

Is HostGator Saying That Your Account Has Been Abusing CPU Resources?

If you've just received that dreaded boilerplate email from HostGator saying, "Your account has been abusing CPU resources for an extended period of time," then you may be in for a rude shock since you've just discovered in the worst way possible that an "unlimited" hosting plan is not exactly unlimited.

Before signing up for any hosting plan, it's crucial you first understand what web hosts mean when they claim their hosting plans offer unlimited bandwidth, storage, and all of those things that are supposed to have kept you away from abusing CPU resources. Instead of merely focusing on bandwidth and all those nitty-gritty details that *don't really matter* all that much in the grand scheme of things, you need to educate yourself on the limitations of CPU usage that hosts such as HostGator place on your account.

Being aware of CPU limits for various HostGator plans and what happens if you exceed them is wise. This is because the abusing of CPU resources can easily be averted if one is well-informed and knows what to look out for. The following article will bring you up to speed on all that, including what to do when trying to resolve a CPU overuse problem. Read on to learn more.

I've Just Received that Dreaded "Abusing CPU Resources" Email from HostGator – Now What?

HostGator will send you a warning message when you've exceeded their CPU resource allocation limits. This is most frequently seen on sites that utilize shared hosting because, well, it's shared hosting after all. And if you go above a certain limit, someone else on the same shared server as you are will suffer as a result of your "abuse."

If your account has been flagged for this violation, you're probably going to log-in to your hosting account as soon as you can. And as if the ominous email isn't enough, you'll now also see a warning message displayed across the top of the screen reminding you that your site may be shut down any moment.

Luckily for you, HostGator will not shut down your website (like some other hosts do) as soon as you cross CPU limits. What this company does right is it will leave your website online in a cached form for a period of 12 hours in order to give you time to correct the underlying issue without inconveniencing site visitors.

But be warned: if your website's issues have not been fixed within this given grace period, it will be suspended on a temporary basis. Sometimes, only a specific directory will be affected instead of an entire hosting account, so be sure to get in touch with support to clarify anything you're unsure of.

The great thing about HostGator is not only does it allow offending sites an opportunity to fix the problem, warning messages even specify the probable cause and then proceed to offer you useful links on how to resolve the issue. If nothing can be done to return CPU usage within accepted levels, the next solution is to move to a VPS plan or increase specific server resources.

Know Your CPU Limits With HostGator Plans

Abuse of CPU resources is common with shared, reseller and VPS plans. Of course, the same can occur with dedicated hosting accounts as well. But in the case of dedicated hosting, the impact of CPU overuse will harm your website's performance rather than negatively affect other users, as is the case with shared, reseller, or VPS plans.

Each hosting option that HostGator offers has a CPU usage limit. For instance, shared servers allow any single account to use as much as 25% of available processing power. This limit may also be exceeded for a short span of time that does not exceed 90 seconds.

CPU usage limits for HostGator's reseller plans are the same as those for shared servers. In this case, however, limits are applicable on a per cPanel basis.

And with VPS and dedicated hosting plans, website owners are allocated a maximum of 100% of CPU computing power. On a VPS plan, though, this only represents a fraction of the server's total CPU resource.

Knowing how much processing power HostGator allocates you is important. While you may be getting unlimited bandwidth and storage, you're not getting unlimited CPU, I/O, or memory usages. The same thing applies with every web host in the world.

To help you understand this concept, let's take a look at two different types of websites. The first consists of hundreds of pages and it gets thousands of visitors a day without getting shut down. The second website may only contain 10 pages, with only a couple of hundred visitors visiting the site a week. However, the second site gets shut down. What's going on?

The reason for that has everything to do with CPU usage. Unlimited bandwidth and storage don't mean much in this case. The first website could be a normal, plain-looking one filled with text. It can also host no images, videos, scripts, plugins, or advertisements.

The second website, however, may be hosting 50 flash videos on its 10 pages, and every time a visitor lands on the page or plays a video, the server that the website is hosted on gets taxed and CPU resources shoot up.

Therefore, understanding what you intend to use your website for and signing up for a suitable hosting plan is critical in preventing CPU-abusive behaviors.

How to Monitor CPU Usage with a HostGator Account

Regardless of the HostGator plan you've signed up for, you can monitor CPU usage to know whether your account is reaching its limits. One tool that will prove to be very helpful with this task is SSH. Secure Shell Socket is a UNIX-based command interface

you can use to log-in to your server. Upon logging in, simply enter the top command line. The syntax for this command is written as `user@rootserveraddress.tld [~]#top`.

Once the top command is executed, your screen will list CPU and memory usage for all tasks that are running on your hosting account. Besides monitoring purposes, SSH may also serve as a troubleshooting tool. Using it will help you to pinpoint any task that may have caused your HostGator account to be restricted for overusing CPU resources. As soon as you get rid of the offending task, your CPU usage will go back to normal.