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# WEB HOSTING ISSUES TO CONSIDER

"Here are a few things you probably didn't think about when you set up your web site with your host."

BY MARK KAWABE

If you have a web site, you have a web host. "Hosting" refers to the storage of the electronic files that make up your web site on a computer that is hooked up to the internet 24/7. This computer is referred to as a "web" server (or just "server") and the company that owns the server is referred to as your web hosting provider (or host). Here are a few things you probably didn't think about when you set up your web site with your host.

**1. Dedicated vs. Shared Server.** A shared web server means your web site is hosted on a machine with dozens or even hundreds of other web sites. Your site shares server resources with all the other sites on the server. With a dedicated server, your site is the only site hosted on that machine. Sounds great but you will pay much more for a dedicated server and often be responsible for many more things, including server security and back-ups. The majority of small and medium sized businesses manage just fine on shared servers. Keep in mind that if another company hosted on the same server is a spammer, your e-mail could be affected if the server gets blacklisted.

**2. Uptime and Reliability.** You want your site and e-mail to be available as much as possible. Most hosting providers offer 99.9% uptime or greater. Sounds good, but then again, 0.1% of one

year is 8.76 hours. With advances in technology, some hosting providers are now offering 100% uptime guarantees. You will generally pay more for 100% uptime and it's important to read the fine print. Some providers guarantee their NETWORK will be connected to the internet 100% of the time. They do NOT guarantee your website will be available 100% of the time if the problem is due to an internal network or server problem.

**3. Hosting is a Marketing Advantage.** When you host your web site you will generally have your own domain name. This also means you should be able to have e-mail accounts set up so you can send and receive messages with your domain like me@mydomain.com. An e-mail sent from an address with its own domain looks so much more professional than one sent through Yahoo, Hotmail, Gmail or any of the other free e-mail providers. Having your own domain also gives you more freedom to move from one host or internet service provider to another

without having to worry about changing your e-mail address. For example, if you switch from Sympatico to Cogeco and you don't have your own domain name, you will potentially lose e-mail messages because your e-mail address will change from me@sympatico.ca to me@cogeco.net. If you have your own domain name this won't be a problem.

There are thousands of companies offering web hosting services so finding one is easy. Choosing one can be more difficult. Technically, most hosting providers are about the same, so the real difference between them can be found with their service. Whether you want to stay local or are considering one of the multi-national hosting providers, it is the service that ultimately will determine how happy you are with them. Happy hosting! ■

*Mark Kawabe is a Niagara internet marketing specialist at The Web For Business.com. For more tips and advice visit TheWebForBusiness.com.*

## Web Hosting

A web hosting service is a type of Internet hosting service that allows individuals and organizations to make their own website accessible via the World Wide Web. Web hosts are companies that provide space on a server they own or lease for use by their clients as well as providing Internet connectivity, typically in a data center. Web hosts can also provide data center space and connectivity to the Internet for servers they do not own to be located in their data center, called colocation. —*wikipedia*

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