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Selecting a Hosting Platform and Domain Name

Having a website of your own has never been easier with an assortment of different designers, hosts, and other tools to make your first step into the web a swift one. While many companies provide similar benefits to using their services to build and host a website not all are built the same. Many of these services have become affordable with hosting only costing a few dollars for the first year or two while others provide an easy interface to help navigate and design a website online with no coding knowledge. Three of these services have been selected for comparison: HostGator, Bluehost, and GoDaddy.

First on the chopping block is HostGator, a web hosting platform that boasts a cheap pricing model from as low as $2 to as high as $5 a month across three different plans as an introductory offer. Each plan has unmetered bandwidth and storage of 10-20-40 gigabytes respectively. WordPress comes pre installed but cPanel access allows for more control over the website's files and other information. Malware scanning and SSL certificates come with each plan but the SSL certificate is limited to the first year of the lowest “hatchling” plan. Last of note is the use of artificial intelligence to allow for swift creation of the website based on a quick questionnaire. HostGator provides near 100% uptime and fast speeds with an average load time of around one second and response times of under two fifths of a second. These pros come with a few flaws. The low pricing is an introductory rate and as such the renewal rate is double or triple the starting price. Additionally only the highest payment plan provides daily backups of the server. The lowest payment plans SSL certificate will expire after the first year along with the claimed domain name and moving up in the plan while providing a solution to the SSL needing to be renewed does not resolve the domain name no longer being free.

Bluehost is the most recommended hosting platform among a sea of web hosts when it comes to its WordPress integration, having a dedicated team to work on WordPress optimizations and features in-house. Bluehost has four pricing plans starting at $2 a month and going up to $10 a month for the first year and doubling in price afterwards. Only the highest paying plan offers a 1 year daily website backup for free. SSL encryption is completely free and malware scanning is provided. Additionally BlueHost provides access to CodeGuard, SpamExperts, and SiteLock so the server's data is stored, protected, and backed up. Speeds for Bluehost are also modestly fast around the world with the United States having times of under 100ms with the higher regions having response times of around 300ms. But even with all the benefits Bluehost does not guarantee near 100% uptime of the servers. Upselling of other services is also pushed during checkout of the web hosting services with no month-to-month payment available for anyone who wants to have a short trial period. An e-commerce storefront is not available either so in the event goods or services would need to be sold it would not be possible to do so using Bluehost.

Last of note is GoDaddy, the one stop shop for domain name registration, web hosting services and website builder. GoDaddy sports an excellent custom having 24/7 chat and phone support, knowledge base and how-to videos as well as many good user reviews. Speeds on GoDaddy websites are claimed to be 40% faster with optimized hardware with options to pay more in the event of higher traffic on the website. All payment plans are 3 years in length with prices starting at $6 for the most basic plan and going up to $55 a month for the most features and performance. WordPress and migration tools are provided allowing for changing of web hosts while keeping any previously made information on the website's design and other files between domains. Built-in CMS alongside WordPress ensures that updating content on the website is easy. GoDaddy is not the greatest though needing to pay for the three year plan upfront and in full. Additionally, services are not competitively priced compared to alternative web hosting services.

Overall in regards to Fernscape Interiors and their use case for a website I feel that GoDaddy might be the best to start with. While pricing is upfront and marginally higher than other websites the amount of tools at the designers disposal allow for any desired website customization. The multitude of plans provided by GoDaddy allow for scalability to the needs of the company and if and when a new web host is needed all information can be transferred with WordPress. Security plans are available outside the usual daily scans. Customer support is highly appraised by customers and load times for GoDaddy hosted sites are claimed to be fast by GoDaddy themselves. With this in mind GoDaddy appears to be the best overall pick for the start of the website.

When choosing a domain name it must be short and sweet so it may be remembered by many while still portraying the company, website, and overall image. To maximize traffic multiple considerations must be made. The top level domain or TLD should be something widely known such as .com, or .net. Hyphens should not be used as it is associated with scams or spam material. Names and link extensions should be short and brief to keep enhanced readability. All domain names were run through GoDaddy’s domain name search. With this in mind the most basic choice of a domain name would be “fernscapeinteriors.com” as it is a direct translation of the company's name. GoDaddy claims it will cost $44 to register and contains the keyword “interior” making it more likely to appear in interior design searches. This is probably the best choice by far but other ideas are “fsinteriors.com” which was already taken. However “fsinteriors.net” is still available for $50 making it an option but not as good as the previous mentions. “fernscapeinteriors.us” is an option with restrictions that do not appear to apply to Fernscape Interiors - that being U.S. citizenship and may not be used for personal websites i.e. must be used for a business. This would cost $5 according to GoDaddy for the first year then go up to $20. Any other alterations would hinder the readability of the domain name or the visibility when searching, so sticking with “fernscapeinteriors.com” despite its simplicity may be the best option. According to GoDaddy having “interiors” in the name increases the likelihood of the domain appearing and a similar search while the .com TLD makes the link more likely to be accepted as normal by viewers as compared to other less known TLDs. Lastly the domain being a direct representation of the brand name conveys the company's image and thus correlates with the website theme or branding.

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