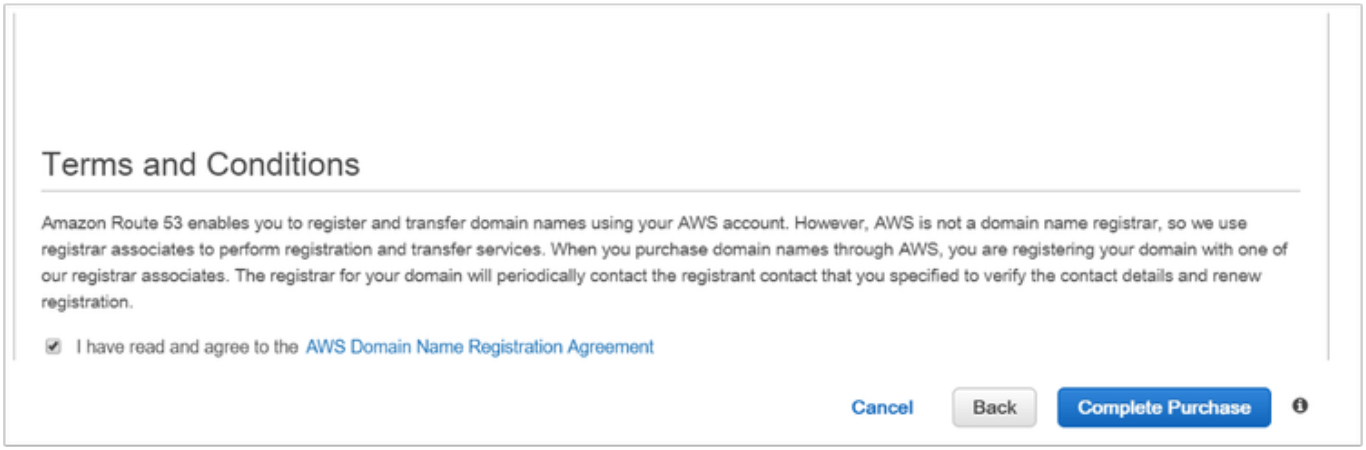


4.6 Contact Details for 1 Domain

Enter in your contact details as the domain owner.

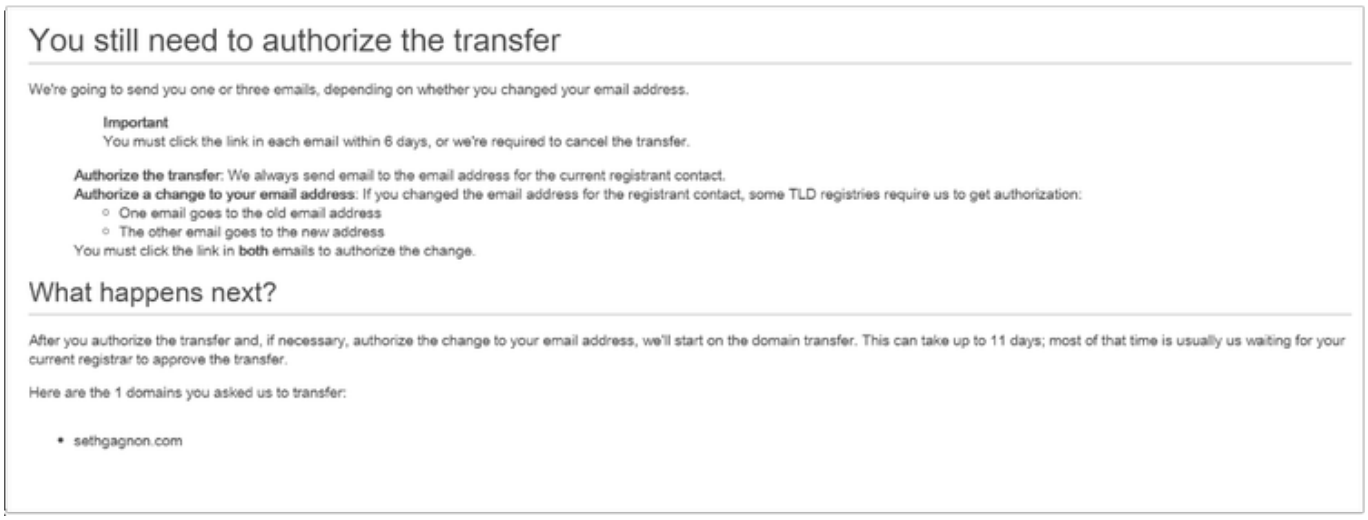


4.7 Agree to terms and conditions and purchase



4.8 Validatation email

You will receive an email asking you to approve the transfer and validate your email address. After you have done so, the transfer process will begin.



You still need to authorize the transfer

We're going to send you one or three emails, depending on whether you changed your email address.

Important
You must click the link in each email within 6 days, or we're required to cancel the transfer.

Authorize the transfer: We always send email to the email address for the current registrant contact.
Authorize a change to your email address: If you changed the email address for the registrant contact, some TLD registries require us to get authorization:
- One email goes to the old email address
- The other email goes to the new address

You must click the link in **both** emails to authorize the change.

What happens next?

After you authorize the transfer and, if necessary, authorize the change to your email address, we'll start on the domain transfer. This can take up to 11 days; most of that time is usually us waiting for your current registrar to approve the transfer.

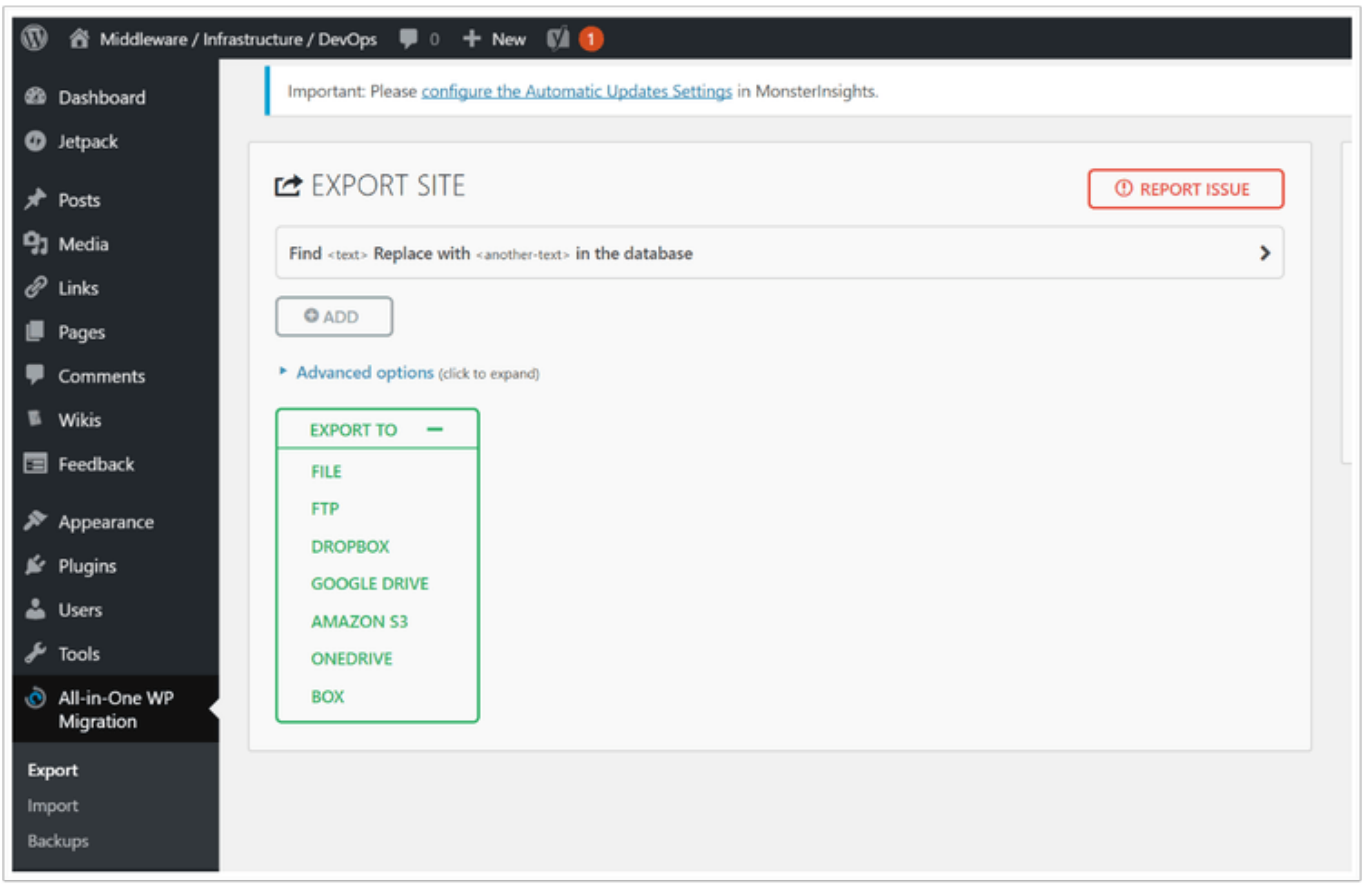
Here are the 1 domains you asked us to transfer:

- sethgagnon.com

5. Export existing WordPress site so it can be moved over

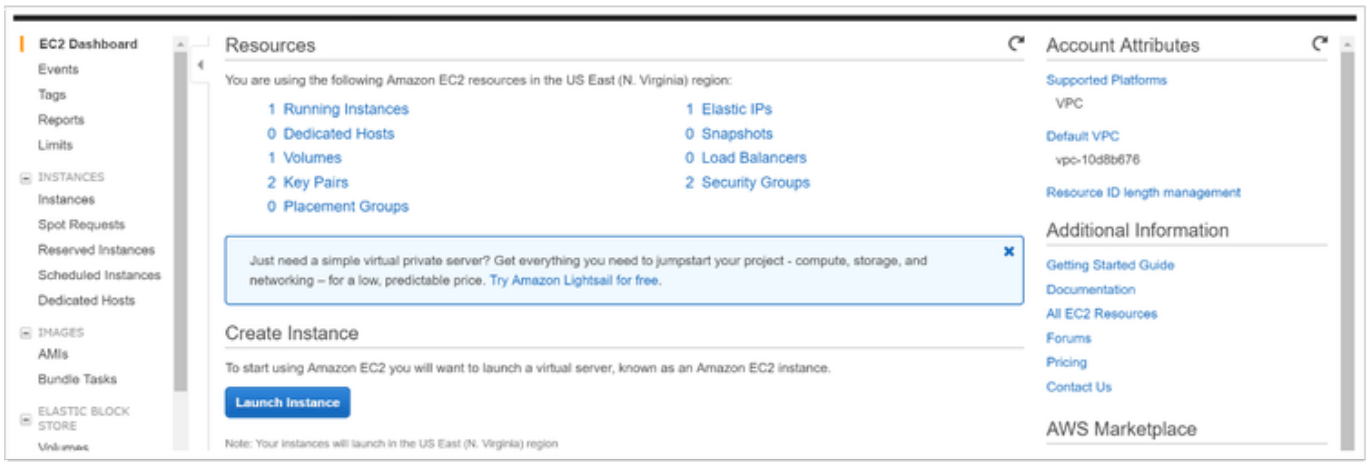
5.1 Select your plugin to use for migration

There are several good WordPress plugins available for migration of a site. I choose to use All-in-One WP Migration. If you don’t have it, install the plugin and then do an Export site. You can select where you would like to export the site to. I choose a file for now. Save the file somewhere safe, as we will need to use it for import later.



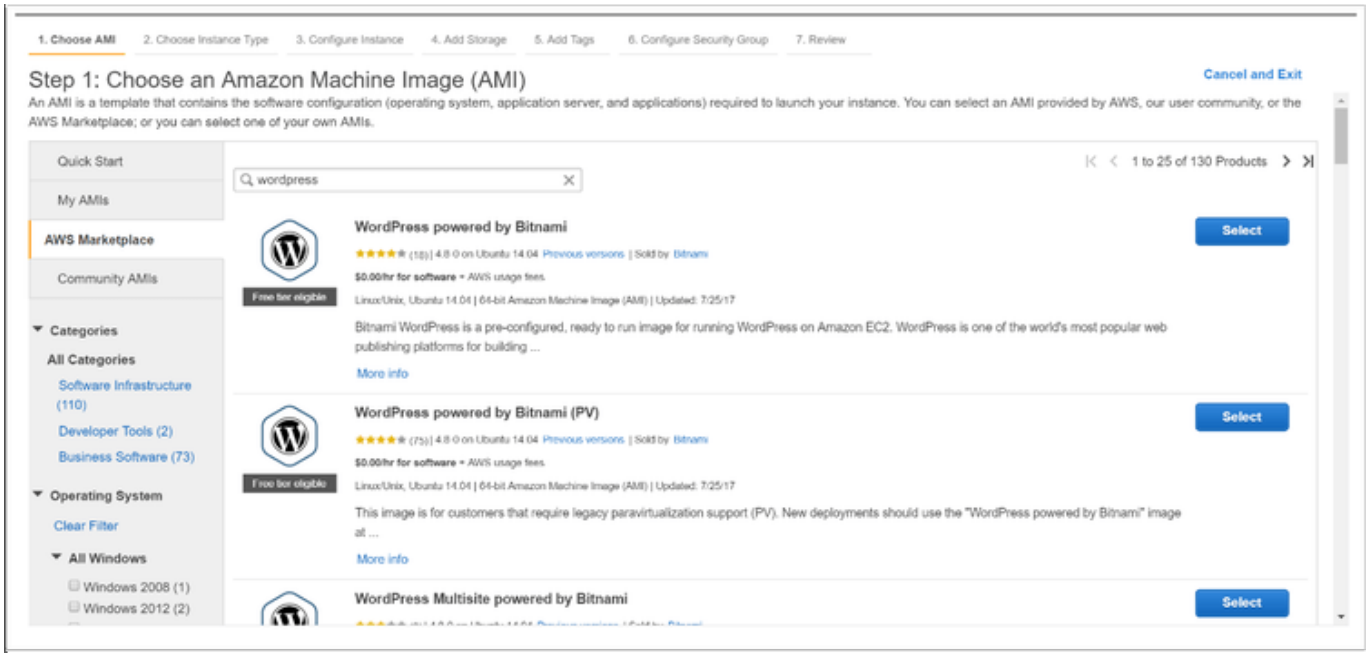
6. Create an EC2 instance that is running WordPress

6.1 Go back into the AWS console and navigate to EC2. Then click on Launch Instance

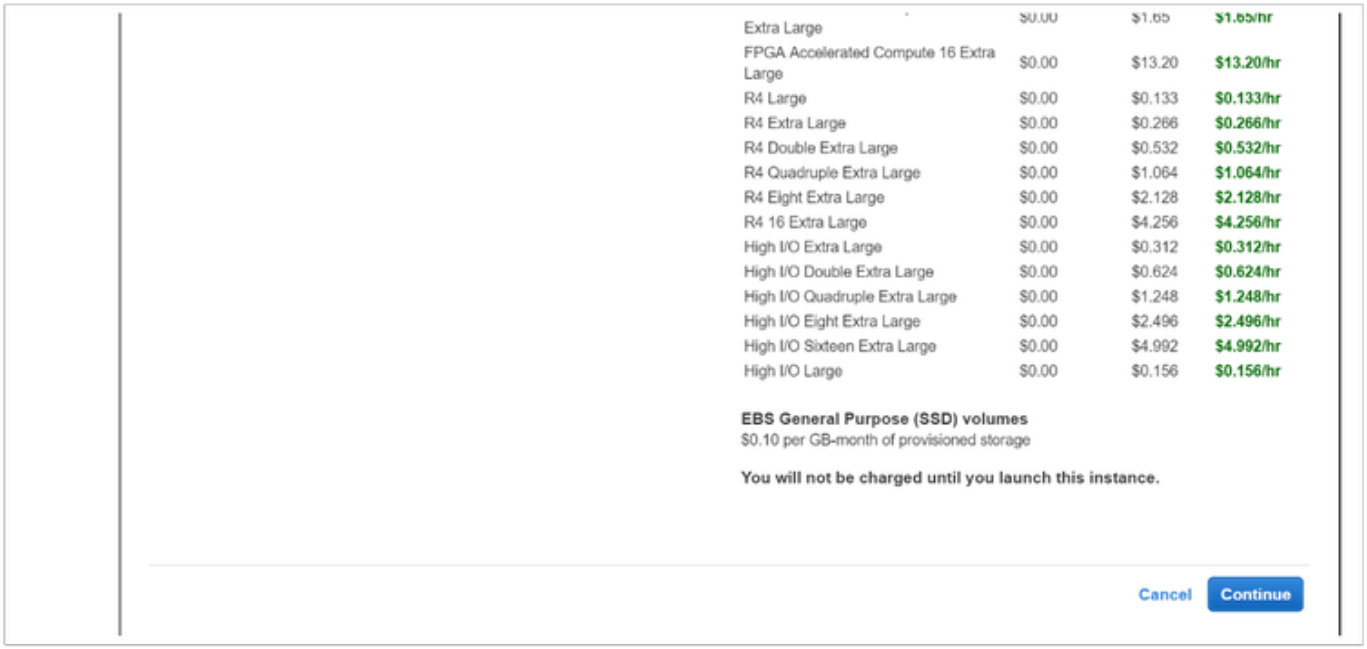


6.2 Choose your Amazon Machine Image (AMI)

In the left menu, select AWS Marketplace and then search for WordPress. Select the first option in the list and click Select

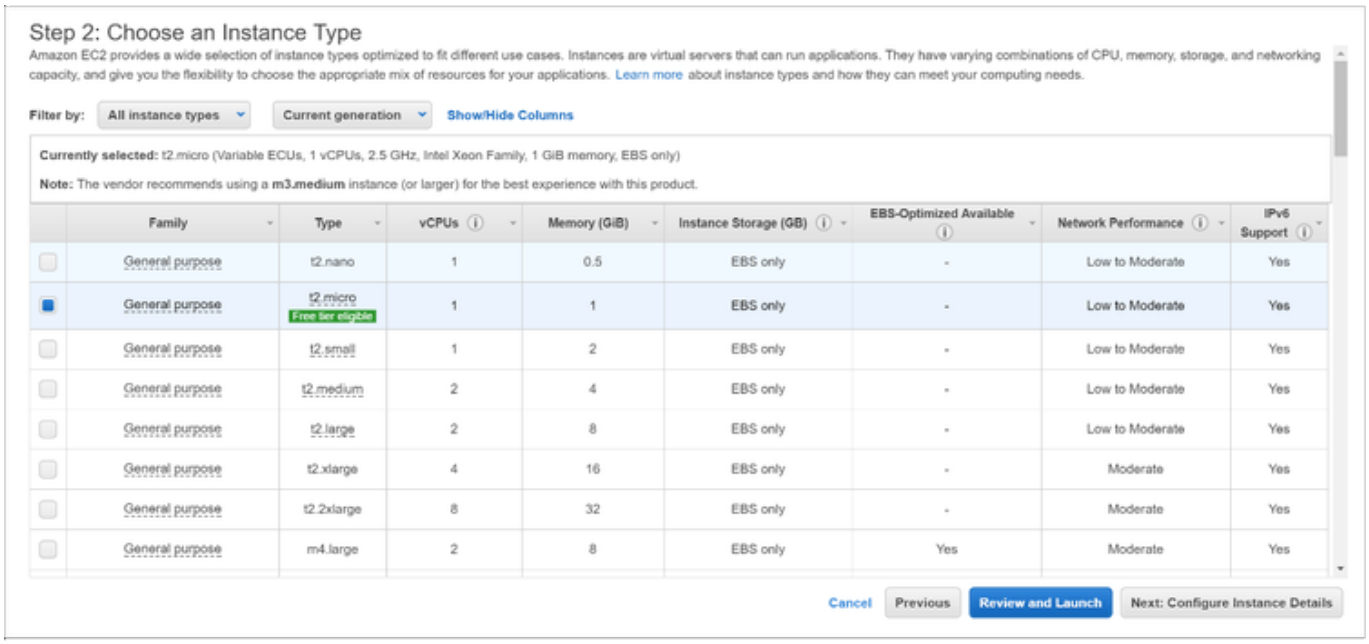


6.3 Click Continue after your review the pricing options (we will be using the AWS Free Tier option)



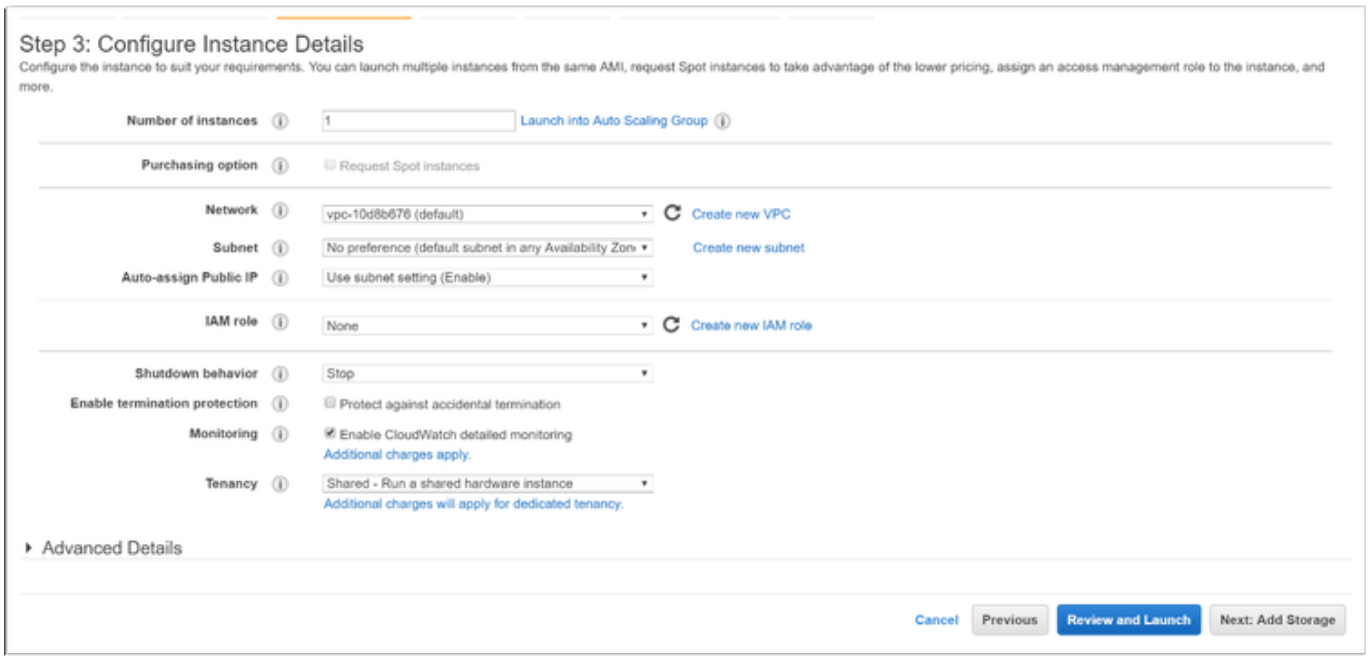
6.4 Choose Instance Type

Select the free tier eligible option here, unless you need to choose a different type for your needs. Click Next Configure Instance Details.



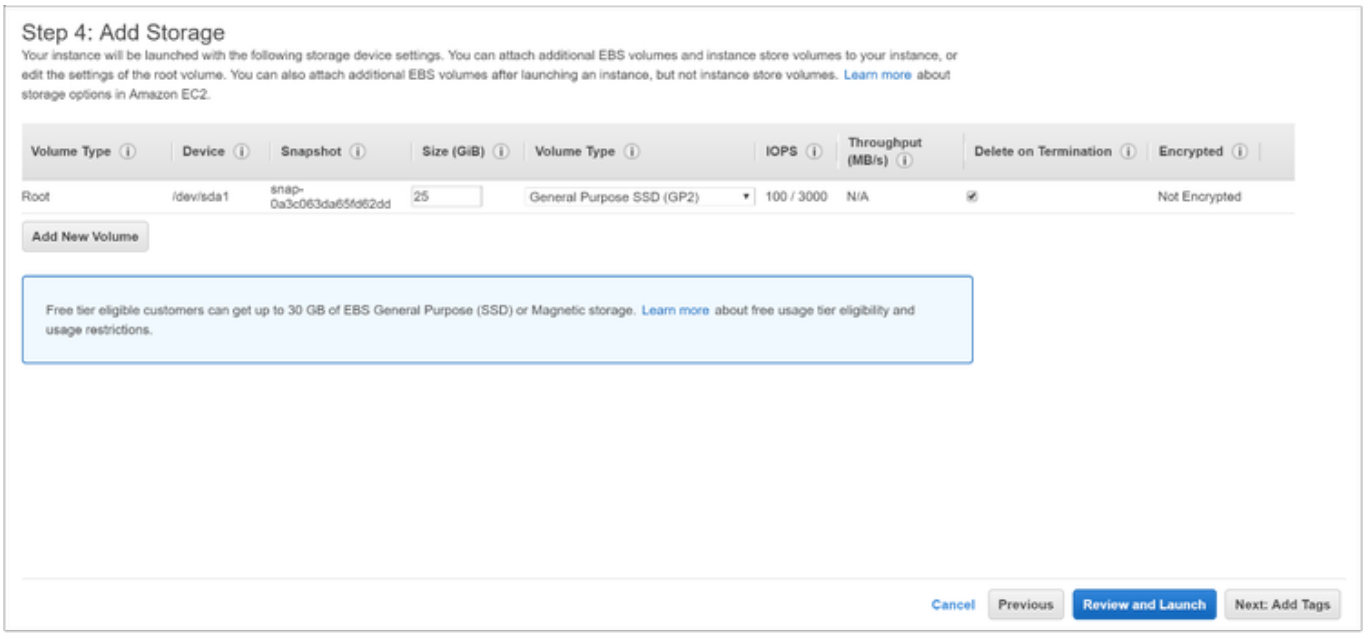
6.5 Configure Instance Details

You can keep the defaults here. I also enabled Cloudwatch for monitoring purposes, but you can always do that later if you so choose. Click Next: Add Storage



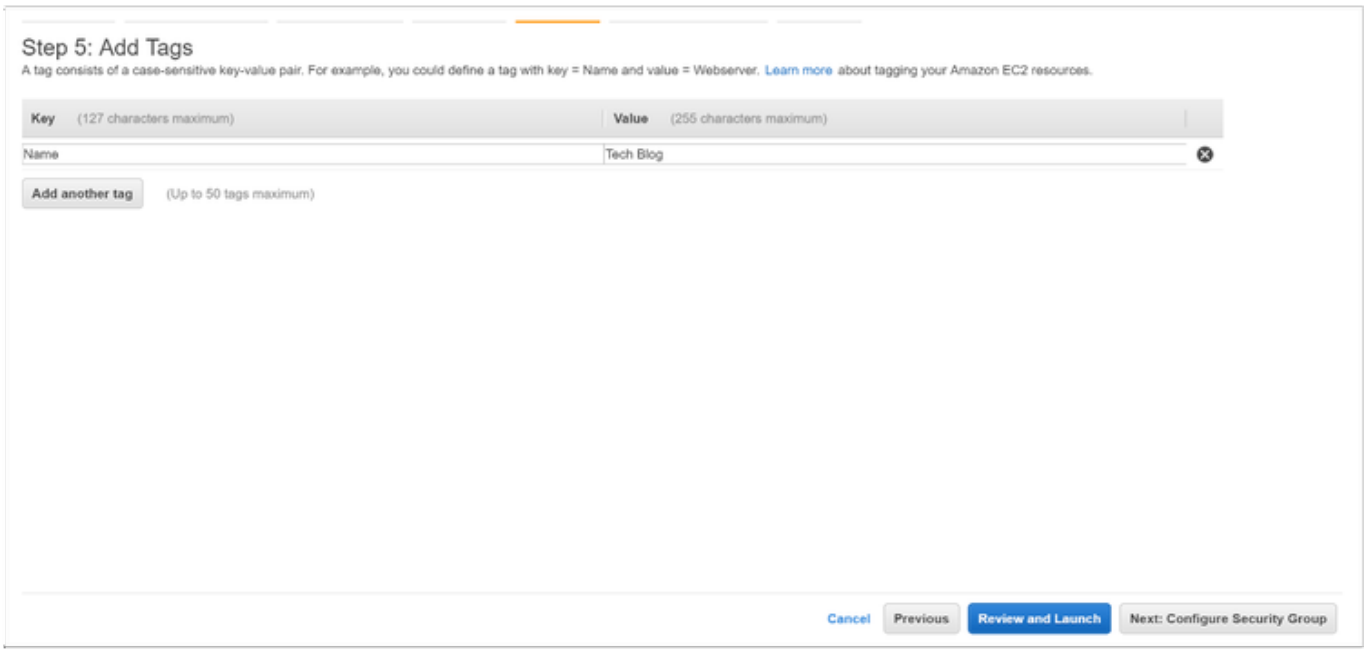
6.6 Add Storage

Enter the storage requirements you have. Pay attention to the free tier requirements. Click Next: Add Tags



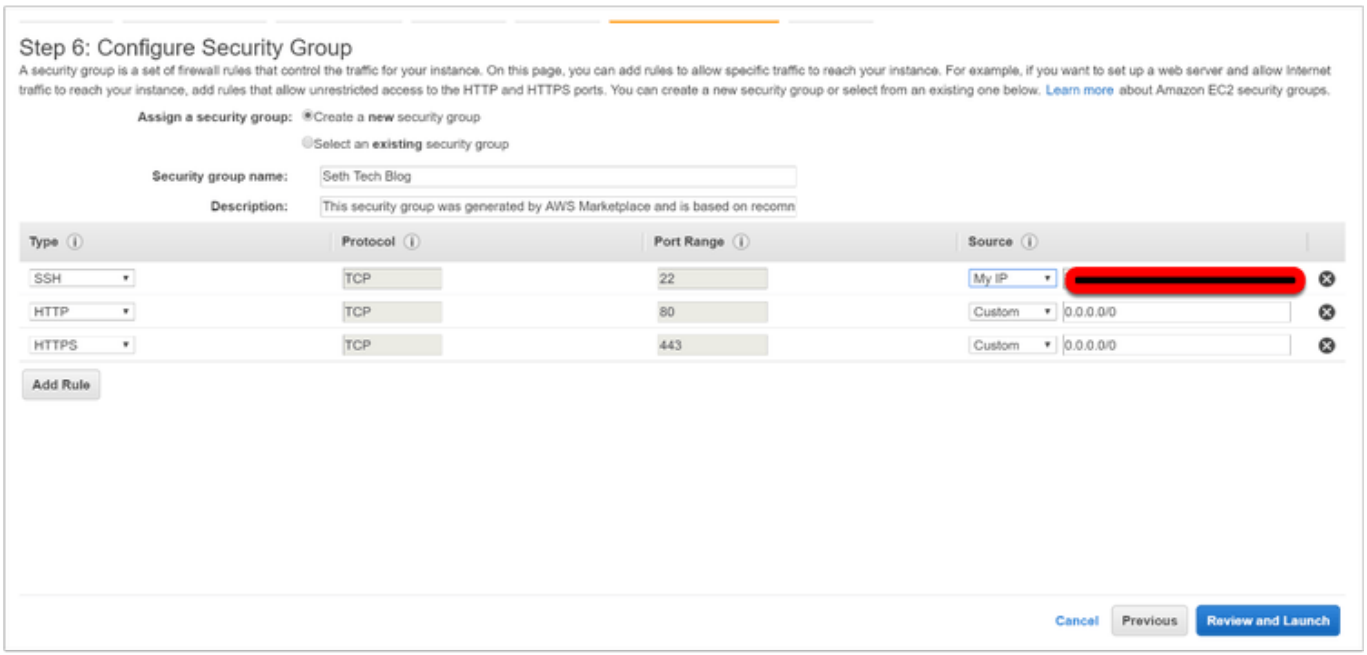
6.7 Enter Tag (optional)

I like to use tags so that I can groups resources and easily find usage patterns. Then click on Next: Configure Security Group



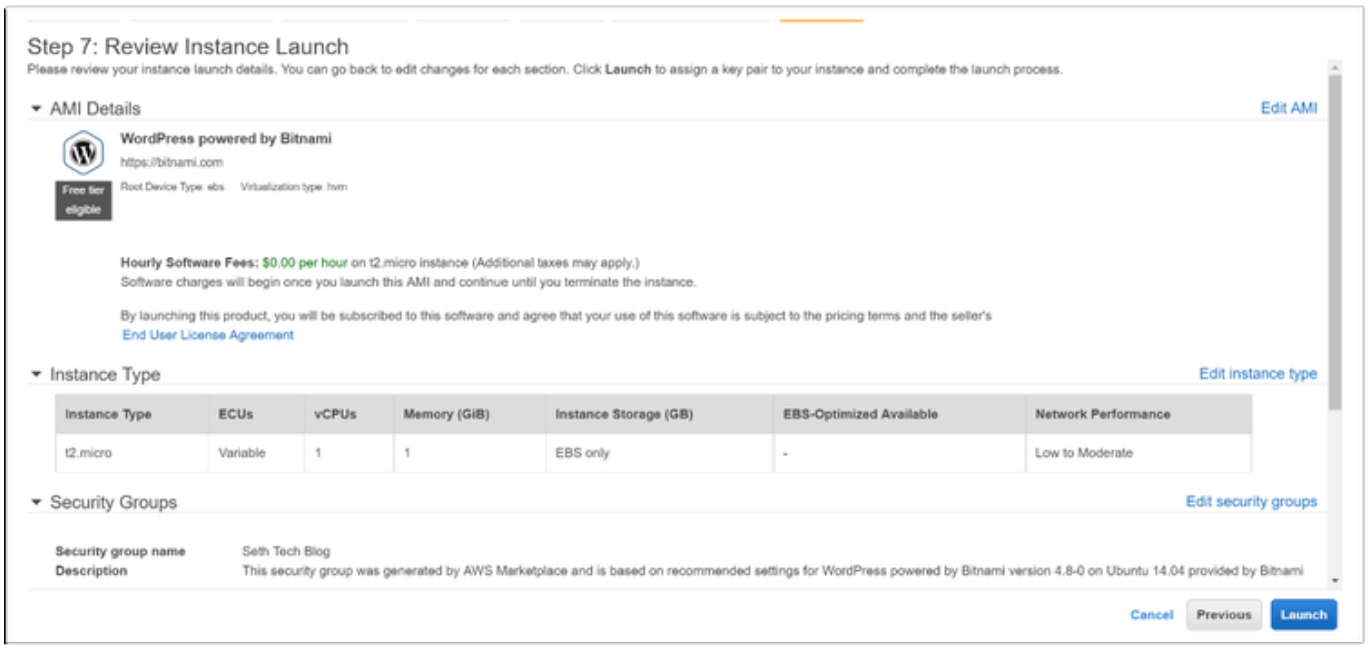
6.8 Configure Security Group

This is an important step. This tells AWS how you want to communicate and open up your new server instance. Here, I am creating a new security group and I entered in a meaningful name and then I changed the SSH type to only allow my IP address (masked out) to SSH into this server. This is recommended. I will want to keep HTTP and HTTPS open as this will be how users access my WordPress blog. Click Review and Launch.



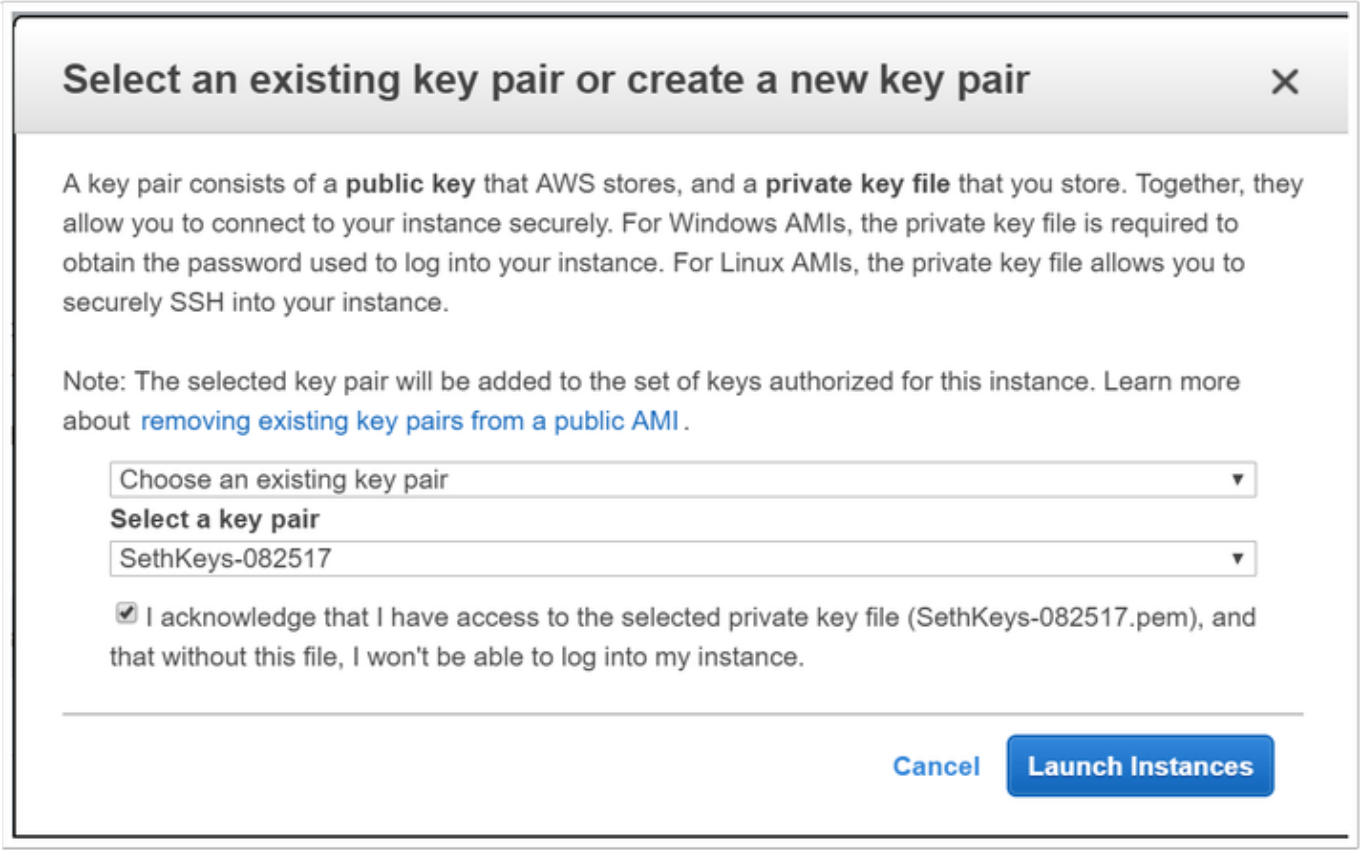
6.9 Review final details and Launch instance.

Click on Launch



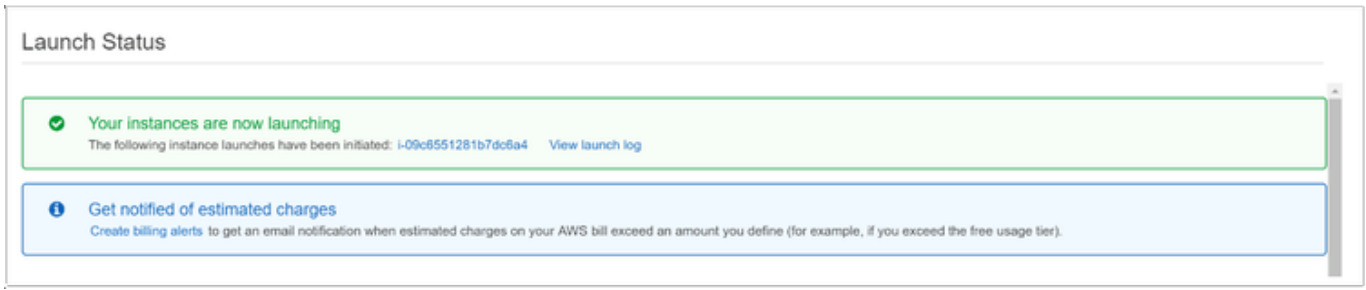
6.10 Select Key Pairs

This is the security key that will be used to access this server instance you are creating. You can either create a new key pair, or use an existing one. Select Launch Instances



6.11 Launch Status

The instances are launching. Select View Instances at the bottom of the screen.

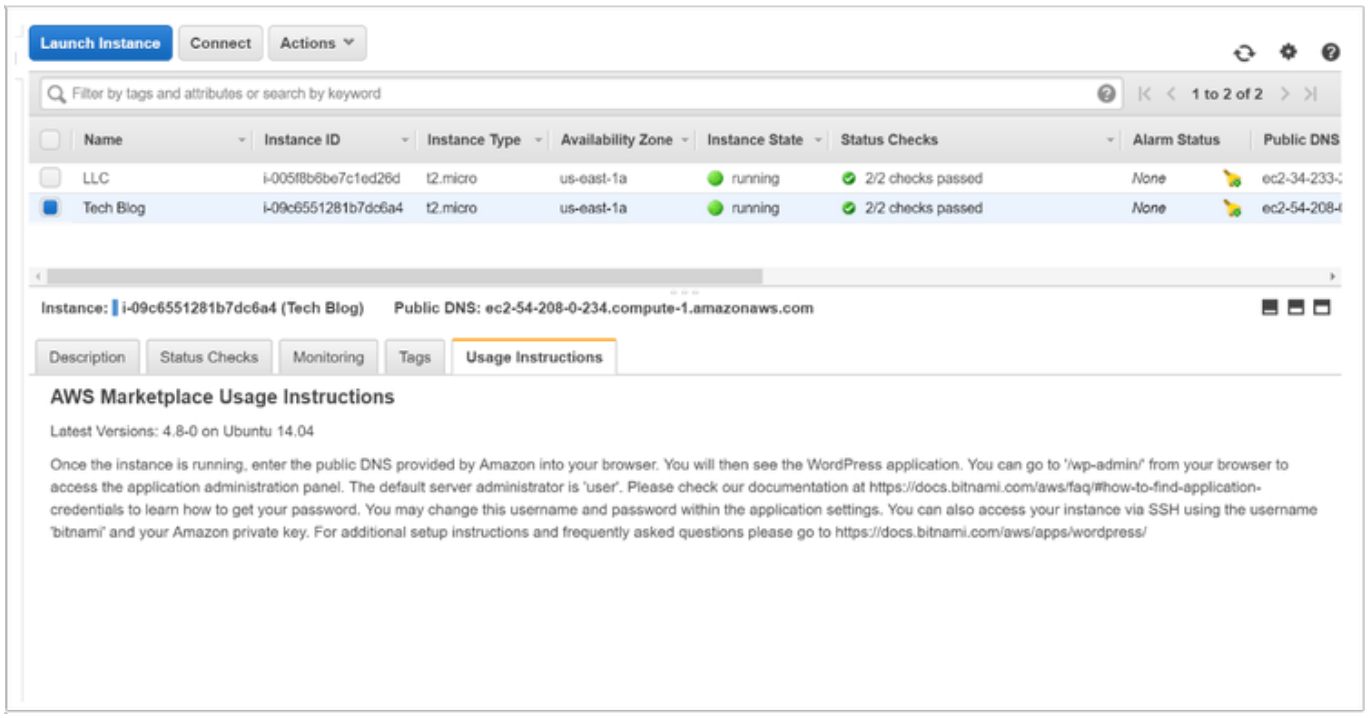


6.12 Confirmation

Ensure that your instance is launching and in running state.

6.13 Get the username and password to be able to login to your newly WordPress site.

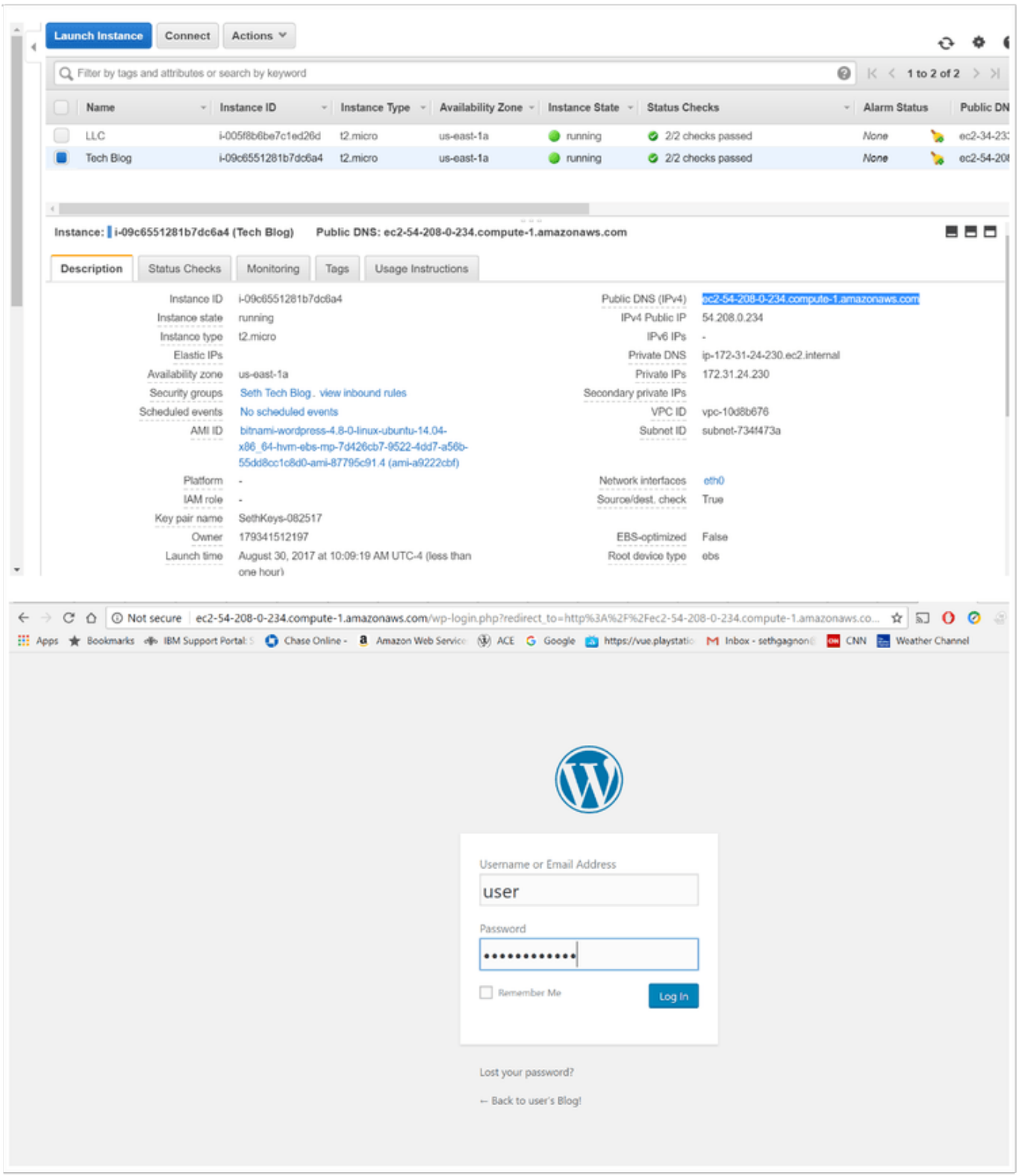
The usage instructions tab outlines what you need to do to find the password for the user account to login to the site and manage WordPress.



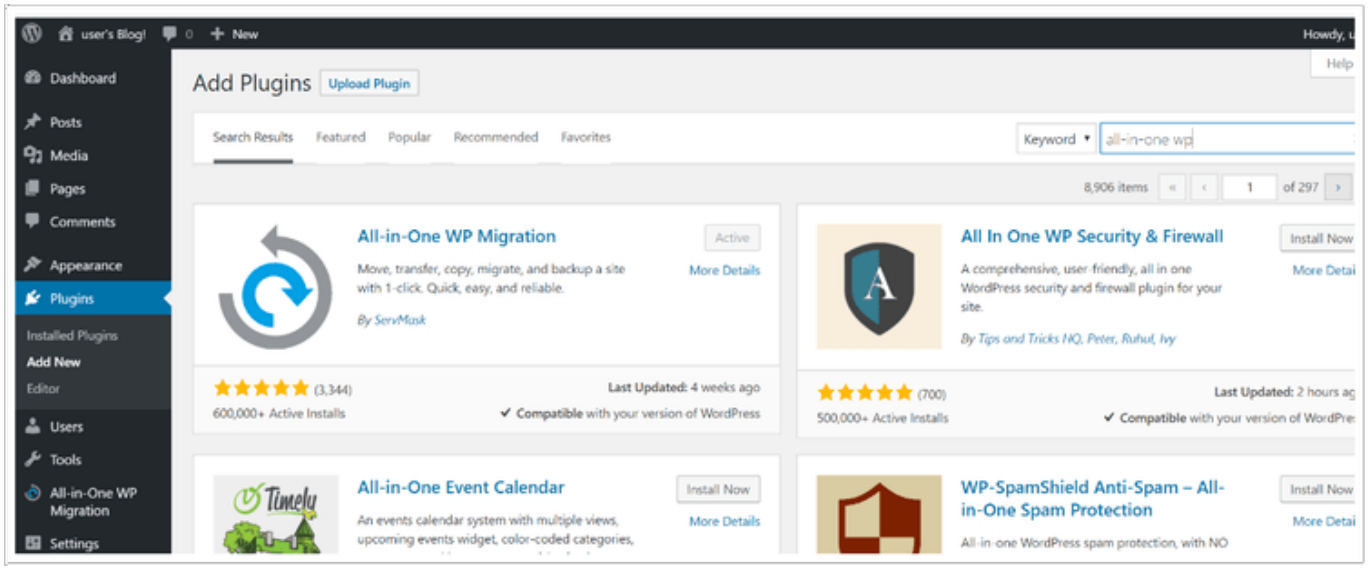
7. Import your WordPress site

7.1 Login to your newly created WordPress site.

Look for the public DNS to use to access your WordPress instance. Use that in a browser and add /wp-admin to the end of the DNS. (Refer to those usage instructions from above on how to obtain the password for the default user account.)

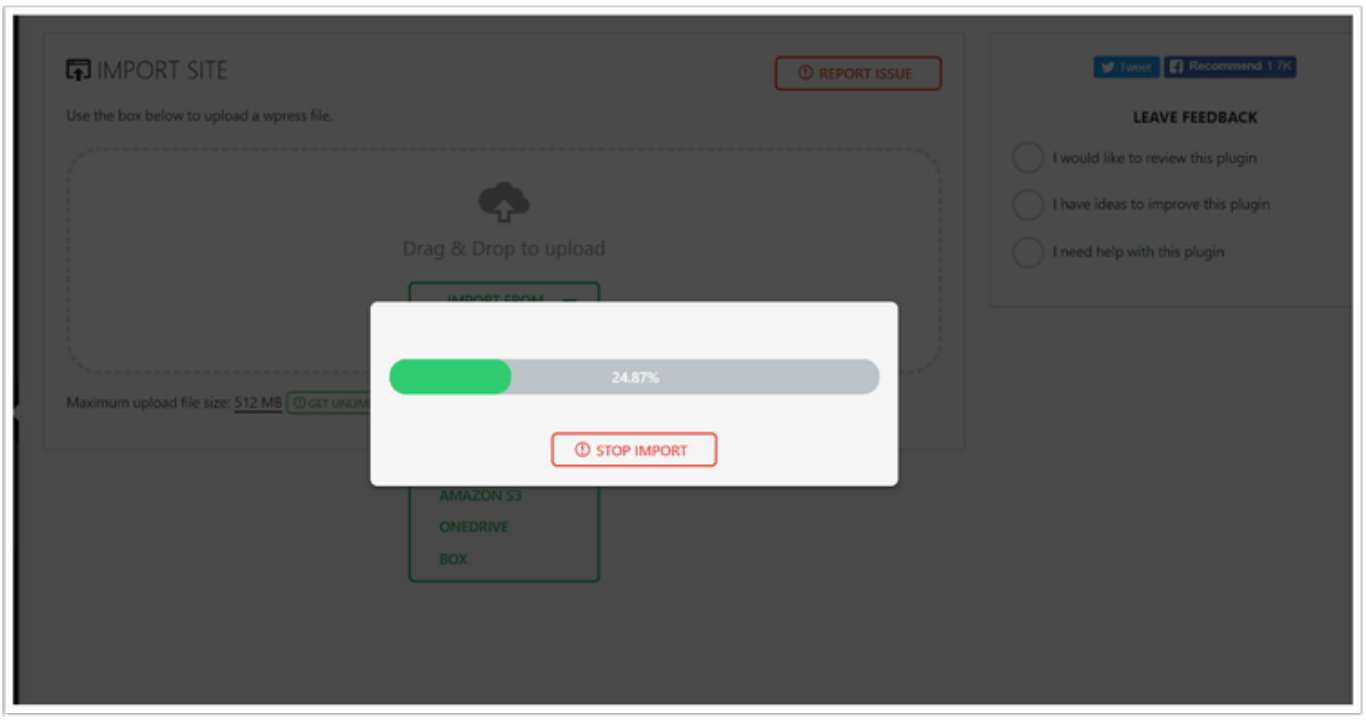

Launch Instance
Connect
Actions
Filter by tags and attributes or search by keyword
1 to 2 of 2
Name
Instance ID
Instance Type
Availability Zone
Instance State
Status Checks
Alarm Status
Public DN
LLC
i-005f8b6be7c1ed26d
t2.micro
us-east-1a
running
2/2 checks passed
None
Tech Blog
i-09c6551281b7dc6a4
t2.micro
us-east-1a
running
2/2 checks passed
None
Instance: i-09c6551281b7dc6a4 (Tech Blog)
Public DNS: ec2-54-208-0-234.compute-1.amazonaws.com
Description
Status Checks
Monitoring
Tags
Usage Instructions
Instance ID i-09c6551281b7dc6a4
Instance state running
Instance type t2.micro
Elastic IPs
Availability zone us-east-1a
Security groups Seth Tech Blog. view inbound rules
Scheduled events No scheduled events
AMI ID bitnami-wordpress-4.8-0-linux-ubuntu-14.04-x86_64-hvm-ebs-mp-7d426cb7-9522-4dd7-a56b-55dd8cc1c8d0-ami-87795c91.4 (ami-a9222cbf)
Platform -
IAM role -
Key pair name SethKeys-082517
Owner 179341512197
Launch time August 30, 2017 at 10:09:19 AM UTC-4 (less than one hour)
Public DNS (IPv4) ec2-54-208-0-234.compute-1.amazonaws.com
IPv4 Public IP 54.208.0.234
IPv6 IPs -
Private DNS ip-172-31-24-230.ec2.internal
Private IPs 172.31.24.230
Secondary private IPs
VPC ID vpc-10d8b676
Subnet ID subnet-734f473a
Network interfaces eth0
Source/dest. check True
EBS-optimized False
Root device type ebs
Not secure
ec2-54-208-0-234.compute-1.amazonaws.com/wp-login.php?redirect_to=http%3A%2F%2Fec2-54-208-0-234.compute-1.amazonaws.co...
Apps
Bookmarks
IBM Support Portal:
Chase Online -
Amazon Web Service
ACE
Google
https://vue.playstatic
Inbox - sethgagnon
CNN
Weather Channel
Username or Email Address
user
Password
Remember Me
Log In
Lost your password?
← Back to user's Blog!

7.2 Install the All-in-One WP Migration plugin and activate it.

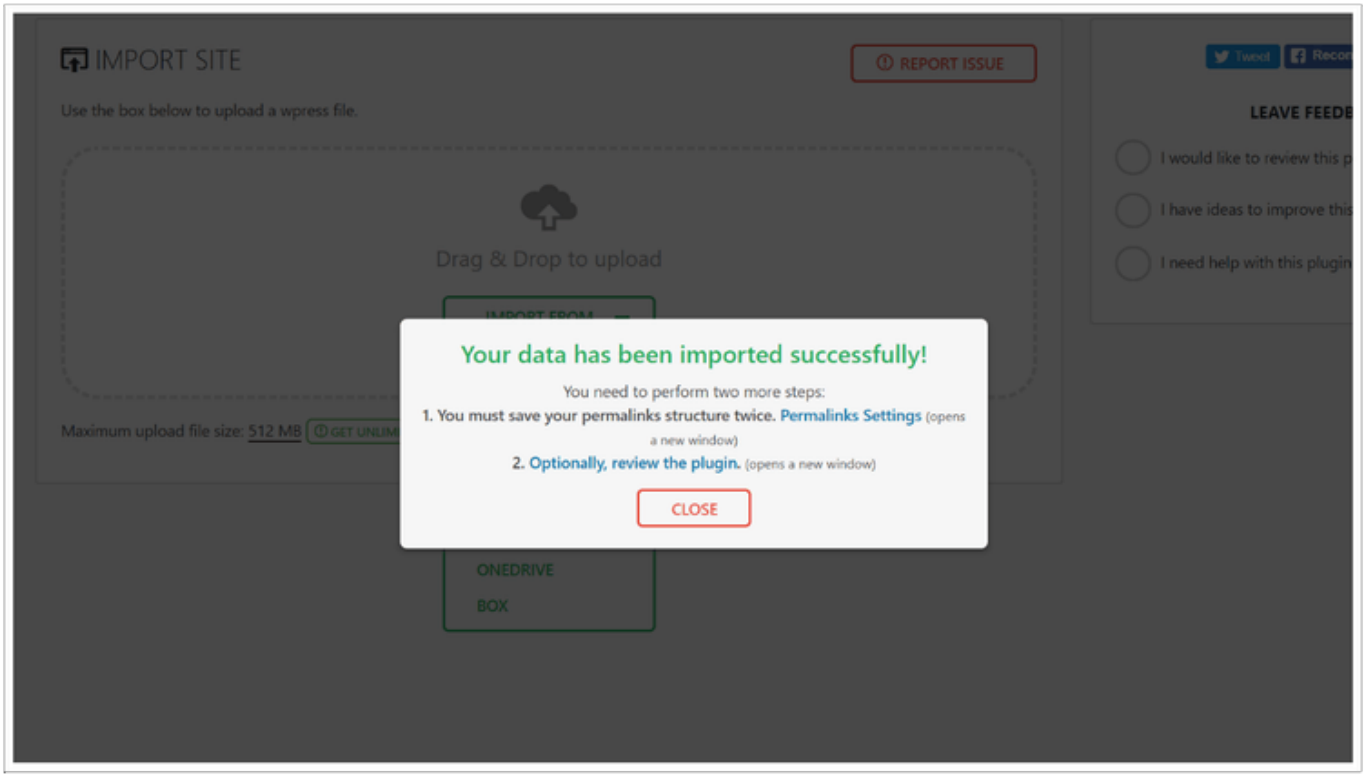


7.3 Go to All-in-One WP Migration > Import

I am importing from a file. I selected the file and then waited for the upload to complete.

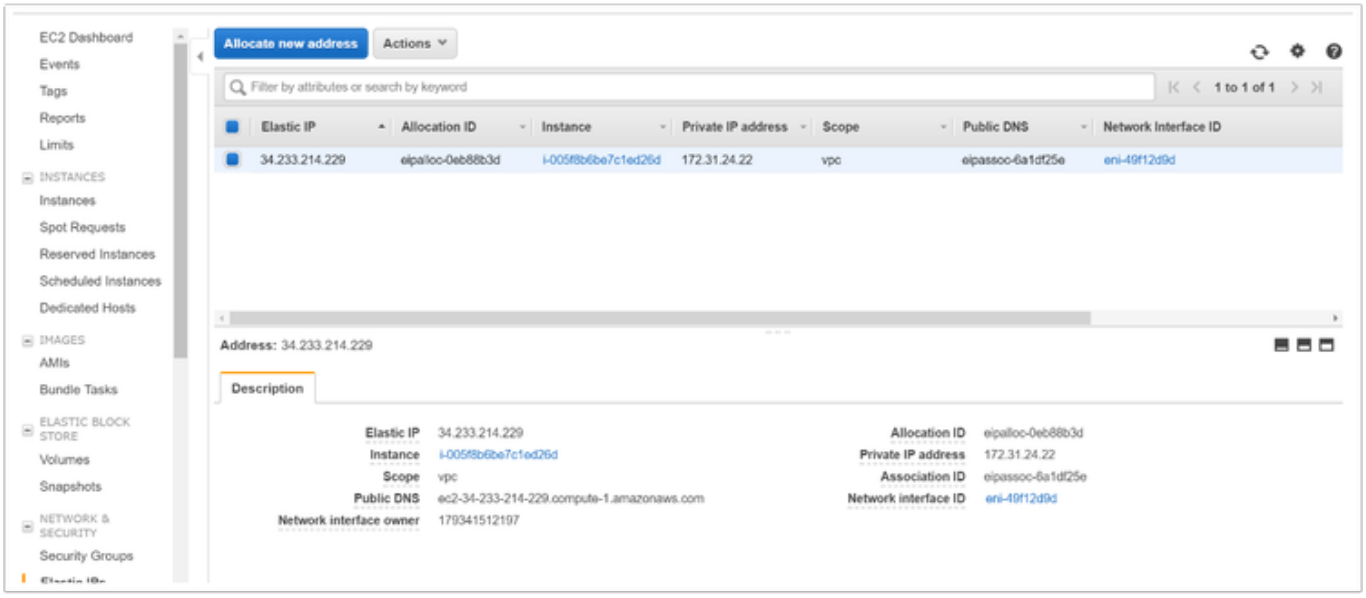


7.4 Look for successful import and follow any instructions.

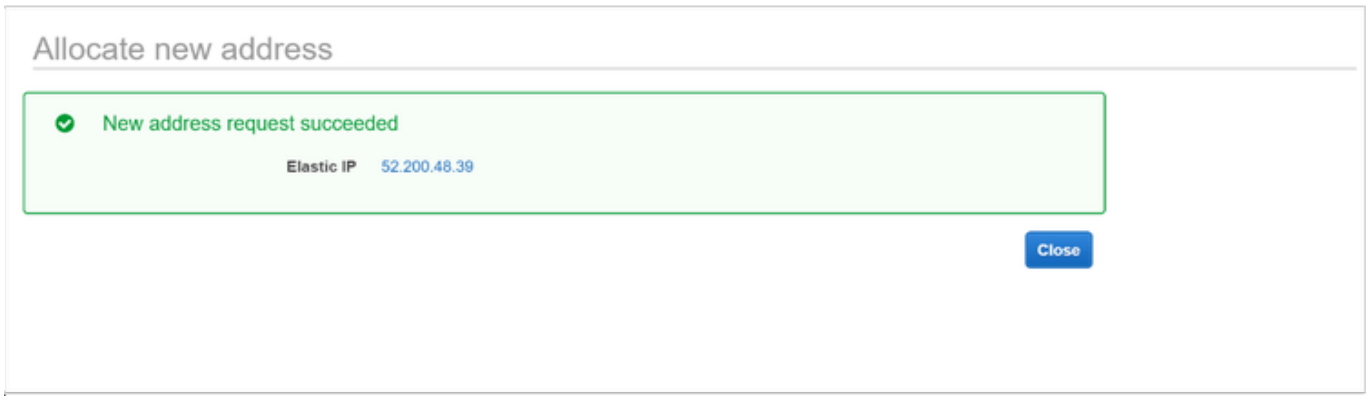


8. Create an Elastic IP for your new EC2 instance

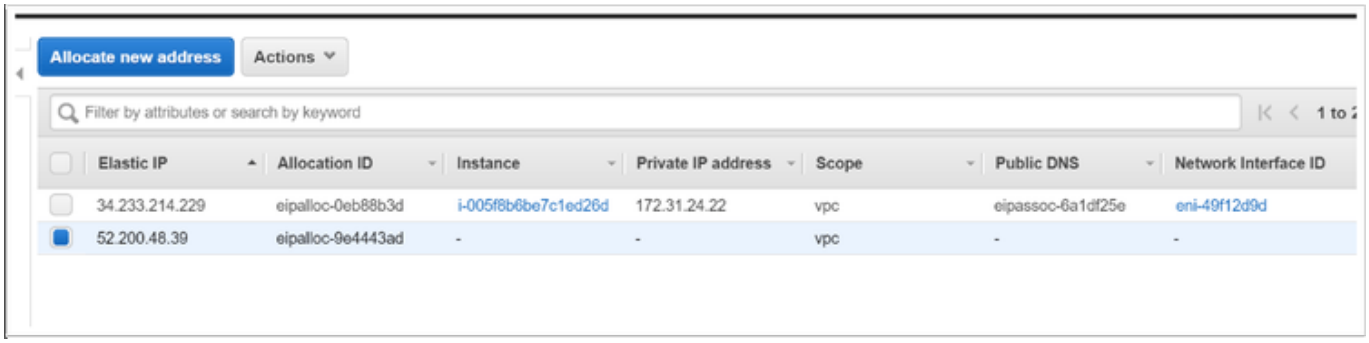
8.1 Navigate to AWS console EC2 > Elastic IPs and click on Allocate new address



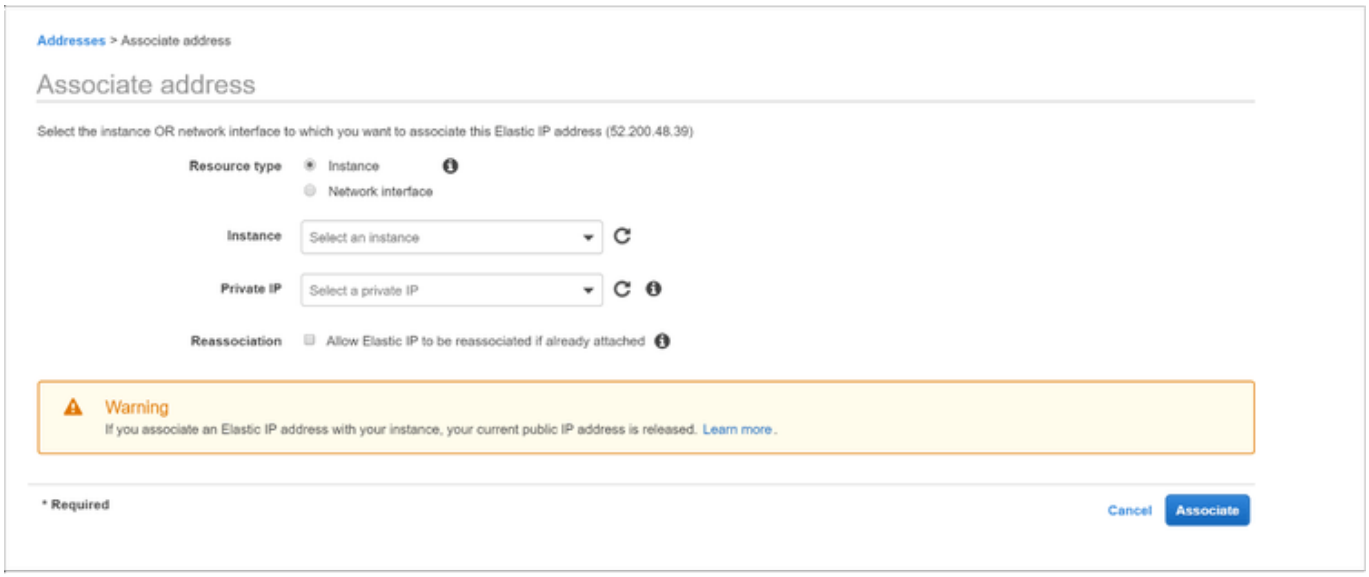
8.2 Select allocate and then look for the new IP address



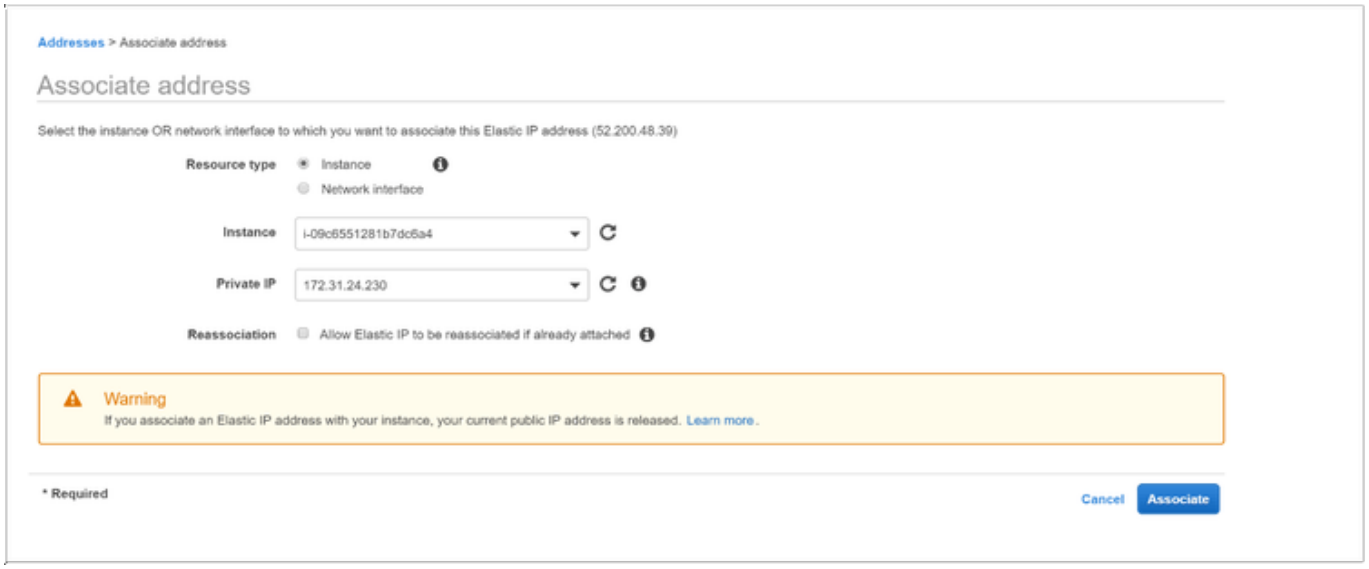
8.3 Select the Elastic IP address you just created



8.4 Then go to Actions > Associate address

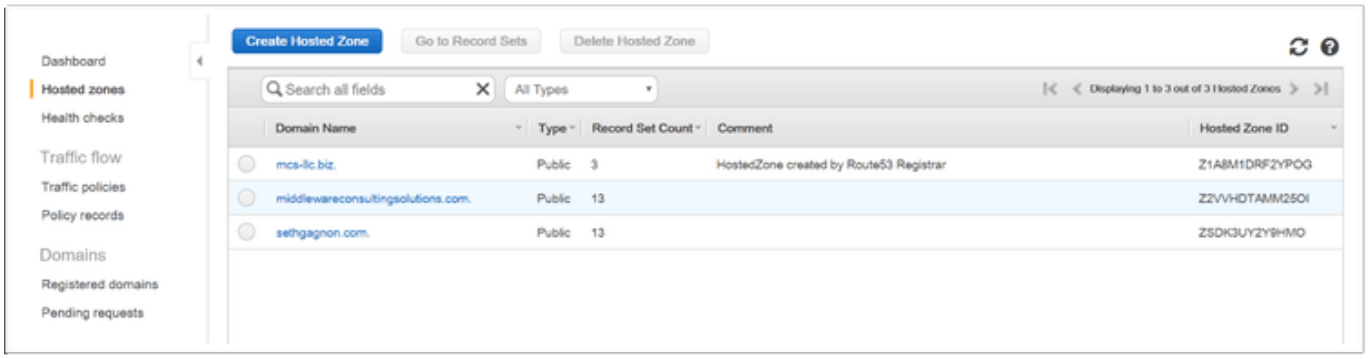


8.5 Enter in the appropriate info from the drop down menus then click Associate

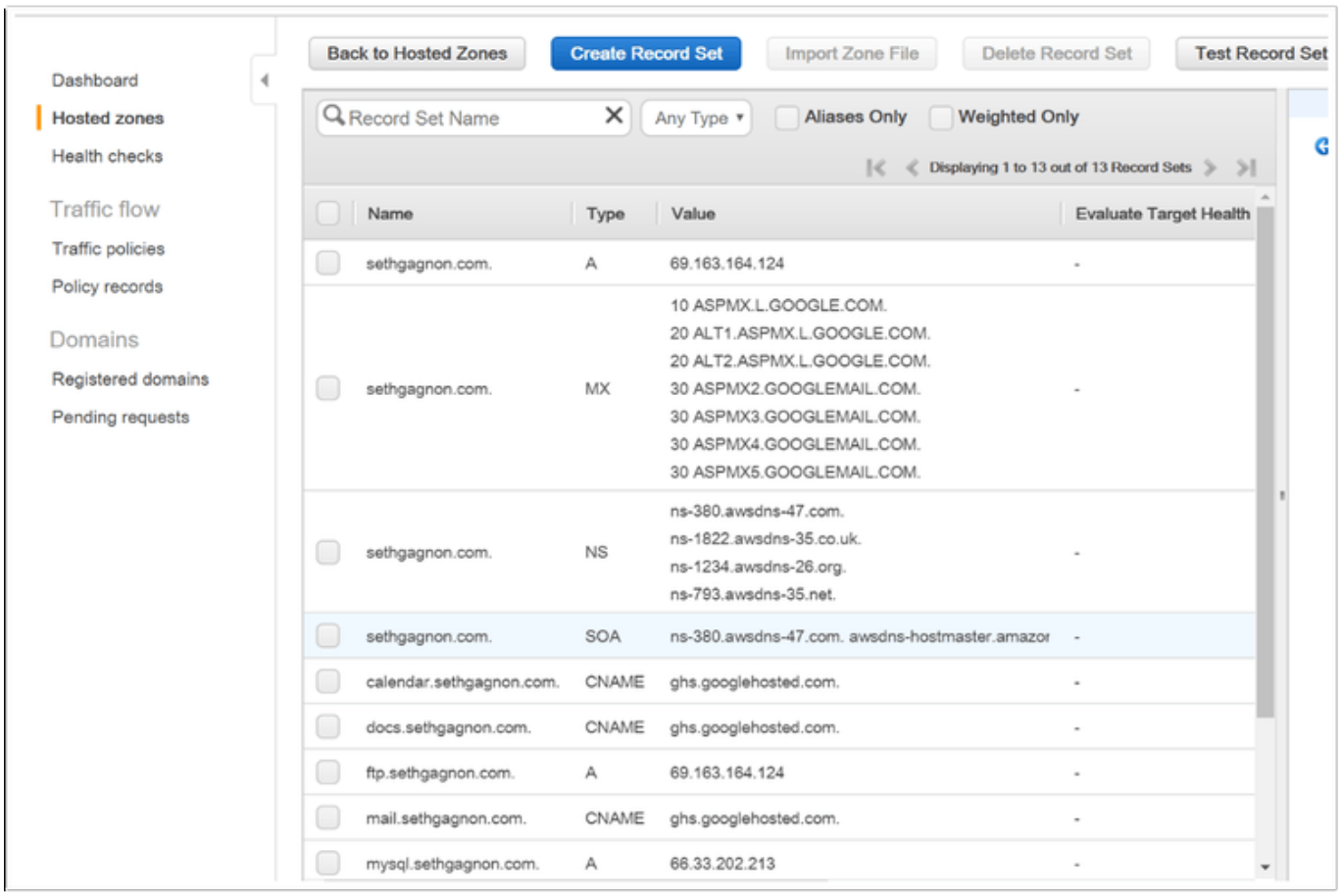


9. Update your hosted zone to point to the new Elastic IP address

9.1 In AWS console, navigate to Services > Route53 > Hosted Zone

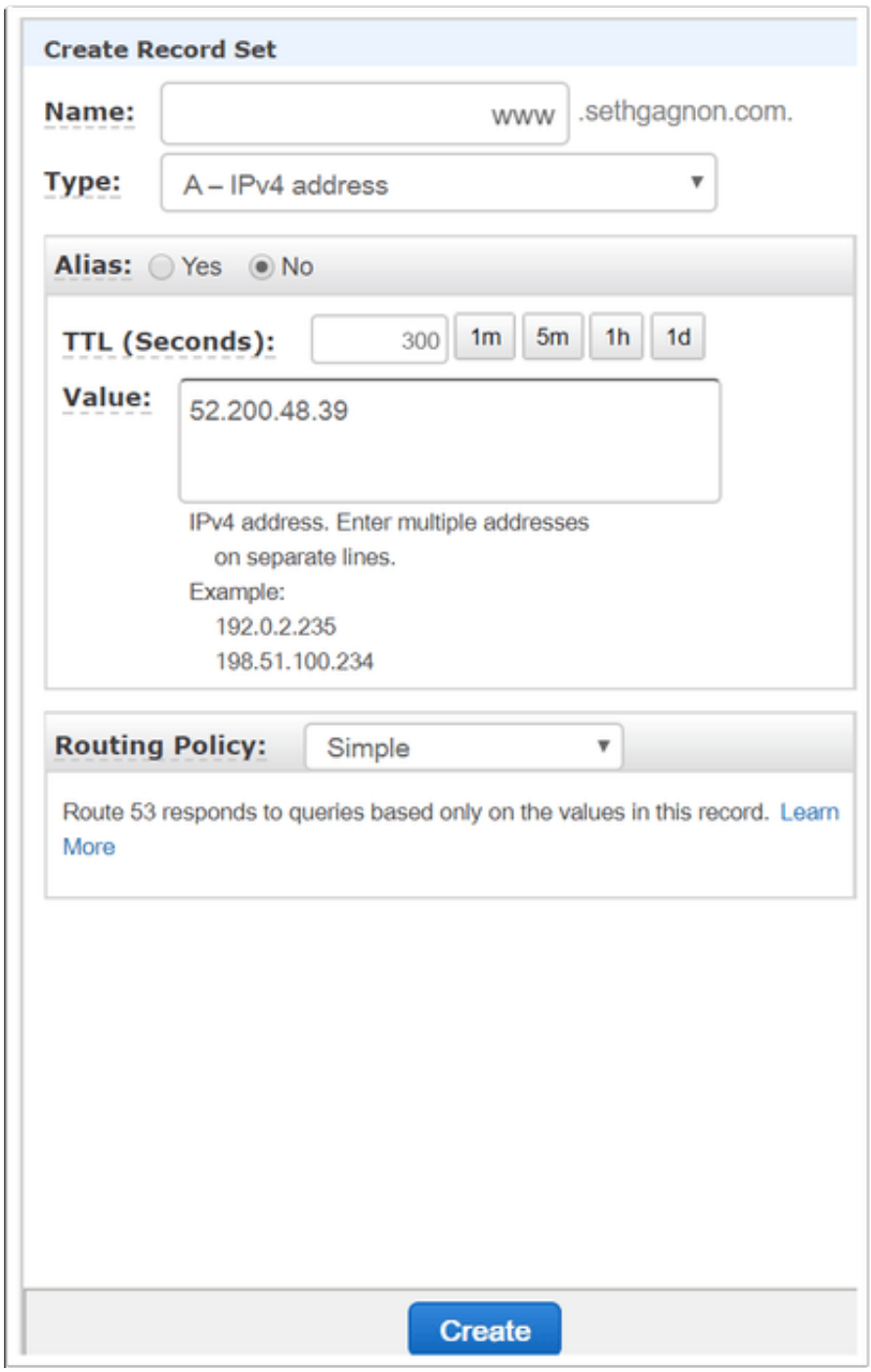


9.2 Select the domain you wish to use to point to your newly created WordPress site and click on that domain name.



9.3 Click on Create Record Set and enter in the new Elastic IP Address as an A type record. Then click Create

If you already have an existing A record pointing to your older IP address from when it was with your previous domain, just edit existing record so that it now contains this new elastic IP address.


Create Record Set
Name:
www
.sethgagnon.com.
Type:
A – IPv4 address
Alias:
Yes
No
TTL (Seconds):
300
1m
5m
1h
1d
Value:
52.200.48.39
IPv4 address. Enter multiple addresses on separate lines.
Example:
192.0.2.235
198.51.100.234
Routing Policy:
Simple
Route 53 responds to queries based only on the values in this record. Learn More
Create

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