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Best free web hosting of 2019

By Desire Athow 2 days ago Web

A disappearing breed – so catch them while you can

Image Credit: Pexels
(Image credit: Image Credit: Panumas Nikhomkhai / Pexels)

The expense of setting up and maintaining a website can add up quickly, so picking the best free web hosting provider for your needs can help cut costs. But be careful, as we found that out of a list of 18 free website providers that we compiled, only eight of them – less than half, in other words – actually delivered the goods.

BEST FREE WEB HOSTING

1. Infinityfree
2. Byethost
3. Googiehost
4. FreeHostingNoAds
5. 000Webhost
6. FreeWebHostingArea

Read on for our detailed analysis of each host

Out of 18 free web hosting providers, Infinityfree is our recommended choice with Byethost, Googiehost, 000Webhost, FreeHostingNoAds, and FreeWebHostingArea being the other options.

Because you are provided with a free service, the obligations usually attached to a paid subscription no longer exist, and you are usually left to your own devices when things go wrong. None of the free web hosting providers that passed our test could measure up with even the cheapest paid-for service on the market.

But there's worse news still. We discovered that the websites of some free web hosting providers were not properly secured, which doesn't generate much faith in their ability to deliver the level of service you'd expect from paid-for providers. Remember the old adage, 'you get what you pay for'? Well, nowhere else in the tech business is this truer than with web hosting.

Our advice would be to steer clear of free web hosting services altogether unless absolutely necessary. Should you want to go ahead, this is our shortlist of the best free service providers out there. If you think there is a free web hosting provider worth covering, send me a tweet: @desireathow

- Free website builders may actually be a better choice if you simply want to get an online presence quickly and easily
- Our complete list of the best web hosting solutions is also worth checking out

bluehost

Cheapest Bluehost Shared Plan | ~~$7.99~~ $2.75 p/m | 63% off

A fantastic bargain for TechRadar visitors, Bluehost has cut the price of its Shared Plan (regularly $7.99 p/m) down to a mere $2.75 per month for the first term only. You get $175 in offers 24/7 support plus free domain and site builder and 30-day money-back guarantee.

VIEW DEAL

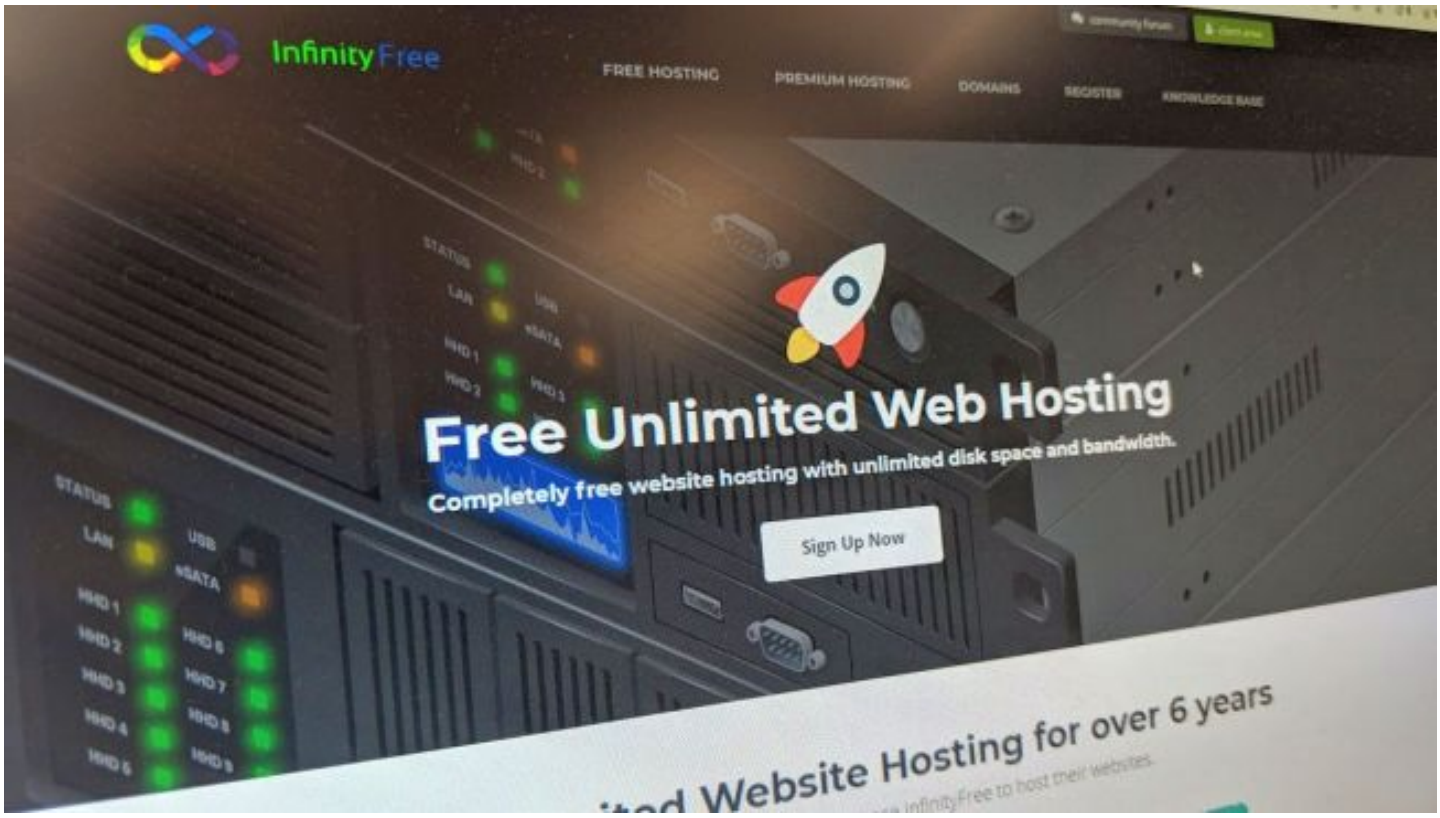

Image Credit: Infinityfree

1. Infinityfree

Best overall free web hosting

Disk space: Unlimited | **Domain hosting:** Unlimited | **Monthly traffic:** Unlimited Bandwidth | **Subdomains:** Unlimited | **Email accounts:** 10 | **FTP accounts:** 1 | **MySQL databases:** 400

- ⊕ Unlimited storage/bandwidth
- ⊕ 400 MySQL databases
- ⊖ Average load times

In the world of free website hosting, Infinityfree stands out for good reasons. It has a well designed website that makes a positive impression and ticks the right boxes for us. Its homepage gets a C performance grade in our load time test but other than that, it looks pretty solid.

It has been in the business for over six years, claims to have 300,000 users and offers unlimited disk space and bandwidth (albeit with a very generous 50,000 daily hits). You can host as many domains as you want but you will only get 10 e-mail accounts and one FTP to upload your content.

There is no hidden fees and despite its free status, you will get a 99.9% uptime guarantee (although you are more or less on your own if your site goes down) and the popular Softaculous Script installer with more than 400 applications.

We were surprised to see that its features list include 400 MySQL databases (where others give only a handful, if at all), a free DNS service, free SSL and free Cloudflare CDN.

As expected Infinityfree offers a cheap paid for hosting (Infinityfree Ultimate Premium) that offers unlimited everything for $6.90 per month, worth an upgrade as you will also get access to CloudFlare Railgun, which cuts load times significantly.

- Try Infinityfree free web hosting service

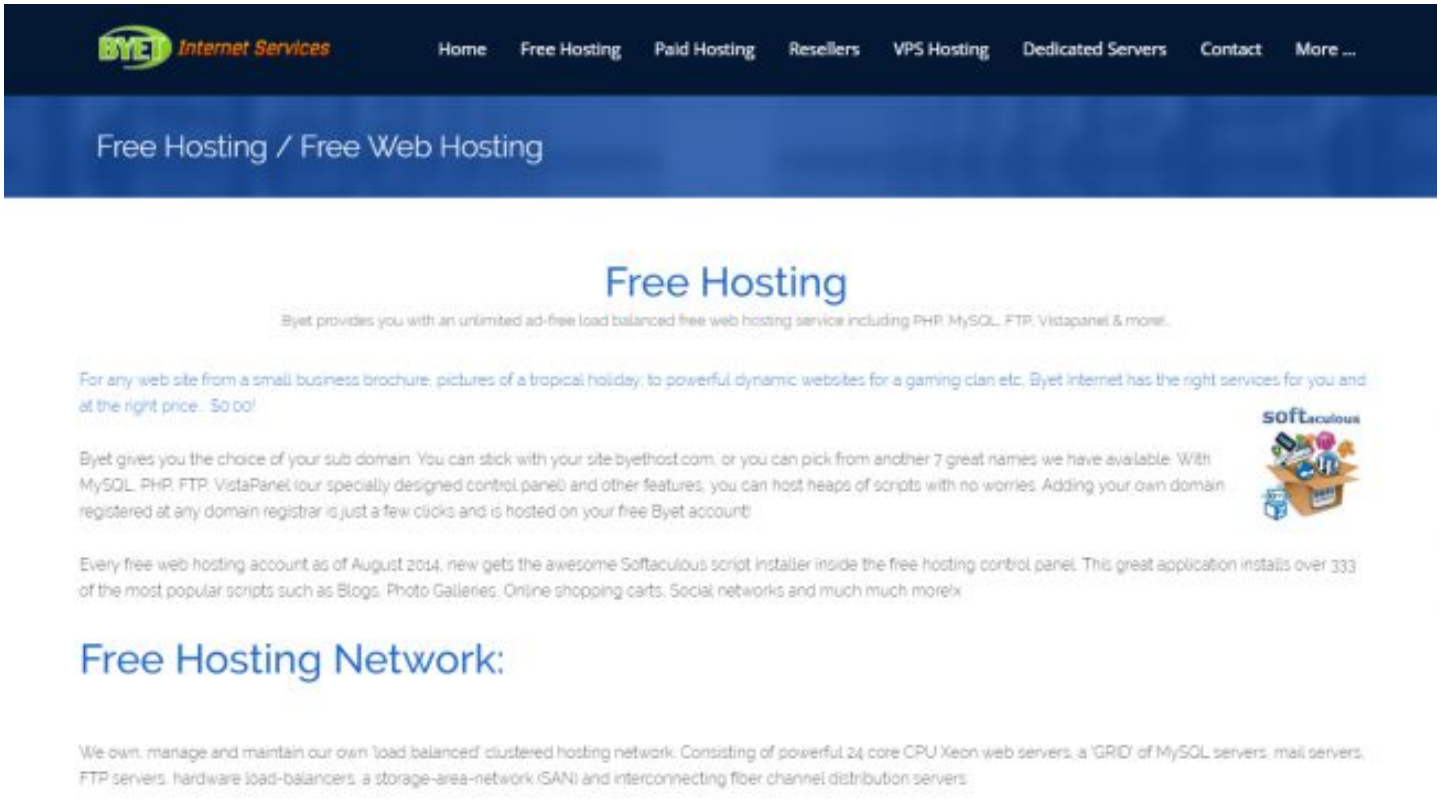

Image Credit: Byethost

2. Byethost

Quick and easy hosting

Disk space: 5GB | **Domain hosting:** 1 | **Monthly traffic:** Unlimited | **Subdomains:** 7 | **Email accounts:** 5 | **FTP accounts:** 1 | **MySQL databases:** 5

- ⊕ Good support
- ⊕ Easy to use
- ⊖ Limited server space

Byethost is part of Byet Internet, a US-based provider of hosting, domain name and reseller services. With more than one million websites hosted, It claims that its free hosting service is, "one of the most powerful networks dedicated solely to free hosting in the world."

Users are given 5GB of server space, unlimited monthly bandwidth and MySQL / PHP compatibility. They also benefit from 24/7 tech support and access to Byethost's community and knowledge base. And if you are ever interested in becoming a free web hosting provider yourself, Byethost operates a separate entity, myownfreehost, that allows you to do just that.

- Try Byethost free web hosting service

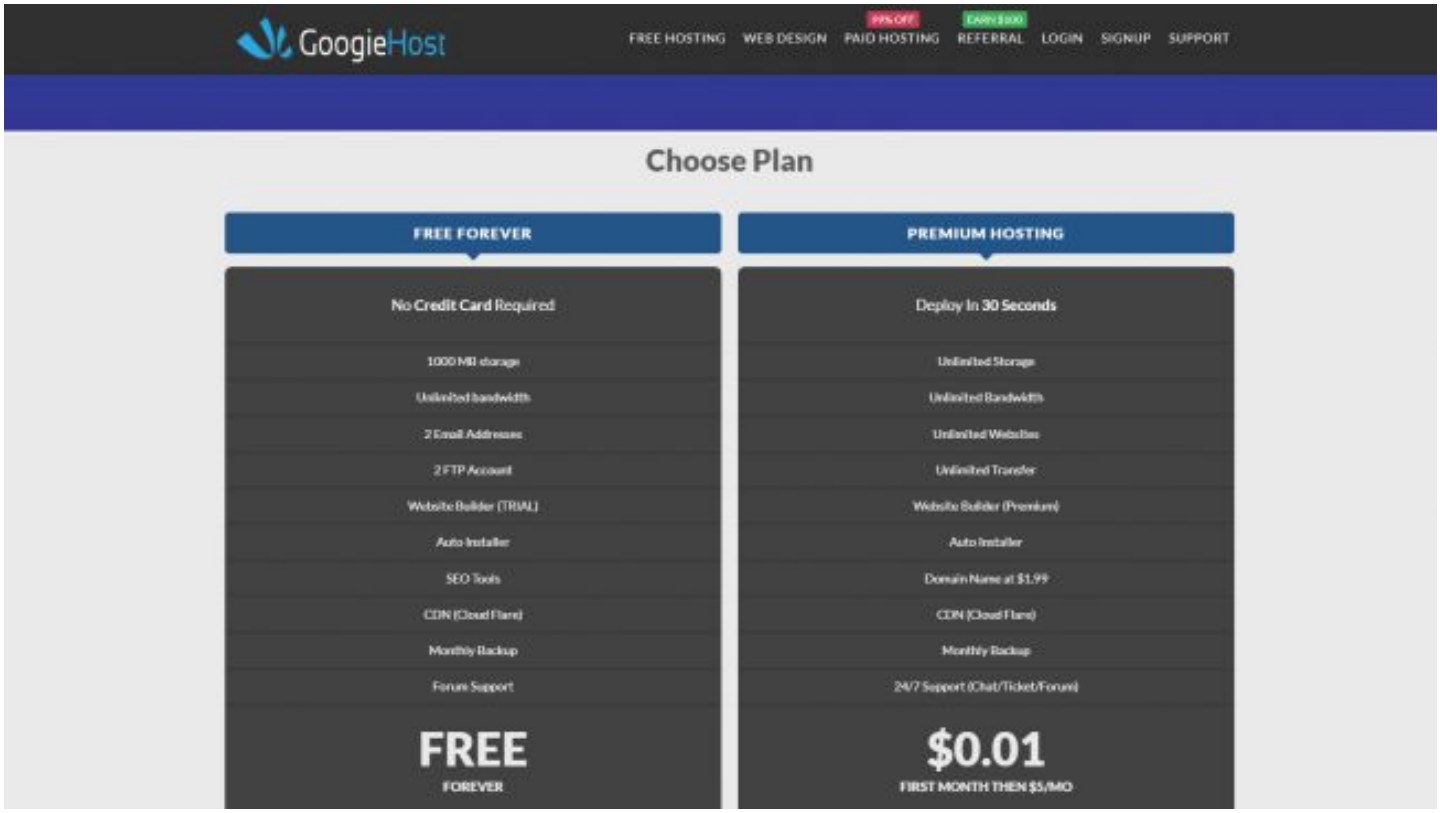

Image Credit: Googiehost

3. Googiehost

A free host that gives you cPanel and Cloudflare

Disk space: 1GB | **Domain hosting:** 1 | **Monthly traffic:** Unlimited | **Subdomains:** 2 | **Email accounts:** 2 | **FTP accounts:** 2 | **MySQL databases:** 2

- ⊕ 100GB of data
- ⊕ 2 FTP accounts
- ⊕ Free SSL
- ⊖ Site doesn't inspire trust
- ⊖ Worrying security errors

You could easily confuse Googiehost with Googlehost, a cheeky way of getting some attention. However, the eight-year-old Googiehost still remains one of the better options in a not-so-good bunch of free web hosting providers.

That said, the company's website inspires little confidence. The small print copyright notice extends until 2021 rather than 2019, presumably to protect against potential infractions by time travellers. Also, odd grammatical mistakes abound – *Lastest, Trsuted, Powerfull* – not to mention confusing terms: SSD or HDD space? SSL or no SSL? Unlimited or 100GB bandwidth? In short, tread carefully.

Still, it's not all bad. This is the only provider here to come with cPanel and Cloudflare, albeit in its free form. However, note that we experienced a few instances where the dreaded "your connection is not private" popped up on our screen when trying to access cPanel. That's never a good sign as Chrome is identifying it as a "not secure" property.

With more than 165,000 hosted sites, Googiehost's revenue model relies on some of the free websites converting to paid-for ones via Interserver.net. Plus it does run a few banner ads on the control panels and on its own website – but not on the users' sites. A last caveat: You need to provide a reason for the firm to accept your website, a special version of Recaptcha, and a surprising way to weed out spammers.

- Try Googiehost free web hosting service

Image Credit: FreeHostingNoAds

4. FreeHostingNoAds

A good alternative to Googiehost

Disk space: 1GB | **Domain hosting:** 1 | **Monthly traffic:** 5GB | **Subdomains:** 3 | **Email accounts:** 1 | **FTP accounts:** 1 | **MySQL databases:** 1

- ⊕ Largest file size limit
- ⊕ Straightforward installation
- ⊕ 3 subdomains
- ⊖ Very limited one-click install
- ⊖ Limited disk space and bandwidth
- ⊖ Specs for free plan on website are incorrect

FreeHostingNoAds delivers just what it says on the tin: Free web hosting without any adverts. The brand is owned by Runhosting, an established web hosting provider that offers unlimited disk space and unlimited traffic for as little as $2.39 per month.

As expected, though, FreeHostingNoAds offers a small subset of what you get with a paid-for account, and uses the same dashboard as Batcave (1GB/5GB/1 domain) and FreeHostingEU (200MB/4GB/5 domains). The latter are two other free web hosting providers that share an identical set of features with FreeHostingNoAds, and may well be part of the same family.

An SSL certificate, which will give you the all-important security padlock in browsers, will set you back an eye-watering $30. The control panel, via Zacky Tools Installer, is extremely limited, with either Grav, WordPress or Joomla being offered as one-click installs. However, you will be able to install your own should you want to do so – but bear in mind that the file size limit is only 15MB.

Creating a new account is straightforward, but we were slightly concerned by the fact that the account emails landed straight in our spam box, a sign that some sites hosted by FreeHostingNoAds might be blacklisted.

- Try FreeHostingNoAds free web hosting service

Image Credit: 000Webhost

5. 000Webhost

A controversial choice that can't be ignored

Disk space: 1GB | **Domain hosting:** 1 | **Monthly traffic:** 10GB | **Subdomains:** 0 | **Email accounts:** 0 | **FTP accounts:** 1 | **MySQL databases:** 1

- ⊕ Established player
- ⊕ Impressive bandwidth allowance
- ⊖ No one-click install
- ⊖ No email accounts or subdomains

CHECK AMAZON

Our fifth pick is 000Webhost, a free website hosting provider owned and operated by Hostinger. 000Webhost has been around for 10 years and has millions of users, which unfortunately makes it a prime target for hackers. In 2015, the provider's entire database was compromised with details of an estimated 13.5 million accounts stolen. Since then, 000Webhost has completely changed but many users still remember the hack to this day.

There's no control panel, although there are three routes should you want to build a website: You can use the Zyro website builder, or WordPress, or just upload your own files.

As expected, there's no SSL certificate, but slightly surprising is the absence of subdomains, email accounts, as well as support via tickets (you have to go through the forums).

You should be able to install two websites, but we got an error message when we tried to do this a second time, saying that we had reached our limit. Furthermore, the account creation email was flagged by Google as a suspicious email, with a pop-up warning that malware often comes from that URL. Note that you can also create a website on 000webhostapp.com using the same credentials as 000webhost.com.

- Try 000Webhost free web hosting service

Image Credit: FreeWebHostingArea

6. FreeWebHostingArea

Ideal for seasoned veterans

Disk space: 1.5GB | **Domain hosting:** 1 | **Monthly traffic:** Unlimited bandwidth | **Subdomains:** 0 | **Email accounts:** 0 | **FTP accounts:** 1 | **MySQL databases:** 3

- ⊕ Unlimited bandwidth allowance
- ⊕ 3 MySQL databases
- ⊕ 1.5GB storage
- ⊖ No one-click install
- ⊖ No site builder

FreeWebHostingArea might sport the design of a website from 1999, but it's another option if you want a free web hosting company that can give you unlimited bandwidth (or at least that's the provider's claim).

What's more, at 1.5GB, it offers a more generous storage capacity than most, plus you get three MySQL databases – which again exceeds most rival free website hosting providers.

The control panel is rudimentary, and at the time of writing, the site builder and the auto-installer were not working properly, leaving any user with the task of uploading their files via FTP if they want to create their own websites. The maximum file size allowed on FreeWebHostingArea is 12MB.

We liked the fact that FreeWHA, as it is also known, is active on Twitter. Users also get daily or weekly offsite backups and no ads on low traffic websites. Upgrade to the FreeWHA Basic package for $12 a year and you get the ads removed regardless of how popular the site is, along with five MySQL databases per account, one-click database backup and priority technical support.

- Try FreeWebHostingArea free web hosting service

Discard corner

We eliminated the following 'free' web hosting companies during our extensive evaluation of the current market.

- Freevirtualservers, Freehosting and Freehostia: All these were removed because they either require you to buy a domain name from them, or transfer your own.
- X10hosting: The login section no longer works.
- Uhostfull: We were not able to create a new account because it kept complaining about non-valid characters for a non-existent domain field.
- Instafree: It has a very convoluted signup process requiring you to give your date of birth and gender before waiting up to 48 hours for approval.
- 5GBfree and Hoophost: They no longer accept new accounts. Hoophost candidly admitted that this was because of spam accounts.
- AdvancedFreeWebHost: This provider wants you to subscribe to a YouTube channel and remain subscribed to it. Failure to do so will see your account deleted.

Why do web hosting companies offer free hosting?

Free web hosting should be seen as a marketing tool which means that terms and conditions may be changed frequently and since there is no financial transaction, downtimes may be more frequent as SLA (service level agreements) are non-existent.

Free web hosting comes with a number of limitations of course. Server space, site speed, traffic, uptime guarantees and backup provision are all features that are often curtailed, but that's not to say that good cheap hosting isn't available.

Bear in mind that free web hosting exists because it allows companies to upsell more expensive web hosting to those who may need it.

You might also want to check out our other website hosting buying guides:

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