

# Which web hosting and why

If you do not want your website to be found or convert traffic into business, now is the time to leave this page! Quite frankly how you got here in the first place is anyone's guess, unless of course you fall into one of these two categories X or Y

Understand the difference between website hosting and cost.

The cost to your business will be unforgiving if you do not understand how much your business could increase with the right hosting solution in place.

The internet has got a lot faster, not just because of broadband and now fibre optic, remember the dial-up modem? The backbone connection for the internet has been repeatedly improved and replaced with better technology. The home computer is faster and smarter. The mobile phone is faster and smarter. We're all doing things faster and expect things to be on our screen (or door step!) in an instant.

## What has this got to do with website hosting you're asking?

Not another article that makes watching paint dry interesting? Ignore the rules of engagement and so will your new customers ignore your website and business. If you have or are investing in driving more traffic to your website and not hosting your website with performance in mind you are throwing money away.

If you'd rather watch paint dry than give your business the very best opportunity to get your website in front of new customers and convert more traffic into business, do not leave watch this...

Good choice, read / listen to this 20 second story.

The cleaner of a client asked him what he spent on website hosting, knowing his business was e-commerce and that he ran it from home and he had a website that was being hosted somewhere! She was genuinely interested but was gobsmacked when he told her what his hosting cost each and every month. But equally excited and proud that her website hosting solution was free for life! Yes, she bought a domain with free hosting for life for £100. Wow he said, that's amazing and left her to carry on cleaning his house.

This client didn't always have the very best hosting money could buy. He started his e-commerce business back in 2002 and went with a shared server solution because £23 a month made a lot more sense for his young start-up business. Had he paid any more than this his cash flow would have been squeezed.

It wasn't until his traffic was exceeding 10k a month and his turnover from online transactions was reaching 200k a year that hosting became a topic worth talking about.

**For most businesses that are starting out the initial investment in a website should be minimal.**

A clean simple website design and cheap hosting gives the business a presence. A good presence that makes financial sense. What follows or what should follow is a process that involves scaling.

However, the mistake that is made is a simple one. Hosting for a website is not seen, it is something invisible, it's in the background and for this reason it is not assigned any value. Value that is, that contributes to the growth of the business. It's an easy mistake to make and it's understandable how it can be made. But here comes the problem for businesses that continue to stick with the 'cheap as chips' hosting solutions. The free for life hosting packages and let's face it, anything that is costing less than a few hundred pounds a month and is expected to generate 100's of thousands a month is pie in the sky wishful thinking.

## Think about it

The investment made driving traffic to the website is wasted.

The loss of visitors and the lack of conversions is down to the poor performance of the website. Cheap hosting equates to slow under optimised servers delivering your website pages slower than the faster servers.

There is no way to explain this other than fast response from the server = faster loading website / pages = visitor much more likely to stay on the page / website for longer.

**What do you do when a website doesn't load as fast as you would like or a website page freezes?**

**You leave** and the chances are you'll never come back. Statistically it is over 90% and statistically the chances are high that the cheap skate business owner hasn't implemented a retargeting campaign so the chances of you ever reaching this business again are in the high 90%

It's a boring subject. To be interested in website hosting takes a certain sort of hunger for knowledge. The truth is, as a business owner you only need to know that the investment made to get more traffic / visitors to your website should reflect the investment in knowing the website will respond as fast as it possibly can to suit your budget.

## [Check your speed with Google Insights](#)

With the web server technology available today there is no excuse for not having an optimised server delivering a faster website / pages and user experience.

Here are some questions to ensure you go about securing the best solution for your website. If you are using a service such as Wix or Squarespace for your website you will have no control of your website server and performance.

Know the difference between a shared and dedicated server?

Know the difference between a cloud based hosting solution?

How much traffic comes to your website each month and where does it come from?

How much are you investing in acquiring new traffic?

How long do you expect your website visitors to stay and consume your content?

What is the primary purpose of the website?

Are you sending new traffic to a specific page to complete a call to action?

There are many considerations that end with the question. Is the server responding as fast as it should when visitors come to our website. See Google Insights

## **We're human we hate delays! We hate waiting in queues.**

Yes people do wait in line waiting for something but it's usually something worth waiting for and it's not available online. Can you imagine how popular the internet would be if you had to wait in line for something. You are 23 in the queue please continue to wait we will be with you shortly!

When it comes to the internet and people searching for stuff there is no waiting in line. There is too much choice and there is no being patient.

## **Write a list of the reasons why people should**

a) find your website and

b) what they should do when they do find it.

Look at the available hosting solutions and research price differences for the same level of service.

A superfast managed dedicated server for example could cost £500 a month but the same solution could be achieved for half the cost using a non managed server and a website developer to set it up.

## A few considerations.

A shared server means resources are shared with all other websites being hosted on the “same” server, this will vary from one hosting provider to another.

**Q:** How many users are there on the shared server, or how many resellers are on the same server. After all this is typically a dedicated server split into a number of users the hosting provider is profiting from. A profit they make that compromises the performance of the server which in turn impacts the speed and user experience for your visitors.

A standard package server that offers website hosting for the year on a pay monthly from as little as 3.99 a month is start-up level service. These types of website hosting packages vary in resources allocated to each and every domain hosted on the same range of IP addresses. It can be from a few hundred to 10,000+. Yes you read that correctly. Your website could be on a server that is hosting over 10,000 other websites at the same time and they are all competing for the resources. A salesperson or technicians for the hosting provider will claim that the servers are optimised to optimally perform and allocate resources with software and monitoring and that distributed resources reduces any risk of bottlenecks and downtime. This claim is bold and misleading. Yes technology has improved and there are some very clever systems to regulate server traffic and resource hungry setups but it really is hit and miss for your website.

It will never ever be able to scale along with the activity you carry out to drive more traffic. If your business really is focused on driving more traffic to the place that generates more business why would you stifle it?

**Again** - the main problem with hosting is knowing what you can't see is actually doing what it claims to be doing. This is only true if you have not got something in place to monitor downtime / outages or you're not looking at traffic reports.

Super fast hosting isn't cheap but it need not be prohibitive. Take Digital Ocean for example, a cloud based service with state of the art server networking enabling a business to scale according to resources needed. A good dedicated server setup on their cloud network can be achieved at a base cost rate of \$10 a month! Comparing websites being hosted in this environment compared to a website hosted on a shared server would be notably difference.

Over the years there have been many attempts to list hosting providers in terms of best performers. Eg, top 10 hosting providers but this is generally skewed to include those that win awards for being so wealthy! And those paying to sponsor such websites! The website's that list 'objectively' the best hosting providers also try to sound neutral by using text like this:

“Choosing a type of web hosting

There are many types of web hosting plans available, but most projects will be best served by one of the two most popular types of plans: shared and VPS hosting.

Shared hosting, which involves many customers sharing an IP address and a single set of computing resources, is very inexpensive and widely popular. It is perfect for personal blogs and websites for smaller businesses and non-profit organizations.

VPS (Virtual Private Server) hosting gives you much more control, as well as your own unique IP address and a larger portion of server resources. It is typically the right choice for larger organizations and online businesses.

Depending on the type of site, and how much traffic you expect, you can filter the list above for the type of plan you are looking for. From there you can narrow it down based on the specific details (like how scalable the plan is, how they handle traffic spikes, and the cost of bandwidth).“

Sounds neutral and just what you want to hear but it's telling you nothing about the host providers they are promoting.

Want the best hosting solution? Ask someone who runs a website that consistently increases traffic and is generating revenue month after month. A website that is a successful website will be one that is delivering content and pages fast and reliably and therefore has a great website hosting provider.

Know your competition? Not the local ones that pop-up every now and again. The real competition that are always on top of the search results and always have a website that responds superfast. Tip, if you have seen a business spending cash on Adwords consistently for the last few years, the chances are high that paying for traffic works!

Check out their website on Google Insights and check who their [website is hosted by using a whois tool](#), this tool will tell you how many other websites are hosted on the same IP and whether it's a dedicated server or not.

Whilst there is a trend to move away from dedicated servers and onto a cloud based dedicated server setup the main difference will be how it is managed and setup to ensure the best performance for your website. Depending on your website platform the server setup will have different considerations. Drupal, Wordpress, Joomla all do similar things but the database and file structure will impact on the server differently. E-commerce platforms will likewise have to be considered for the same reasons. Oscommerce, Open Cart or Magento will all need specific server setups to ensure optimal performance.

There should be enough information in this short document to give you a starting point. And remember:

“It's unwise to pay too much, but it's worse to pay too little. When you pay too much, you lose a little money - that's all. When you pay too little, you sometimes lose everything, because the thing you bought was incapable of doing the thing it was bought to do. The common law of business balance prohibits paying a little and getting a lot - it can't be done. If you deal with the lowest bidder, it is well to add something for the risk you run, and if you do that you will have enough to pay for something better.”

— John Ruskin

This short article skims over the basics and provokes thought. Hosting a website is more often overlooked if not because it is not fully understood or something that can't easily be setup but also because free to cheap services are available. Click and forget services that end up costing the business more in the long term!

This was written after being contacted by someone recently who business partner registered a domain name with !\$! And one clicked installed Prestashop. After 5 months and no sales and no enquiries the questions started to flow. Why isn't this working? Having had a couple of long and detailed conversations about options the penny dropped and they realised time and money had been wasted. Start as you mean to go on. Business solutions are no more favourable online if you choose to go down a route of doing things on the cheap. You can't rock up at a car boot sale and be seen to be retailing in the same Shopping Mall as John Lewis!

Personally I hate website hosting because it is seen by the business owner as a waste of money. Because it is not seen!!! Professionally I love good website hosting because when it is set up right for the right business the rewards are never ending. For a couple of case studies contact me directly.

The future is all about metrics, setting up your hosting with awesome analytics will tell you in easy to read reports what is working and what is not.