Web Hosting Report
--- GANG RUAN

ANSWER QUESTIONS:

1. What is a web server? Why would you need one?

<u>What is a web server</u>?
A web server is a computer software with associated hardware users can store their files for website pages for visitors from around world to access the website pages through http (hypertext transfer protocol)

Below is quoted from Reference [1] describe more professionally:

A web server is computer software and underlying hardware that accepts requests via HTTP, the network protocol created to distribute web pages, or its secure variant HTTPS. A user agent, commonly a web browser or web crawler, initiates communication by making a request for a specific resource using HTTP, and the server responds with the content of that resource or an error message. The server can also accept and store resources sent from the user agent if configured to do so. [1]

<u>Why would you need a web server</u>?
For website owners, they need a place to store their website files so visitors from the around the world can access and see the websites.

Below is quoted from Reference [3]

A web server's main purpose is to store web site files and broadcast them over the internet for you site visitors to see. In essence, a web server is simply a powerful computer that stores and transmits data via the internet. When someone visits a web page on your site their browser communicates with your web server, sending and receiving information that ultimately dictates what appears on the visitor's computer screen. Thus, the main purpose of a web server is to store and transfer web site data upon the request of a visitor's browser. [3]

2. Explain why getting a domain name is not enough to put your site up on the web.

Domain name is just giving you an exclusive web name for people around the world to use for accessing your website. While the web server is a hosting service where website owner can store their files for the websites so people from around the world can access and see the website pages.

Below is quoted from Reference [2]:

Domain names and web hosting are two different services. However, they work together to make websites possible.

Basically a domain name system is like a massive address book that is constantly updated. Behind each domain name, there is an address of the web hosting service storing the website's files.

Without domain names, it will not be possible for people to find your website and without web hosting you cannot build a website.

This is why many top domain name registrars also offer web hosting services.

To build a website you will need both a domain name and web hosting account. Buying a domain name alone only gives you right to use that particular domain name for a specific period (usually 1 year).

You need web hosting to store your website's files. After you get hosting, you need to update your domain name settings and point it to your web hosting service provider.

You can also buy both the domain and hosting from the same company. Typically a domain name costs $14.99 / year, and web hosting normally costs $7.99 / month.

If you are starting your first website, then this may sound like a lot.

Thankfully, Bluehost, an official WordPress recommended hosting provider, has agreed to offer our users a free domain name and over 60% off on web hosting ($2.75/month). [2]

3. What service does a website hosting company provide?

A web hosting company provide a website server for website owner to store their website files so people from all over the world can access and see the website. A web hosting company also provide technical support of their hosting server, website files, accessibility, speed, security and related service.

Below is quoted from Reference [4]:

A web hosting company provides a type of internet hosting service that allows individuals and organizations to make their website accessible via the World Wide Web. Web hosts are companies that provide space on a server owned or leased for use by clients, as well as providing internet connectivity, typically in a data center. Web hosts can also provide data center space and connectivity to the Internet for other servers located in their data center, called colocation, also known as housing in Latin America or France. [4]

4. What are the most important characteristics to look for in selecting a good web hosting company?

For me as a website beginner, Reliability and technical support are the most important characteristics.

Below is quoted from JOHNNY FLASH website (Reference [5]). They have a comprehensive description of 9 qualities of the best web hosting companies:

9 qualities of the best web hosting companies: [5]

1) **Solid/Reliability**

   Every time your web site goes down, so does your number of visitors. If you lose visitors, then you lose profit, members, reputation, etc. You cannot afford for your web site to be down—even for a short amount of time! To ensure the web host you're looking at will be reliable, find out how many customers they have (typically the more the better), see if they have a guaranteed up-time, search for complaints about them on the internet and ask other users using their service about their experience (if you know any).

2) **Speed**
   No one likes to wait in line to get what they want—they want it now or they wanted it yesterday. Starbucks delivers quickly and people know that the Starbucks line (even if long) moves fast. If your web site loads slow because it's on an overburdened server or on a slow network, your visitors will go somewhere else. Make sure its blazing fast. Test the web hosts site and some of their customer's sites to see how fast they load.

3) **Space**
   Starbucks usually have indoor and outdoor seating to accommodate the most people. It's not easy to move a restaurant and it's not easy to move your web site. Make sure you have more than enough space for what you plan to do with your web site. Web space is cheap, so get a lot of it.

4) **Substantial Bandwidth**
   Imagine if Starbucks was only allowed to have 1,000 customers per day and then they had to close their doors. This is essentially what bandwidth is for web sites. If you have too much traffic and use too much bandwidth, they cut off your web site or charge you more. It protects the web hosting companies from having someone who uses up all of the server resources. Make sure your new web hosting company allows you to buy more bandwidth should you someday need it.

5) **Support**
   If you walked into a Starbucks and you couldn't find an employee to take your order that would be really frustrating. When you have a problem with your web hosting company, you want to be able to reach some one and get a quick

response. Find out if they have a published phone number, their hours of support, and how easy it is to reach someone.

6) **Superior Features & Technology**
When was the last time you heard some one ask for something at Starbucks they couldn't make? When it comes to your web site, make sure you have all the options you need. Look into their control panel, number of allowed sub-domains, scripting language support, databases, and whether it is hosted on a Windows or Unix platform.

7) **Sufficient Email**
Find out if there is a limit to the number of email boxes you can have and what other email features they support. Make sure you have full control over them and can manage them yourself.

8) **Secure Location**
Web hosts that are local will likely be faster, more reliable and easier to contact than those that are not nearby. It's best to at least have the web server be in the same country as most of your visitors. It doesn't make sense to use a hosting company in the UK or Europe if you all of your visitors are in the United States. Also, make sure your web site information will be safe and secure on their servers.

9) **Standard Pricing/Payment Plans**
Finally, the last thing we can learn from Starbucks is that you get what you pay for. Starbucks charges more but you get better, faster service more of the time than you do at other coffee shops. When it comes to your web hosting company, you will usually get what you pay for—there are exceptions to every rule, but in general this is true. Also, beware for hosting companies that lure you with a low price but nickel and dime you for extra features that are standard on most web hosts (GoDaddy is notorious for this).

5. **Research companies (Links to an external site.) that provide website hosting plans. On average, what is the price range (price per month) for hosting a website?**

The Top 10 Best Web Hosting Providers:

1) Bluehost – Best Web Host for Beginners ($2.75/month)
2) DreamHost – Most Affordable Month-to-Month Plan ($2.59/month)
3) Hostinger – Best Cheap Hosting Plans ($0.99/month)
4) HostGator – Best for Lean/Minimal Needs ($2.75/month)
5) A2 Hosting – Fast & Reliable Shared Hosting ($2.99/month)
6) GreenGeeks – Best Eco-Friendly Hosting ($2.95/month)
7) WP Engine – Best Managed WordPress Hosting ($30/month)
8) InMotion – Best VPS Hosting ($5/month)

9) SiteGround – Best for Making Your WordPress Site Speedy & Secure ($6.99/month)
10) Nexcess – Best for scaling and growth ($$15.84/month)

*Note: The price listed is for 1 domain and basic plan and on sale.

Average price above is $7.30/month.

6. **What are the most important features for you when reviewing a hosting plan?**

My preference is "Hostgator". They are good for beginner and small business. I don't require many domains and much space, but 24/7 support is the most important. HostGator SEO Tools Start is a good choice if you are beginning a new website that needs to be submitted to search engines. If you have a Business Hosting Plan, it includes Free SEO Tools as part of the hosting plan. From the web hosting feature comparison table below, you can see, Hostgator have free domain registration, unlimited Web-Traffic Limitations, and 500GB/month server storage space with comparable price. The point is that Hostgator covers everything you could possibly need from a host for a beginner or small business.

WEB HOSTING FEATURE COMPARISON:

	Bluehost	DreamHost	Hostgator
Domain-name registration costs	Free	$6.99	Free
Database Support	MySQL	MySQL	MySQL
Website-Traffic Limitations	50GB/month	Unlimited	Unlimited
Server Storage Space	50GB/month	50GB/month	500GB/month
Cost per month	$2.75	$2.59	$2.75

Reference:
[1] WIKIPEDIA <<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Web_server>>
[2] wpbeginner –BEGINNER'S GUIDE FOR WORDPRESS
<<https://www.wpbeginner.com>>
[3] WEBHOSTING GEEKS <<https://webhostinggeeks.com/>>
[4] WIKIPEDIA <<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Web_hosting_service>>
[5] JOHNNY FLASH <<https://www.johnnyflash.com/choosing-a-web-host/>>