

How To Shop and Save On Website Hosting

By Jim Edwards

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"What's your web address?"

From small "mom and pop" home-based businesses to mega-stores, people ask this question in business every single day. Even if you only operate a small, local business, if you don't have a website (or at least email) people honestly look at you funny.

A few years ago, website hosting was one of the largest expenses connected with setting up a website. Now, with dramatic drops in pricing, website hosting can actually present the least costly component of operating a website.

However, before you run out and sign up for \$2-a-month website hosting and wake up tomorrow filled with regret, take 5 minutes right now and learn the main points to consider when evaluating any website host.

Total Storage

How much space do you get to store your website files? If you operate a small website with a handful of pages and only a couple of pictures per page, you can get by with 5-10 MB (megabytes) of disk space or less. However, if your site contains dozens of pages and hundreds of pictures, you may need a hosting plan with 10-25 MB of space.

Data Transfer / Bandwidth

Here's where many people fall down and get run over by the Internet bus! Bandwidth represents the total amount of traffic the website host allows you to receive.

Successful sites that get a lot of traffic eat up more

bandwidth than sites without many visitors. Honestly, bargain website hosting companies don't want you to get much traffic because your bandwidth costs them money.

If you plan to do any business online, make sure you get a bare minimum of at least 1 GB (gigabyte) of data transfer per month.

Email "Aliases"

Most web hosts allow you to set up email addresses connected with your domain, such as jim@thenetreporter.com, and have them forward to your email account, like yourname@aol.com. The ability to set up email aliases forms an integral part of any online business. Make sure your hosting company allows you to set up at least 5 email aliases.

Website Tools

If you want to do anything more than let people look at static web pages, you will need to have certain tools available. The two most important tools are CGI and website statistics. These allow you to run scripts and see who came to your site and when.

Tech Support

Make sure you understand any company's technical support policies and hours of operation. Don't wait until Saturday afternoon to discover your only help option is to wait and email them Monday morning.

Go to www.comparewebhosts.com and check out the tool for researching and comparing the offerings of over 9,000 different website hosting companies. Try the "Power Search" feature, which allows you to specify about 50 different variables, including price, company location, bandwidth, and number of email aliases allowed. It even lets you search by how often the hosting company backs up its servers to protect against data loss.

Jim Edwards is a syndicated newspaper columnist and the co-author of an amazing new ebook that will teach you how to use free articles to quickly drive thousands of targeted visitors to your website or affiliate links...

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