

Professional Web Site Hosting Checklist

In order to make sure you get what you've been looking for from a professional web site hosting server, here are a few things you should take into account before deciding on a web hosting provider:

Bandwidth

A professional web site hosting provider should have a bandwidth of at least 45 mbps. You'll also need to find out how much of the available bandwidth is currently used. The percentage should be less than 30% and the peak bandwidth should be about 60%-70%. The bandwidth utilization terms should be specified within the contract.

Proximity to backbone

You should also try to find out how many hops separate the professional web site hosting provider from the ISP they connect to (the backbone). Each server that the Internet traffic must travel through until reaching the backbone is a hop. You should choose a web hosting provider with only a few hops. A large number of hops are associated with a higher risk for something to fail.

Server setup

Ask your potential professional web site hosting provider what kind of hardware components are included in the server. A good host should use high quality hardware components and preferably multi-processor servers.

Redundancy & reliability

You should also consider connectivity issues. A professional web site hosting provider should have multi-homed Internet connections to prevent downtime. Your potential host should have back-up power supply as well in case of power failure.

Disk space

You shouldn't need more than 25 MB storage space to begin with, but it's very important to learn about the possibilities you have to increase it over time.

Site building & ecommerce tools

If you are planning to build a virtual shop any time soon, there are many professional web site hosting services which include site building tools such as ShopSite by Icentral, Commerce Publisher, by iCat and SoftCart, by Mercantec. Find out what kind of packages your potential host is providing.

Security

The most commonly used protocol for online transactions is SSL (Secure Sockets Layer). A digital certificate is also used to check the seller's identity. The most frequently used are VeriSign and Thawte.

Payment processing

If you want to develop an ecommerce business, you should also check the payment processing service that your potential professional web site hosting provider is using. The payment processing service is used to mediate credit card transactions between a merchant account and an ecommerce business. The most common are Segue Systems, iCVerify and Cybercash.

Back-end integration

You might need to integrate information from your website into your accounting database system. A professional web site hosting provider should offer you some data integration assistance. Ask about the scalability that your potential host can provide.

Cost

The account setup usually costs between \$50 and \$150. If you haven't registered a domain name yet, you will have to pay another \$100 - \$200 to have your host register it for you and \$70 for the first two years to Network Solutions. The software licenses may range from \$249 to \$3,500 at low end.

Defining your requirements strictly is very important for choosing the best professional web site hosting provider. However, getting all the information you can about web hosting will certainly help you in making the right decision.

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About the Author

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