



Web Solutions

Understanding Web Hosting

Web Hosting is vital to each and every website in the world but is often neglected or misunderstood. You could spend a small fortune on a website designer or web design agency and end up with a beautiful, professional web site design, but if it takes 30 seconds for the site to load, or worse, it doesn't load at all, then it's unlikely that many people will get to see you amazing web design. This article will give you a better understanding of the different kinds of hosting available, the importance of web hosting to your site and how it relates to website design.

What is hosting?

A website's data must be physically stored on a computer (a server) which is connected to the internet, so that it can be accessed by any other computer connected to the internet. The service of storing a website and making it available on the internet is called hosting, and the service provider is called a web host. Since your web site's hosting will determine how quickly it will load and how many visitors can access it simultaneously, it essential to use the best host you can, without paying for capacity or features that you don't need.

The variety in web hosting services is as great as the variety of types of web sites, website designs, web designers and web design agencies, so it is important that you understand the different types of hosting available and what will be suitable for your web site.

At Origin Multimedia Design we have team up with one of the most respected Web Hosting companies around, 1&1; they offer us a great service which we pass on to our clients. While your web design is being developed, our web designers may store your website temporarily on our own server for testing. In this case the server may be called a testing, development, or staging server. When

your website design is complete, our website designers will move it to its permanent home. This is referred to as a production server. It is useful to know these terms as website designers may use them, for example, when developing a new feature for your site, the feature may be available for you to see on the staging server. Once you have approved the work it can then be made 'live' by putting it on the production server.

Different types of hosting

There are many services that allow you to create and host web sites, blogs, photos, video and personal profiles, often for free, but generally these services will have limited storage space, capacity for visitors and features, making them unsuitable for professional web designs for businesses. Here we are concerned with hosting for your own, self-contained website, which will be built by a web designer or web design company. The kind of hosting your site needs depends upon a number of factors, but the most important ones are the number of visitors your site receives (or could receive) and the features or content of your site.



For the very best web hosting and other web essentials like e-mail and databases, 1&1 are the company you are looking for.

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- Shared hosting is an entry level option, where your web site is stored on a server which also hosts other web sites. It is generally the cheapest option, but there are some dangers. Since you are sharing a server with other web sites, the performance of your site is directly related to how busy the other sites are.
- Dedicated hosting means that your website has a server all to itself. The advantage of this is that a dedicated server provides more storage capacity and can serve more visitors than would be possible in a shared hosting scenario. The downside is that you are paying for the whole server, whether you use it or not.
- Virtual Private Servers are a compromise between shared and dedicated hosting. One physical server runs a number of virtual servers, which behave exactly like a real computer, but share the resources of the server. You pay for a set amount of the real server's resources, so you can guarantee a certain amount of performance. Since your server is virtual, it can easily be moved to a more powerful real server or its own dedicated server.

For very large, busy websites, there are a number of hosting options involving multiple servers. These services are customised for the site's needs, so if your web site becomes too popular for a standard hosting option, you can work with your web designers and hosting provider to find the best solution.

Getting the best hosting for your web site

Now that you have an idea of what web hosting is and how it works, you need to know how website design affects hosting, and vice versa. Every time someone visits your web site, your web host's server sends data to the visitor. You will probably pay your host for a certain con-

nection speed, and may have a limit on the amount of data your site can transfer for a given period, so it makes sense to minimise the size of your web pages and thus the amount of data sent - as well as making your web pages load quicker it will save you money, especially if your site has a lot of visitors. Our web designers will do this as a matter of course, by making any images as small as possible, and by using CSS web design, which allows for exciting web designs without having to use large image files.

There may be special features which you want for your website design, for example a message board or forum. Since interactive, dynamic websites like this work by performing processing on the server hosting the website (referred to as 'server side') you will require a host which supports dynamic content.

Our website designers will be able to advise you and, if necessary, arrange for appropriate hosting if you don't already have hosting. So please contact us if you have any questions.



1&1's aim is to provide you not only with the best possible products, but also, the best possible support. The dedicated 1&1 support team has gained an excellent reputation throughout the industry in providing comprehensive after-care for the products you purchase.

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