

Hosting Support

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1. It's all about Support

The first and most important thing to remember when picking a web host is that you get what you pay for. Don't pick a \$5 a month hosting plan and expect to get instant access to a technician every time that you call in with a problem. There are four basic components to any web hosting plan: disk space, bandwidth, software costs, and man-hours. While large web hosts have many ways to spread the physical and software costs out between their many customers, there are only a certain amount of hours in any tech's workday and tech time isn't cheap. Large, inexpensive hosts try to minimize their support costs by automating as much of their infrastructure as possible and giving their customers the tools they need to make account changes on their own. They often offer forums, frequently asked questions sections, and help pages to allow customers to answer their own questions without calling in. If you do need support from an actual tech, though, you'll end up waiting a day or more for a response as often as not. The more expensive plans from smaller hosts will often have the cost of quick personal support built into them. When dealing with small hosts, make sure you know what type of company you trust your website to. Every year hundreds of people happily put their sites into the hands of a small, responsive web host only to find out three months later that their site is down and they can't get a hold of anyone at the hosting company to get it back up because the company just went out of business. Before you do put your trust into a hosting company make sure that you're confident that they will be there two or three years down the road. Two general rules of thumb to use when trying to decide the amount of support that you will need are:

1. The less comfortable you are with technology the more personal support you will need.
2. The more money your site brings in, the more you will need high quality responsive support.

If you have a personal blog and knack for solving minor technical issues on your own, you shouldn't have any issues with purchasing an inexpensive hosting package from one of the large hosting providers. If you have a high volume, high revenue site or would rather not have to take the time to go looking for answers anytime you have questions, then you will want to either go with a reliable smaller host, a more expensive package or pay for premium support from one of the larger companies. No matter what hosting company you decide to pick make sure that they are a match for you. If you end up choosing a bad hosting company, it can cause you a lot of problems down the line. If the uptime of your website is important to your business be especially careful. Look at the company's forums, and see what kind of experiences their customers are having, see how long the company has been around, find out about any uptime and disaster recovery policies they might have, and do anything else that you can think of to gauge whether this company is a match for you. Picking a hosting plan>>