FINDING THE RIGHT WEB HOST

The Right Web Host

It's crucial to choose the right web host for your business or personal use. Poor hosting can cost you a lot of time, money and hard work. With the vast amount of web hosting companies available today it can be difficult to decide which ones are reputable and can be relied on. Before you open your wallet, you need to do some research, determine what your needs are and compare the companies.

This tutorial will help you find the best hosting option for your needs.

What do You Need?

Before you even begin looking at web hosts, you need to figure out what you want and need in a hosting company. Are you looking for a place to host a personal website or are you doing business? A free hosting plan is fine for a simple family site. But a business will need one that offers more advanced features.

Are you looking for a place to host a bog or do you need an ecommerce site? Do they have an easy to use cPanel?

Do they offer tutorials to help you learn how to use their service or do they offer tech support?

What type of hosting do you need; basic, shared, virtual private server, dedicated or managed web hosting?

These are all questions you'll need answers to as well as the following.

Points to Consider

There are eight points to consider when looking for a web host service. They include:

- **Up-time Percentage:** This is the amount of time the host is online. When the server is "down" that means your website is down as well.

- **Tech Support:** This could possibly be one of the most important aspects to web hosting space. Back end support is necessary to keep your site live and to fix problems when they happen. You need support to be there 24/7. Support can be available by email, chat or phone. Look for lots of help pages and FAQs pages.

- **Storage Space:** Most basic servers have enough space for the majority of websites. Unless you have huge downloadable videos, stream live video feeds or have thousands of products, a few gigabytes of storage should be enough.

- **Bandwidth:** Bandwidth is the amount of data that is transferred from your site to those downloading it. For most websites this isn't really a concern. Only those with significant amounts of downloadable videos need to worry about bandwidth.

- **Ecommerce**: Many hosting companies offer a large number of tools like shopping cart software, ecommerce tools, secure servers and database builders are all necessary for an ecommerce site.

- **Blog friendly**: Most hosting companies offer one click installation of WordPress blog software.

- **Number of Domains / Domain Pointers:** Your web hosting company should allow for multiple domains in one package. Businesses often have more than one domain.

- **Number of Emails, FTP accounts / Databases**: As your business grows and more staff is added, you need a host and hosting package that allows each department or staff employee their own domain email address. Every blog needs its own database.

Tips

- ✓ Do a search of your top picks to get honest reviews from others. Visit the company's forum as well to see what others are saying about the host or having issues with.

Talk to others about the hosting service you're Interested In.

✓ Understand the different hosting options available. Shared, Virtual Private Server, Dedicated and Managed Web hosting are just a few. Basic shared web hosting is fine for small amount of traffic. If you are selling a lot of products or have lots of traffic then a dedicated or managed hosting provider is the best choice.

✓ Don't use cost as a consideration when choosing a web host. Cheap hosting may also mean you have extended downtimes. A managed or dedicated hosting provider will cost more upfront but is more reliable in the end.

✓ Look for companies with the ability to scale up if you need to.

✓ Check the maintenance schedules of any company you are interested in for average downtime statistics.

Top 4 Web Hosting Companies

1. Hostgator is a decade-old company that's a serious Web-hosting solution for those looking for a stable, reliable online presence.

2. BlueHost boasts over 20,000 new customers per month and a customer base in the millions.

3. Dream Host boasts that the company provides hosting for over 350,000 customers that have created over 1.3 million blogs, apps, and websites.

4. 1&1.com offers a wide array of shared, virtual, and dedicated server packages that cater to personal and commercial needs of over 12 million customers.

Let's take a closer look at setting up a web host using Dream Host.
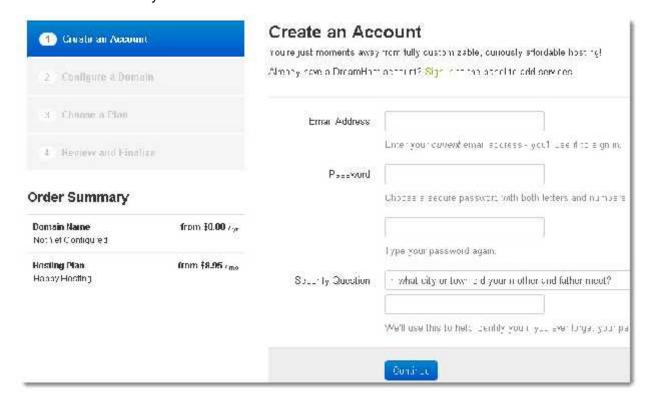
Getting Set up on Dream Host

DreamHost.com offers what is called shared web hosting which simply means that a lot of customers' websites are all hosted or reside on a single server. That server's resources are shared with all the customers on that CPU and RAM.

Shared hosting is an ideal solution for most businesses including website designers, bloggers, e-commerce sites and other small businesses.

Begin

Click the sign up button to begin.

Fill out the form with your information. Click continue.

Configure your Domain:

On this page you can choose to purchase a domain, enter one you already own or skip this step for now.

Choose a plan on the length of time. Click Continue.

Review and Finalize:

Enter your information

Click Complete.

You'll receive an email when your account has been approved. It contains your login details, name servers and instructions for transferring from another host.

Transfer from another host

Be sure you haven't purchased or renewed your registration within the last 60 days. If you have, you can't transfer your registration.

If you can transfer your registrations, then follow these steps:

Unlock your registration.

Update your e-mail address on the whois information page.

Turn off any privacy protection.

Obtain a valid Auth Code (or, epp code) from your current registrar.

Tip: Back up everything on your old host before beginning the transfer.

Login to your Dream Host account. Upload your website files to the new account.

Return to your old hosting service and set the nameservers for your domain registration to point to Dream Host using the nameservers you received in your welcome email.

Once all the registration and files have transferred, cancel your old hosting plan.

What to Do Next

You can find the right web hosting service for your needs by comparing and researching what is available. Don't settle on one just because the price is low. You don't want to find out later that they have a lot of down time. Choose your company, and then learn how to install your domains and websites on it through their knowledgebase. Don't be afraid to use their tech support to help you get started as well.