**Comparison of Hosting Services**

This is a report on the marketplace for hosting services. Note that the technical term for this kind of service is Virtual Private Server (VPS). This should not be confused with Website Hosting Services, although most VPS companies are also website hosting companies. A VPS company provides virtual machines (VMs) to their customers. To a customer, a VM is indistinguishable from a physical machine.

There are a great many VPS companies. It is a very competitive area. Looking at the web for such companies I found over 200 of them.

A typical example of a VM will have 1 core (processor), 1 GB of RAM and 25 GB of memory on a hard disk or solid-state drive. Such a VM is more than adequate for one to host several websites. I have hosted 6 websites on such a VM, some of which are very active. Such a VM does not provide all of the services that one requires for a website. The following must still be provided:

1. The domain (e.g., iaoa.org) must be registered and forwarded to the VM. This typically costs around $12 per year. Some VPS companies are also domain registries, but there is no advantage to using the same company for this.

2. The VM cannot store very many large documents or video recordings. A cloud storage service is more appropriate for this as it is very cheap (primarily because they use HDDs not SSDs). Some VPS companies are also sell cloud storage, but there is no advantage to using the same company for this.

There are several websites that rate VPS companies. Their rankings (and set of companies listed) differ substantially so it is difficult to make a decision based on what such websites say. A further complication is that many VPS companies bundle together the VM with domain registration and cloud storage, among other services. The rating of such companies will typically be about the other services, not the VPS. One example of this is GoDaddy which is highly rated, but also much more expensive than other companies and offers other services. All VPS companies charge by the month in US dollars, except for ArubaCloud that charges monthly in euros. All provide a single IP address unless otherwise noted. Here is a selection of some companies.

* GoDaddy $18, 1GB RAM, 40GB SSD and 8 IP addresses. Very highly rated.
* Digital Ocean $5, 1GB RAM, 25GB SSD. Highly rated.
* Hostgator $5. Highly rated, but not easy to find their specs.
* A2 Hosting $5, 512MB RAM, 20GB HDD. Highly rated.
* DreamHost $15, 1GB RAM, 30GB SSD. Highly rated.
* BlueHost $20, 2GB RAM, 30GB SSD. Highly rated.
* Hostinger $5, 1GB RAM, 20GB SSD. Good ratings.
* Host1Plus $6.40, 512MB RAM, 20GB Storage. Good ratings.
* ArubaCloud 1 euro, unknown specs. Fair ratings.

The ArubaCloud VPS had a rating of 3.4/5 on a website that listed 195 companies! The reviews were either 5/5 or 1/5. The negative reviews were extremely negative. Nevertheless, the fact that they charge in euros is an advantage as it can cost 15 euros to transfer money from a European bank to a US bank, not including the cost of exchanging from euros to dollars. On the other hand, this could be handled by using PayPal. Digital Ocean can automatically deduct from an authorized PayPal account each month, and IAOA has a PayPal account.

I have used Digital Ocean for several years, and I am very satisfied with it.

For cloud storage I use Amazon S3. It typically costs me $2/month of which $0.50 is for storage and $1.50 is for data transfer. I store around 100K files that use around 25GB of space, and my monthly data transfer is around 7TB.