

Choosing a Web Hosting Company

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In order to get your website up and running, you will need to choose a web hosting service. Hosting companies provide you space on their servers that they own or lease to you so that you can connect to the internet via the World Wide Web (www). You can use your own server for this purpose but if you are a small operation, the cost to running, upgrading and securing your own server would be expensive and if technically beyond your expertise, you would need to hire an IT person to manage your servers. For this article, let us assume that you are a small business without the need for an IT person. You may want to consider:

Pricing

The current hosting market has about ten major web hosting companies, all of which compete with each other using first-time pricing techniques. Advertised prices can be as low as \$2.00 per month, which is really a loss leader price. The cost is for a temporary period of time. After the timeframe has ended, the price goes up to a level you were not previously assured of which can be a hindrance to your budget. It is advisable to do a comparison of these companies first. Do your homework as to what your cost will be down the line after the discounted price's term ends. Hosting companies make additional money by charging you for a domain name, mailboxes for email, a search engine optimization (SEO) program, email marketing, automated emails, and additional services. Find out if any of these are in the discounted or regular price or are standalone items that will add to your hosting cost.

Website Builders

Hosting service companies are in the market to obtain as many customers as possible. They are in business to provide you with website building that is easy to do yourself as well as affordable. They are your web developer. All you need to do is design your website using their website builder software or use your own web builder software that you can upload to the hosting site.

The best route for the not-so-techy person is to use the website builder that the hosting company provides. Compare companies to see if they offer a large number of templates you can use to make your job easier. Designing the website by using a template offers a number of color schemes, page layouts, and font choices. You may be limited in the number or type of widgets (forms, buttons, scroll bars, etc.) available but the common and popular ones are usually included.

Domain Name

A free domain name is usually offered for the first year. This gives you the opportunity to choose your company or product name for your website. Although you are getting a free domain name, some of the hosting companies do not relinquish full ownership to you and use their own name as the registrar. You may want to know if after the first year you can change the registrar to be you and not the hosting company.

Internet Marketing

The trend is for hosting companies to provide their customers with marketing services such as pay-per-click advertising, Google AdWords, and other services to build traffic for your website. These services are in addition to your web hosting package and are pricey. You may want to forego them for a while until you are familiar with maintaining your website and, of course, can include them in your budget. These are helpful to expose your business but when first starting out, you can benefit to a degree by using the SEO options that are offered free in the web package.

In Conclusion

When googling the words, *web hosting companies comparison*, you will come across several comparisons already done by reputable firms. This is a good place to start. You can research further by going to a web hosting company's website with your own checklist. The first year of web hosting may be a bargain year for you but remember that discounted prices are always short-lived and you will eventually have to pay the full hosting price.