

## How-To Guide: How to Choose a Web Hosting Company

Most small businesses use outside Web hosting companies to host their websites. Here are the most important factors to consider when selecting a Web hosting service.

**1. Do you want a dedicated or shared server?** The server is where your website resides. Sharing a server with other companies' websites costs less, and a shared server can typically handle most small companies' bandwidth needs. However, as your company's website grows, you may want to consider a dedicated server. You may need a dedicated server if:

- Multiple customers will be making multiple transactions at the same time
- Large file transfers are necessary
- Your site has video streaming, sound files, large graphics or other features that use a lot of bandwidth
- Your site gets heavy visitor traffic

**Why it's important:** Without a dedicated server, a data-heavy site may take a long time to load or may crash.

**2. What is the hosting company's uptime rate?** Many Web hosting companies boast a 99.9 percent uptime rate, meaning they rarely crash or have connection issues.

**Why it's important:** When your website is down, customers can't visit or buy—and that's not good for your brand or your sales.

**3. Does the company offer multiple domain hosting?** Most subscription plans include options for a certain number of subdomains on your Web host account. At some point, you may launch one or more spinoff sites, and you'll want all your files and information on the same server.

**Why it's important:** Keeping data and files for all your websites all in one place reduces bandwidth needs.

**4. Are monthly transfer and disk space unlimited?** The amount of disk space you'll need to transfer information back and forth between your business and your customers should be unlimited.

**Why it's important:** Disk space should not be something you worry about when building a successful website. Most Web hosting companies today offer unlimited space.



# Business Technology Program

**5. What content management systems are available?** The content management system (CMS) is how you post and update content on your site. Most Web hosts offer a variety of publishing systems to choose from. If there's a particular CMS you're familiar with, make sure the Web host offers it. If you're not familiar with any CMS, ask about easy-to-use options.

Popular CMS programs include:

- [Drupal](#)
- [ezBuilder](#)
- [Joomla](#)
- [Movable Type](#)
- [Wordpress](#)

**Why it's important:** Your CMS should be easy to navigate and user-friendly so you can get information up on your site quickly.

**6. Does the site offer 24/7 support?** Find out what hours the site offers support, and whether it's by phone, email, live chat or other options.

**Why it's important:** Website problems can occur at any time. Quick resolution means fewer lost sales.

**7. Is the Web host ecommerce ready?** If you plan to sell your products or services online, you'll want a Web host with ecommerce capabilities such as shopping cart solutions, inventory management and online payment acceptance built in.

**Why it's important:** You want a Web host that can get your ecommerce capabilities up and running as quickly and smoothly as possible.

**8. Get opinions.** Ask fellow business owners for advice and check online reviews from experts and users before you make your decision. Here are some popular review sites:

- [TopTenReviews](#)
- [Web Hosting Comparison](#)
- [Web Hosting Geeks](#)
- [Web Hosting Search](#)

Before you sign on the dotted line, always read the fine print on the hosting company's terms of service. Most hosts have you sign a contract for a certain amount of time and impose a penalty if you opt out early.

