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Is Free Hosting Reliable?

Many new marketers choose free hosting when they first set up a website or blog. Obviously the no cost aspect is appealing and it does allow you to get content online fast. The question that remains is , is free hosting reliable enough or should you go with a paid hosting option?

A free hosting account will allow you to set up your webpage quickly so that you can start sharing content with your family and friends. However, if you are running a business bear in mind that a free hosting service will often place advertisements on your site. These ads cannot be removed and can make your site look less professional.

Hosting reliability should be a key concern when choosing any type of hosting account. You want to be certain that your website is always up and running. Of course even the best hosting companies can have downtime. But you want to use a hosting provider which offers the least amount of downtime as possible.

Free hosting can suddenly disappear for hours or even days on end! Is this something that you are prepared for? Plus if you haven't backed up your content you can lose everything. This could be valuable photos of family memories or important business documents.

All hosting providers will have certain terms and conditions that you must adhere too. With a free host you are not contributing to their monthly income. So if you unmistakably do something outside of their terms they can easily shut your site down.

One good use of free hosting is for running an experiment or test. If you want to experiment with a certain feature or product you can do this at no cost. Once you have compiled your results you can decide whether or not you want to go with a paid hosting service.

Mind you free doesn't not always mean inferior. You can get free hosting with sites like WordPress and blogger. These hosting companies offer great looking websites with thousands of themes available for users. But even these have ads on them. Plus it is quite common for people to suddenly lose their blog overnight for no apparent reason.

If you truly want peace of mind over your website and want to wake up each day knowing that your site is there, then a paid hosting service is your answer. For any information that you want hosted on the web on a temporary basis then by all means use free hosting for as long as necessary.

Why You Need a Good Hosting Service

When people think about choosing a hosting service they immediately look at the cost first and the features second. In fact you want to reverse this. By looking at the features of each hosting service you can decide if the price merits this amount or not?

Unfortunately hosting services come with a multitude of options and features. Sometimes trying to decipher these can be frustrating. To narrow down your choices you want to compare various hosting services. This way you can clearly see what options you are getting with each.

Hosting services are available for free or as a paid service. Now free is often good and there is nothing wrong with this option. But when it comes to hosting your own website I would highly recommend you go for a paid hosting service.

Free hosting would be suitable for testing out a site or service first. Or if you want to just put up a family page you could choose free hosting. Just remember with anything free it could disappear on you though, just a friendly warning!

A good paid hosting service can run you anywhere from a few bucks up to hundreds of dollars. With such a difference in the price range you want to look at the features each hosting service is offering.

This is where it helps to try and plan out your website beforehand. You can then calculate just how much bandwidth and storage capacity you need. If you are running a business then having your

pages load quickly is important. So is having the capability to allow people to download gifts or products from your site. You don't want to run into issues because you suddenly get too many visitors to your site!

Some of the top hosting services are Hostgator and Blue Host but there are hundreds of others to choose from. Some of the key items to look for include looking at reliability issues. This includes things like customers complaining about too much downtime or having major security issues.

Customer service is another crucial element. If something goes wrong you want to know that your hosting service will fix it quickly. Having access to a ticket support system or online customer service support should be among your top priorities.

Make sure you fully understand the type of hosting service you are buying. Can you install multiple domains or only one? Plus I would advise you on having the ability to upgrade your account easily.

By taking the time to think and plan your website you can choose your hosting service accordingly. You definitely don't want to have to move services!

Understanding Hosting Fundamentals

If you are serious about your business you will need to have your own website. Having control over this site is important. You need access to the site at any time and the ability to upload any form of content. One way to achieve this is by opening up your own hosting account.

Remember with a free website you have no control over how long it will be hosted for. You can easily wake up one morning and the site is gone, along with all your hard work!

Hosting can be confusing so to help you understand why you need hosting I will try to explain the concept of hosting fundamentals.

Every webpage or blog has pages full of content including text, images and videos. For people to access these pages the entire site has to be accessible. This is done by purchasing a domain name and then hosting the name on the internet.

The hosting portion is done by a hosting company. For a fee they will allow you to upload your content and make it viewable for visitors.

Hopefully you now understand why you need hosting. It allows you to have secure web pages on line and gives you control over how your site looks and what type of content you place on it.

Choosing Your Web Host

Of course there are plenty of hosting companies to choose from. To help you narrow your choices down take the following points into consideration. You will then be able to make a wise hosting decision.

- Is this a personal or business site?

- Do you have a budget for hosting?
- How big do you plan on growing your website?
- Do they offer Cpanel?
- Are you uploading lots of images?
- Will you require a shopping cart and payment method?
- Do you plan on installing a forum?
- If running a business will you need to set up an affiliate program?
- What type of security does your site require?
- Does the hosting company offer website templates?
- Will your account allow for growth or upgrading if and when you require more space?
- Is there a support desk and an online customer service system?

As well as thinking about what features you want for your site you need to think about how much work you are prepared to do if things go wrong! Does the hosting company offer free support or will they charge you extra to go into your account and fix something?

Each web hosting company offers different packages and features. Be sure to check each one at and make comparisons before making your final decision.

What is Dedicated Hosting?

If you have ever looked at hosting terms you know that they can get quite confusing sometimes! Many people misunderstand what dedicated hosting is for example. This article will attempt to explain what dedicated hosting is in a straight forward manner.

The best definition I could find for dedicated hosting is:

A type of internet hosting where a client leases a server which is not shared by anyone else...

Obviously your next question would be to know why you want to choose dedicated hosting.

Basically you have two main options shared or dedicated hosting. With shared hosting you are as the name implies sharing space on the server with other clients. If something happens to one client you could experience the fallout from it. Someone could install a piece of software that has an adverse reaction on other members on the shared site. This could be done quite unintentionally but your website could be blocked for a certain time period.

With dedicated hosting you are the only person on that particular server. So you don't have to worry about what other clients are doing on their websites. In essence you are renting your own personal space!

Using a dedicated server means that your site is more secure. The other advantage to this type of hosting is that your website will load more quickly. Unless of course you install software that slows your site

down, if this happens you will notice an increase in your bounce rate. Which is why looking at your stats is important!

The main reason why most people opt for a dedicated hosting service is because they want more control over their site. On a shared site the hosting service has to put restrictions and limitations in place. These limits are usually removed or higher on a dedicated server.

If you need to use PHP scripts and web applications then a dedicated hosting account is the best way to go. On top of this you have more flexibility of what you can do with your account. If you suddenly start to get hundreds of thousands of visitors each day your dedicated server can handle this increase in traffic. On a shared account you may find yourself being shut down!

Another benefit is being able to customize your hosting package. You can add certain items and delete others. Shared packages are pretty standard and you may or may not have all the features you need.

You should now have a better understanding of what dedicated hosting is and can determine if this is an option to take a closer look at.

Understanding Virtual Hosting

The term virtual hosting can often be misleading. Basically it is another term for shared hosting. Hosting is accomplished by using servers.

Virtual hosting is when numerous domain names are shared on the same server. This one server will share certain features like memory and processing cycles without needing these services to be pointed to the same hosting name.

For example this allows you and a friend to share the same server, but each of you wouldn't have access to the other person's files or information. The hosting company provides each of you with a separate log in account. You have access to your own domain names and files but nothing else.

Because of the shared feature virtual hosting is cheaper than paying for a dedicated hosting account.

A virtual service uses two methods for hosting. Name hosting and IP based hosting. Name based is more commonly used and the cheaper of the two. When a protocol is served it must supply the name at some point.

With IP based virtual hosting the IP address is used at some point in the protocol. Each domain name must have its own IP address and this is the point that drives the price up for this type of hosting.

Many marketers don't want to have all their domain names coming from the same IP address. Imagine renting out IP addresses for each domain that you own.

It is also possible to have a virtual hosting account that incorporates a mixture of name and IP based hosting. Again planning your website and business will allow you to see if this is a service you require. Whether you need it immediately or not if you are planning on running lots of domains it might be option to keep open. Check to see if your hosting provider even offers this type of service, so you can upgrade when necessary.

Virtual web hosting is normally taken on by large companies and corporations. Many hosting companies themselves are on a virtual web hosting plan. This is how they offer the service to you as a customer!

Internet and computer technology can sometimes be overwhelming to understand. Hopefully you now have a better understanding of what virtual hosting actually consists of. It is always best to educate yourself ahead of time. You don't want to be paying for services that you will ever use.

What is a SSL Secure Server

A SSL secure server is a protocol which provides encrypted communication to a secure server. A good example of this is when you are paying with a credit card on a website. The site will use a SSL Secure Server to process your transaction. This allows you as the customer to feel safe that your information cannot be read by anyone else.

The easiest way to understand a SSL Secure Server is to know that it is a method of transmitting information to and from a website securely.

The benefit to using a SSL secure server is one of protection and security. The information which the website collects is stored in a secure location. The type of information stored can include phone numbers, addresses, credit card numbers and social security numbers.

For visitors to your website using a SSL secure server means that they can trust your site. This is especially true if you are collecting data or selling products.

Using a SSL secure server is fairly easy. Your hosting provider may even set it up for you if necessary. Basically all you are doing is to create a new subdirectory in your hosting account. If you use the File Manager it is a simple process to set up.

Once your directory is created you add any pages that you wish to protect inside this subdirectory. What this does is to redirect your website visitors to this secure page. The visitor themselves will not really notice any difference.

If you look in your address bar you will notice that your SSL pages are displayed by https:// instead of just http://.

Each web hosting provider may set up their SSL Secure Servers a little differently. If you are not sure how to do this contact support and they can redirect to the tutorial page.

To use a SSL Secure Server you normally have to purchase a SSL Certificate. Some domain name registrants may include this free with the purchase of a new domain name. Prices for these certificates can vary considerably. So it is worthwhile to research what different companies are offering.

If your website contains private information or you want to protect your content and products buying a SSL Secure Server Certificate is a wise investment. With more people expecting to make purchases online it really makes sense to protect your website. This will in turn attract more visitors who are willing to spend money on your site.

What is Free cPanel?

Hosting companies which offer a cPanel service are very popular. What cPanel does is to allow you to manage and install websites easily. You can install WordPress with one click. Plus you can upload files and documents through their file manager. cPanel also offers Awstats which tracks visitors to your site.

A good definition of cPanel is:

'a Unix based Web hosting control panel" that provides a graphical interface and automation tools designed to simplify the process of hosting a web site. cPanel utilizes a 3 tier structure that provides functionality for administrators, resellers, and end-user website owners to control the various aspects of website and server administration through a standard web browser.'

Free cPanel is normally offered by companies such as Hostgator. While technically it isn't free it is included in your hosting package. As you can tell from the above definition having a cPanel with your hosting account can really make your life easier.

Even if you are planning on just a basic website you will need to install a website or blog on your domain name. This can be done inside your free cPanel by using Fantastico. This is a simple step by step guide to setting up a wordpress, joomla or a Drupal site.

cPanel is easy to use and is one of the reasons why many people are looking for a web host who offers this service. With cPanel you can

easily upload images and files, install shopping carts and forums as well as creating your own help desk ticket system.

Another great feature of cPanel is that you can track and monitor your visitor traffic. Knowing where your visitors are coming from is great. In addition you can find statistics on what pages they visit and which keywords are used to find your site. For a serious business owner this is vital information!

Once you start adding content to your website it is important to backup your files. This way if anything does happen to your site you can easily restore it. Backups can be done from within cPanel and you should get into the habit of performing a backup regularly.

cPanel also offers email setup and forwarding. This allows you to use different email names and have them all redirected into one inbox. Email redirecting provides you with a professional online image by using your domain name. For example you can set up `info@yourdomainnamedotcom`, or multiple variations of this.

If you are just starting out with hosting your own site I would highly recommend you choose a hosting company that offers free cPanel.

What is SEO Hosting?

I don't know about you but when I first heard the term SEO hosting I had no idea what it meant. To me SEO means search engine optimization so what has that to do with hosting?

After a little research I determined that SEO hosting boils down to a multiple IP hosting solution. Anyone familiar with SEO understands the importance of having your sites look as though they are coming from different locations. This makes it look more natural to the search engines. If one IP address has hundreds of domain names pointing to it, this can devalue the domains in the eyes of the search engines.

With IP addresses there are different classes that you can purchase. So this is not an area to jump into blindly. Do some research on the various classes and see which ones are best suited to your needs.

Here is a quick explanation of the different classes:

Your IP address is made up of 4 different areas and looks something like this:

61.43.547.98

Now label each section A, B, C, D these are your classes.

Servers can often have the same numbers in them especially in the Class C area. If you have too many of these it looks suspicious to the search engines. The SEO hosting company will sell you IP addresses with different Class C numbers.

Most hosting companies offer Class C and Class B IP addresses in their packages. This method will cost you more money but might be worthwhile if you have a large number of websites.

One important thing to remember is that Google or any other search engine can still track you by your contact info. So you if decide to go to the expense of using SEO hosting use different contact info on your domain names.

A good SEO hosting company will have the ability to host your domains across multiple IP addresses and across multiple locations. When selecting a company use one that offers plenty of class options on each account. This way if you add more domains you won't have to pay for additional IP addresses.

Remember that SEO hosting is more expensive but for serious internet marketers with multiple domains it can be a wonderful and profitable solution. Because you are hosting numerous sites with them make sure they have high speed bandwidth levels and use modern equipment.

Your Pop3 Server Explained

Technology is a wonderful thing but it can also be downright confusing. This is very true when it comes to hosting websites and setting up your own email accounts.

Once such term that is often confused is a Pop3 Server, just what does this mean?

Well Pop simply stands for Post Office Protocol. This is an application which is used by email clients to retrieve their mail. The number 3 stands for the version number. Pop3 is the current model which is used by services like Gmail, Hotmail and Yahoo mail.

If you have Outlook or Outlook Express on your computer this will also use the Pop3 server protocol. The Pop3 server collects your mail from a remote location by listening in on a port and collects the mail at a pre-set interval. The port used is a well known one Port 110. You can force the Pop3 server to check for mail or set it to check every 15 minutes or more.

To make the Pop3 server work you will need a username and password. The protocol, which can be compared to a simple program, uses certain commands to instruct the Pop3 on what to do.

The commands that the Pop3 Server understands are:

USER - Enter your user name

PASS - Enter your password

QUIT - Quit the Pop3 server

LIST - List the messages and their sizes

RETR – retrieve messages

DELE – delete messages

TOP – show the top number of lines

Your email service instructs the Pop3 server on what to do and you end up with mail in your inbox. Most servers will delete messages from the originating server unless you have instructed them not to.

A Pop3 server removes the emails to your computer. If you lose them from your hard drive they cannot be retrieved. Another thing to remember is that you cannot download via Pop3 to your mobile device and computer. So if you want to check your mail while away from home you may need to use a different service.

An IMAP server which is what Yahoo mail and Gmail use allows your email to stay on the main server. IMAP stands for Internet Mail Access Protocol. While this is a great option it does mean that you can only access your mail while connected to the internet. A Pop3 Server allows you to read mail while not online.

You probably use a combination of both types of mail protocols depending on where you are. This is one benefit of technology that has made our lives that much easier.

Where to Find Cheap Hosting

Everyone today wants to save money and this includes trying to find cheap hosting for your website. Paid hosting is a great way to go and if you can save money on hosting fees then why not?

To save money on hosting you can look for a hosting company that offers a free trial for 30 days. This allows you to install your website and test out the features and functions that they offer.

If you go this route then make sure you test out their customer service department. See how long it takes for a support ticket or question to be answered. Can you call them or do they have an online support chat system?

During this time look into the features that your hosting company offers. Do they allow you to install a shopping cart or PHP scripts? Try to think ahead about what features you may require in the future and see if they cater to them.

Another way to find cheap hosting is to look for specials from hosting service providers. Many times you can find a coupon code that can save you a lot of money on hosting services.

You can also reduce your hosting costs by pre-paying in advance. Normally the more months or years that you pay for the cheaper your hosting becomes.

For example at Hostgator if you commit to a 3 year plan your costs will work out to just \$3.96 per month. This gives you unlimited disk space, bandwidth and a shared SSL secure server.

You do need to be careful when looking for cheap hosting. The saying you get what you pay for is very true. Some hosting services may offer cheap, cheap prices but there is normally some downfall to this somewhere. They may not have a very good support system. If you encounter problems you will have to try and fix them yourself. This has the potential of having your website offline for hours if not days.

The best method for cheap hosting would be to look for coupons to use. If you can possibly afford to pay months in advance this is another very good option. By doing your homework you can compare various hosting providers and narrow down your choices. Plus don't forget to ask fellow online marketers or businesses what hosting company they recommend. Word of mouth referrals are very powerful!

To Your Success!

Alex Major

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