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Generated on 21/10/2026 16:09

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HestiaCP or CloudPanel on your VPS: the differences that matter

VPS & Servers

CODE	VERSION	COUNTRY · LANGUAGE
RLX-AO-KB-2318	v2026.10.21	Angola · English

Interweb Angola
RLX Angola, Lda. · Group RLX Holdings
Tax ID (NIF) 500 260 5724 · Commercial registration no. 26464-25/250724

https://www.meu.interweb.ao/knowledgebase/2318

HestiaCP or CloudPanel on your VPS: the differences that matter

VPS & Servers · Created on **October 21, 2026** · 4 min read

The short answer: both are free, need no licence and run on Debian and Ubuntu. Choose **HestiaCP** if you want a complete hosting server, with **e-mail, DNS and several accounts with limits**. Choose **CloudPanel** if you only need sites and **PHP, Node.js or Python** applications on Nginx, and e-mail lives with a separate service: CloudPanel itself says it does not provide e-mail, for performance reasons. Either way the VPS is unmanaged: installing and maintaining the panel is up to you.

Side by side

What to compare	HestiaCP	CloudPanel
Licence	**Free** (open source, GPLv3). There is no licence.	**Free.** There is no licence.
Systems you can order	**Debian 12 and Ubuntu 22.04.** Ubuntu 24.04 and Debian 13 through a support ticket. LTS releases only; no AlmaLinux, Rocky or CloudLinux.	**Ubuntu 22.04 and Debian 12.** Ubuntu 24.04 and Debian 13 through a support ticket. No AlmaLinux, Rocky or CloudLinux.
Web server	Nginx with PHP-FPM, or Nginx in front of Apache; several PHP versions.	NGINX with PHP-FPM; Varnish and Redis available.
E-mail included	Yes: Exim and Dovecot, Roundcube webmail; SpamAssassin and ClamAV optional.	**No.** The documentation says to use a separate e-mail service.
DNS	Yes: BIND, your own nameservers, DNS cluster and DNSSEC.	**No DNS server:** the records stay wherever the domain is managed.
Several accounts and reselling	Users with limit packages. The documentation has no resellers.	Users with three roles (Admin, Site Manager, User). No packages and no reselling.

What to compare	HestiaCP	CloudPanel
WordPress	Quick install of WordPress and other applications.	A dedicated WordPress site type.
Node.js and Python apps	No app manager in the documentation: a Node.js app sits behind an Nginx proxy template, set up by hand.	Built in: Node.js and Python site types, plus PHP, static and reverse proxy.
Backups	Automatic, on the server or to FTP, SFTP and Rclone; incremental with restic.	Off the server only: S3, Dropbox, Google Drive, SFTP and anything Rclone supports; manual restore.
Minimum memory and disk	1 GB without SpamAssassin and ClamAV (4 GB recommended). Disk: 10 GB (40 GB recommended).	2 GB. Disk: 10 GB.
Learning curve	A simple panel; what it does not show is done with the v- commands on the command line.	Few menus: sites, users and backups, no e-mail and no DNS.
First login	https://IP:8083	https://IP:8443

Choose HestiaCP if…

1. **You want the mailboxes on the same server**, with webmail, anti-spam and antivirus.
2. **You want to run DNS on the server itself**, with your own nameservers. How the nameservers are registered: **pointing a domain at your VPS**.
3. **Several people or clients will use it**, each with an account and limits. Installation: **installing HestiaCP**.

Choose CloudPanel if…

1. **Your projects are applications** in Node.js or Python, or PHP such as Laravel and WordPress, and you want to create them as site types, without setting up the proxy by hand.
2. **E-mail already lives, or will live, with another service.** The server then only serves sites.
3. **You want to give a developer access to one site only**, with the User role. Installation: **installing CloudPanel**.

There is no converter between the two.

HestiaCP only restores backups made by HestiaCP or VestaCP, and the CloudPanel documentation only describes moving site by site: copy the files and import the database. When moving from HestiaCP to CloudPanel, **the mailboxes and the DNS zones have nowhere to go**: move e-mail and DNS to another service first, and only then switch off the old server. Both need a freshly installed system, so the move goes to a new VPS, or to a reinstalled system (a reinstall is requested in a support ticket).

Right after installing, close the door.

On CloudPanel, create the administrator as fast as you can (the documentation warns that bots may create it before you do) and, if you can, open port 8443 to your own IP only. On HestiaCP, turn on two-factor authentication for the administrator. Still deciding? **Which panel to install** and **free or paid panel**.

NEED A HAND?

Torn between HestiaCP and CloudPanel and want to know which fits your VPS? Tell us what will run on it.

Open a support ticket →

SEE ALSO

- **Installing HestiaCP on your VPS, step by step: a free panel with e-mail** →
- **Installing CloudPanel on your VPS, step by step: a free panel for PHP, Node and Python apps** →
- **Which control panel to install on your VPS: cPanel, Plesk, Webuzo, HestiaCP or CloudPanel** →
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