



**Website Owner's
Complete Guide 2-in-1:
Choosing Domain & Hosting**

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Building a website is like building a house. You should think out well all its elements - from ceiling to basement. Of course, it should be made of high-quality materials and look trendy and beautiful. But you have to consider how your house will fit the surroundings, what it will be like inside and how you will store all your stuff in it.

The same is for a website. Aside from a cool design and usability, it should also have a catchy domain name to be easily noticed and found among millions of other websites. And you should carefully think of storing your website well to provide users with the best experience.

In the first part of this detailed guide we will give you practical recommendations on choosing a best-fitting domain name that will perfectly work for your brand, SEO and users. The second part is focused on another vital topic: selecting the right hosting plan and provider to guarantee great website performance, fast loading and zero mistakes.

Let's get started!

MotoCMS Team

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The guide includes an affiliate link to Bluehost. MotoCMS team gets a small compensation fee anytime you purchase the hosting provider's service throughout this link.

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Part I. How to Choose a Domain

Everyone who is building a website, or planning to do it faces this problem - **how to choose a proper domain name**. The answer to this question is hard to explain in a couple of words, that is why we have created this ultimate guide that we hope will help you to choose the best domain name for your online presence.

Pick Up Proper Words

Website is a necessity for many businesses along with it is a way of entertaining for many users. Therefore, hundreds of new websites emerge every day. In its turn, it becomes harder to find a short, not confusing, easy to remember, and catchy domain name which is still available and won't make a hole in your pocket. Our simple tips may be valuable for you and help you overcome tedious domain name search.

Choose a Branded Domain Name

In general, Top 10 websites in SERPs with industry related keywords are also Top 10 ranking websites with branding keywords. It means that users search for your business or product's name before they enter your website. There is a widespread but quite a wrong thought to use a generic domain name like "shoes.com" (for companies selling shoes). Such a domain name probably costs a lot, and we would not even guess how much exactly. This idea is not so good as it seems, because if you are looking for shoes online, you may already have some brands in mind. Therefore, it's more likely your search term would be not "shoes", but a kind of branded name "ugg.com" or a world-known company name "zappos.com". It explains why you should tie your brand name with a domain name.

It may happen that your desired domain name is owned by someone else. What's then? It depends on how crucial it is for you to get this specific domain. In case it is more than just important, you can try to buy the domain name from its owner. Find the **whois.com** info of the owner and contact him to know if he wants to sell this name. You may be ready to pay more for such a domain name than for a new one. If you have a little budget because you are just starting your business, think about a cheaper alternative.

Don't Focus on Keywords Too Much

Don't overestimate the role of keywords when choosing a domain name. Many people pay too much attention to keywords and wrongly base the domains on these 'right' words alone. It is not a primary task to use your main keyword in the website's URL. Absolutely different case is when your website name includes an industry-related keyword and you have a chance to get a laconic domain with both your brand name and primary keyword. This is a perfect option though. You should never neglect the keywords, but the key for high rankings is not the main one in your domain name. The best way to choose a domain name is to make an accent on brand, simplicity, and availability.

Follow the KISS Principle

There is no doubt you want to be a company with a great website that everyone can remember, visit again and share with friends. Therefore, don't use difficult, long, mind-bending words, also try to avoid any complexities like numbers, symbols, double letters, etc. Make

your best to pick the name with one possible spelling as this will make it easier for users to find and reach you. In general, the domain name could be up to 67 characters, but it would be impossible to remember. The best length is of 10 characters - try to keep it.

Choose the Domain Name Which You Don't Need to Explain

When you are choosing a domain name, think how clear it is. Will you need to explain it, when telling someone? And will you be able to pronounce it over the phone or at a noisy place? Imagine that your domain is "*designwebsiteswithfabulous.com*", and you need to spell it: "D-E-S-I-G-N *then* W-E-B-S-I-T-E-S *then* W-I-T-H *then* F-A-B-U-L-O-U-S dot com". When looking at these words separately, we may guess that it is a design company named "Fabulous". If you are going to tell this domain name to someone who is not very good at English spelling, you will lose a potential website visitor. Make sure your website domain name doesn't require extra explanations.

Avoid Hyphens and Numbers

The keywords with hyphens are distinguished by search engines well, though we would recommend you to avoid hyphenated names (if it is optional). In case a user has heard your domain name from someone and wants to find you on the web, he or she will probably not use hyphens. This can lead to bad results for you, as a user can open a competitor's website instead of yours. Another side of this issue is when you need to tell someone your domain name, you may spoil it with "dashes": "*i-create-websites*" - "*i dash create dash websites*".

Numbers can make a domain name confusing, too. Tell someone your website is "*creativedesigns21*" and he will never find or remember it. Whether a number should be typed as a number or as a word, and how is this number associated with you?

Think About the Extension

There are around 117 million .COM, 15 million .NET and 10 million .ORG domains on the web as of [February 2015](#). A .COM is registered nearly every second all over the world and there is a statement that [100% of Fortune 500 companies have a .COM](#). We can't disagree with these facts and recommend you to pick .COM as a top-level domain. One more important argument

to support .COM is that many users think that businesses which have .NET or .BIZ domain names failed to pick an appropriate .COM. We would not like to offend webmasters whose websites are with .NET, .BIZ or .ORG domains. Also, we should admit that .ORG domains are good for institutions and non-profitable organizations.

If you own a local business, and you are not interested in the international audience (for example, you run a local food delivery service, a car wash service or pet training center), it is better to use a country-specific domain. There is a huge benefit that you get from such domain: clients who are potentially interested in services you provide understand that you are a local company and that's what they are looking for. Finally, if an insurance company operates in Germany, the customers would rather go for a company with a German domain instead of the international one.

Keep Copyright Issues in Mind

Make sure you are not violating any of website owners' copyright exclusive rights with your domain name. Check everything properly on **copyright.gov** before you make any decision related to domain names. Never use names with branded keyword like "facebookthemes" "adobehelper". Many influential companies take this issue seriously and if you use their branded keywords for your domain name, get ready for troubles. They won't doubt to sue you.

Search for Available Names with Domain Generators

Domain generators, or search engines, offer you an easy way to check if a particular domain is still available. In addition, you can search for relevant suggestions on domain names for your business with these tools. You can try these services BustAName.com or NameBoy to pick the domain name for your website. Further in this book you will find a big collection of useful tools to help you choose your personal domain name.

After you have made a decision with your domain, we recommend you to check if it is "clean". This applies to you if you are buying a domain name from an existing owner or you are thinking about one of the recently expired domains. Google will show you all existing backlinks to this domain, just type in search: *link:www.yoursite.com*. E.g., you want to check the website "*bestdesigns.com*", then type *link:www.bestdesigns.com* in the Google search.

Alternatively, you may use [Wayback Machine](#) or any related service to check your future domain name.

Choose a Reliable Domain Registrar

Make a deal with the most reputable and reliable domain registrars. When you purchase a domain from a new, not well-recognized company, you risk to lose your domain name if the company goes out of business. The largest registrars like GoDaddy, Enom, Hover or NetworkSolutions provide good services. Though, if your budget is limited, some of them may be too expensive for you.

By reason of you are a current or future MotoCMS user, we recommend you to use the [Bluehost](#) web hosting service. It registers domain names for free in case you purchase their hosting plan. The MotoCMS developers find Bluehost a trustworthy hosting provider, and it is compatible with Moto CMS.

Register Your Domain for the Maximum Available Period

If you are creating a website to run a business for a long time, you would better register your domain name for as long as possible (the maximum period is usually 10 years). Search engines give some kind of benefits to websites registered for a long time. Many experts claim that websites registered for a year can't reckon upon search engines' trust. And you probably know how much trust means for SERP results. Take care of this beforehand if don't want to regret later.

7 Tools for Choosing a Domain Name

We have researched the web to create a list of useful and feature-rich tools, which are supposed to help you find a good domain name for your future website. Surely, this list doesn't include all tools available on the web. Also the tools are listed randomly, and the tool we feature first is not obligatory the best one. You may try a few of them before decide which one fits you best.

1. [Domain Tools](#)

This service gives you full information on any domain name, IP address or nameserver, owner and what it was used for.

2. [Domize](#)

It is a safe and fast domain search engine. Besides that it checks a domain availability, it gives you data on whether registered domains are available on the second market or they are expiring soon.

3. [DomainsBot](#)

This advanced search engine provides available domain suggestions, expiring domains and “whois” lookup.

4. [Dot-o-mator](#)

This domain search tool offers you to choose the name from existing ones or type your own beginning and ending words, which it combines automatically. If you like the name you get, check it for availability right on the same page.

5. [Domainr](#)

This tool searches good domain names for you and it revises the most popular domains of other owners.

6. [NameMesh](#)

This domain hunting tool allows you to check availability of the most common TLDs like .COM, .NET, .ORG. Plus, it checks the hyphenated version of the domain name you are interested.

7. [Panabee](#)

This domain search engine provides a simple way to search for domain names, app names, and company names. It supports all popular international domain names like .CO.UK, .IN, and COM.AU.

We have offered you a number of solutions to solve the domain search issues. Build a wise strategy to find a nice and memorable name for your website. And remember that domain search is a creative process.



Part II. How to Choose a Hosting

After choosing a proper domain name for your shiny new website you should think of **getting a right hosting** for it. Choosing a hosting provider may seem a tricky task since you should consider many technical characteristics - from the type of server to technical support a provider offers. A novice webmaster may get lost among multiple offers of hosting services and get confused trying to find the best hosting plan for his or her website. This part of the guide is to clear up the situation about hosting providers and give you all the info you may need to choose the best one.

First you should consider the price. In this guide we will not review free hosting options. Quality support, hardware and other perks cost money free hostings cannot offer. The good old truth “you get what you pay for” should be your main principle when choosing a hosting. Assess features that different hosting providers offer and then compare prices.

Let's establish the most important criteria in the best web host choosing.

Hosting Server Types

Most hosting servers work with only two types of software - Windows or Linux. Both these types are just perfect for most purposes. They work great on any PC and deliver powerful software for any website. So, your choice will depend on what your website's technical characteristics and main goals are. In any case, Windows is a more expensive option.

Linux Hosting Software

Linux usually offers a lot of additional software for hosting services (like Sendmail, Apache, BIND, APF Firewall, etc.). This software is mostly free or very inexpensive. However, Linux software is very hard to manage compared to the one from Microsoft. You won't find there a nice and comfy interface or handy buttons. Instead all operations are performed through the remote shell access (e.g. DOS). Despite such drawbacks Linux offers you much more control over your server than Windows does. It is more stable, efficient and is proven to deal with the most demanding applications.

Linux Advantages:

- Apache HTTP Server;
- PHP + MySQL Database Services;
- Chmod command for file permissions;
- mod_rewrite customization.

Windows Hosting Software

One of the main benefits of Windows hosting software is its easy integration with all Microsoft products. Thus, you may use such options as Advanced server, 2003 Server and 2008 Server. Windows hosting software is perfect for novice webmasters due to its clear intuitive user interface. Another vital feature is that Windows allows running ASP (Active Server Pages that contains special scripts for dynamic website content).

With all that said, the only drawback of Windows hosting software is its high price. Moreover, if you need some additional programs like firewall, ASPmail, remote admin management, ASP

Encrypt, etc. - you will need to pay extra cost for that.

Windows Advantages:

- ASP and ASP.NET Support;
- SQL, PHP and MySQL Server Database;
- IIS Web Server;
- Access Database Support.

If you plan running such ready-to-use solutions like CMS and blogs, you should opt for Linux as it offer enough open-source software. Windows hosting will charge you extra fee for licensed applications instead. There is a simple rule works in choosing the right hosting server for your website. If your website runs ASP you should opt for Windows hosting; otherwise choose a Linux host for PHP-developed websites like those on MotoCMS.

What Kind of Hosting Suits You

Hosting types include three paid options that are offered for various budget plans and various needs. It's shared (or virtual) hosting, co-located hosting, unmanaged dedicated or managed dedicated hosting kinds.

Shared Hosting

The most popular hosting type due to its affordability. As you can see from its title, shared hosting means you share space on one server with many other clients of the hosting provider. Provider has the control over the server but it offers you an opportunity to manage your website hosting features via control panel access. Shared hosting has the cheapest pricing plans. The price of the server is divided between customers that use it, so you can get hosting for as low as \$1.99 per month.

Shared hosting may seem not the best solution. They offer low flexibility and low-quality support in most cases. Since shared hosting servers are mostly overcrowded (one server can be used by 100 and more people at a time) you may expect many issues like limited bandwidth or slow response time.

Who does it fit: small hobby websites, beginners and people who just start their online business. Low traffic websites can also benefit of shared hosting. It's a very affordable and low-cost solution that can be re-considered any time.

Co-located Hosting

This type allows physically place your own server machine in a secured cabinet or cage of co-location service provider. The co-location company then provides an IP, power supplement and bandwidth to your server. Some companies also offer managing your server for extra fee. Co-location services are usually expensive and in combination with additional prices for support they are not the most affordable options. If your company changes locations, you may also need to opt for other co-location center that is closer to your office.

Who does it fit: small business companies that run online stores and need some extra security for their data.

Dedicated Hosting

It's a total opposition to a shared hosting. You rent a hosting server machine from a provider and fully use it without sharing with other customers. You have a full-time access to that server and can host more than one website on it. You can install any software you need for your purposes as well as choosing a hardware for your purposes. Most hosting providers offer support and management of the server for additional payment. In such case you get a managed dedicated hosting. It's the best and the most expensive solution.

Who does it fit: big companies that have a lot of data and traffic and have enough budget to afford managed hosting.

Other hosting types:

- VPS (virtual private server or virtual dedicated server) It's usually a dedicated server with its own software but is technically installed on a machine that runs multiple VPSs. It's not literally a shared hosting since each VPS has its own data, software and

support;

- Cloud hosting. It's a relatively new type of hosting that allows multiple individual servers work together as one huge server. When hosting needs grows the provider can just add some extra hardware to increase space without having to change software options.

Factors to Consider When Choosing Hosting

When choosing the best hosting for your website you have to consider not just software and server types. Here are three the most important factors you should take into account.

Provider Reliability

Hosting provider should have a trustful reputation so you don't have to worry about your website. Reliable hosting provider should offer up-to-date servers that will grant you a steady and secure functioning for all websites that run on those servers. A trustworthy hosting provider should give its customers no less than 99% productive time guarantee. That is to say your website will be running without significant fails at least 99% of an agreed hosting period.

It's vital to know host age as well. The older a provider is the more stable and reliable it is. If the company runs hosting services for two or more years it usually means it has already fixed all bugs and set up an effective management and support. With a help of <https://whois.net/> service you can learn a hosting provider age to make sure you're choosing the right one. With typing a domain name in a search box you'll get a general info on the company's owner and date of founding.

When choosing a reliable hosting company, ask a potential provider if it offers a recovery solution in case of any disasters like power outage, fire damage or various natural calamities. These are potential threats to your website, so you have to be sure you won't have lengthy downtime issues. If you run several websites choose different servers for them to keep at least a few of them working if something happens to others.

Customer Support

High-quality technical support is one of the crucial factors in a choice of a hosting provider. Even if you opt for unmanaged hosting, you should know about kind of customer care a company offers. The most common types of support are those via email, by phone or live chat as well as via a system of tickets or various combinations of the types mentioned above.

Of course, a customer-oriented provider that offers the best support conditions for all its clients according to their hosting plan is a choice #1 for any website owner. The best solution is having a support available 24/7. It allows solving any issues in time without delays.

Don't be shy of testing a provider's support. You can call them by the phone several times to check out their average response time. As a rule, this time shouldn't be longer than 30 minutes, but high-quality support answers much faster, within just a few seconds. If we speak about emails or tickets, the average response time shouldn't exceed a couple of hours.

Low-quality support may mean that a hosting provider experiences some financial, technical or other issues. That doesn't mean you should discard that company right away. Bad days happen to any providers and you should check again later. If those were some force majeure circumstances or accidental mishaps, you may still wish to opt for that provider. Your main reason of abandoning a certain hosting provider should be a constantly bad support service.

Technical Assistance

This category includes not just a good office location and a high-quality hardware. There are some vital issues you should definitely discuss with a hosting provider before making a final decision on choosing its services.

Location. As we mentioned above, it's better to opt for a host located near to the area of your main office. In any case, you should learn about where the company's facilities are located; is that an area predisposed to various natural disasters (hurricanes, tornadoes, floods etc.); does its location allows hiring a good staff in case of need etc.

Power Supply. A steady electricity flow is vital for hostings. When a hosting provider gets

power from independent substations, it ensures that all the data on servers will be safe and the websites won't be down in case of electricity issues.

Backups. Any technology may suffer outages or other problems from time to time. To make sure your website won't suffer from such circumstances it's essential to choose a host that has connection to at least three IPs. But the more - the better.

Security. Protection of your data on servers is a direct function of the entire data-center protection. Make sure a hosting provider has a strong on-site security and may provide a biometric access to data.

Connection Speed. Everybody knows that fast connection speed promises fast loading website. The truth is that users can't connect to a website that fast. But good connection speed means a host provider is able to send tons of data at a time and that is what really matters.

The characteristics mentioned above are essential for any hosting provider. Start evaluating your hosting options from these features because without them other ones (like disc space, data transfer options etc.) break no squares.

Hosting Features

When you land on a hosting provider's website you might first be confused by a number of features and goodies it offers. Those lists may be very long and include multiple tiny features you won't even be able to assess. Moreover, most of those features are pretty much alike for all hosting providers. As a user you should pay the exceptional attention to the amount of disc space and bandwidth providers allow to your website per month. Anyway, lets check out the most often seen features of host you may encounter.

Disk Space

This feature is easy to assess. It's the general amount of data space you can use for your website. Today most hosting providers offer users unlimited disk space. Is that any catch in this offer? Yes, of course. In most cases it means "unlimited until your website is too big."

Actually, there's no server that is capable of hosting unlimited websites. It's like your hard disk - it has a certain amount of space. Well, if your website becomes too big for that host you will simply be asked to move it to another server or choose a dedicated service. Is that bad for you? Guess not, because if you have a really big website it means you're doing very well.

Bandwidth

One of the most important factors. Bandwidth means what amount of data you can transfer to website visitors over a certain period of time. As with disk space, it can be unlimited and included into your pricing plan, or you may be charged for it depending of what amount you use.

Again, "unlimited" in reality means a really huge amount of bandwidth per month (per day). It may be as big as 20 GB per month. Since most small business websites' usage is mere megabytes it's not a problem. However, you should carefully assess bandwidth amount is you use a shared hosting. Some people may run really big static website with huge amount of bandwidth use. Since you'll be sharing the same bandwidth pipe with those owners, it may greatly affect your website loading speed and overall performance.

Control Panel Access

Its interface may vary from host to host, but in general all of them allow you managing your account online. As a minimum, you will be able to manage your email addresses and change a password. Additional features may include blog and shopping cart installation, spam controls setting, ability of installing or removing domains and subdomains as well as tracking website statistics and many more.

Uptime

Uptime means the amount of time the hosting is up. Most hosting companies promise a good percentage of 99.9% or even 99.999% of uptime. But we remember that ANY hosting can be prone to periodical downtimes. Just try to get a clear plan what host offers in case of your website goes down: how soon it will be recovered, what's the amount of compensation etc.

Additional Services

Many modern hosting providers offer a full package of services that may include domain name, web analytic and tracking tools, content management features etc. Just evaluate those services and discard what you don't need.

Price

In case of pricing, the main rule is finding a golden mean. Some hosting providers may include in their pricing plans multiple additional features that you don't need and may never use. It's definitely possible to find an optimal hosting solution for as low as \$5-10 a month.

Common Hosting Myths

Looking for new products we usually not just check out its features and characteristics, but also searching for people's feedback on this product. Good and bad feedback both are equally important as it helps to understand what benefits you can get from a hosting provider as well as to know about potential pitfalls. In fact, any web hosting company has a good amount of negative reviews what doesn't mean you should immediately discard this option. Due to such, often inaccurate and obtrusive feedback, many myths about hosting companies emerge. Here we will try to ruin at least the most common of them.

Myth#1: Multiple Complaints Mean Bad Hosting

As we mentioned above, any product/service has a certain amount of bad reviews. Hosting companies are not an exception. If you try to google negative reviews on any host (like <host name> + bad or + negative) you may be surprised of a number of complaints about that hosting company.

In most cases such negative reviews are simple tricks that some companies use to drive you to their websites. Other cases may include complaints about hosting company violated someone's rights and canceled his or her account without any reasons. Let's face it: hosting is a business. No business person likes losing clients. Will this company cancel someone's account having absolutely no reason to do it and lose money from that client? Don't think so.

In many cases those people violate some rules of hosting but don't want to admit it. So you should pay attention to the background of such complaints. Are the reasons you've read seem adequate to you? If not, this might be just a hater's review.

On the other hand, some dishonest hosts may write many good reviews to look more reliable and delete real reviews with complaints. In that case try to find people that you trust who dealt with that host and find out if those multiple reviews are fake or real. Just remember, that a few complaints with no good reason can't testify that host is bad.

Myth #2: High-Price Means Better Hosting

A total misconception! People tend to think that expensive hosting is perfect by default. The truth is that there can be no perfect hosting that equally ticks all the boxes. Any host can have some soft spots in any area of services. High price doesn't guarantee a high-quality support, better bandwidth or downtime proofness. The main way of finding a perfect host is multiple testing before you find the one that meets all your requirements.

Myth #3: 100% Guarantee Is Real

Sometimes you may come across hosts that claim the 100% SLA index. We all have to admit that in real life nothing can have 100% guarantee. In reality, the company that declares a 100% availability per year saving just 4-5 hours per month for force majeure conditions, usually holds back hours and hours of maintenance. Thus a 100% guarantee turns to be only 90% what doesn't keeps up with a real SLA standards.

Actually, it's really hard to exactly define the level of availability even for the most renowned hosting companies. To keep up with at least 99.8% a provider have to maintain a highly-developed infrastructure with improved features and a constant system monitoring. For most hosts it's a challenge, so don't expect a 100% guarantee to be real.

Myth#4: High-Quality Hosting Can't Cost Less than \$5 per Month

Most reviews about hosting services provide the idea of the Myth #1. They claim that really good hosting services should cost a lot of money and there can't be a quality host for less

than \$5 a month. In fact, a really good hosting provider can offer its clients such a low price for some reasons:

- Technology evolves and becomes less expensive and far more accomplished than before. Thus providing better service for less money becomes more and more real;
- Most of hosting providers charge a full subscription fee in advance. It allows them offering good service and get their revenue.

The key-note here is you can get a basic, quality hosting for reasonable money.

Conclusion

Domain name and hosting selection are often neglected or left aside until last moment. It's a really bad idea. You should consider the domain name of your website before starting working on its design. It will save you a lot of time and money in future.

Similar is for choosing a proper hosting for your website. Choose carefully because a reckless decision may end up with losing your files, corrupted website and disappointed users as a result.

Now when you understand the peculiarities of choosing a domain name and hosting, it's time to start creating your own website. It's actually not that hard to make a website idea become a functional website. Creating a website with MotoCMS is extremely easy and requires no coding knowledge.

Choose a Design for Your Website

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Tina Zennand

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