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Servers & Technology

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LiteSpeed or Apache: what the web server changes for your site, and what it does not

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The web server is the program that receives the browser's request and hands back the page. **Apache and LiteSpeed do the same job and read the same rules** (the **.htaccess** file, redirects, address rewrites), so for someone with a website the difference shows mainly in **speed with caching** and in the load the server can carry, and hardly at all in the way you work. Our shared hosting servers run LiteSpeed.

Side by side

	Apache	LiteSpeed
.htaccess rules	Reads them natively.	Reads them too, and is designed as a compatible replacement.
How it works	Serves each request with a process or thread, depending on configuration.	Serves many requests with fewer resources, through an event-driven architecture.
Page cache	Needs a module, or a plugin that does it through PHP.	Has a page cache in the server itself, which on WordPress you switch on with the LiteSpeed Cache plugin.
Where you meet it	On many hosts, and on VPS you set up yourself.	On our shared hosting servers.

There is also **Nginx**, another widely used web server. One difference you notice at once: Nginx **does not read .htaccess files**, so the rules of a site built for Apache have to be rewritten in the server configuration. On a VPS the choice is yours. See **Nginx or Apache on a VPS: which web server to choose**.

What this changes for your site, step by step

1. **Check that page caching is on.** That is where LiteSpeed pays off. On WordPress, see **LiteSpeed Cache for WordPress: the first settings**.

2. **Verify it in the browser.** Open the site with the developer tools (F12), the **Network** tab, and look at the response headers. On the second visit the **x-litespeed-cache** header should show the value **hit**.

3. **Keep your .htaccess.** The redirect and rewrite rules you used on Apache keep working. See **.htaccess for PHP projects**.

4. **Do not swap cache plugins out of habit.** A generic plugin stores files but still has to start PHP to serve them. See **installing and tuning a page cache**.

Changing the web server does not speed up a heavy site.
The web server does not fix huge images, slow queries or too many plugins. What LiteSpeed does is serve better the pages that can be stored. See **the site is slow: what actually makes a difference**.

What does not change with the web server:
PHP, WordPress, themes, the database, the domain and the e-mail. A site that ran on Apache runs here without changes.

NEED A HAND?

Coming from an Apache server and wondering whether anything on your site will change? Tell us what you use and we will go through it with you.

Open a support ticket →

SEE ALSO

- **LiteSpeed Cache for WordPress: the first settings** →
- **Nginx or Apache on a VPS: which web server to choose** →
- **Installing and tuning a page cache** →

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TAX ID (NIF)	500 260 5724
COMMERCIAL REGISTRATION NO.	26464-25/250724
REGISTERED OFFICE	Rua Direita do Patriota, Bairro Dangereux Belas, Luanda, Angola
CONTACT	info@interweb.ao · +244 942 011 191 · www.interweb.ao
OPENING HOURS	Monday to Friday - 08 AM to 04 PM Saturday & Sunday - Closed

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