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# Hosting an AI agent: why it needs a VPS and not shared hosting

Agents & AI on a VPS

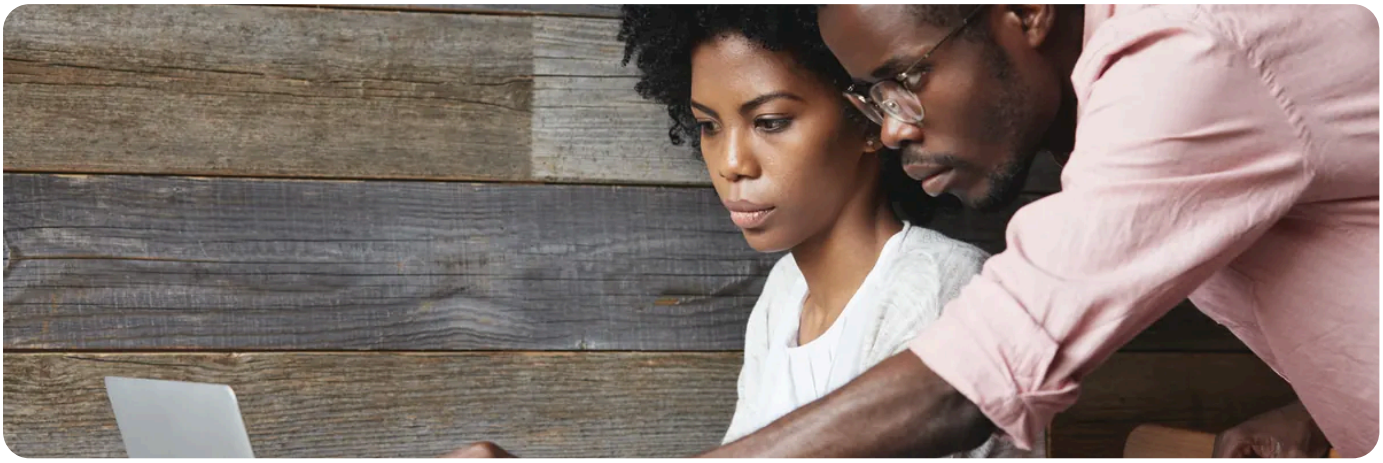
| CODE | VERSION | COUNTRY · LANGUAGE |
| --- | --- | --- |
| RLX-INT-KB-2982 | v2026.10.10 | International · English |

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Tax no. (SARS) 943 907 6234 · Registration no. (CIPC) 2025/667953/07

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# Hosting an AI agent: why it needs a VPS and not shared hosting

Agents & AI on a VPS Created on **October 10, 2026** 3 min read



An AI agent that runs on your own server (such as OpenClaw) is a program that has to **stay running all the time, have root access and be reachable on a public IP**. Shared hosting gives you a space within limits, with no root and no way to install system software. So the right place is a VPS, a Cloud server or a dedicated server. It is not a question of power, it is one of **permissions and kind of work**.

## What the agent asks for and what shared hosting gives

| The agent asks for | Shared hosting | VPS |
|---|---|---|
| **Root and SSH to install and configure** | No root. SSH exists on many accounts, but only inside the account. | Yes, root access over SSH |
| **A process running all the time, in the background** | Long-running processes are limited by the server | Yes, as a system service |
| **Recent Node.js (22.14 at minimum, in OpenClaw's case)** | cPanel has "Setup Node.js App" with several versions, aimed at web applications | Install whatever version you like |
| **Memory sized for the agent** | Shared and limited per account. See **the limits nobody advertises**. | The plan's own, yours alone |
| **Choosing and opening ports** | Server ports are not changed | Yes, with the firewall you choose |
| **Installing system software (Docker, a headless browser)** | No | Yes. See **installing Docker on a VPS**. |

The row in the table that misleads most is Node.js. It is true that cPanel has **Setup Node.js App**, with many versions, but it is designed for web applications that answer visitors' requests, managed by the server within the account's limits. An agent is something else: an autonomous process that decides what to do, runs commands and talks to

outside services.

## What can stay on shared hosting

1. **The website that shows the assistant.** The model provider does the thinking. The site makes a call outward. See **the options for an assistant on your site**.
2. **WordPress AI plugins,** which write texts or answer visitors through a model API.
3. **Small scheduled scripts** (a PHP in cron) that call a model, as long as they fit the account's limits.

## What needs a VPS

1. **Agents such as OpenClaw,** which run commands and stay connected to messaging channels. See **what you need**.
2. **Automation tools such as n8n,** which receive webhooks all day.
3. **Remote MCP servers** and any application with permanent connections.
4. **Local models** with Ollama, which need real memory.

**Moving from shared hosting to a VPS is not automatic.**
It is another server, with another IP address and no cPanel handling everything. Installing and maintaining whatever you put there is up to you. See **managed or unmanaged VPS**.

If you are torn between the options, see the full comparison in **shared hosting or VPS**. Plan specifications are on the **VPS**, **Cloud** and **Dedicated** pages.

NEED A HAND?

Not sure whether your project fits shared hosting or needs a VPS? Describe it and we will tell you what we see.

Open a support ticket →

SEE ALSO

- What OpenClaw is, and what you need to run it
- Shared hosting vs VPS: which one does your project need?
- The limits nobody advertises: inodes, processes and memory
- VPS plans


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