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What n8n is, and what you can automate with it

Automation & n8n

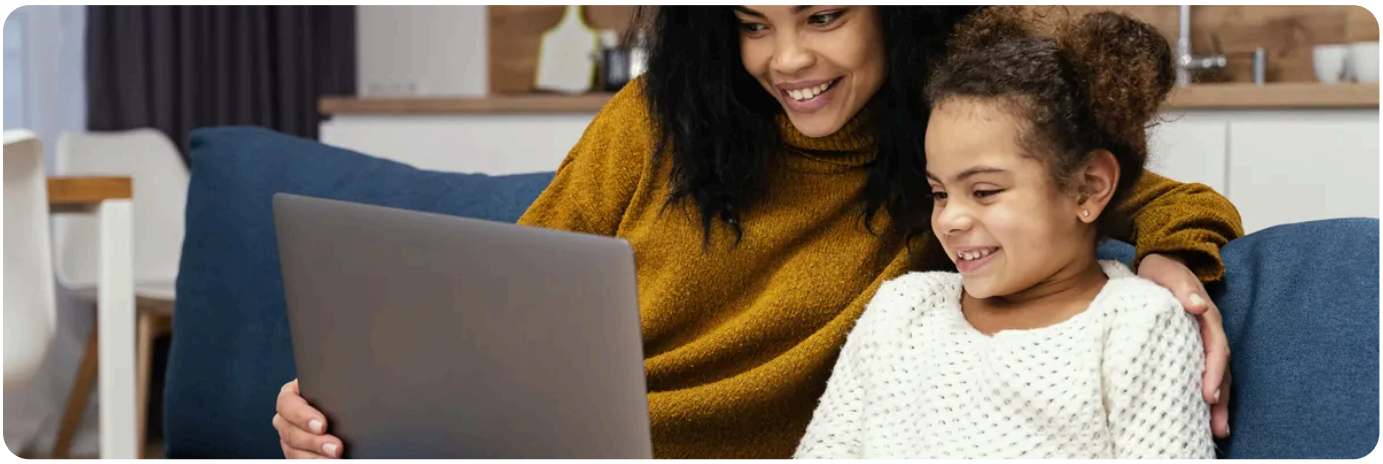
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What n8n is, and what you can automate with it

Automation & n8n Created on **October 10, 2026** 3 min read



n8n is a program that connects applications to one another through **workflows**: when something happens in one application, it does something in another, without you writing code each time. It is open-source software made by a third party, and you install it on a server of your own. **Interweb does not sell n8n**: we sell the server it can run on.

A workflow is drawn in the browser, as boxes joined by arrows. Each box is a **node**: it reads, writes, decides or waits. What changes from one workflow to the next is only the combination.

The parts of a workflow

Part	What it does	Example
Trigger	Starts the workflow.	A request reaches a webhook, a set time comes round, an e-mail arrives.
Action node	Does one thing in one application.	Add a row to a spreadsheet, send an e-mail, create a post.
Logic	Decides, filters, merges or splits data.	Carry on only if the order value is above a minimum you chose.
Credential	Holds the access to an application.	The password of a mailbox, an API key.

What is usually worth automating

1. **Website forms.** The enquiry arrives, lands in a spreadsheet and the customer gets a confirmation. See also **a contact form that actually reaches your inbox**.

2. **Shop orders.** A paid order triggers a notice by e-mail or message and is logged where your team works.

3 **Scheduled reports.** Every morning the workflow gathers figures from several places and sends a summary. See **Schedule Trigger or cron**.

4 **Housekeeping.** Alerts for failed backups, domains about to expire, pages that stopped answering.

5 **Text with AI help.** The workflow sends some text to a model through its API and uses the reply. You need a key: see **getting an API key and keeping it safe**.

What to know before you start

Question	Answer
Where does it run?	On a server of your own, a VPS with root access. The n8n project also runs a hosted service of its own; that one is theirs, not ours. See **do you need a VPS for n8n?**
Who installs it?	You do. n8n is third-party software on an unmanaged VPS, so installing and maintaining it is your side of the line. See **how far our support goes**.
What does the program cost?	It depends on the edition and the licence. The figures and the terms are on the project's own site, and that is where to confirm them.
Which applications does it connect?	Those the project ships as nodes, and any service with an API through the HTTP request node. The current list is in the n8n documentation.

! **Read the licence if you plan to resell n8n.**
According to the project's documentation, n8n uses a licence of its own ("fair-code"), which is not the same as the classic open-source licences. For automating your own business it is a simple matter; to resell it, or to build a product on top of it, read the terms first.

Start with a small, harmless workflow
that only reads and notifies. Once you trust it, move on to workflows that write, delete or message customers.

RECOMMENDED
Need a server to run n8n on? See the VPS plans and pick the operating system when you order.
See the VPS servers →

SEE ALSO

- VPS servers
- Do you need a VPS for n8n? What shared hosting cannot do
- Installing n8n with Docker Compose on a VPS
- Managed or unmanaged VPS: who does what

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