6 Points to Look At When Choosing a Web Host

Sydney, Australia - Choosing a web host can seem like an overwhelming feat at times, especially to those with less experience in the industry. The necessity to evaluate the provider on various topics both on the hosting package for sale and the company itself - cannot be stressed enough, so we have decided to compile a short list of 6 points to look at when choosing a web host.

1) Bandwidth

Many web users, when shopping for web hosting packages, are unsure of the differences when it comes to choosing the amount of bandwidth. The amount needed varies on the needs of the individual or business and on the popularity of a website in general.

Simply put, bandwidth is the amount of data transfer that occurs between your website and end users. You may not realise this fact, but whenever you are viewing a website, your computer must download the files involved in the making of the webpage before being able to display it. The amount of bandwidth used up at this moment depends on the size of these files, which include anything from images, text, and documents to website and external files such as cascading style sheets, JavaScript and flash. Additionally, this amount of bandwidth will process for each visit.

Bandwidth is being used when:

-Someone loads a webpage from your website-Someone downloads a file from your server-You send an email from your hosted account-Backing up your website

When it comes to bandwidth, it is wise to keep in mind the ability of a web host to accommodate your needs if they grow more than expected. Some companies may charge a fee to transfer to another plan, charge an extravagant amount of money per certain amount of transfer beyond the plan, or even suspend the account once the maximum has been reached. Find a company that allows you to expand or contract as necessary. Digital Pacific, for example, lets you upgrade and downgrade your plan at any time for no extra charge.2) Storage SpaceStorage space is defined as the amount of space available on a server to store your files such as those to construct your website(s), images, documents (e.g. PDFs and spreadsheets), programs, and drivers. Some users like to backup files, or keep old copies of web pages, on the server. It is wise to assume that the amount of storage space needed will grow over time, perhaps to 3 or 4 times the original size, so the ability to upgrade a plan easily from a web host can be an important point to look at when making your decision.

3) Competitive Pricing

In relation to the above two points, the web host must also provide the options that meet your needs at a competitive price. Be sure to shop around to see how much you actually get for the amount of money you spend. Do not forget to take into consideration the possibility of fees for various add-ons and account changes that may occur in the future.

As a general rule, try to avoid the cheapest hosting you find as these companies tend to overload servers which may contribute to downtime and more hassles in the future. On the other hand, paying extravagant amounts for hosting is not normally going to get you a better hosting solution. The best bet is to choose something mid range that you know will be well supported, should problems arise.

4) Reliability

The next point to look at when choosing a web host involves the reliability of the servers and company in general. Imagine being a company with a large part, or all, of its business revolving around a website. If that website were to go offline for reasons involving the reliability of the web host, then that will most likely affect the image of the company, not to mention the ability for a business transaction to occur. The amount of uptime a web host can guarantee adds to the reliability factor.

5) Support

When it comes to email, websites, and databases, issues sometimes arise that involve the need to contact a support person. If such issues occur, the quality and availability of the support staff of a web host can determine whether or not they are a good option.

Some questions to ask when choosing a web host are:

-What is the availability of support?-Is there sufficient off shift support for urgent situations?-Are the staff members knowledgeable in issues that concern me?

Furthermore, many issues that arise can sometimes be resolved given there is a sufficient knowledge base on the web hosts website. The quality and searchability of this database can save a customer much time and stress, as well as keep them from having to make an unnecessary phone call in the process.

6) Location

The location of your web host and servers may affect the following:

-The speed of your website and server uploading/downloading.-The hours at which live support is available if problems should arise.-The hours at which server updates are processed.

Imagine having a web host in a country other than your own. Data transfers may take much longer just for the fact that it has a greater distance to travel. Time differences will affect support hours, and server updates might be processed at your peak working hours. It is wise to think about how such issues may affect your web presence down the road before choosing your web host.Depending on your specific web needs, the above points may not be all you should look at when choosing a web host. For instance, some customers decisions might rely more on the type of control panel used to manage the account. However, in most cases, we definitely feel these 6 points are a great place to start.

About Digital Pacific

Digital Pacific, based in Sydney and founded in 2000, provides web hosting, domain names and Search Engine Marketing solutions to businesses and individuals Australia wide. Further information on Digital Pacific hosting solutions can be found on the website at http://www.digitalpacific.com.au.

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