Self-Hosting & Home Servers 101

or

How Sonos made me like Docker

Why Self-Host? Unlocking the Benefits

Ultimate Data Privacy

Take back ownership of your personal information. Self-hosting means your data resides on your hardware, under your rules, away from third-party servers.

Empowering Control

No more being at the mercy of cloud service changes or unexpected shutdowns. You decide how your services run, what features they have, and when they update.

Boost Your Skills

Every self-hosted project is a hands-on learning experience. You'll gain practical skills in networking, system administration, and software deployment that are highly valuable.

Popular Projects: Media Server

Stream Your Content with Plex or Jellyfin

Imagine having all your legally owned movies, TV shows, and music organised and streamable from any device, anywhere. A media server makes this a reality, giving you a personal Netflix and/or Spotify for your own collection.

- Consolidate your digital media library.

- Access content on smart TVs, phones, tablets, and web browsers.

- Nice user interface with rich metadata and cover art.

- Share access with family and friends, if you choose.
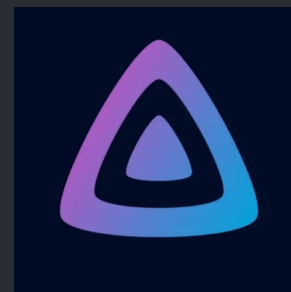
Popular Projects: Document Management

Declutter with Paperless-ngx

Paperless-ngx transforms your physical documents into an organised, searchable digital archive. Scan receipts, invoices, contracts, and more, and let the software automatically sort, tag, and make them searchable using advanced OCR (Optical Character Recognition).

- Automatic OCR for searchable text in documents.
- Automated tagging and categorisation.
- Monitor email accounts for automatic import of attachments.
- Say goodbye to physical filing cabinets!

Popular Projects: Password Manager

Secure Your Logins with Vaultwarden

Tired of remembering countless passwords? Vaultwarden offers a secure, self-hosted solution for managing all your login credentials. It's compatible with Bitwarden clients, providing a robust and encrypted way to store your sensitive information.

- Generate strong, unique passwords for every service.
- Access your passwords from all your devices securely.
- Benefit from end-to-end encryption, ensuring only you can access your data.
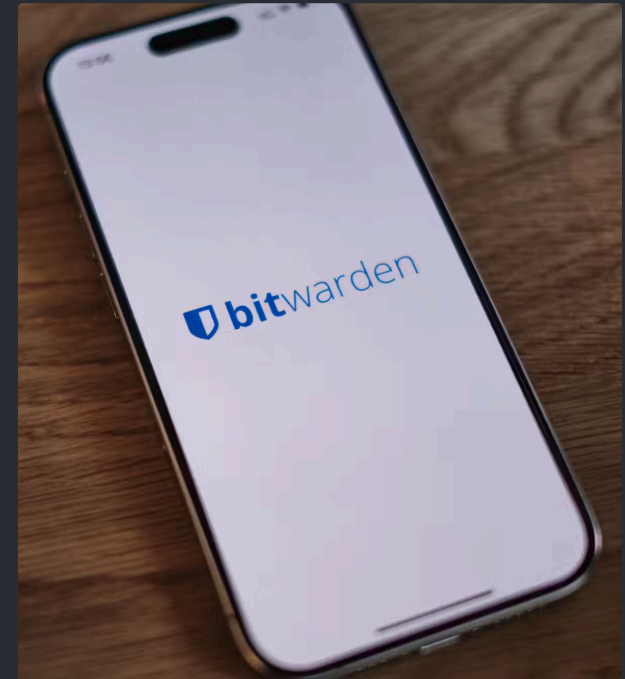
Popular Projects: Photo Backup

Your Own Photo Cloud with Immich

Looking for an alternative to big tech photo services? Immich provides a self-hosted solution that feels just like Google Photos, allowing you to back up, organise, and share your precious memories with privacy and control.

- Automatic backup from mobile devices.

- Features like facial recognition and timelines.

- Create albums and share them easily.

- Keep your photos off commercial clouds and on your own hardware.

Getting Started: Your Self-Hosting Journey

Ready to dive in? Here's a practical path to begin your self-hosting adventure:

Start Simple, Build Up

You don't need fancy hardware. An old laptop, desktop, or a credit card-sized Raspberry Pi is often enough to begin. Pick one service and get it running before adding more.

Embrace Docker

Consider using Docker. It simplifies setting up applications by packaging them with all their dependencies, making deployment consistent and much easier.

Connect with the Community

You're not alone! The self-hosting community is incredibly supportive. Check out the **r/selfhosted Reddit** for discussions and troubleshooting, or explore the **awesome-selfhosted.net** list for project ideas. The **selfh.st** newsletter also offers great insights.

Practical Tips for Success

Remember these key takeaways as you embark on your self-hosting journey:

- **Backup, Backup, Backup:** Regularly back up your data to multiple locations. I use rsync and backblaze.

- **Security First:** Keep your systems updated and use strong, unique passwords. Consider if you really need to expose your services to the public.

- **Patience is Key:** Between breaking updates, maintainers dropping from a project, and the nature of volunteer-based development, you'll eventually find your patience tested.

- **Documentation is Your Friend:** Keep notes on your configurations and installations.

Practical Tips for Success

Docker deserves a second chance.

Your Journey Begins Now!

Self-hosting is a rewarding path to digital freedom, continuous learning and some degree of insanity as you justify your decisions to folk who like 'the easy route'.

If you have any questions, or just want to share your self-hosting aspirations, let's chat during the social time!