

CPanel

Backups: Think of backups as the ability to go back in time and have things like they were before something went bad - really bad. More often than once I've seen website owners make hundreds of page changes, only to want and revert back to the former because of a catastrophic mistake. Backups are the solution – in fact, for those sites which change with some frequency backups are perfect and those sites which change everyday may even want to consider backing up every day. Backups are also important if you plan on moving an account to a new server. Backups can be made for a MySQL Database Backup, email accounts, etc. and if you are short on time, you can create a Cron Task (see below) to automate backups.

Password Protecting Directories: It's hard to believe, but hardly anyone uses password protected directories like they used to in the past – everyone seems to be changing to online forms to grant access to users. But there's something to be said for those more rigid windows - exclusivity and security being the primary reasons as I see it to use them. If a web directory is password protected and a user attempts to open either that directory area or a file in that directory, a window will appear requesting a required username and password. With the proper username and password entered, the user will be allowed to view "exclusive" files in that directory. Password protecting a directory area does not necessarily stop the document names from being displayed during a search within the web site, it just means that the documents themselves cannot be viewed without the proper username and password associated with the directory.

Error Pages: With a few minor tweaks to an .htaccess file you can create custom pages to display when a user encounters a website error. Website owners and managers can present some explanatory pages for those times when presenting error pages is necessary such as bad requests, when authorization is required, when users are forbidden, and internal server error. The result simply is an improved users experience. If you frequently move or rename pages and directories then creating custom error pages within your cPanel account is not just a great idea, it's essential.

MySQL Databases: There is a lot that you can do with a MySQL database. Host a blog (like WordPress), a content management system (like Drupal) and even a shopping cart system like OSCommerce. But many website owners are content with their static websites and make a conscious decision to avoid sites with more advanced features and avoid the complexity associated with going in this direction. Most cPanel accounts however come enabled with PHPadmin (or it can be installed relatively easily) which helps you administrate MySQL databases and the programs using them. There are hundreds of open source projects which require a MySQL database that you can look into at SourceForge.net.

Redirects: Website owners frequently move pages or change the names of filenames based on the needs of their users, the popularity of their content or because of force-majeuer. When page changes need to take place, say for example that you

created an article and would like to rename it, but it's already receiving several highly trafficked inbound links, then setting up a redirect is a easy way to make changes without losing traffic or presenting an error page.

Pre-installed CGI: The cPanel CGI Center allows you to activate and modify simple CGI scripts that can be used through your web site. The type of scripts you can run are limitless but counters, guest books, rotating banner ads, and more are possible with CGI. One of my favorite CGI solutions is the use of Random HTML which list and inserts it in an SSI (Server Side Includes) enabled web page. This can be useful for daily hints, trivia, or other random information you wish visitors of your site to see. Another popular CGI script is for an email form, which takes the input of an HTML form and converts it to an email format defined by the author of the form.

Standard Cron Manager: If you are a Windows user you will be familiar with Scheduled Tasks. Cron is the equivalent in Linux/Unix. Cron is a web interface to the crontab program which allows you to run commands and complete repetitive tasks at any time you specify. Cron jobs are useful if you regularly have to delete temporary files, need to make a backup copy of your site files. This is a very useful tool to help manage and administrate various functions of a site.

Hotlink Protection: If someone is using the images on your website without permission, then HotLink protection is for you. This feature of most cPanel accounts prevents other websites from directly linking to files on your website and in short stealing your bandwidth; Other sites will still be able to link to any file type that you don't specify below (ie. html files). An example of hotlinking would be using a tag to display an image from your site from somewhere else on the net. You should ensure that all sites that you wish to allow direct links from are in the list below. This system attempts add all sites it knows you own to the list, however you may need to add others.

Index Manager: If you use directories, subdomains or subdirectories, and you don't have an index page (index.htm for example) then the index manager will allow your website files some privacy by enabling you to turn those indexes on or off. This means when indexes are off, people will not be able to see what files are in a directory that lacks an index file. You've probably been curious when you go to a website and remove the file name and extension to see what the hiercharchy contains.

IP Deny Manager: This feature will allow you to block a range of IP addresses to prevent them from accessing your site. It happens frequently that you see a certain IP address hanging around (probably poaching your content) You can also enter a fully qualified domain name, and the IP Deny Manager will attempt to resolve it to an IP address for you.