

## **Title: Window web hosting or linux web hosting ?**

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Author: Hostsdepot

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Summary: Linux (and its close relation Unix) and Windows 2000 (and its close cousin Windows NT) are types of software (known as operating systems) that web servers use to do the kind of things that web servers do. You do not need to know any real detail of either to make a decision as to which you need but here a few guidelines.

Just because you use a windows desktop PC doesn't mean you have to opt for Windows web hosting (and the reverse is true as well). The operating system you use on your desktop has little to do with your choice of web hosts. As long as you understand how to use your FTP or web publishing software, you can use either operating system.

But what is important is that you know what you want your website to do and what you want to offer on it. This is what will ultimately help determine the type of web hosting that will work best for you. As mentioned earlier, interactive websites usually rely on ASP, PHP, or Perl type languages.

Linux Web Hosting or Windows 2000 Web Hosting ? Make your Choice !

When it comes to Web hosting, Linux has, for some time, been widely considered the best OS for Web servers. It's typically found to be the most reliable, stable and efficient system and, as such, it's commonly used for the demanding environment of Web and mail servers. Indeed, aalphanet.com runs on the Linux OS precisely because of this traditional stability.

The million-dollar question is what application are you looking to use for your hosting? Consider the tools and scripting languages you plan to use – if you use PHP, Perl or MySQL, Linux is the way forward. If apps are Microsoft-specific, then Windows is what you need.

If your site, like most web sites, is what might be termed "brochure-ware" then Linux servers are ideal. By brochure-ware I mean a site that offers the kind of information that in the past might have been provided on paper in the form of brochures, newsletters or data sheets. Brochure-ware sites will offer some interaction through enquiry forms and can certainly incorporate online purchasing and other routine e-commerce functions.

If however your site incorporates an online searchable database or interactive chat facilities then Windows 2000 or NT will be a better bet in most cases. It will cost a bit more but you'll get that back in reduced development time and simply better functionality.

The following are the advantages of using Linux based web server compared to Windows based web server :

Stable: Linux/Unix operating systems has traditionally been believed to be very stable and robust. A

web site housed on a Linux operating system will have very high up-time (of the order of 99.9%). Of course, other factors such as power supply, network admin skills, and network load etc. also matter when it comes to maintaining the system uptime.

Low cost of ownership: The Linux OS comes free of cost (or at very insignificant cost, usually cost of distribution). Also, it has full fledged server, and desk top applications that comes free along with the OS. These server applications (such as FTP, Web Server, DNS Server, File Server etc.) being free, are also very stable.

Ease of use : When it comes to web hosting, it is easy to host on Linux web servers. The process of uploading and hosting is almost same for both Linux and Windows web servers. If you want to use a Windows based tool such as Front Page for uploading a web site on to a Linux based web server, make sure that the Front Page extensions are enabled. This is only required if you are uploading using HTTP feature (<http://www.yourwebsite.com>) of Front Page. Front Page also makes it possible to upload a web site using FTP. You need to select <ftp://www.yourwebsite.com> for up loading using front page FTP option. Note that if you select "Front Page Extensions" during web site design, you must enable Front Page extensions on a Linux web server also. These days, all Linux web servers are coming with installable Front Page extensions, and this should pose no problem for hosting on a Linux platform.

You can use almost all types of file extensions (or scripts) when using Linux web server. Commonly, the following extensions are supported:

.cgi, .html, .htm, .pl, .php, .shtml, .xml, and others.

Basically it means that you can host web sites that use different types of server side scripts including .cgi, .pl, .php, and .asp (with plug-in).

Easy to move between hosts : A web site designed to be hosted on a Linux based web server can be hosted on a Windows web server easily, where as the reverse is not always true.

Most widely used : Linux/Unix based web hosting is most widely used compared to Windows based web hosting.

Scalability : A web site is dynamic. Usually, a web site starts with a few pages of html and grows over a period of time to suit the customers requirements. It is preferable to design a web site keeping this requirements in mind. A web site designed for compatibility with a Linux/Unix based web server meets the scalability requirement easily without making any site wide design changes.

On the downside, Linux based web server is not fully compatible with Microsoft technologies. If you are using any specialized applications or VB for development of your web site, it is preferable to host with a Windows based web server.