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VPS, Cloud or Dedicated: how to choose

Getting Started & Choosing

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All three give you what shared hosting cannot: **resources that are yours alone** and administrator access to the machine. The difference between them is not better or worse, it is what each one is for. This article gives you a way to decide, and it also tells you when the right answer is to change nothing.

First: do you actually need to leave shared?

Half the people who ask us about a VPS do not need one. These are the signs that really count:

1. **The account keeps hitting the plan limits.** Not a feeling: the panel shows disk, databases and the rest as numbers. Sitting near the ceiling week after week is a real sign.

2. **You need software shared hosting will not run.** A service that must stay running in the background, a language or version that is not offered, a port of your own.

3. **You need administrator access.** To configure the server your way, not just your site inside it.

4. **You need guaranteed resources.** A shared machine is split between accounts. If your business depends on surviving a spike you already have in the calendar, you do not want to depend on neighbours.

If the only symptom is a slow site, measure before you buy.
A great deal of slowness comes from the site itself, and in those cases a bigger server just makes the problem more expensive. Send us the address and we will look first.

What actually differs

	What you get	Where it tends to fit
VPS	A reserved slice of a physical machine, with its own operating system and administrator access. The resources are yours, the hardware is shared with other slices.	The first step up from shared. Sites with real traffic, custom applications, staging environments, anyone who needs control of a server without paying for a whole machine.
Cloud	The same idea as a VPS, but built on infrastructure designed to grow and to survive the failure of one part. What changes is not raw speed: it is the network and how resources are adjusted.	When load is unpredictable and has to scale without a rebuild, or when tolerating a failure matters more than the price.
Dedicated	The entire physical machine, with nobody sharing it. All the processor, all the memory, all the disk.	Heavy, constant workloads, large databases, requirements that demand physical isolation, or when a large VPS is already full.

The actual configurations, with the options you can pick, are on **VPS Server**, **Cloud Server** and **Dedicated Server**. Put them side by side before deciding: that is where the numbers that matter are.

The part nobody mentions: who administers it

On a shared hosting plan we administer the server. On a server of your own, that job changes hands, and it is where most people are caught out.

> **!** **An unmanaged server is somebody's job.**
> System updates, security, backups, monitoring, and getting the service back up when it falls over at three in the morning. If it is not us, it is you or someone on your team. Before you choose, check what each option includes and read the **Support Policy**, which says where our side ends.

Four questions, and the answer appears

1. **Do you need administrator access to the machine?** If not, stay on **shared hosting** and save both the money and the work.
2. **Is your load steady or spiky?** Steady and predictable points to VPS or dedicated. Irregular, with peaks you cannot forecast, points to Cloud.
3. **Do you have someone to run the server?** If not, choose an option with management included, or hire someone. This question weighs more than the choice between the three.

4 **What does the project justify?** Check the figures on **pricing** and compare them with what shared costs you today. The difference has to buy something real.

Starting small is almost always right.
Moving from a VPS to a bigger machine is far easier than discovering, three months in, that you bought twice what you use.

NEED A HAND?

Tell us what your project does and what traffic it sees. We will tell you which of the three fits, including when none of them does.

Ask for a recommendation →

SEE ALSO

- **VPS Server: configurations and options**
- **Cloud Server: configurations and options**
- **Dedicated Server: the whole machine**
- **It may still be shared: see the plans**

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