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Introduction

In order to establish an online presence you will need to first register a domain name and then set up a hosting and FTP account so that you can upload webpages, files, download items and effectively manage your entire online business.

Hosting providers, such as www.HostGator.com, provide you with web space that will house your websites, and make it easy to build your marketing campaigns, as well as create squeeze and landing pages to capture leads and begin promoting your product. You can even set up a fully loaded blog with a basic Host Gator account!

Once you have set up a hosting account, you will use a FTP program (File Transfer Protocol) to upload, download and manage your files, including your index page and any graphics or images used on your website.

In other words, your hosting account stores your webpages and files and FTP is the tool you use to update these pages, upload or download new files, and manage all items stored on your hosting account.

While many hosts including Host Gator give you the option of managing files directly from within your cPanel, using an FTP program simplifies the process, and gets the job done much faster, so it's important that you learn how to set up and use a FTP program in connection with your hosting account.

To begin, let's go through the process of setting up a simple hosting account!

Creating Your Hosting Account

HostGator offers several hosting packages ranging from basic plans to full featured dedicated servers. When you visit their website, you will see the following categories available, all with individual hosting plans.

Web Hosting
Reseller Hosting
Dedicated Servers

The plans featured within the "Web Hosting" category are all basic hosting plans, with many of them offering you the opportunity to host unlimited sub-domains as well.

With "Reseller Hosting" accounts, you are able to host an unlimited number of domains and sub-domains on your hosting account, and can also choose to SELL hosting to others in the future.

And finally when your website has begun to generate a consistent flood of traffic and user activity, you can consider upgrading your plan to a dedicated server.

When just starting out however, all you really need is a basic hosting account. You can upgrade instantly just by contacting the HostGator support team should you wish to enhance or modify your website hosting plan in the future.

Let's set up your basic hosting package:

To begin, visit http://www.HostGator.com and click on "Web Hosting" to review

the different plans available under this category.

Every web-hosting plan comes with a 45 day money back guarantee, 99.9%
uptime guarantee.

Choose the plan that you feel best suits your needs. For the majority of new
business owners, the Baby (or Croc) plan will help them create an online
presence without having to invest a lot of money in start-up costs.

Remember, you can upgrade your hosting plan at **any** time should you need a
larger package to accommodate your website traffic or bandwidth usage.

Click the "Order Now" link for the hosting package that you are interested in.

In the next step, you will be asked to choose to register a new domain name, or

if you intend on using an existing domain.

If you have yet to register a domain name for your website, go ahead and click the "Register New Domain" link to secure your website's domain.

In the event you have already registered a domain name with an external registrar service such as www.NameCheap.com , click "I will use my Existing Domain Name" and enter in your complete domain name, to proceed through the checkout process as shown below:

The next page will provide a summary of your order, including your package type, domain name and billing cycle. With HostGator, you are able to choose to pay your hosting bill on a monthly basis, as well as for six months, yearly, or even two or three years at once.

The price of the hosting package will vary depending on the payment terms you choose.

For example, if you choose to pay monthly, your hosting account will be priced at $9.95, whereas if you decide to pay for six months of hosting upfront, your payment will be $ 59.70. There is no discount for paying for multiple months at once, so I recommend going on a month-to-month basis.

Click "Calculate Totals" to proceed through the checkout process.

IMPORTANT MONEY SAVING TIP:
Visit http://www.RetailMeNot.com to uncover the latest coupon that will save

you money on hosting costs. The coupon code "Wordpress" will reduce your first months costs to only $.01 (And you can use it for ANY website, it doesn't have to be a Wordpress based site).

Note: This coupon applies only to your first billing cycle. After that the standard pricing will be billed.

The next page will ask you to provide information based on whether you are an existing customer or a new one. If this is the first time that you are setting up a hosting account with HostGator, choose the "I am a new customer" option.

Click "Continue".

You now have to create a customer profile with HostGator. Enter in your name, address and primary email address. All of your website hosting information will be sent to this email address, so make sure that it is a valid address and one that you can easily access.

The information required within the "Additional Information" form is used in setting up your actual hosting account. You are asked to choose a username and password.

Make sure that you use a strong password that combines both numbers and letters, and that your username does not include any keywords used within your domain name, for security purposes.

Note: If you choose a username that is too close to your actual domain name, HostGator will be unable to create your hosting account until your username is

modified. You will need to contact their live support for assistance in changing your username to one that is more secure.

Select your payment option to continue. You can choose to purchase your hosting account via credit card or Paypal.

Setting Up Nameservers

Once your payment has been processed, you will receive a series of emails from Host Gator, the first one thanking you for becoming a customer, and reminding you to pay for your account if you have not yet done so.

You will also receive a secondary email containing invoice details once you have finalized your hosting payment, and a third email will arrive shortly after containing your hosting account information.

This email is VERY important so make sure that you retain a copy for future reference. It will include your account details, domain name, username and password to access your hosting account, as well as your website hosting nameservers.

Your nameservers will look similar to this:

ns2011.hostgator.com
ns2012.hostgator.com

You will use these nameservers when pointing your domain name to your new

hosting account. You simply log into your domain registrar (where you registered your domain name) and choose "Update NameServers".

You then add in each of these nameservers and within a few hours (often within a few minutes), your domain name and hosting account will be "connected", which means that when people enter your domain name into their browsers they will be able to access your website.

Note: It can take up to 24 hours for your domain name to "propagate" so that it's visible to everyone who visits your website.

cPanel

Host Gator uses cPanel for all of their hosting accounts. You will be given access to your cPanel within your HostGator account information email.

CPanel, which stands for Control Panel, provides you with all of the tools you need to effectively manage your website, including setting up email addresses, forwarders, databases as well as creating sub-domain accounts.

If you would like to simplify the process of installing scripts and software, look for the "Fantastico" icon in your cPanel area.

Fantastico is an automated "script installer", enabling you to instantly install scripts such as Wordpress or free help desk scripts. It speeds up installation by eliminating the need to manually install scripts or create databases. In fact, you'll be able to set up over 25 different scripts with just a few clicks of your mouse!

Not every hosting provider offers Fantastico, but if you choose HostGator it will be included at no extra cost.