

How to Choose the Best Webhost for Your Business Website

by Webnames.ca

1. Determine Your Actual Hosting Needs First - For most start-ups and small companies, a shared hosting plan with between 500MB and 1GB storage space and 20 to 100GB of bandwidth is usually ample. Although individual web pages do not use a lot of space, you will need extra storage and bandwidth to host files for download including pictures, PDF's, music, video and more. If you have a simple brochure-style or personal website, an even smaller plan may be sufficient

In today's competitive hosting industry many companies now offer 'unlimited' storage and/or bandwidth. While it seems like a great offer, don't commit to an unmetered plan without researching the offering and the company ... after all when was the last time you saw an 'unlimited' hard drive? Since it's unlikely you will ever require unlimited resources, a webhost's reputation and customer support are much more important.

We recommend getting a plan slightly above your immediate needs so you have room to grow. If you don't know your needs, have a chat with your web designer/developer and find out; after all, he/she might not always be available to you and you're going to need a working understanding of your website.

2. Evaluate the Webhost's Technical Support - It's important to ask if a hosting company has experienced system administrator(s) on their support team. The webhost you decide to go with should have dedicated agent(s) in this capacity - someone who can resolve technical issues and who is available on a regular basis. Quality of support is the most important thing, above response times and even 24/7 accessibility. Also, look for good online documentation and FAQ's so you can troubleshoot basic issues yourself. Lastly, don't be shy about requesting references or testimonials; better yet, call the support line with some prepared questions and evaluate your potential webhost's professionalism, quality of advice and wait times.

3. Research the Webhost's Reputation and Longevity- Just because a hosting company is big, does not mean it is stable, secure or responsive to your needs. Some important indicators to look for include:

- How long has the hosting company been in business?
(A company who has been in business and maintained the same location for three to five years is generally good)
- Has the webhost changed ownership?
- Is the webhost profitable?
- Do they have a good rating with the [Better Business Bureau](#)?
- Can the company provide references from clients who can tell you about their experience using that company?

4. Features and Functionality to Look for in a Webhost

Building Features - If you're not planning on building your webpages from scratch, look for a hosting plan that includes web-building tools and shortcuts like templates. If you require specialized tools such as FrontPage Extensions or MySQL to create a database, ensure your hosting plan supports it and that it's not an add-on option with an additional charge. Your webhost should also provide an easy to use hosting control panel to help you manage your website more efficiently.

Business Features - In addition to server space and bandwidth, look for the following key features. If you're a start-up, does the plan include a domain name? If you already own your business domain, make sure your webhost also supports domain hosting. In terms of email, your hosting plan should include enough accounts with dedicated email storage to meet the needs of your business, along with webmail, spam protection, blacklist functionality and the ability to send/receive very large files. Lastly, check to see if CGI-bin access is included; because CGI scripts are used for a variety of interactive features you'll probably require this feature as your website grows.

Ecommerce Features – Ecommerce websites have additional considerations beyond regular business websites. If you are planning to sell products online, you'll need a hosting plan that includes built-in shopping cart software, secure socket layer (SSL) encryption for consumer information and merchant account support. Shopping cart programs vary in complexity and ease of use, but there are many good ones – just make sure your webhost is an expert at supporting the version they offer.

Marketing Features - Does your hosting plan support features you might want to integrate as your online presence matures, for example blogs, RSS feeds, or streaming audio and video?

5. Scalability, Redundancy and Network Security Requirements - Always verify that a potential webhost has multiple, fully redundant data centers to safeguard you from downtime and loss of data. Dedicated backbones and optical lines will ensure your website loads quickly and help provide uninterrupted service in the event of connectivity or power failure.

Summary:

It's also becoming increasingly important to ask whether your potential webhost's network has policies around what type of customers/websites they will support. Ethical issues aside, pornographic websites, spammers, etc. can negatively affect all customers if the webhost has blacklisted IPs on its network. Ask your potential webhost if their networks have ever been blacklisted and what policies or precautions they have in place to prevent this from happening.

Telephone Support Hours

Monday - Friday: 6:00am to 5:00pm Pacific Standard Time
Saturday, Sunday and statutory holidays: 10:00am to 2:00pm PST

Live Help (chat) available Mon-Fri, 8:00am - 4:00pm PST

Office and mailing address

Webnames.ca Inc.
3rd Floor - 322 Water Street
Vancouver, BC V6B 1B6

Telephone Support

We strive to keep our telephone hold times to below 2 minutes!

Toll Free number:
1-866-221-7878

Telephone Support Line:
(604) 633-1142

Fax number:
(604) 633-3174

webnames.ca
securing internet identities