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Linux Hosting vs. Windows Hosting

If you are wondering what the difference is between Linux Website Hosting and Windows Website Hosting then read on as this is one of the most commonly asked questions in the hosting world.

Pricing

Why is there a difference in pricing between Windows and Linux? The reason is that the licensing fees required for Windows hosting cost more. Linux is open source software, which is maintained by individuals who are not getting paid for their contributions. The developers at Microsoft are getting paid. And as such to run the Windows software (mail server, IIS, etc.) requires fees being paid to them. This is the reason that Windows hosting tends to cost more than its' Linux alternative.

Reliability

Which is better for reliability? Actually at this point it really does not matter whether you choose the Windows operating system to host your web sites or a Linux based solution. Both offer premium uptime, reliability, and security. In the past, people used to use Linux because of its increased reliability over Windows. But since the Windows 2003 release of their server software, Microsoft has definitely closed the gap in this area.

Developmental Tools

The place where Linux differs distinctly from Windows server hosting is in the area of developmental tools. If you are writing your scripts in ASP or the advanced ASP.NET, you need Windows hosting. Period. Linux does have an emulation program, which allows ASP scripts to be run under it, but you have to write your ASP scripts in Perl to use it. Only true ASP is available on a Windows based hosting platform. Another area in which Windows is the only choice is if you need integration with Microsoft's tools. MS SQL databases, access databases, and other specific Microsoft tools are only available with Windows.



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If you need these tools then you need Windows hosting. If you do not need these specific items then you probably should look at Linux based hosting. Linux offers the common programming tools used by Windows but does not have the higher prices attached. With Linux you can use Perl, PHP, MySQL databases, cgi scripts, and a whole lot more. You can also use FrontPage Extensions to publish web sites. All these items are available on both hosting platforms.

A Breakdown: Windows Website Hosting

One of the first things that people notice when trying to choose between Windows or Linux hosting environment is cost. Windows will always be a more expensive option than Linux due to the licensing fees that must be paid in recognition of the fact that you are dealing with a Microsoft application.

The biggest difference between Windows and Linux website Hosting is that Windows servers are configured specifically to be compatible with Microsoft Applications, such as Access (for database programming) and ASP (a website development tool) although Linux servers are quite happy to run FrontPage extensions.

For the more experienced user/programmer, Windows offers the ability to utilize certain programming languages such as ASP (Active Server Pages), ASP.net, Coldfusion, and Visual Basic scripting. With ASP, users can develop a database driven website using MS Access and SQL as the database.

As a very basic guideline, we usually ask potential customers to look at the facilities a Windows server offers and if they are 'not sure' or 'don't know' whether they need to use the applications listed above, it usually means that they do not need them and therefore, a Linux hosting plan would be adequate for their needs.

Linux Website Hosting

Linux is known as an “open source” operating system. This means there are no licensing fees to pay and consequently, it is cheaper. Linux has also been around a lot longer than Windows servers. A wide range of programming languages are supported by Linux servers, such as HTML, PHP, CGI, PERL, etc...



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If there is a disadvantage to Linux, it would simply be that it is not fully compatible with some Microsoft technologies so if you are using ASP, ASP.net or, Visual Basic tools to develop your website, then a Windows platform would be necessary.