

# **Website Hosting Explained Simply for UK Businesses**

## Why Website Hosting Matters

- A business website can help attract new customers and promote your services.
- Some business owners only consider their web design and do not think about where their website is hosted.
- All websites need to be hosted on a server before they can be accessed online.
- Hosting providers affect the speed of how quickly you can load your website and whether your website is reliable.
- A good hosting company will also provide protection for your website from cyber threats.
- If your website is hosted poorly, it may take a long time for your website to load, or your website may be unavailable.
- Customers, inquiries, or sales can be lost by having your website not load or have a slow loading time.
- If you know the basics of hosting and how it works, you will be able to select a trustworthy and secure hosting provider.

## What Website Hosting Actually Is

A website hosting company provides the internet service to have your website visible on the internet.

You can think of it like this:

- Your domain name is like the address of your store.
- Your website files are like what you have in your store.
- Your hosting server is like where your files for your entire store are being stored.

When someone wants to visit your website, their computer connects to the server where your website is hosted to view your pages.

If you do not have a hosting server, you will not be able to see your website online.

## How Websites Work

When you access a website, the steps involved happen in very rapid succession. Here are the steps involved:

1. A visitor enters your domain name into a web browser.
2. The domain gets translated into a server's location by the Domain Name System (DNS).
3. Once the DNS translates the domain name, the web browser connects to the server that houses the website.
4. The server where the website is stored sends the website's pages back to the visitor's web browser.

All of these steps happen in only a matter of seconds!

Good hosting can help to guarantee that these processes occur quickly and are reliable.

## Key Components of a Website Infrastructure

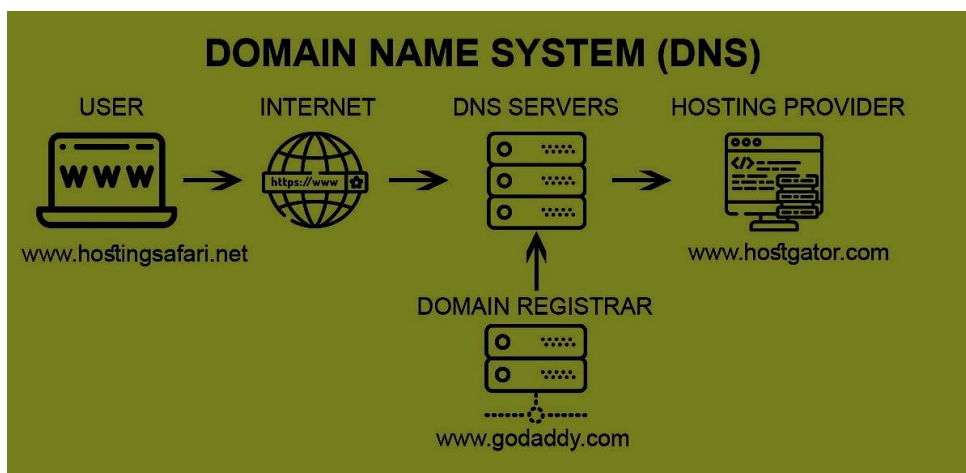
### Domain Names

A Domain Name is the address entered to reach a particular Website.

Examples of Domain Names include:

- yourbusiness.co.uk,
- yourcompany.com

Domains are registered independently of the actual hosting, but communicate with the Host via the DNS.



### Web Server

A Web Server is a computer/server that operates continuously, provides storage for Website files, and receives requests to deliver the files to individuals once they access a page from the Website.

Web Servers operate non-stop in order to maintain the availability of the Website.

### Databases

Databases are used by many websites today to store information about the items they create.

Examples of the information stored in a database usually include:

- Locations of products
- Artwork for blog post content
- Customer records for e-commerce

When a person loads the page of your Website, the Web Server will get whatever files were requested based on the request made by that user.

## **Content Management System**

A Content Management System (CMS) is a type of software application typically used by companies to create or edit content on the Website.

CMS allows a business to manage the content on their Website without having to have any technical knowledge of how to modify code.

## **Bandwidth and Storage**

There is an unlimited amount of data that can be placed on any hosting provider's storage account, but there is only a specified limit as to how much can be transferred (bandwidth).

For example, if a Web Site has one million unique visitors each month, it would require much higher levels of bandwidth for the one million visitors to view the entire content of that site.

## **SSL Certificate**

An SSL Certificate allows users to securely access a website utilising the HTTPS protocol. HTTPS provides a secure encrypted connection between the Web Site and user, which protects private information from being stolen. Sensitive private information protected includes:

- Username and password to log on to a secure portion of web site
- Contact form information entered by visitor

## **DNS (Domain Name System)**

DNS is a connection from a Domain Name to the server hosting the site.

DNS acts as an Address Book for the Internet to guide people to their destinations.

# **Types of Website Hosting Explained**

## **Shared Hosting**

### **Overview**

- Shared Hosting is when multiple sites are sharing one server.

### **Common Use Cases:**

- For instance, sites for a Small Business
- Basic Brochure Sites

### **Advantages of Shared Hosting:**

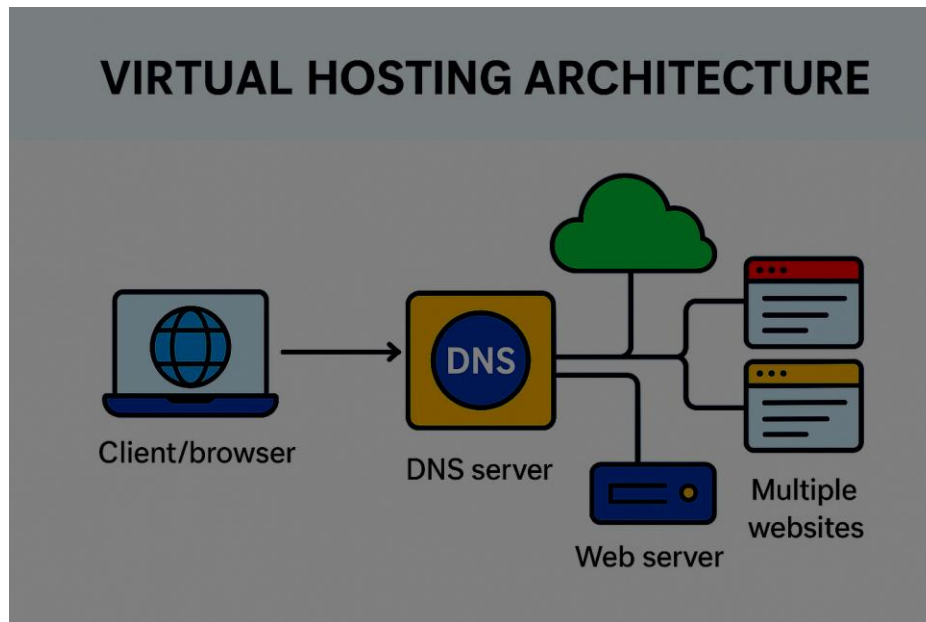
- Low cost
- Easy to get started with Shared Hosting.

### **Limitation of Shared Hosting:**

- The performance of all shared sites may suffer if someone uses a lot of the server's resources.
- Limited control over the server.

### Best Suited for:

- Websites with Low Traffic.



## VPS Hosting

### Overview

A Virtual Private Server hosting environment runs on a single physical server but is divided into many separate resources for each of the multiple sites.

### Advantages:

- More Performance vs. Shared Hosting
- More Flexibility vs. Shared Hosting

### Limitations:

- Cost is greater than shared hosting.

### Suitable For:

- Websites that need a little more than shared.

## Dedicated Servers

### Overview:

Dedicated server is solely used by one business.

### Advantages:

- Complete authority to control performance
- Very reliable

### Disadvantages:

- Very costly

- Requires technical management to run properly

**Suitable For:**

- Larger websites with lots of traffic each month.

**Cloud Hosting**

**Overview**

Cloud Hosting uses many different servers to host a website.

**Advantages:**

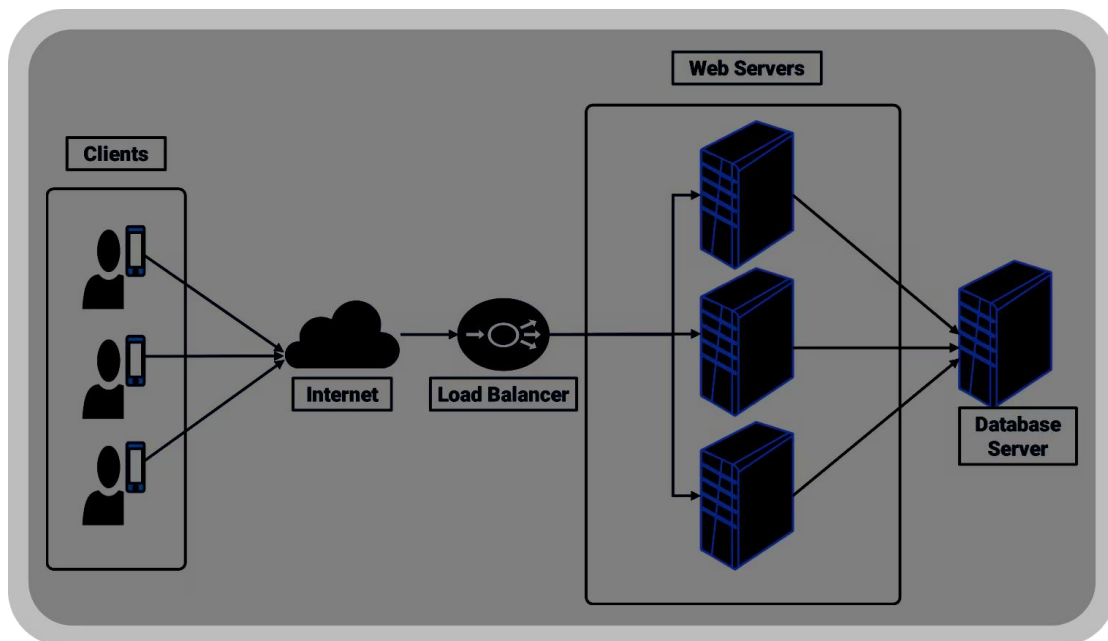
- Very reliable
- Resources are scalable

**Disadvantages:**

- Can be expensive due to varying rates based on usage.

**Suitable For:**

- Companies that expect their site traffic to increase.



**Managed Hosting**

**Overview**

Managed Hosting is when the web host handles the technical tasks related to your website (updates, monitoring, security, etc.) so that the company does not need to manage their own servers and can focus only on their website content.

**WordPress Hosting**

**Overview**

WordPress hosting is specifically created for websites using the WordPress platform. Most WordPress hosting accounts will come with performance enhancements and auto-updates.

## **What Businesses Should Look For in a Hosting Provider**

Consider the following when choosing a hosting provider for your business:

- Uptime reliability
- Fast server performance
- Impressive security features
- Backup regularly
- Responsive support

Business could also check where the server is hosted. If you are a business operating in the UK, hosting your website in the UK or a European country will help you comply with the UK GDPR requirements.

## **Security Considerations for Hosting**

Having good hosting is one of the biggest things you can do to ensure the overall security of your website. Some of the most important protections include:

You should have:

- HTTPS encryption using an SSL certificate
- A web application firewall (WAF)
- Malware scans
- Regular software updates
- Secure access controls for users

## **Website Performance and Speed**

Website speed can impact an individual's overall experience.

If the website load time is slow, then visitors to a site will leave the site before the page has loaded.

There are four areas where your website's performance is affected by hosting:

- Server Speed
- Bandwidth Capability
- Caching Options
- Content Delivery Networks

A reliable host can help to ensure that your web page loads quickly.

## **Backup and Disaster Recovery for Websites**

Backups allow you to recover lost data if anything happens to your data on your web hosting provider's servers.

Most reputable hosting providers will offer their customers:

- An automatic backup system
- A minimum of three copies of your website's backup
- A quick way to restore the backup to your website

Without having the ability to backup your website, any business runs the risk of permanently losing their data.

## **Typical Hosting Mistakes SMEs Make**

Some of the most frequent hosting mistakes that businesses make include:

- Only considering the price when choosing a hosting provider
- Not using an adequate backup system
- Not updating the website's software regularly
- Having weak passwords
- Using a slow server to host their website

Avoiding these mistakes will help to maintain a stable website.

## **FAQs**

### **1. I have already purchased a domain name; do I also need to buy web hosting as well?**

A domain is simply an address for a website; web hosting actually contains all of the files for your website.

### **2. What is the cost of web hosting in the UK?**

The price of web hosting in the UK can range from £5 to over £100 a month depending upon the type of host and performance requirements.

### **3. Is cloud-based hosting better than traditional hosting?**

Cloud-based hosts typically offer improved scalability and reliability, however it ultimately depends on your website's requirements.

### **4. Who will be responsible for managing the hosting account, my developer or IT provider?**

Most business owners rely on third parties such as their web developer or IT provider to manage their website hosting account as well as security.

### **5. Is it possible to change hosting companies later?**

Yes, typically all of your website files can be transferred from one host to another with a little forethought.

## **About This Guide**

**Computer Support Centre** has created this guide to assist UK small and medium-sized enterprises comprehend the concept of hosting for their websites in an uncomplicated and useful way. Many business owners use their website to showcase their services, gain customers, and handle online inquiries however, they may not fully appreciate what is involved with site hosting.



The guide aims to define the term 'hosting', explain how websites function, and provide assistance to SMEs to think about their requirements when selecting a hosting company. The guide has been created in plain English to allow non-technical individuals such as business owners, directors, marketing managers and office managers to easily understand the fundamentals of website infrastructure enabling them to make more informed decisions regarding their own online presence.

If you learn more about **Computer Support Centre**, our services, and our approach, please visit our official website:

□ <https://computersupportcentre.com>

© **Computer Support Centre**

## **Conclusion**

Your website will never be able to exist or function on the internet unless it has proper website hosting. A poorly designed or badly managed website will have difficulty operating correctly, even when hosted on an excellent service provider.

Companies located in the UK can understand the basics of hosting and select hosting solutions that are designed to meet performance, reliability, and security needs by knowing some fundamental aspects of hosting, such as server function, domain registration, security protections, and backup systems. When a website has good hosting from a reliable web hosting company, it will load efficiently, remain accessible to customers, and be protected against the loss of critical business or customer data.

Most small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) want reliable, usable, and manageable hosting solutions rather than complicated technical systems; this is why they choose hosts that enable them to grow their business and build a stable and secure online presence.