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File Manager, FTP, SFTP or Git: which way to upload your site

Servers & Technology

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File Manager, FTP, SFTP or Git: which way to upload your site

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For a small change, use the cPanel File Manager. To upload a whole site or many files, use SFTP (or FTP over TLS) with a program such as FileZilla. For frequent updates made by someone who programs, use Git. All four put the files in the same place: what differs is the effort, the security and what gets recorded.

The four, side by side

Route	Good for	Worth knowing
File Manager (cPanel)	Changing one line, creating a folder, uploading a file or a zip and extracting it.	Works in the browser, nothing to install. For thousands of files it is slow: compress first.
FTP / FTPS	Uploading a whole site, or giving someone access to a single folder.	Plain FTP encrypts nothing: use FTP over TLS. See **FTP accounts and connecting with FileZilla**.
SFTP	The same as FTP, with everything encrypted and a single connection.	Uses the SSH port and depends on the account having shell access. It signs in as the cPanel user and sees the whole account. See **SFTP instead of FTP**.
Git	Sites with code, updated often, or by several people.	Needs a repository and an instructions file. See **Git in cPanel**.

Choosing in three questions

1. **How many files are you touching?** One or two: File Manager. Dozens or thousands: SFTP/FTP, or a zip uploaded through the File Manager and extracted there.

2 **How many times a week?** Once a month: FTP or File Manager. Every day: Git saves you the risk of forgetting a file, because it sends what changed.

3 **Who else needs access?** If only you, SFTP with a key is best. If an outsider needs a single folder, an FTP account restricted to that folder gives them only what they need.

Care that applies to all of them

Upload the **contents** of the site's folder into the domain's folder (the one cPanel shows for that domain), not the folder above it. The entry file (`index.html` or `index.php`) must sit right at the root of that folder. See **uploading your site with FileZilla**. Connecting cPanel to your computer as if it were a folder is another option, described in **Web Disk**.

Never leave the password on an unencrypted FTP connection.
Plain FTP sends the password in clear, visible to anyone on the same network. If the program gives you the choice, pick SFTP, or explicit FTP over TLS. And if errors such as "530" appear, or files do not show up, see **common FTP errors**.

With Git, keep the repository outside the public folder.
That way only what the deployment copies is visible on the internet. The article on Git in cPanel explains how.

NEED A HAND?

Cannot connect, or not sure your account has SFTP? Tell us the domain and the error you see.

Open a support ticket →

SEE ALSO

- Uploading your website to the hosting with FileZilla →
- SFTP instead of FTP: when you can, and why it is better →
- Git in cPanel: publishing your site from a repository →
- Hosting plans and what each includes →

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