

Paid Hosts

By Richard Lowe

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I find it amazing that I still get asked by numerous people where they can get their site hosted for free. The question comes up constantly, even in these days of failing dot com's and dying web hosting companies.

Why would anyone want to pay for something they could get for free? That's actually an easy question, as the disadvantages of free web hosting are many and varied.

Free web hosting is based upon the idea of getting something for nothing. No, it's not what you think ... yes, web site owners get free web space but that's not what we're referring to here. No, the something for nothing is content.

You see, free web hosting companies base their existence on selling advertising. The ads (most often banners) sell for such a small amount that the web hosting companies must display them millions of times (or more) just to make a few dollars.

The big news and entertainment web sites solved the problem nicely by providing their own content. After all, they already had existing content and the necessary organizations to keep new information flowing to their sites.

Your average free web host does not have that luxury, so they came up with the scheme of getting other people to create their content for them. In return, they would give away small web sites, usually very tiny and with extremely limited functionality.

Think about it for a minute. Paid web service costs between \$7.95 and \$24.95 a month. That's what the free web host is paying you for your good works. You can make more than that in a day's work at minimum wage, or by giving up a pizza or two for lunch.

Okay, so what should you get from a paid hosting company? At a minimum, you should get enough disk space to hold your entire site plus at least 50% more. You also need to get CGI, PHP and SSI support (get these even if you don't know what they are, you will need them later), unlimited autoresponders (very useful feature), a few email accounts, email forwarding and access to the server log files.

One word of advice - don't go with any web host that claims "unlimited bandwidth". This is a physical impossibility, and it usually means "we'll decide when we want to shut down your site". An explicit limit is much better, because then you will know when you need to get more.

Addr.Com

<http://www.addr.com>

This is a very good web host. They have packages running from \$7.95 a month to \$14.95 with just about all of the features that you could want. Their support is a little slow, but their service is so solid that you probably won't need their support much.

Bizland.Com

<http://www.bizland.com>

Another very good web hosting company. They are inexpensive (\$5.5 to \$19.95 a month). They have weak support for CGI, Perl and other niceties, but if you don't need those then this is a good choice.

HostRocket.Com

<http://www.hostrocket.com>

Excellent web host with very good prices. Starting from \$7.95 a month and going all the way up to \$39.95, they have excellent services, quality services and responsive support.

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