

Finding a good web hosting company

Finding a good web hosting company amongst the thousands vying for your business is no easy task. Firstly you may not know what to look for, or what questions to ask, it is unwise to sign-up for just any web host and hope for quality service. The web hosting industry, boasting several thousand web hosts, is still young and growing at a remarkable pace; hence finding the right host is not only difficult, but very time consuming; fortunately though it is worth the time and effort. There are a few things to keep in mind when exploring; when deciding to form a partnership with the host. The four most important factors for judging the quality of web hosts are: 1. Cost, 2. Reliability, 3. Features, and 4. Support. So let's examine those a little closer.

Costs

Choosing the right host is an important aspect in lowering your web hosting costs. The first thing to remember is that the cheapest and in many cases the dearest is not necessarily the best. There are many FREE web hosting companies, like geocities for example where you don't have to pay a penny. However, your web pages can be filled with advertising, which may not be to your liking. The truth is that most good web hosting prices are very similar and are within one or two dollars of each other. The only real way to compare web hosting companies is to combine costs with features to give you an idea of value for money.

Reliability

What this really boils down to is uptime, or to cut through the web hosting jargon, the amount of time the web hosting company guarantees to keep your website online for. Uptime is literally what it means - it is the amount of time your site is online throughout the entire month. The best uptime would be 100%, but because things can break, some hosts offer 99.9% uptime guarantees. This means that if your site is not accessible for more than 43 minutes in a single month, they will reimburse you, depending on their terms of service. This does not however, include maintenance reviews.

Features

The features list can sometimes be a little ambiguous. If you are looking for a web host to just host a very small website, say a couple of pages with photos, then your needs will be small. However, none of us knows what the future may hold and your small two page site may blossom into something quite different, so if you already have a lot of features already installed in your hosting package you won't need to ask for them or have to pay extra for them later. Many hosting companies consider certain features like, Front page extensions, MySQL databases, cgi scripts etc as being extras and charge accordingly. When choosing a web hosting company, look for one that includes these as standard.

Support

This is probably one of the most important areas to look at when choosing a web hosting company. When you have a problem, you need it dealt with as soon as possible, especially if you are running an ecommerce business, where problems can cost you money. The things to look for in a good web hoster is can you contact them easily. Do they have telephone contact? Do they have a support line or help desk? Is there a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) section where you can get answers to your problems? Try these out too first before you commit yourself. Search through the FAQ's to see if they are comprehensive. Contact the help desk and ask questions. Use the support line to ask questions. Ask if you can contact their existing customers for a reference. If they are doing a good job, they won't have any objections.

The above does not by any means cover every aspect of finding a good web hosting company, but it will start you off in the right direction. The more you look into web hosting providers and what they have to offer, the more your knowledge will grow and you will know instinctively what to look for and what questions to ask.

About the Author

Webs Hosters have been in the website hosting business for 10 years. Their customer base ranges from large corporations to small businesses, but their priority has always been to provide honest affordable hosting for all. www.webshosters.com

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