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Plesk or CloudPanel on your VPS: the differences that matter

VPS & Servers

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Plesk or CloudPanel on your VPS: the differences that matter

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The short answer: choose **Plesk** if you want one server that does it all: sites, e-mail, DNS and accounts for clients, under a paid licence. Choose **CloudPanel** if you will only run PHP, Node.js or Python apps and your e-mail already lives with another service: it is free and simpler. What weighs most is e-mail: **CloudPanel has none**, and its maker says to keep it off the server.

Side by side

What to compare	Plesk	CloudPanel
Licence	Paid. Web Admin (up to 10 domains), Web Pro (up to 30) or Web Host (no limit), when you order.	Free. There is no licence.
Systems you can order	AlmaLinux 8 and 9, Rocky Linux 8, Debian 12, Ubuntu 22.04. Not advised: Ubuntu 20.04, Debian 10 and 11, CentOS 7.	Ubuntu 22.04 and Debian 12. Ubuntu 24.04 and Debian 13 through a support ticket. No AlmaLinux, Rocky or CloudLinux.
Web server	nginx and Apache 2.4, both shipped with Plesk.	NGINX with PHP-FPM; Varnish and Redis available.
E-mail included	Yes: Postfix and Dovecot, with webmail.	No. The documentation says to use a separate e-mail service.
DNS	Yes: BIND.	No DNS server: the records stay wherever the domain is managed.
Several accounts and reselling	Customer accounts on Web Pro and Web Host; resellers on Web Host only. Web Admin is for your own sites.	Users with three roles (Admin, Site Manager, User). No packages and no reselling.

What to compare	Plesk	CloudPanel
WordPress	WP Toolkit: limited (SE) on Web Admin, full on Web Pro and Web Host.	A dedicated WordPress site type.
Node.js and Python apps	Through extensions: Node.js, and Python (WSGI apps, through Phusion Passenger).	Built in: Node.js and Python site types, plus PHP, static and reverse proxy.
Backups	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.	Off the server only: S3, Dropbox, Google Drive, SFTP and anything Rclone supports; manual restore.
Minimum memory and disk	1 GB plus 1 GB of swap. Disk: 20 GB.	2 GB. Disk: 10 GB.
Learning curve	A single interface for the server and the sites, which grows with extensions.	Few menus: sites, users and backups, no e-mail and no DNS.
First login	https://IP:8443 (according to the Plesk documentation, the address without a port may also open the panel).	https://IP:8443

➔ Choose Plesk if

- 1 You want e-mail on the same server**, with each domain's mailboxes managed in the panel.
- 2 You want to run DNS on the server.** For that, the domain has to point at your VPS: **pointing a domain at your VPS**.
- 3 You will give accounts to clients** (Web Pro) or **resell** (Web Host). CloudPanel only has users per site.
- 4 You need AlmaLinux or Rocky Linux.** CloudPanel only runs on Ubuntu and Debian.
- 5 You are coming from cPanel or DirectAdmin.** Plesk Migrator brings accounts over from those panels; CloudPanel has no importer.

➔ Choose CloudPanel if

- 1 **Your sites are apps** in PHP, Node.js or Python, and you want to create them in the panel without configuring NGINX by hand.
- 2 **Your e-mail is already with another service**, or can move there. The server keeps only the apps.
- 3 **DNS stays at the domain registrar or at Cloudflare**. CloudPanel does not hold DNS zones.
- 4 **You do not want to pay for a licence** and you work alone or with a few people, with no clients logging into the panel.



From Plesk to CloudPanel, e-mail and DNS have nowhere to go.

Move the mailboxes and the zones to another service before you switch, or you lose messages. CloudPanel wants an empty server, so Plesk cannot stay alongside it: ask for the system reinstall through a support ticket, after copying everything out. Neither brings the other over: Plesk Migrator does not list CloudPanel, and the CloudPanel documentation has no Plesk importer. Files and databases move by hand.



Your VPS is unmanaged:

You install and look after the panel yourself. The steps are in **installing Plesk** and **installing CloudPanel**. The Plesk licence is chosen when you order; 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. Still torn between the five panels? See **which panel to install** and **what the licence buys you**.



NEED A HAND?

Not sure which of the two fits? Tell us what will run on the server.



Open a support ticket ➔

SEE ALSO

Installing Plesk on your VPS, step by step



Installing CloudPanel on your VPS, step by step: a free panel for PHP, Node and Python apps



[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](#)[Pointing a domain at your own VPS: nameservers and glue records](#)**interweb****Interweb Mozambique**

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