

CHANGES TO VALLEY TECHNOLOGIES HOSTING PROGRAMS

Introduction

Valley Technologies has been building, hosting and managing websites since 1997, and we have seen a great deal of technology influence the process. None has influenced the market more than the introduction of Smart Phone technology.

Along with that, Content Management Systems (CMS) have risen in popularity, allowing users to create, edit, and maintain their own websites.

WordPress has become the most popular product in web design, now used in over one-half of all websites, and in nearly 80% of those using a CMS product. WordPress offers a “database-driven” design, with enhanced capabilities for easy editing. Additionally, the WordPress platform reduces the amount of time required to build responsive websites; that is web sites that are viewed well in all platforms, from desktop to Smart Phones. Valley Technologies has offered the WordPress product for several years, and now uses it almost exclusively in their designs.

With the advantages a product like WordPress offers, there are also issues that may not be fully understood by the general public:

- **Updates.** Much like your computer needs regular updates to its operating system, WordPress needs regular updates to...
 - the WordPress software, usually to address security issues;
 - the “Plug-ins” used to enhance the WordPress
 - the WordPress “theme” (the basic design of the site)
- **Backups.** Although our servers offer daily backups held for 30 days, the backup will have the page files, but may not include the database. The database has to be in a “closed” state, or the backup will ignore it. So in most cases, the backup must be done manually.
- **Security.** Security hacks happen with alarming frequency all over the web, including the supposedly most secure computers in our own government. Without knowing it, attempts are made on most websites several hundred times a day. See paragraph 4 below.

So in order to reinforce the importance of implementing safer, stronger systems – and your bottom line – we have taken the steps outlined in the following pages. They will help you define and understand the product offerings and packaging that makes the most sense for you.

All of these packages shown below offer a “do-it-yourself” option with 24x7 help line, should you choose.

Please read this information carefully. Call us with any questions you might have about any of the below plans.

Components of a website:

1. DOMAIN NAMES - this is the identifier for your website (more info at http://netforbeginners.about.com/od/d/f/domain_name.htm); identifies the true “owner” of that domain name, and where the site is hosted.

1.1. Domain names can be purchased at a variety of places. We do recommend that the hosting and domain name(s) be purchased at the same place for ease of management. Valley Technologies offers the service starting at or about \$31 per year per domain name for the standard “top-level” names (like .com, .org, .net, etc.), other domain extensions are available, and may cost more.

2. E-MAIL HOSTING

2.1. Email Hosting

2.1.1. E-mail hosting is offered often by many companies as a free option with either hosting or with domain name registration.

2.1.2. If you already have an e-mail address @yourdomain, and are hosting through Valley Technologies, you are likely using one of these available Valley Technologies plans:

2.1.2.1. Personal: One address, 1GB of total storage, \$20/yr (POP3 only)

2.1.2.2. Business: 5 addresses, 2GB of total storage, \$38/yr (POP3 only)

2.1.2.3. Business with Unlimited Storage (** most common): 5 addresses with unlimited storage, \$60/yr, and additional addresses with unlimited storage at \$6/yr per address; allows for either POP3 or IMAP mail processing.

2.1.2.3.1. POP (Post Office Protocol) simply downloads email to your computer, and usually (but not always) deletes the email from the remote server. The problems arise if you have more than one device where you read your mail (desktop, laptop, tablet or phone). It’s not necessarily bad, but you have to delete or file the same email on every device.

Logging into each device, you will see lots of unread emails with no indication of which you deleted, read, flagged or filed. Any folders you created and organize on one device won't be replicated on the other devices using a POP service.

2.1.2.3.2. IMAP (Internet Message Access Protocol) allows users to store their email on remote servers. This two-way protocol also allows the user to synchronize their email among multiple devices, which is extremely useful today, when most people have at least two devices - their laptop and smartphone.

2.1.2.4. Although e-mails can be received through your smart phone and other mobile devices, you will need to have your cell phone service provider assist with that setup.

2.2. Email forwarding Program

2.2.1. All of the Valley Technologies e-mail plans come with some level of e-mail “forwarding”, which allows an address @yourdomain to be forwarded to another account (like G-mail). The e-mail forwarding feature is ONLY provided if your domain is also purchased through Valley Technologies. In this case, there is no specific “mailbox” on our servers storing your messages.

2.2.1.1. Create emails to forward to Gmail or other email provider

2.2.1.2. Even though your e-mails will be processed through G-Mail, that account can be set up through your Outlook e-mail (and others, too) so...

2.2.1.2.1. Messages are sent to your account at your domain, and then forwarded to your G-Mail (or other account), and received in your Outlook Mailbox.

2.2.1.2.2. Replies and new can be sent from your Outlook, looking as if they are coming from your domain account as well, without recipient ever knowing otherwise.

2.2.2. Again, our service allows for you to do this on your own. There is a 24x7 phone service that will assist for free, or for a minimal fee, our Valley Technologies staff can help you.

3. WEB HOSTING - this is the location of the computer that actually houses the files for your website. Many options are available. Valley Technologies **strongly** encourages the use of our Managed WordPress product. WordPress is the most popular Content Management System (CMS) in use today for designing, building and managing your website.

Like domain names, there are many options available for web hosting, and with a wide variety of features. The following paragraphs will identify some of the features offered by Valley Technologies that are used by a majority of our clients.

3.1. Managed WordPress:

More than just WordPress, our Managed system has the ability to

- automatically update the software,
- save daily backups of both the web files **AND** database for 30 days, and
- e-mail a copy to support staff for longer term security.

The Managed WordPress product does NOT have the ability to automatically update “plug-ins” (special components that integrate with your WordPress site).

About WordPress databases: WordPress is a “database-driven” website content management system. Databases cannot be backed up if the data files are in an “open” status. Data files are open whenever anyone is looking at or updating any of the files contained in that database. So chances are the website database is not normally backed up.

Our “Managed WordPress” product temporarily closes the database for just a couple of minutes (usually between midnight and 2am), does the backup (the site will not be available during the backup process), then re-opens the database to allow access.

Backups are a critical part of any website. After all, the files are kept on a computer. Granted, the computers used to store your website are state-of-the-art computers, with all of the latest and greatest features, but stuff happens. Backups ensure that if anything happens, restoration can take place quickly.

Plug-ins are also a critical part of the process, and should be updated regularly. Updates most often close any security gaps, as well as keep your site running efficiently.

The Valley Technologies “Managed WordPress” system is set up in such a way that you could do this on your own, and there is a 24x7 help line tech to assist.

If you would like our staff to assist, there will be associated costs of just \$20 per year and we will handle that for you! (This is outlined below.)

3.2. Website Maintenance Program

This includes Monthly:

- 3.2.1. Updating the WordPress product - Much like the Windows operating system on your computer, the WordPress software also needs updating on a regular basis. The Managed WordPress system takes care of these updates automatically. Any other WordPress product likely does not, and will need to be backed up and updated manually at least once per month.
- 3.2.2. Updating WordPress Plugins & Theme updates (to close security holes).
 - 3.2.2.1. Along with the WordPress software, the Plug-ins (bits of software that can be added to extend and expand the functionality of your WordPress site) and theme used to work with your site also need to be updated, but must be done manually.
 - 3.2.2.2. Web site optimization – this includes the purging of unnecessary items held in the database, outdated revisions, posts, etc. This frees up server disk space, to help to keep the site running faster, and more efficiently.
 - 3.2.2.3. There are several top-rated security products available, but not all products “play well” with other plug-ins. We will take care of the installation and updates of the best-suited security plug-in for your site.

3.2.2.4. Some Plans shown below will include Valley TechNologies handling updates and maintenance. The Economy Plan does not, but can be added for only \$20 per year (billed separately from your hosting, domain, and e-mail services).

3.2.2.5. All of the above are available to be done on your own if you choose to do so.

****However, if you choose to do this on your own, and then need our assistance for whatever reason, there will be hourly charges for the assistance.**

4. SECURITY

According to a recent statement by the head of the NSA:

“There are two types of businesses in the world today: those that have been hacked, and those who don’t know that they have been hacked.”

As you likely already know, even the most secure websites in the world – those run by US Homeland Security and Department of Defense – have shown vulnerabilities and have been compromised by individuals and foreign governments. Even if your site wouldn’t contain information that you think could be used by hackers, your site could still be used to generate virus attacks and spam e-mails.

The minimal security is a backup of your site, so if your site is compromised, it can be restored quickly. Every one of our sites are backed up daily and held for 30 days. This may not be enough, so we also offer the additional:

4.1. Managed backups (including database backup), sending a weekly copy to our remote server (see paragraph 3.2 above)

4.2. SiteLock Product –

4.2.1. Demonstrates to your customers that you are a trustworthy business by verifying your credentials such as email, phone and address.

4.2.2. SiteLock automatically scans your website daily for malware to ensure they are not being blocked or spammed.

4.2.3. Displaying the SiteLock certificate increases conversion rates on your site. It will give your business instant credibility and trust in the eyes of customers. See an example on our site at www.valley-technologies.com

4.2.3.1. Basic Plan - \$17.88 per year, displays the logo, scans the site daily, and sends a report if the site has been compromised, but does not remove the malicious code

4.2.3.2. Professional: \$47.88 per year, also removes most malicious code ****Recommended!**

4.2.3.3. Premium: \$83.88 per year, adds continual monitoring for vulnerabilities; highly recommended if you process credit cards through your site, or if your bank recommends (or requires) PCI Compliance.

4.3. Secure Sockets Layer (SSL) Certificate: This is a protocol developed for transmitting private documents via the Internet. SSL uses a cryptographic system that uses two keys to encrypt data – a public key known to everyone and a private or secret key known only to the authorized receiving computer of the message. Standard SSL: \$89/yr ***Just reduced, was \$129/yr

5. HOSTING PACKAGE OFFERS

All this may be pretty confusing, so we have outlined the recommended packages for you to choose from with components that will best fit your needs. Please feel free to contact us with questions, or if you want to put together a **customized plan!**

5.1. ECONOMY PLAN - \$180 per year, includes:

5.1.1. **Managed WordPress hosting:** \$149 per year - Note that this plan can do daily backups of the files and database, held for 30 days, but updates to the WordPress product and plug-ins are NOT included.

Additional assistance by Valley Technologies staff is subject to standard web service fees.

5.1.2. **Domain Name Registration:** \$31 per year

5.1.3. **E-mail forwarding** (if the domain is managed through Valley Technologies): \$0

5.2. BASIC PLAN - \$217.88 per year, includes:

5.2.1. **Managed WordPress hosting:** \$149 per year - Note that this plan can do daily backups of the files and database, held for 30 days.

5.2.2. **Domain Name Registration:** \$31 per year

5.2.3. **E-mail forwarding** (if the domain is managed through Valley Technologies): \$0

5.2.4. **Website Maintenance Program:** \$20 per year (see paragraph 3.2 above)

5.2.5. **SiteLock Basic:** \$17.88 per year (see paragraph 4.2.3.1 above)

5.3. PREMIUM PLAN (most popular) - \$307.88 per year, includes:**

5.3.1. **Managed WordPress hosting:** \$149 per year - Note that this plan can do daily backups of the files and database, held for 30 days.

5.3.2. **Domain Name Registration:** \$31 per year

5.3.3. **Unlimited Storage Business E-mail:** \$60 (see paragraph 2.1.2.3 above)

5.3.4. **Website Maintenance Program:** \$20 per year (see paragraph 3.2 above)

5.3.5. **SiteLock Pro:** \$47.88 per year (see paragraph 4.2.3.2 above)

5.4. ULTIMATE PLAN - \$432.88 per year, includes:

- 5.4.1. **Managed WordPress hosting:** \$149 per year - Note that this plan can do daily backups of the files and database, held for 30 days.
- 5.4.2. **Domain Name Registration:** \$31 per year
- 5.4.3. **Unlimited Storage Business E-mail:** \$60 (see paragraph 2.1.2.2 above)
- 5.4.4. **Website Maintenance Program:** \$20 per year (see paragraph 3.2 above)
- 5.4.5. **SiteLock Premium:** \$83.88 per year (see paragraph 4.2.3.3 above)
- 5.4.6. **SSL Certificate:** \$89/yr ***Just reduced, was \$129/yr

All pricing shown above is subject to change without notice.

**** PLEASE NOTE – REVIEW** the [Valley TechNologies Policies Page](#). Customers who choose to manage their own backups and security measures must understand that should site repair be required, standard web maintenance service fees will apply. Upon receipt of this document, it must be understood, that Valley TechNologies is not liable for any site invasion, hack or problems due to inadequate security measures.