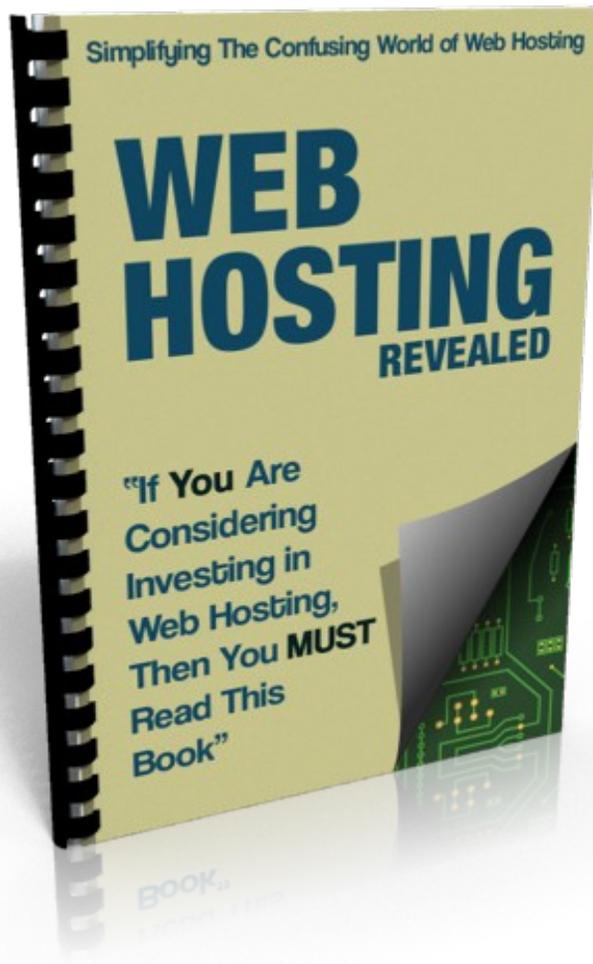


How to Choose The Best Web Hosting Company For Your Site



[Blogging Income Lifestyle](#)

[Best Web Hosting](#)

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Web Hosting:

A web hosting service is a type of Internet hosting service that allows individuals and organizations to make their own website accessible via the World Wide Web.

Web hosts are companies that provide space on a server they own or lease for use by their clients as well as providing Internet connectivity, typically in a data center. (source:wikipedia)

In basic terms -- Web hosting allows you to put your website(s) on the internet.

If you are interested in making money online, and you are serious about it - then you will one day have to deal with **buying** web hosting. Yes, there are some free options out there, but at some point you will max out those free options, and will need to turn to your own hosting.

Even if you don't want to make money, and are just an online hobbyist - web hosting is important. Owning your own web hosting gives you a freedom on the net, that **no** free options provide.

When I started working online, I got to the point where I needed to buy web hosting. The only problem is, it was like a different language for me. I had no idea what I was looking for.

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I eventually bought web hosting from an ad I saw on Facebook. Things went smooth at first, but one day I found all of my sites down and realized I had lost not only a nights profits, but Google ranking for a couple of my sites.

I had a hard time reaching customer service, and when I did, I ended up having to pay a higher monthly cost to cover my new found traffic (or so they claimed).

It was a nightmare.

Luckily, I ended up working with a tech whiz, and he let me know I was paying too much, where I could get a better deal and more importantly **what to look for** in web hosting.

That is why I created this guide. Included will be ten chapters, and each chapter is a question you must ask before you dive in and purchase web hosting.

Once you have read this guide, you will be able to make an educated choice on what web hosting is **right for you.**

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1. What Are Your Goals?

The very first question you need to answer, has nothing to do with potential web hosts. Before you even Google the term “Web Hosts”, you need to look within first. Sorry if I am getting a little Zen on you, but this really is important.

You need to figure out what YOUR goals are.

Before worrying about technical details, you need to consider what you want to accomplish with your web hosting.

It is an obvious first step. If you just want a daily journal you can find that for free. If you have the next great idea for a social network, then you might be looking at a big investment.

Make a checklist of all of the things you need and plan to do on your website. Think of every action you want people to take on your site. Write down things like...

1. How much traffic do you expect/need for your website?
2. Do you want to sell things on your site?
3. Will you be hosting large file downloads?
4. Will you have hi def photography on your site?
5. What are your monetary goals?
6. Do you need an extra secure connection? (If you want to accept credit

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cards you might)

7. Is website speed very important?
8. Do you need email accounts?
9. Will you need regular backups?
10. Do you want to control the hosting yourself, or have it managed?
11. Etc...

Your end goal here is to have a big list of things that you want or need in a website. You can even consider, splitting your list into two columns; things you need right now, and things you want eventually.

Some hosting methods make it very easy to expand your operations as you go (while others don't, more on that in next section). You may be able to settle for a cheaper hosting solution, while you build up your website audience.

Right now, this list might not seem extremely helpful, but when you begin your research it will be an invaluable tool. Keep the list handy when doing your research. I'd actually have a version of it right on your computer as you work through the next questions.

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2. What are the Differences Between Types of Hosting?

One of the things I had a really hard time dealing with was figuring out what the differences are between the types of web hosting out there.

I started searching for web hosts and all of a sudden I realized I needed to do some homework, because there are a number of different kinds and I had no idea what each one was. Luckily for you, I will guide you through this morass of information.

In general, when you are looking for web hosting you are going to come across these different types:

Free

Free web hosting can be found throughout the web. It is clearly the cheapest option, but it is also the one you should most likely avoid.

If all you want is a simple daily blog, then join up with WordPress.com or Blogger.com. They are both free and provide the hosting for your blog/journal. This is just about the only scenario I would recommend free web hosting.

There are other free web hosts out there, that actually let you upload a typical website but the problem with these is they are rarely reliable, usually ad filled and at the end of the day you don't have complete ownership of your website. Avoid them.

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Shared

Shared Hosting is usually the cheapest hosting option available. I don't want to get too technical, but web hosting companies store your website info on servers. A shared account means you share a single server with a number of other websites.

This type of hosting requires that the hosting company provides the system administration. This is valuable for people who are new to the net, or who lack tech savvy because all of the scary tech issues (managing servers, installing software, security updates, backups, etc...) are controlled by the hosting company.

Usually this type of hosting provides you with a user panel to control it. The most popular seems to be cPanel. With it you can control just about every aspect of your hosting. See our companion guide, for a 68 page cPanel tutorial.

The downside to this hosting is that it isn't as secure since you share a server with so many other users. It usually doesn't perform as well either (speed wise). Shared hosting can also be tough to scale, meaning a traffic spike could kill your websites.

A final note - shared hosting is a great intro to web hosting. It lacks the flexibility of the other options, but for basic use it will be fine. If you do need more flexibility or power you can upgrade at a later date.

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VPS

VPS stands for Virtual Private Server. The key word there - virtual. This type of hosting let's you have the functionality of a dedicated server, but in reality, VPS is actually a kind of shared hosting. Your “virtual server” will be included, along with others, on one physical machine.

While you share a physical machine, you have much more control than with shared hosting. For example - each virtual server on one machine can run it's own set of software and reboot separately.

Besides the flexibility, another big benefit with VPS hosting is that it is easy to scale up your resources. If all of a sudden your website is the next viral sensation, you will be able to quickly get more resources to meet your traffic demands.

Also while not ideal, it is much more secure than a shared hosting platform. While you still share a physical server with other people, your virtual servers are so well partitioned they are their own isolated environment.

One downside to VPS hosting is that you could need some technical know how in order to properly run it. With shared everything is set up, your software is installed and cPanel (or an equivalent) is ready to go. Some VPS web hosting packages will expect you to handle those type of things yourself. To offset this, some hosts will have an option to choose a *managed* account for a premium price.

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Dedicated

This is the cream of the crop of web hosting plans. That is why it costs the most (more on that later).

Dedicated hosting means that you get an entire server to yourself. Wherever your hosting company is located there will be a computer dedicated to you and only you.

There are many advantages to this type of hosting.

First of all it is the most secure. While no server is 100% secure from every nefarious attack out there, a dedicated one is the best choice if security is a top need for your website. Since the server is dedicated to one user it is also easier to pinpoint where potential problems are coming from.

Dedicated servers are faster as well. You don't have to share bandwidth with people after all. They usually offer more resources as well. Even the most basic of dedicated servers will allow you to build multiple fast loading, busy websites. Like VPS hosting, it is also easily expanded to meet traffic needs.

On top of all that, you get the most flexibility as well. You can run anything you want on your own server. The downside being you will need the technical knowledge to manage the server yourself. Once again though, you can always opt for a managed option when choosing a dedicated server.

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*Cloud

Cloud hosting is a newer development on the web and it is currently a MUCH discussed topic. If you follow tech news, you have certainly heard the term cloud hosting before - most likely linked with Google and Apple's cloud storage for music.

Cloud computing may seem like a VPS, but it differs quite a bit. Basically, instead of servers being dedicated to one(dedicated) or more(shared & VPS) users, all of the computers work together to create a giant network (or cloud) of computing power.

This makes cloud web hosting the most easily expandable/scalable version of hosting on the market. A traffic spike that could take down a shared, virtual or even dedicated server, can be absorbed into the "cloud" of servers since all of the servers work together.

If your traffic maxes out power of one server, it is ok because it is connected to more. In these cases you may have to pay for the added bandwidth use, but the piece of mind is worth the cost. Basically, you pay for only the resources you use with cloud hosting so usually it is a cheaper option than dedicated.

Reliability on cloud hosting is great as well, because if one server goes down it doesn't mean that your site goes down, it just begins to draw resources from another computer in the cloud.

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The prognosis isn't all rosy though. Cloud hosting does have a couple of areas of concern. First off - where is your info? There is no way to really control the physical location of your data. It is part of the "cloud". This might just be a mental hold up for me, and nothing to be concerned with but it is worth mentioning in my opinion.

Security is another questionable area. While cloud companies stress they are as secure as a dedicated server, you have to wonder. On a dedicated server you are on your own server. At the end of the day, multiple people are sharing physical hardware with cloud hosting.

By now you should already see the value in the list you created earlier. You can go through your list of needs and wants, and match them up with the above info to get an idea of which types of hosting you would consider. Of course before you decide, you better think budget...

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3. How Much Do I Have to Spend?

Most people who want to buy web hosting have some sort of budget. If you can spend whatever you want with no thought, go ahead and ignore this section, but if you have a budget in mind you will want to read along.

When I started out online, I had to seriously consider my budget so I did a lot of research looking at prices for each of the above types of web hosting. Now keep in mind that the price recommendations I mention are based on an average package that should be good enough for someone new to online. The price you actually pay could be a little higher depending on your needs, or maybe even a little less.

Shared

I mentioned before that shared hosting is the cheapest. In fact if your sites don't have to be secure and you don't get much traffic you can run multiple sites off one shared hosting plan. This is perfect for people who are "dipping their toes" into the online world.

Every web host varies of course, but in general you can get a decent shared hosting plan for about **\$10/month**. You could even get as low as **\$6/month** if you prepay for a couple years in advance.

VPS

VPS is essentially a step up when it comes to web hosting. You get more options and resources, but of course you pay for more. VPS offers the same functionality as a dedicated server but usually at a lower cost.

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Inmotion (Cnet rates best VPS host) offers VPS packages that start as low as **\$39/month** and rising to as high as **\$139/month**. Even on the low end it is significantly higher than shared hosting but as detailed in the last section there are many benefits to VPS hosting.

One thing to keep in mind, is that VPS hosting makes it very easy for you to upgrade based on your needs, so if you start with a cheaper plan and need a resource boost, it is no problem.

Of note - the above plan prices I quoted are managed VPS servers, so the host will handle the heavy lifting tech wise. Managed VPS usually costs more money.

Dedicated

Going to stick with Inmotion, for comparisons sake and because they also provide highly recommended dedicated servers.

Their dedicated hosting packages start at **\$199/month**. That may have made you gasp since it is a very high cost, but remember this is a managed plan, you can probably find cheaper plans out there but if you aren't tech savvy you will have to choose managed.

No matter what, if you want a quality dedicated server you are looking northwards of **\$100**. Dedicated servers are usually chosen by people who are already making money online and need to expand, or by businesses that want secure eCommerce.

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A quick note - you can make some of your hosting back by selling hosting to friends who need it, or local business owners/internet marketers. If you have a fully dedicated server, you will be able to handle the extra sites no problem.

Cloud

Cloud hosting is most likely to fall within the same price range as VPS. Their main selling point is that you get all the benefits of dedicated server, but at a fraction of the cost. In the last section we went over a couple key differences between Cloud and Dedicated, so keep those in mind.

One of the oldest and most trusted companies offering cloud web hosting is Rackspace. One thing to remember is you pay for what you use in cloud computing, so some companies won't have a monthly price, they will charge you per hour. Rackspace hosting starts out at **1.5 cents/hour** for unmanaged, and **13.5 cents/hour** managed.

The hourly cost is based on bandwidth and storage used etc... The good news is that you can start low and build your way up as you need it. Cloud hosting is the most flexible in that regards.

So a little basic math:

$24 \text{ (hours in day)} \times 365 = 8760 \text{ hours per year}$

$8760 \text{ divided by } 12 = 730 \text{ hours (an average month)}$

$730 \times 0.015(1.5 \text{ cents}) = \10.95

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So as you can see the most basic of all cloud hosting packages works out to shared hosting type of costs. A managed account would work out to just under **\$100 a month**.

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4. Does Unlimited Really Mean Unlimited?

You might be researching web hosting already. If you started with the cheapest (shared) then you have probably come across some AMAZING deals.

You have, without a doubt, come across deals announcing - **UNLIMITED** resources for just dollars per month.

The current deal on Hostgator (uber-popular shared host) states:

UNLIMITED web hosting

UNLIMITED bandwidth

UNLIMITED disk space

All for \$3.95 a month!!!

Why the heck would you go for any other plan? This is your dream set up. You can host unlimited sites for a ridiculously low cost.

There is a catch though (isn't there always?). Any shared hosting plan claiming unlimited is never unlimited. How could they ever make their money back? These companies will bury clauses into their fine print making sure that you can never use up too many of their resources. If you do...your sites go down. Simple as that.

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Hosts do this by limiting things like inodes (inodes store info on files, folders etc...) or by using unclear statements in their terms of service, like:

"Bluehost's offering of "unlimited" services is not intended to allow the actions of a single or few subscribers to unfairly or adversely impact the experience of other Subscribers."

Bluehost.com reserves the right to limit processor time, bandwidth, processes, or memory in cases where it is necessary to prevent negatively impacting other Subscribers

So basically, Bluehost won't tell you exactly how many resources you can use, but if it gets to this unspecified level, then they will shut your site down.

Beware unlimited plans, make sure you read the fine print first....

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5. Where Can I Find The Fine Print?

This is a pretty logical next question. When you are looking at the pricing page on most hosts, they will have charts that break down the different packages. The problem is, some shared host packages will just say UNLIMITED (like mentioned above). You will have to go past these promotional pages and find the real info.

If you want to find out the real limitations and rules of your hosting then look for pages on the site like:

1. **Terms Of Service** - You can usually find this page near the bottom of the webpage you are viewing. It might be in the footer area. It could also just be called Terms. While there is a lot of info here, it is certainly worth reading. If you are trying to find out the real limitations of Web Hosting. Look for sections labelled: RESOURCE USAGE or "UNLIMITED" USAGE POLICIES.
2. **Review Sites** - While you have to be careful since so many review sites are actually thinly disguised affiliate sites, check out web hosting reviews before you buy is a good place to find out about fine print you may have missed.
3. **Support** - I recommend everyone who is researching hosting should talk to the support team for their web host. This will allow you to question them on their policies, as well as give you an idea of how responsive the support team is. If you get poor support when you are looking to buy, how can you expect good support once they already have your money?

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6. What are the Bare Minimums I Need?

Time to talk bare minimums. No matter what choice you make there are some minimums you should ensure that you have. Of course, your needs will dictate your real minimums, but this is a list that everyone should have no matter how basic their needs.

1. **Hosting Management** - Obviously if you are tech savvy this doesn't apply, but I find myself pretty tech savvy and I wouldn't get unmanaged hosting. Hosting software is not something I am familiar with. If you want to leave the tech details to the pros, choose a managed hosting package.
2. **cPanel (or equivalent)** - cPanel is a great tool for web owners. There are other similar programs (Plesk for example) which would work just as fine, but I am familiar with cPanel so I will talk about it. This tool will allow you to easily manage things like; adding domains to your hosting, adding email accounts, setting up databases, creating backups, monitoring traffic and installing scripts and platforms like WordPress.
3. **FTP Access** - Almost any web hosting should offer you FTP access, but make sure. FTP access is important because file managers in things like CPanel or Plesk don't work nearly as well to transfer and upload files. Also, if you use WordPress for your website (and you should!) you may need FTP to fix certain problems.

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4. **MYSQL Databse Support** - You will need databse support for a number of web functions, most importantly - you will need it if you want to build your site using a CMS (content management system) or WordPress.
5. **PHP** - Most “scripts” that run on your server will require PHP support. Once again, this is important because WordPress needs it to run. Once you start installing things like website forums, or backup scripts you will realize how important PHP is.
6. **Email Accounts** - You want your hosting to let you set up email accounts. This way you can create email accounts for your websites. You can have email accounts like **info@your-website.com**, or **your-name@your-website.com**
7. **Support** - Which brings us to the next point...

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7. What Kind of Support Do I Need/Get

Support gets it's own section because it is that important.

You need to make sure that you get quality support from your web host. This is super important, because, trust me, you will need to contact your host. The quicker they can deal with a problem, the quicker any problem you have will be fixed.

This is really important for people who choose managed options. If you are paying a premium to have your server managed, then you should get premium style support.

If you pay the price for a dedicated server for example, you need to ensure you have 24/7 support. Things go wrong at 2 AM just as often as they go wrong at 10 PM. A friend of mine has a managed dedicated server with Mojohost, and they respond to his email requests in minutes rather than hours or days.

Check out the terms and service of any potential host, and see if they have any guaranteed support response times.

Another thing to look for is live help, this is a huge added bonus. Live help will let you connect to chat support whenever you want/need. When I was new to web hosting, this was how I dealt with the majority of my problems. Very helpful.

If you see that one of your potential hosts has a live support feature, check it out. Use it to ask them some pre-sales type of questions. If you get a quick, courteous, intelligent response - then you can feel comfortable with the live support.

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8. How Do I Know if the Hosts are Reliable?

Reliability is KEY!

Basically, reliability in this instance means your website is up and running as much as possible. I don't want to blast any hosts in the guide, but when I started out we had hosting with a certain company, and our uptime in North America was great, but thanks to an overseas friend we realized our site was constantly offline in Europe and Australia.

This was a big hit to us, because England and Australia make up a nice chunk of English speaking population, and was an area we targeted with our Google Ads.

How can you possibly know if a web host is reliable or not?

Research is the only way. You need to be doing Google searches and finding reviews for each host you are considering.

Google searches for hosting information, can be tough because so many hosting affiliates dominate the top of Google. A lot of it will come down to common sense, with enough practice you will be able to figure out what reviews are promotional.

One thing to keep in mind is Forum or Message Board threads that come up in searches are often less promotional and more of a consumers point of view. Perfect for your needs.

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There are also some tools online that can help you test reliability. The first tool:

<http://www.whoishostingthis.com/>

This website won't actually tell you what hosts are reliable or not, BUT if you know of a website that is never down and fast loading - you can actually enter that site and find out who hosts it. This can be a good way of finding potential hosts.

Another way to ensure reliability is to find web hosts with uptime guarantees. You will often find 99% uptime guarantees, and even 99.9%, 99.99% and 99.999%. Now some might find that to be a marketing ploy, but over the course of a year even a less than 1% uptime boost can make a difference.

If your potential host claims a certain uptime guarantee, then make sure they offer regular "Uptime Reports". This is something that will either be stated on their site, or you might have to ask the support before you purchase.

Once you have bought your hosting, you should still monitor reliability.

<http://www.uptimerobot.com/>

Above is a website that will help you monitor your website's uptime.

It is free and you can get notified of any down time via text message, email or Twitter! If your site is down too often - change hosts!

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9. What are Some Common Terms I Should be Familiar With?

Some of the common terms you will come across that you should understand are:

Bandwidth - Bandwidth is the amount of data that can be transferred over the network in a fixed amount of time. On the Net, it is usually expressed in bits per second (bps) or in higher units like Mbps (millions of bits per second). 28.8 modem can deliver 28,800 bps, a T1 line is about 1.5 Mbps.

Disk Space - This indicates the amount of disk space that will be available to you on the hosts server to hold your web site files. Normally because HTML files are small, a web site (unless it has extensive graphics or database functionality) will be small, as low as 1 or 2 MB in most cases.

Inodes - Data structures that contain information about files in Unix file systems that are created when a file system is created. Each file has an inode and is identified by an inode number (i-number) in the file system where it resides.

Inodes provide important information on files such as user and group ownership, access mode (read, write, execute permissions) and type.

There are a set number of inodes, which indicates the maximum number of files the system can hold.

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Server - A computer, or software package, that provides a specific kind of service to client software running on other computers. The term can refer to a particular piece of software, such as a WWW or HTTP server, or to the machine on which the software is running.

VPS - VPS stands for Virtual Private Server. The key word there - virtual. This type of hosting let's you have the functionality of a dedicated server, but in reality, VPS is actually a kind of shared hosting. Your "virtual server" will be included, along with others, on one physical machine.

Dedicated Server - A more expensive type of account in which the web hosting company provides you with an entire hosting setup including your own server hardware that only you can use. This usually means a much faster loading time for your site because the entire computer is "dedicated" to running the server software.

Control Panel - An online package of tools permitting easy site management and editing. Almost all hosting companies provide this option today. It is a very important feature to have. By having your own control panel, you can maintain basic information about your site, mail boxes, etc. without having to send emails to the hosting company or call them on the phone. (cPanel is one example)

Cloud Hosting - Cloud web hosting is hosting that uses the resources of several clustered servers. Basically, this means that your website uses the virtual resources of several servers to accommodate all the aspects of hosting your site. The load is balanced, security is taken care of and hardware resources are available virtually so they can be used when needed. The cluster of servers is the cloud.

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Availability (Uptime) - Refers to the amount of time within a 24 hour period a system is active or available for servicing requests. For example, if a hosting company says it is available 99.9% of the time, they are claiming that your web site will be up all the time except for about 8 seconds each day.

Over the course of a year, in this example, the hosting company is claiming that your site will only be unavailable (couldn't surf to it) for 48 hours.

Backups - Web hosts back up data on their servers. Many host packages offer backups every 24 hours. This is supposed to prevent the loss of data should something happen to the server. . If you think you may need to restore old data in case of a disaster, it may make sense to choose a hosting company that performs regular backups.

MySQL - Is a system used to create databases on web servers.

PHP - PHP is an free, open-source server-side scripting language. PHP code can be embedded in HTML. It is integral for installation of popular blogging platforms like WordPress

Domain Name - Domain name is an easy-to-remember address that can be translated by DNS into server's IP address. This is your website address.
www.YOURDOMAIN.com.

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FTP - File Transfer Protocol is the Internet protocol defining how to download and upload files between a client and an FTP server.

IP Address - Internet Protocol Address. A unique number identifying all devices connected to the Internet.

SSL - Secure Sockets Layer. Protocol developed by Netscape to provide encryption for commercial transactions data that should be protected while traveling over the Internet, like credit card numbers. SSL uses https protocol. Before using SSL in commerce, you'll also need to get is a certificate from a Certificate Authority.

These definitions were courtesy of the following websites:

<http://www.hostindex.com/glossary.shtm>

<http://findwebhosting.com/glossary-of-web-hosting-terms/>

<http://www.webhostingratings.com/glossary.html>

<http://www.wikipedia.org>

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10. I am Ready to Choose, Any Red Flags to Look Out For?

By now you should have a good idea of what you want and/or need in a web host. Here is a list of some red flags that you should watch out for...

- ▶ Free hosting - mentioned it before but this is not the type of hosting you want to build your future empire on.
- ▶ Beware of “promotional reviews”. The FTC is trying to put a stop to this, but many web hosting reviews are still nothing more than promotional pieces by affiliates
- ▶ Unlimited is NEVER unlimited.
- ▶ Lack of Support - live support is not required, but you do want some sort of fast response support.
- ▶ Are they a company? This might sound like a joke, but make sure the web host you are dealing with is a registered company in it’s juristrisdiction
- ▶ New companies - oh your host has only been in business a week? I’d avoid them.

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- **No Privacy Policy** - You definitely want a host with a privacy policy. At the very least you want to know exactly what they do and don't do with your provided information.

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11. List of top 10 web hosting companies with good web hosting service

By now you should have a good idea of what you want and/or need in a web host. Here is a list of some red flags that you should watch out for...

1.) BlueHost

Since the early 2000s, BlueHost has been one of the top picks for small to mid-sized websites. BlueHost is built on open source technology, and has grown steadily over the past decade. Today it is one of the leading web hosts.

They offer quite a variety of services, fairly reliable customer support, and highly competitive pricing.

Why Choose BlueHost?

One of the biggest selling points of BlueHost is that they are WordPress-friendly. BlueHost offers a one-click install with SimpleScripts, which makes it very easy for customers to set up blogs or sites quickly.

With prices starting at just under \$4 per month, BlueHost is an affordable and fairly reliable hosting solution. If you don't want to deal with gimmicks, hidden fees, or contracts, this is a pretty good option.

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2.) HostGator

HostGator is a Texas-based company that was established in 2002. They have grown from a small firm with just three servers into a widely-recognized, reliable hosting service with 12,000+ servers.

This company hosts sites of all sizes, ranging from private blogs to large e-commerce ventures.

Why Choose HostGator?

An interesting feature of HostGator is their support of reseller web hosting. This is an excellent solution for web designers and developers who offer hosting to their clients.

Reseller accounts come with substantial bandwidth and unlimited domains and subdomains, unlimited email accounts, and unlimited MySQL databases

3.) FatCow

FatCow was started in 1998, and they've built their business around a simple, user-friendly approach to hosting. They offer some interesting solutions that are particularly appealing to those who are less technically inclined.

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FatCow takes one plan and one price approach to hosting, that offers fairly reliable hosting for customers in the normal usage range.

Why Choose FatCow?

Because they make things simple. For a flat rate of \$40/year, customers gain access to reliable, no-nonsense hosting with simplified site-building, email and selling tools.

FatCow makes it easy for those without web-development skills to build a site with a variety of themes and template options.

4.) JustHost

JustHost offers some of the most well-rounded hosting, with just about every feature you might need to build and maintain a website.

For a number of years now, they've delivered an extensive range of services, yet they've managed to stay amazingly user-friendly.

Why Choose JustHost?

They've managed to combine affordability and reliability; something that isn't easy to do. They rank high amongst users due to that fact. They take a pretty no-frills approach to hosting, support and domains, yet they do offer unlimited hosting and a standard cPanel that is easy to navigate.

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Plus, they offer a free domain name if you sign up for their JustPlan (or three domains with their Premium Plan).

5.) InMotion Hosting

InMotion Hosting has been around since 2001, and they've earned a solid reputation for premium hosting at affordable rates.

This is the company that many experienced bloggers and webmasters turn to when they're willing to pay a little extra for premium support and greater reliability.

Why Choose InMotion Hosting?

One word: reliability. This is a company that is built around an exceptional level of uptime. This is why so many businesses rely on InMotion Hosting. Their servers are fast, reliable, and almost never fail.

The company monitors their systems 24/7 for unusual activity and runs frequent benchmark checks to ensure high performance at all times

6.) Site5 Hosting

Site5 came onto the hosting stage in a blaze of glory back in 1999. Obviously, they've got some serious chops in the hosting industry. They offer hosting targeted at designers and developers, and for many years, they were considered one of the most innovative and reliable companies on the scene.

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Why Choose Site5 Hosting?

Site5 has one of the most extensive choices of server locations in the industry. Alongside the nine locations in the US and three in Canada, Site5 Hosting also has servers in Brazil, Singapore, Romania, The Netherlands, India and Sydney.

While you can expect to pay an extra fee for hosting anywhere but their Dallas location in the US, the sheer number of server locations makes Site5 an appealing option for international customers.

7.) PAGELY

A few years back, Pagely was released with a single target audience in mind: WordPress users. Unlike most of the hosting companies on this list, Pagely offers a unique set of services.

Pagely provides Managed WordPress Hosting. This was (and still is) quite an amazing notion, and one that has helped numerous companies avoid the headache of WordPress updates, security issues, and automatic backups.

Why Choose Pagely?

You can take care of all the speed, security, updates and scaling of your WordPress site if you want; but if that all sounds like a hassle, Managed WordPress Hosting might be just the ticket for you.

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Pagely offers quite a tidy solution for Managed WordPress sites. They were the first on the scene, and they offer more than a decade of technical industry experience.

If you're happy handling backups, security, and other technical aspects on your own, you'll find better value elsewhere. However, this is an excellent solution for those who are not so technically-inclined.

8.) WP Engine

WP Engine came in hot on the heels of Pagely and currently offers premium Managed WordPress Hosting at premium rates.

Much like Pagely, WP Engine's services don't come cheap; however, customers really get what they pay for. WP Engine is committed to delivering exceptional speed, almost zero downtime, and top of the line support.

Why Choose WP Engine?

If you compare WP Engine against Pagely, you'll immediately see a pretty noticeable price jump if you choose WP Engine.

The biggest selling point of WP Engine is their speed. As part of their service, WP Engine scans each WordPress site for anything that might cause sub-optimal performance.

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Customers who have switched to WP Engine consistently see a dramatic increase in page load time. Pages typically load 2x faster, HTML is delivered over 10x faster, static elements are delivered 7x faster, and jQuery libraries are accessed 6x faster.

9.) SiteGround

SiteGround has been around for nearly 10 years, and they are now considered one of the premier hosting companies.

They are constantly innovating and they've gained a reputation for pushing the technological envelope. This has earned them a top-ranking spot as one of the fastest, most stable hosting companies in the industry.

Why Choose SiteGround?

When you need absolute reliability, SiteGround delivers. They currently have some of the best uptime figures in the industry, and they offer a 99.9% uptime guarantee; something that you really don't get anywhere else.

SiteGround has accomplished this through custom server monitoring software that identifies and resolves 90% of issues with zero human intervention.

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10.) Web Hosting Hub

Web Hosting Hub was founded in 2001, and they offer much of the standard fare that you would expect from a web hosting company.

They provide tiered hosting plans, domain transfer, domain name and registration services, and support for popular platforms like WordPress, Drupal and Joomla.

They provide reliable, easy-to-use, and affordable hosting solutions for sites of all sizes.

Why Choose Web Hosting Hub?

When customers talk about Web Hosting Hub, there's one thing they all rave about: service. While many of their offerings are pretty standard for a web hosting company, this organization has taken tech support and customer service to a new level.

If you're totally new to web hosting, this company will get you started on the right foot. If you're simply sick of shoddy support, Web Hosting Hub might just renew your faith in customer service.

When so many companies are outsourcing customer and tech support, it's nice to see a company that takes service seriously. Tech Support Hub offers 24/7/365 support, and tech teams are actively involved in solving problems that arise.

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Conclusion

By now you should have a much better understanding of web hosting, what to look for and what to avoid.

The most important step of this guide, is determining your needs. Your list of needs will quite often match up with one form of hosting so completely, that you don't have to worry about the others.

It also gives you something to talk to your potential hosts about. If you start a conversation (by live support, or email) with a potential host, it is imperative that you have a list of your needs, because they will ask you that!

The best way to get used to the process is dive in. I don't suggest that you dive in by buying a \$500 a month server, but you can easily find a \$10/month plan of shared hosting that will let you at least get used to things like cPanel.

Web hosting is an intimidating part of the online world, but if you face it prepared and knowledgeable, you will make the perfect choice for your needs.