

Windows Web-Hosting Providers

Do your research before you buy

Historically, hosting Windows-based Web sites has been expensive. High Windows licensing costs and the slow proliferation of Windows-based management tools favored UNIX and Linux Web-hosting platforms. Although UNIX-based platforms still dominate, more providers are now supporting Windows-based infrastructures. If your Web site uses Windows-based applications, you use COM objects in your code, or your applications require Microsoft SQL Server, you'll probably prefer to host your Web site on a Windows platform rather than on UNIX or Linux.

The number and variety of service providers is daunting, and finding the one that best meets your needs requires thorough research. Begin by characterizing your site's type and audience. For example, the needs of a small bed-and-breakfast site differ drastically from the needs of a file-download site or a secure e-commerce site. Although all Web sites require the same basic infrastructure (i.e., appropriately sized Web servers, databases, and network connections), some Web-hosting providers offer packages that are tuned for different purposes.

Most providers charge extra for SQL Server database support. You might also need access to your stored procedures, tables, views, and other SQL Server programming. Does the provider support Microsoft FrontPage extensions, the Windows .NET Framework, Web services, Macromedia Flash, scripting languages (e.g., C#, JavaScript, Perl, Visual Basic—VB), Common Gateway Interface (CGI), SMTP-based email, virus scanning, Secure Sockets Layer (SSL), streaming media, custom COM objects, and e-commerce packages? Find out how many sites will share the server that hosts your Web site; most providers offer dedicated servers for an additional fee.

How will you publish content? Does the company support FTP or FrontPage, or does it use its own proprietary interface? Most hosting companies provide a Web-based management interface that lets you perform functions such as configuring SSL, adding users, checking billing information, and configuring database and ODBC settings. If visitor statistics are important to you, find out which

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statistics the company collects, how it reports them, and whether it provides access to raw Web logs. Many providers let you test their management tools and view sample statistics and reports.

Almost every provider offers DNS hosting and associated email addresses. Ask the provider how it manages DNS and email as well as which process you can use to update configuration information. Many companies offer Web-based email interfaces; others support IMAP or POP3. Sophisticated Web-hosting companies also provide email forwarding, autoresponders, and listservs. Shop carefully; some providers charge extra for these services.

Evaluate the provider's technical support. Call during various times of the day and night to assess the support team's accessibility and technical proficiency. Does a different or less-proficient team handle off-hours support? Does the company outsource its technical support, or does it handle calls inhouse?

What hardware does the provider have? Are its servers located in a commercial data center that has redundant utility service? What happens if a server goes down? Does the company offer service level agreements (SLAs) that guarantee uptime? Find out

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how often the company backs up its Web servers and the process it uses to restore data. Can you request individual file restores, or are restores done only in the event of a catastrophic server failure?

Web-hosting services are available in a range of prices—from a bare-bones application service provider for \$6.95 per month to a fully redundant data-center service for more than \$1000 a month. Most providers base their pricing on tiered bandwidth and storage requirements. For example, small packages that cost less than \$10 per month might provide just one domain, 150MB of storage, and 6GB of data transfer. Or, you might spend \$100 per month for multiple domains, 4GB of storage, and 75GB of data transfer. Consider the cost of à la carte options. For example, one provider advertises a low \$10 per-month fee but charges an additional \$10 per month for SSL support and \$15 per month for SQL Server 2000 support. With so many options to choose from, reading the fine print when you shop for a provider is crucial.

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Contact Information	Product Name	Price	Description
Aquest Hosting 336-676-9320 http://www.aquesthosting.com	A-200	\$9.95 per month	Provides Active Server Pages (ASP) and ASP.NET hosting package with 100MB of hard disk space, 6GB of data transfer, free Web access, and POP3 email for each domain; includes one domain
ASPwebhosting.com 812-759-6100 800-431-6140 http://www.aspwebhosting.com	ASP and ASP.NET Hosting	\$20.79 per month	Supports ASP, ASP.NET, and SQL Server; provides 99.9 percent uptime, guaranteed performance, a free trial, and 24 × 7 support
Boundgrid Technologies 703-286-2196 888-889-5640 http://www.boundgrid.net	Windows Hosting and Reseller Services	\$9.95 to \$199.95 per month	Supports unlimited domains and Web sites; lets customers run all Web sites under one account; gives each domain its own Web root and email service; offers reseller hosting accounts; includes automated billing, support software, and anonymous automation software that provides branded services for resellers
DataPipe 201-792-1918 877-773-3306 http://www.datapipe.com	Advanced Windows Hosting	\$149.95 per month	Provides virtual hosting with 4GB of memory; includes 500MB of storage, 50 email accounts, 35GB of data transfer, 50MB of SQL Server storage, and more than 30 server components
	SQL Application Server	\$1100 per month	Provides dual 2.4GHz Pentium 4 Xeon servers; 2GB of memory, three 36GB SCSI hard disks, and 200GB of data transfer; supports RAID configurations; includes SQL Server licensing
Data Return 972-869-0770 800-767-1514 http://www.datareturn.com	Highly Managed Hosting	Contact vendor for pricing	Features highly managed hosting services on Windows, Sun Microsystems' Sun Solaris, and Red Hat enterprise Linux platforms; provides custom architecture design on a per-customer basis
DiscountASP.NET 323-372-3864 http://www.discountasp.net	.NET Hosting Plan	\$10 per month	Provides Windows Server 2003 Web hosting specializing in ASP.NET sites; features isolated application pools; includes Microsoft .NET control panels, .NET Framework, and .NET components support
HostMySite.com 302-731-4948 877-248-4678 http://www.hostmysite.com	Advanced Hosting	Starts at \$11.95 per month	Supports the .NET Framework, ASP components, and Microsoft Access; lets you create custom error pages and custom default documents
	Dedicated/Co-Location	Starts at \$129 per month	Provides Windows 2003 Web hosting that includes UPS battery back up, diesel generators, multiple-tier Internet connections, and 24 × 7 support
HostOnce.com 61-3-9515-3977 http://www.hostonce.com	.NET Windows Hosting	\$6.95 per month	Provides full support for the .NET Framework, 500MB of storage, 25GB of monthly data transfer, control panel with advanced problem handling, and inhouse development; supports ASP.NET, ASP, CGI, ODBC, Perl, and PHP; includes Webmail and subdomains; provides MySQL connectivity and SSL functionality; offers multiple-domain-hosting upgrade
Infosaic Technologies 614-855-7084 888-855-7084 http://www.infosaic.com	Web Hosting	\$60 to \$240 per year	Provides Microsoft Web hosting; supports the most recent Web technologies
Interland 404-260-2477 877-467-8464 http://www.interland.com	Interland Virtual Private Servers	Starts at \$49.95 per month	Provides shell and root access; hosts multiple Web sites, email domains, and accounts; provides add-ons, a Web-based control panel, and CGI-bin control

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Interland (cont.)	IBM eServer Series High Performance	\$399 to \$1049 per month	Includes an IBM xSeries server, Windows 2003, Pentium and Xeon processors, robust data transfer, and 24 × 7 support
	IBM eServer xSeries Entry Level	\$199 to \$249 per month	Includes IBM xSeries server, Windows 2003, Celeron processors, and 24 × 7 support
	BlueHALO Shared Hosting	Starts at \$9.95 per month	Includes business-class email; provides spam, virus, and shared firewall protection and 24 × 7 support
Logicworks 212-625-5300 800-363-3428 http://www.logicworks.net	Win2K/.NET Managed Hosting Services	Starts at \$295 per month	Provides dedicated managed hosting; specializes in .NET, Windows 2000, SQL Server hosting and clustering, and hosted Microsoft Exchange Server 2003
Minerva Network Systems 703-263-0796 888-667-7231 http://www.thehostcompany.com	DotNet Hosting	\$9.90 per month	Provides personal .NET service with 250MB of storage, 25 email accounts, Helm control panel, .NET Framework, AWStats, 5GB of bandwidth, and 24 × 7 technical support; other plans are available
Nevidia Internet Solutions 888-638-4342 http://www.nevidia.com	Nevidia Hosting	\$6.50	Supports ASP, .NET, FrontPage 2002, Access, PHP, CGI, Perl, MySQL, and unlimited POP3 and SMTP accounts; provides 24 × 7 technical support
ProWinHost 765-452-3851 http://www.prowinhost.com	Windows Hosting Plans	\$4.95 to \$79.95 per month	Offers multiple domains and email with Web access; supports CGI, MySQL, and PHP scripts and ASP.NET; uses the Helm control panel
Reinvent Technologies 508-476-7400 877-346-9473 http://www.re-invent.com	HE-50 Windows 2003 Hosting Plan	\$11.95	Features ASP and ASP.NET components; supports Access, SQL Server 2000, and Visual Studio .NET 2003; provides XML Wireless Application Protocol (WAP), Webmail, and Web site stats; includes Web calendaring, task management, toll-free access, live Web chat, MSN Messenger, trouble ticketing, and email
R & R Computronics 760-734-6658 866-770-7467 http://www.rcomputronics.com	Proxima Windows Web Hosting	\$39.95	Supports ASP, ASP.NET, and Microsoft IIS components; supports SQL Server 2000; features 500MB of disk space for power users
ServePath 415-869-7000 866-321-7284 http://www.servepath.com	AdvancedPath Dedicated Server	\$399.99 per month (\$499.99 for setup)	Provides dual Xeon 2.4GHz processors, 1GB of RAM, two 80GB hard disk RAID 1 arrays, and 750GB of monthly data transfer; supports Windows 2003 and Win2K Server Standard Edition
	UltraPath Dedicated Server	\$599 per month (\$799 for setup)	Provides dual Xeon 2.66GHz processors, 2GB of RAM, five 36GB SCSI hard disk RAID 5 arrays, and 1000GB of monthly data transfer; supports Windows 2003 and Win2K Server Standard Edition
Verio 303-645-1900 800-438-8374 http://www.verio.com	NTT/VERIO PowerPlatform (dedicated) Hosting	\$1285 per month, plus setup	Provides dedicated hosting; offers flexible framework built on existing infrastructure; features high-end Web and application servers, low monthly price points, and powerful hardware capabilities
	Verio Windows Server 2003 (shared) Web hosting	Starts at \$14.95 per month	Supports Windows 2003; includes support for ASP.NET and new .NET-based Web sites and applications; offers a 99.9 percent uptime SLA
WebECS.com sales@webecs.com http://www.webecs.com	Windows2003 Web Hosting	\$12.50 to \$44.95 per month	Supports Access, MySQL, and SQL Server 2000; includes support for the .NET Framework 1.1, ASP, and FrontPage