

# Web: convert absolute links to relative links

There are ways to make links on the web or reference an image that will either 1) make thing harder for us later or 2) make things easier later. Here's the short scoop; Sharon or Randy could clarify for you if this is unclear:

1. there are two major ways to make links within a web site; they are called absolute links and relative links. **Absolute** links are **bad**. **Relative** links are **good**!
2. An absolute link would be something like:
  - <http://spark.ucar.edu/visit> (or [spark.ucar.edu/visit](http://spark.ucar.edu/visit)) to go to the "Visit" page on our site, for example
  - [http://spark.ucar.edu/sites/default/files/images/large\\_image\\_for\\_image\\_content/co2\\_molecule\\_720x400.gif](http://spark.ucar.edu/sites/default/files/images/large_image_for_image_content/co2_molecule_720x400.gif) (for linking to an image or displaying it on a page)
3. Relative links for the same items would look like this (basically, leave off the "spark.ucar.edu", but do keep the "/" at the beginning:
  - /visit
  - /sites/default/files/images/large\_image\_for\_image\_content/co2\_molecule\_720x400.gif

Please start using this approach (**relative** links instead of **absolute**) now.

When we change our group's title to "Awesome" (or whatever!) and our web site becomes "awesome.ucar.edu", all relative links will still work. All **absolute** links will be **broken**.

Absolute links that were made in the past will have to be fixed at some point. **Maybe** Sharon will find a way to automatically change all of the old absolute links; or **maybe not**!

If not, someone (or many someones) will have to fix all those old links **by hand**. Yuck!!!

...and this is just a "best practice" thing you should get used to for any web sites you work on... for just this reason... that groups do sometimes have to change their names, or move their site from one hosting service to another. If you use relative links... no sweat! If you use absolute links... nightmare!

If you are linking to a site **other than Spark**, absolute links are fine (in fact, the only way to go)... this includes other NCAR/UCAR/UCP sites... so the following absolute links are fine:

- <http://www.nasa.gov/news/index.html>
- <http://ncar.ucar.edu/>
- <https://www.eol.ucar.edu/field-projects>
- <http://www2.ucar.edu/>
- <http://www.ucp.ucar.edu/programs.html>
- ... and so on

## Short version of this to remember:

- leave "spark.ucar.edu" off the beginning of your links or references to images (or PDFs or videos or whatever)
- do keep the "/" at the beginning (it is essentially shorthand for "my site")