

Web - Hosting Concepts

Web hosting deals with putting the contents of your website on a Web server. Hosting your website on your own server could be an option. But this will become very much expensive unless you are hosting a site like yahoo.com or google.com. So this tutorial does not cover how to set up your own hosting server.

Buying a server space or renting a complete server from an Internet Service Provider (ISP) is the most widely used option. This section guides you to choose a hosting type and makes you aware of other related concepts.

Hosting Platforms

You can go for any of the following two most widely used hosting platforms –

- **Windows Hosting Servers** – If you are a Windows lover then you will find many hosting servers running different flavors of Windows and you can buy space from these servers. Normally Windows hosting servers are more expensive because of lot of software licensing costs are involved with these servers.
- **Linux Hosting Servers** – If you want to go for Linux then opportunities are unlimited and they will have to pay less than what you will pay for Windows Hosting Server. There are many ISP who provides Hosting Servers with different flavors of Unix.

Hosting Types

There are many options available and you can select any hosting type based on your requirement and budget. Following are most widely used hosting types –

Free Hosting

Yes, this is true there are many service providers who will give you free space on their web server with a condition that you will allow them to run their advertisement at your web pages. So if you are OK with this option, then you have nothing to pay for a space. There are some websites like geocities.com, lycos.com, myspace.com, etc. that give you space to build your web pages.

Shared Hosting

With shared hosting, your website is hosted on a powerful server along with other websites. On a shared host, you will have your own user ID and password to login to the shared host and you will be allowed to work in your work area. You would not be able to touch any file or directory belonging

to other host partner. Even you would not know how many sites are hosted on your shared host. This type of hosting is very cost effective and good for small websites where your space and speed are not very important. Here traffic on one site will affect the speed of all other hosted sites.

Virtual Dedicated Hosting

This type of hosting is better for medium size business. With virtual dedicated hosting, you will have a dedicated bandwidth and dedicated RAM for your site. You will be given a root ID and password to maintain your Web server. You will be the complete owner of your virtual dedicated server and will be able to install or de-install any software. This type of hosting is created on a single server, but it is managed in such a way that every user will have dedicated speed and bandwidth. This is bit more expensive but really good one for medium size business.

Dedicated Hosting

This type of hosting is very similar to virtual dedicated hosting, but here, a complete machine will be allotted for you. They are more expensive than virtual dedicated hosting and should be considered when you have a very high traffic requirement.

Collocated Hosting

It is very difficult to set dedicated resources such as high-security against fire and vandalism, regulated backup power, dedicated Internet connections and more. Collocation is the option which allows you to put your machine in a service provider's premises to avail all the available facilities. This is also a very expensive option and should be opted when you have very high traffic requirement.

Hosting Components

When you buy a Web server space, then you should be clear about the follows. You should do a price comparison between different service providers based on the following components –

Disc Space

A small or medium website will require between 10 and 100MB of disk space. If you plan to keep a lot of audio and video on your website, then you need plan to buy more space. Before buying server space, you should check the options available to expand your disc space if you need it in future.

Monthly Traffic

A small or medium website will need between 1GB and 10GB of data transfer on a monthly basis. If you plan to keep a lot of audio and video on your website, then you need a plan with more data transfer capacity. Check different options based on your requirements. What are the other options

available in case you cross the given data transfer limit. Your site should not be stopped in case you exceed given limit.

Processing Speed

If you are buying space on a shared machine, then you cannot guess how much speed will be given to you. In that case, only way is to see other hosted sites with the same service provider to know about their hosting quality. But if you are buying virtual dedicated server or dedicated server, then you should consider how much RAM is being allocated to you. Your pricing will depend on the given processing power to you.

Connection Speed

Nowadays, most service providers allow very fast connection speed. So choose a service provider who is giving better connection speed in terms of bits per second. You can have a connection speed ranging from 64Kb per second to 2.488Gb per second.

Email Accounts

Make sure you are going to get sufficient number of e-mail accounts. There are many other options available which come along with your e-mail account. Like, will you get IMAP, POP and E-mail Forwarding options available along with your e-mail facilities.

Emailing Support

Apart from having email accounts, it is also very important that your web server should have a facility to send emails from back-end. In case your site visitors want to contact to you using a form, then you will be able to use that emailing facility to send emails to your designated account. In simple terms, you should make sure that the SMTP Server is setup and working on your Web server.

Latest Technologies

You should make sure that your web server is equipped with all the latest technologies. It should have the latest version support for PHP, PERL, ASP and JAVA, etc.

Databases

There are many databases available MySQL, Oracle, SQL Server, etc. You should choose your server based on your database requirement. If you are buying space on a shared server, then you need to verify how much space will be allocated for your database. Many ISPs do not give more than a limited space for databases. If your site needs a lot of database size, then you should go for a virtual dedicated server.

Server Uptime

It is important that you buy a web server from a reliable and reputed ISP. You should make sure your ISP is giving you 99.99% server uptime. If the server is down, then there are many service providers who give you compensation in case your site goes down more than a limited number of times.

Backup & FTP

Make sure your Service Provider is giving you more ways of taking regular backup of your website. If your site is changing everyday, then it becomes very important that you should take regular backup of your website. Many service providers do it on your behalf by charging a small cost for this service.

Control Panel

Just make sure what type of facilities you will get to maintain your hosting account. Check if your service provider is providing you an easy-to-use Control Panel or some other similar tool. Using a Control Panel, you should be able to maintain basic operations related to your website such as logging your service request, your reboot request, or any other problem.

Customer Support

Before finalizing a deal with your service provider, you should make sure they provide you the required support. You can get this information using Internet forums or from your friends. There are many service providers who give you 24x7 support for any technical or non-technical problem.

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