



Domains, Registrars, & Hosting

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When someone wants to [create a website](#), the first thing they do is to get a *domain name*.

A domain registrar offers services that allow you to pick a domain name and register it to an IP address. This is the address of your site. For example, the domain of this site is "business.riverbender.com". If you were to type that into your web browser's address bar, you would arrive at its front page.

A domain name by itself means nothing. Without a website attached to it, it is an address that points nowhere. It's the equivalent of registering a business name in the brick-and-mortar world. At the end of the process, you will have a name. That is all. You will still need to lease shop premises and attach that name to the shop before you can open for business. The Internet equivalent of leasing shop premises is to sign up for an account with a web host. They provide the "premises" on which you can place your website.

Domain Name Registrar vs Web Host

Web hosting and domain registration are frequently paired together. But it's important to understand exactly what they do.

Registrars and web hosts refer to two different types of businesses. One allows you to register names (your domain), and the other provides space for you to set up shop (your website). Most people purchase their domain name through a Web Hosting Provider, such as riverbender.com which does all the work for you and registers your domain through the registries on your behalf.

When you register a domain name, or one is registered for you, it is leased from the Internet Corporation for Names and Numbers, or ICANN for short, via approved registrars. Registration provides you the right to "point" your domain wherever you want with nameservers.

Web hosting is an account on a web server that "hosts" your website files and data. Whenever someone types in your website's domain name, your web hosting provider will be responsible for sending its content to the visitor.

Web hosts also provide beginner-friendly tools for all users so that you can manage the website with little to no technical skills. A hosting provider usually offers customer support, server maintenance, and website builders to help users create and maintain their site.

In addition to storing website files, a web host protects the server and your website files from malicious attacks.

How to Get Started

How to get started with domain registration, web hosting, and building a website depends on what you want to do.

The most common path to creating a website is to buy your domain, hosting, and website services in a single bundle from [one company](#). It's convenient, it's simple, and it makes a lot of sense for many website owners.

There are a few factors you should consider when choosing a hosting company, including:

- **User-friendliness.** Every web host provides a control panel to manage your web hosting account. Make sure the dashboard offered is easy-to-use and has extensive functionality.
- **Server speed and uptime.** Choose a web hosting company that ensures fast loading speeds and offers an excellent uptime guarantee so that your site experiences minimum downtime.
- **Pricing and plans.** Before purchasing a hosting plan, it helps to consider the add-ons and renewal fees that would fit your budget in the long term.
- **Customer service.** Pick a hosting company with a reliable support team to give you immediate assistance when running into a technical issue.