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cPanel or Plesk on your VPS: the differences that matter

VPS & Servers

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MozOut Mozambique
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cPanel or Plesk on your VPS: the differences that matter

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The short answer: both are paid and do the same job: sites, e-mail, DNS, SSL and backups. Choose **cPanel** if you want the same panel as our shared hosting or to sell hosting to clients through WHM; choose **Plesk** if you want Ubuntu or Debian, or a small server: of the systems offered at order time, cPanel runs only on AlmaLinux and CloudLinux, and it needs twice the minimum memory.

Side by side

What to compare	cPanel and WHM	Plesk
Licence	**Paid.** Solo Cloud (1 account), Admin Cloud (5), Pro Cloud (30) or Premier Cloud (100), when you order.	**Paid.** Web Admin (up to 10 domains), Web Pro (up to 30) or Web Host (no limit), when you order.
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.	**AlmaLinux 8 and 9, Rocky Linux 8, Debian 12, Ubuntu 22.04.** Not advised: Ubuntu 20.04, Debian 10 and 11, CentOS 7.
Web server	Apache; NGINX can sit in front of Apache; LiteSpeed with a separate licence.	nginx and Apache 2.4, both shipped with Plesk.
E-mail included	Yes: Exim and Dovecot, with webmail.	Yes: Postfix and Dovecot, with webmail.
DNS	Yes: its own nameserver (PowerDNS by default, or BIND; on Ubuntu, PowerDNS only).	Yes: BIND.
Several accounts and reselling	Yes: WHM creates cPanel accounts and resellers. The Solo licence serves 1 account, with no reselling.	Customer accounts on Web Pro and Web Host; resellers on Web Host only. Web Admin is for your own sites.

What to compare	cPanel and WHM	Plesk
WordPress	WP Toolkit.	WP Toolkit: limited (SE) on Web Admin, full on Web Pro and Web Host.
Node.js and Python apps	Application Manager: Node.js, Python and Ruby, through Phusion Passenger.	Through extensions: Node.js, and Python (WSGI apps, through Phusion Passenger).
Backups	In WHM: daily, weekly or monthly, compressed or incremental; on the server, over FTP, SFTP or Rsync, or on S3 and Google Drive.	Backup Manager: full or incremental, scheduled, on the server or over FTP; scheduled backups to the cloud (S3, Google Drive, OneDrive) are a separate paid feature.
Minimum memory and disk	2 GB (4 GB recommended; 3 GB with ClamAV). Disk: 20 GB (40 GB recommended).	1 GB plus 1 GB of swap. Disk: 20 GB.
Learning curve	Two interfaces: WHM for the server, cPanel for each account (the same as on our shared hosting).	A single interface for the server and the sites, which grows with extensions.
First login	WHM at https://IP:2087, cPanel at :2083, webmail at :2096.	https://IP:8443 (according to the Plesk documentation, the address without a port may also open the panel).

Choose cPanel if...

1. **You already know cPanel** from shared hosting and want the same screen on your VPS: what you learned still applies, and WHM sits on top to run the server.
2. **You will sell hosting.** WHM creates accounts and resellers, each with its own cPanel; pick the licence by account count (Solo for 1, Admin for 5, Pro for 30, Premier for 100).
3. **You want cloud backups without extensions:** S3 and Google Drive come in WHM itself. How to install: **installing cPanel and WHM**.

Choose Plesk if...

1. **You prefer Ubuntu 22.04 or Debian 12.** Of the systems offered at order time, cPanel runs on neither.
2. **The server is small.** Plesk starts with 1 GB plus 1 GB of swap; cPanel needs 2 GB and recommends 4 GB.

3 **You run your own sites**, up to 10 or 30 domains, in one interface: Web Admin and Web Pro are enough, and only Web Host brings resellers. How to install: **installing Plesk**.

Switching from one to the other is not done on the same server.

CPanel installs only on a freshly installed system and has no uninstaller: removing it means reinstalling the system. The safe route is a second server: Plesk Migrator brings accounts over from cPanel (11.5 or later), and the WHM Transfer Tool brings accounts from Plesk, but forwarding-only domains must first become real hosting, and e-mail addresses with `+` and FTP accounts with `_` in the name do not transfer. Point the domain at the new server only after checking the sites and the mail: **pointing the domain at your VPS**.

We sell both licences as a server option

, at order time; if you already have the server, ask for it through a support ticket, and for a clean system reinstall too. For a licence bought from us, first-line help is ours, through a support ticket, and we escalate to the vendor. Still weighing paid against free? See **what the licence buys you**, and all five panels side by side in **which panel to install**.

NEED A HAND?

Still torn between cPanel and Plesk? 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 Plesk on your VPS, step by step →
- 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 →
- cPanel, DirectAdmin or Plesk: what actually differs between control panels →

MozOut Mozambique

RLX Holdings, S.A. · Group RLX Holdings

TAX ID (NUIT)	401 191 607
LEGAL ENTITY NO. (NUEL)	105 045 974
ECONOMIC ACTIVITY CODE (CAE)	62022
REGISTERED OFFICE	Bairro 7 de Setembro Vilankulo 1304 · CEP 0411-02, Inhambane, Mozambique
CONTACT	info@mozout.co.mz · +258 84 635 1111 · +258 86 635 1111 · www.mozout.co.mz
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