

Who Has the Most Web Servers?

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A look inside one of the data centers operated by 1&1 Internet, which is among the companies with the most web servers.

Which company has most web servers? We first examined the question in April 2009, prompted by news that Rackspace now had 50,000 servers. We went looking for other companies that publicly report their server counts, and put together a list of those whose numbers we know, along with a rundown of companies that have extensive Internet infrastructure but don't disclose their server counts. Here's a look at our list of Who Has The Most Servers, gleaned from public reports and partial data from a recent Netcraft server count report. Updated, Nov. 2010 to reflect SoftLayer's acquisition of The Planet and strong growth at Akamai, which has grown from 48,000 to 73,000 servers in the past 18 months. The totals for OVH and Rackspace have also been updated:

- Intel: 100,000 servers (company, Feb. 2010)
- OVH: 80,000 servers (company, Nov. 2010)
- SoftLayer: 76,000 servers (company, Nov. 2010)
- Akamai Technologies: 73,000 servers (company, Nov. 2010)
- 1&1 Internet: 70,000 servers (company, Feb. 2010)
- Rackspace: 66,015 servers (company, Jan. 2011)
- Facebook: 60,000 servers (estimate, Oct. 2009)
- LeaseWeb: 36,000 servers (company, Feb. 2011)
- SBC Communications: 29,193 servers (Netcraft)
- Verizon: 25,788 servers (Netcraft)
- Time Warner Cable: 24,817 servers (Netcraft)
- AT&T: 20,268 servers (Netcraft)
- iWeb: 14,000 servers (company)
- Peer1/ServerBeach: 10,277 servers (company)

Of course, there are a number of providers who have at least 50,000 servers and don't publish the information. Who else is in the club?

Here's a list of companies we believe are running at least 50,000 servers:

Google: The search giant's server count has long been the focus of speculation. There's a widely circulated estimate of 450,000 servers, but that number is at least three years old. If it was ever accurate, it certainly isn't anymore, given Google's data center building spree. Google's recently revealed container data center holds more than 45,000 servers, and that's a single facility built in 2005.

Microsoft: There's actually some numbers on Microsoft's server count, but it's also dated. Screen shots from the company's data center management software suggest that Microsoft was running about 218,000 servers in mid-2008. The company's new Chicago container farm will hold up to 300,000 servers, so the count will change rapidly when that facility is deployed.

Amazon: It runs the world's largest online store and one of the world's largest cloud computing operations. Amazon says very little about its data center operations, but we know that it bought \$86 million in servers from Rackable in 2008, and stores 40 billion objects in its S3 storage service. A 2009 analysis by Randy Bias estimates that 40,000 servers are dedicated to running Amazon Web Services' EC2.

eBay: With more than 160 million active users between its online auction house and PayPal payment service, and 443 million users on Skype, eBay has a massive data center infrastructure. The company houses more than 8.5 petabytes of data in huge data warehouses. We're not certain what kind of server count this requires, but it's certainly in the 50,000 club.

Yahoo: While its data center infrastructure isn't quite as enormous as those for Google and Microsoft, the third major search portal likely has more than 50,000 servers in operation to support its large free hosting operation as well as its paid hosting service and Yahoo Stores.

GoDaddy: It's the world's largest domain registrar with more than 35 million domains under management, but effective cross-selling of its hosting plans has also made GoDaddy one of the largest shared hosting operations in the world. It's infrastructure is probably similar in scope to that of 1&1 Internet.

HP/EDS: While server "ownership" is less distinct with system integrators, EDS has an enormous data center operation. Company documents (PDF) say EDS is managing 380,000 servers in 180 data centers. (Thanks, Bruce for the link).

IBM: With more than 8 million square feet of data center space, IBM also houses an enormous number of servers in its data centers, both for itself and its customers.

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