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cPanel or HestiaCP on your VPS: the differences that matter

VPS & Servers

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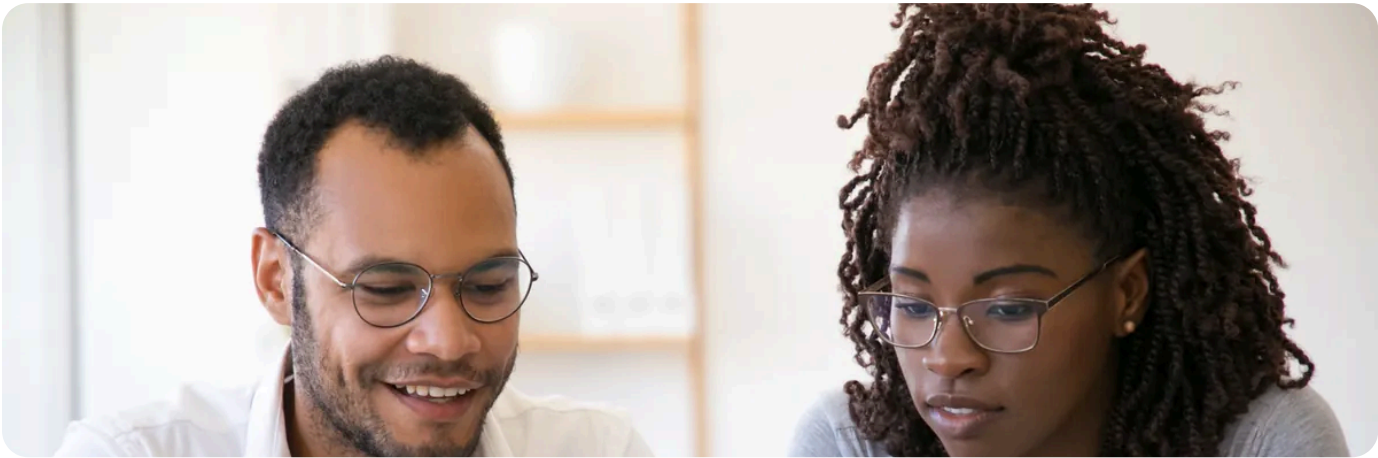
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cPanel or HestiaCP on your VPS: the differences that matter

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The short answer: HestiaCP is free and light, and gives you sites, e-mail and DNS on a Debian or Ubuntu VPS; **cPanel is paid** and adds resellers, WP Toolkit and the Node.js and Python app manager. Choose HestiaCP for your own sites on a tight budget; choose cPanel to sell hosting or to have the same panel as our shared hosting. And choose the system after the panel: of the systems offered at order time, there is none that runs both.

Side by side

What to compare	cPanel and WHM	HestiaCP
Licence	Paid. Solo Cloud (1 account), Admin Cloud (5), Pro Cloud (30) or Premier Cloud (100), when you order.	Free (open source, GPLv3). There is no licence.
Systems you can order	AlmaLinux 8 and 9 (9 recommended) and CloudLinux 8 . Ubuntu only as 24.04, through a support ticket. Rocky Linux is no longer supported.	Debian 12 and Ubuntu 22.04. Ubuntu 24.04 and Debian 13 through a support ticket. LTS releases only; no AlmaLinux, Rocky or CloudLinux.
Web server	Apache; NGINX can sit in front of Apache; LiteSpeed with a separate licence.	Nginx with PHP-FPM, or Nginx in front of Apache; several PHP versions.
E-mail included	Yes: Exim and Dovecot, with webmail.	Yes: Exim and Dovecot, Roundcube webmail; SpamAssassin and ClamAV optional.
DNS	Yes: its own nameserver (PowerDNS by default, or BIND; on Ubuntu, PowerDNS only).	Yes: BIND, your own nameservers, DNS cluster and DNSSEC.

What to compare	cPanel and WHM	HestiaCP
Several accounts and reselling	Yes: WHM creates cPanel accounts and resellers. The Solo licence serves 1 account, with no reselling.	Users with limit packages. The documentation has no resellers.
WordPress	WP Toolkit.	Quick install of WordPress and other applications.
Node.js and Python apps	Application Manager: Node.js, Python and Ruby, through Phusion Passenger.	No app manager in the documentation: a Node.js app sits behind an Nginx proxy template, set up by hand.
Backups	In WHM: daily, weekly or monthly, compressed or incremental; on the server, over FTP, SFTP or Rsync, or on S3 and Google Drive.	Automatic, on the server or to FTP, SFTP and Rclone; incremental with restic.
Minimum memory and disk	2 GB (4 GB recommended; 3 GB with ClamAV). Disk: 20 GB (40 GB recommended).	1 GB without SpamAssassin and ClamAV (4 GB recommended). Disk: 10 GB (40 GB recommended).
Learning curve	Two interfaces: WHM for the server, cPanel for each account (the same as on our shared hosting).	A simple panel; what it does not show is done with the v- commands on the command line.
First login	WHM at https://IP:2087, cPanel at :2083, webmail at :2096.	https://IP:8083

➞ Choose cPanel if...

- 1 You will sell hosting** or give accounts to clients: WHM creates resellers and cPanel accounts; the HestiaCP documentation has no resellers.
- 2 You will run Node.js, Python or Ruby apps** next to the sites: cPanel's Application Manager handles them; on HestiaCP they are yours to run.
- 3 You want what you already know** from shared hosting, with WP Toolkit. How to install: **installing cPanel and WHM**.

➞ Choose HestiaCP if...

- 1 You do not want to pay for a licence.** HestiaCP is open source (GPLv3); you pay only for the server.

2 The server is small: it starts with 1 GB if you leave out SpamAssassin and ClamAV, and runs Nginx with PHP-FPM. With everything on, the vendor recommends 4 GB.

3 You prefer Debian 12 or Ubuntu 22.04 and do not mind doing part of the work with the `v-` commands. How to install: **installing HestiaCP**.

! **Switching from one to the other means switching system**
: cPanel wants AlmaLinux or CloudLinux, HestiaCP wants Debian or Ubuntu, and both install only on a freshly installed system. It is always done with a second server (or a reinstall, requested through a support ticket, after taking the backups). From cPanel to HestiaCP there is the `v-import-cpanel` command, which imports a cPanel account backup into a new user; from HestiaCP to cPanel, the cPanel documentation has no tool: expect to rebuild the accounts. Check sites and mail before you move the domain: **pointing the domain at your VPS**.

💡 We sell the cPanel licence as a server option
, at order time (Solo, Admin, Pro or Premier Cloud); if you already have the server, ask for it through a support ticket. For a licence bought from us, first-line help is ours, through a support ticket, and we escalate to the vendor. HestiaCP has no licence, but you still run the server yourself: **what HestiaCP gives you and what stays your job**. The rest in **free or paid panel** and **which panel to install**.

NEED A HAND?

Still torn between cPanel and HestiaCP? Tell us what the server will run and we will help you choose.

 **Open a support ticket** →

SEE ALSO

Installing cPanel and WHM on your VPS, step by step



Installing HestiaCP on your VPS, step by step: a free panel with e-mail



Which control panel to install on your VPS: cPanel, Plesk, Webuzo, HestiaCP or CloudPanel



Free or paid control panel on your VPS: what the licence buys you



HestiaCP and VestaCP on a VPS: what the panel gives you and what stays your job





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