Hosting Performance Contest – December 2020 Roundup (The Last Of Them)

Here's the 59th Monthly [Hosting Performance Contest](#) Roundup for December 2020!
This month is the last time when I report about hosting performance this way. I've cut the number of the monitored hosts.
Starting from the next month I will report in a bit differnet format. The main improvement will be that I will introduce heavy-loaded sites. I will publish more details at the beginning of February 2021.

And in December 2020 I've been testing 3 hosts in the old-fashioned way like I have been doing for a few previours years. Here are the results of the non-stop monitoring the performance of the few hosts that I left for now.

By the way, you can find the latest roundups [here](#) and the performance tables and charts [here](#).

All monitored hosts are presented in the pricing categories according to the most affordable plan they have. Also, I bought the most affordable plans available at each hosting company to test hosting performance.

Let's see how the hosts performed in December 2020!

Contents

Common Information

As you may already know, I've been monitoring the performance of some of the best hosting providers I know as well as some other well-known hosts.

In short, since 2013 I've been picking out great hosts judging by real users reviews, professional hosting community opinion, long honorable business experience and other factors which make a great hosting.

And I buy anonymously hosting accounts with different hosts in order to *closely monitor their performance* (basically, **uptime** checked *every minute* and **full page load time** checked *every 20 minutes*) using a professional monitoring service *monitis.com*. I buy **the most basic and the cheapest plan** of each hosting. You can read about my **monitoring methodology** here.

And I'm happy to share these statistics with you so that you could see how these hosts perform and who is **the best from the best**!

You can find some **real-time performance charts** on my recommended hosts page for the hosting which I've been recommending and monitoring.

Also, you can see **real-time monitoring charts** for *all* hosts that I am monitoring on this page. In addition, the page contains monthly **historical data** on hosting performance (*speed, uptime, satisfactory apdex*) – very interesting and useful.

Besides, you may read more information about this **Hosting Performance Contest** on this page. I will be adding monthly and yearly Contest results on the page too.

And **other monthly Hosting Performance Contest roundups** are available from here.

December 2020 Hosting Performance Contest – Results

Here are the three hosts that you can compare this month. I've left the three groups: very affordable (below $5/mo), middle class (upto $8/mo) and more expensive ($8+/mo). Although this break-down did make a lot of sense since there are too litle hosts. Anyway, I left it for a record.

- **A2Hosting** (I recommend it, here's my review)
- **GeekStorage** (I recommend it, here's my review)
- **HawkHost** (I recommend it, here's my review)

You'll see a breakdown of hosting performance by prices in the sections below.
Let's start from an overview of the hosting performance in the order of how the hosts performed in general *regardless* of how affordable or expensive the hosts are.

The **winner of this month's contest is A2 Hosting**!

A2 Hosting took the 1st place. Its *full page load time* was **0.65** seconds. The host was ultra super mega fast. And its *uptime* was **99.98%**. The host had ultra mega great uptime, much above the highest standards set for the greatest hosts (99.9%). My site was not available this month for just **8.9** minutes. As regards *Satisfactory Apdex*, it was **100%**. It means that all the time the full page load time of my website hosted with this host was less than 2.5 seconds. The host had simply perfect Satisfactory Apdex, very much above the highest benchmark. The host surpassed the benchmark tests and thanks to the best speed A2 Hosting got the gold this month!

The silver medalist is HawkHost.

HawkHost took the 2nd place. Its *full page load time* was **0.82** seconds. The host was ultra mega fast. And its *uptime* was **99.99%**. The host had almost perfect uptime, very much above the highest standards set for the greatest hosts (99.9%). My site was available all the time during this month except **4.5** minutes. As regards *Satisfactory Apdex*, it was **100%**. It means that all the time the full page load time of my website hosted with this host was less than 2.5 seconds. The host had simply perfect Satisfactory Apdex, very much above the highest benchmark. And since this hosting was the second fastest host among the hosts which exceeded all the benchmarks determined for the greatest hosts HawkHost wins the silver medal.

The bronze medal goes to GeekStorage. Althought it's the last place in the contest, so not a big deal of achivement.

GeekStorage took the 3rd place. Its *full page load time* was **0.79** seconds. The host was super fast. And its *uptime* was **99.69%**. The host did not have a superb uptime, as it was below the highest standards set for the greatest hosts (99.9%). My site was not available this month for **2.3** hours. As regards *Satisfactory Apdex,* it was **99.5%**. It means that 99.5% of the time the full page load time of my website hosted with this host was less than 2.5 seconds. The host had unbelievably great Satisfactory Apdex, much above the highest benchmark.

By the way, keep in mind, that for this Contest I pick out the hosts which are considered to be good, great and superb. These hosts are established businesses for many years and some of them are widely recommended in the Internet. So, the idea of this Contest is to determine the best

performing hosts from a technical point of view, giving you objective information for making your own decision regarding hosts.

Let's see now the results in tables and charts for more convenience, more information and more insight.

Here's a table view to compare the Hosting Performance Contest results in December 2020:

Host	Place	Load Time	Uptime	Superb Uptime	Apdex-S	Superb Apdex-S
A2Hosting	1 (Winner!)	0.65 sec	99.98%	✓	100.00%	✓
HawkHost	2 (Silver medal)	0.82 sec	99.99%	✓	100.00%	✓
GeekStorage	3 (Bronze medal)	0.79 sec	99.69%	✗	99.50%	✓

Table column notes:
Place: The place a hosting has won in this Contest *(the less the better)*.
Load Time: Average Full Page Load Time *(the less the better)*. Checked every 20 minutes.
Uptime: Uptime *(the more the better)*. Checked every minute.
Superb Uptime: If Uptime Benchmark (99.9%) passed *(YES is very good)*.
Apdex-S: Satisfactory Apdex, i.e. how often a test website on a tested hosting was loading faster than 2.5 sec *(the more the Apdex-S the better)*. Checked every 20 minutes.
Superb Apdex-S: If Satisfactory Apdex benchmark (99%) passed *(YES is very good)*.
Color areas: *Green* is superb and above the highest standards. The *greener*, the better. *Yellow* is good, but below the highest standards. *Orange* is not very good; worse than yellow. *Red* is comparatively the worst.
Note: The hosts with failed at least one benchmark go below the hosts with passed benchmarks in the rankings.

Here's a table with hosting prices:

Host	1 year	2 years	3 years	Min price	Worthy	My review
A2Hosting	$8.99/mo	$8.99/mo	$8.99/mo	$2.99/mo	Yes	Read
HawkHost	$3.99/mo	$2.99/mo	-	$2.24/mo	Yes	Read
GeekStorage	$3.20/mo	$3.20/mo	$3.20/mo	$3.20/mo	Yes	Read

1 year: Regular prices (after the first invoice) for 1-year plan.
2 years: Regular prices (after the first invoice) for 2-year plan.
3 years: Regular prices (after the first invoice) for 3-year plan.
Min Price: The minimum price officially available for the first invoice (can be for 1-year, 2-year or 3-year plan).
Limited-time offers with more discounts are not included in these prices. Check out if there are special offers currently available by visiting the hosting websites.
Worthy: This column contains my recommended hosts. (*Under review* label means that the host performs well or/and has a good potential in winning prizes in the Contest, but I want to have more proved records of its technical and support performance.)
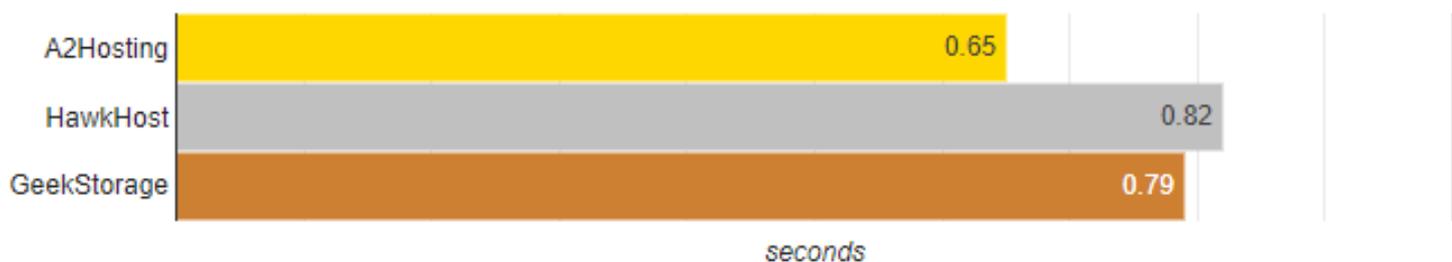
Here's a table with places within pricing categories:

Host	Regular price 1 year	General place	Place ($0-5/mo)	Place ($5.01-8/mo)	Place ($8+/mo)
A2Hosting	$8.99/mo	1 (Winner!)	-	-	1
HawkHost	$3.99/mo	2 (Silver medal)	1	-	-
GeekStorage	$3.20/mo	3 (Bronze medal)	2	-	-

Since it's not always correct to compare hosts from different price categories together, I've broken down the monitored hosts into three categories to compete within as you can see above in the table.

The prices presented in this table are regular prices (i.e. applied *after* the first invoice). Note that prices for the first invoice (1-,2- or 3-year plan) are usually less (see them in the previous table). And special promo prices are not included (check them out on the hosting websites).

And here are the charts with the Hosting Performance Contest results in December 2020:

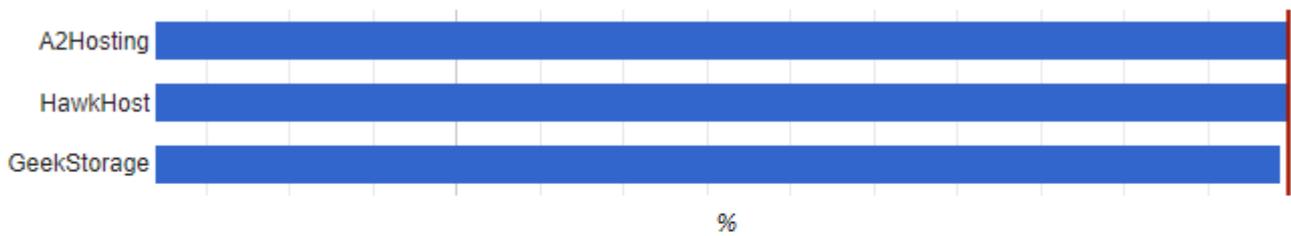**Average Full Page Load Time, seconds (the less the better). Checked every 20 minutes.**

Host	seconds
A2Hosting	0.65
HawkHost	0.82
GeekStorage	0.79

seconds

By the way, if you want to make your website faster, *I suggest looking at this long read which contains a lot of practical tips (upper-intermediate level). This is the tutorial prepared by Kinsta, one of the fully managed WordPress hosting which I recommend.*
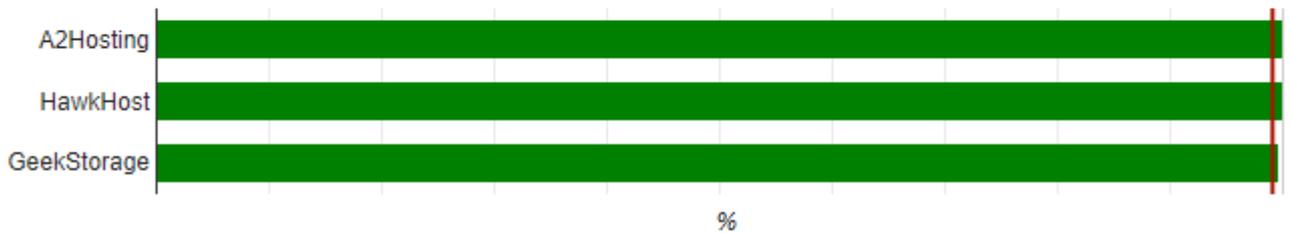
Also, here you can read the analysis of other fully managed WP hosts which I recommend. Kinsta is the option that I recommend for hosting and managing a big number of WP sites (read my short notes here).

Besides, here's the collection of my own articles which will help you make your website faster.

Uptime, % (the more the better). Checked every minute.

A2Hosting
HawkHost
GeekStorage

%

Satisfactory Apdex: how often full page load time was less than 2.5 sec, % (the more the better)....

A2Hosting
HawkHost
GeekStorage

%

December 2020 Hosting Performance Contest Results – Notes

I use monitis.com services for uptime and full page load monitoring. The monitoring is performed from two locations in order to decrease chances of false alerts and make monitoring results more objective. You can read more about my methodology of monitoring here.

Here are the monthly monitoring reports screenshots:

Uptime Monitors

Monitoring Location: All

December, 2020

Monitor Name	Type	Uptime(%)[1]	Average Response Time (ms)[2]	Times Failed from All Locations(#)[3]
ResearchAsaHobby.com tests: Site2 (HawkHost)	http	99.99	345.14	3
ResearchAsaHobby.com tests: Site7 (GeekStorage)	http	99.69	234.52	137
ResearchAsaHobby.com tests: Site9 (A2Hosting)	http	99.98	176.54	5

[1] **Uptime (%)** - If at least one location has returned OK, the All Locations result for the check is assigned OK status. Uptime (%) for a given time interval is calculated as the number of OKs divided over the number of checks.

[2] **Average Response Time (ms)** - For each check that has returned OK as the All Locations result, the smallest response time among all locations is determined. Average Response Time for a given time interval is calculated as average of the smallest response times across checks.

[3] **Times Failed from All Locations (#)** - For a given interval the number of times failure was returned by all locations during the check.

These monitor checks are performed with 1-minute interval, which makes it great for detecting website uptime and downtime.

So, we need **Uptime** values from this table for finding the winner of our Contest.
By the way, downtime is detected if *server response time* (*time-to-first-byte*) is more than 10 seconds.

Other values (just for information):
– **Response time** is not that important for this Contest, because I've got a better indicator monitored, which is Full page load time (see below).
– **Number of failures** may be interesting to look at, but this is just an additional information to Uptime, which is more important for the overall hosting evaluation.

Four hosts on the screenshot have not passed the *uptime* benchmark test (99.9%) for the greatest hosting. The other hosts I'm monitoring were up more than **99.9%** in this month. The websites on the uptime-failed hosting were not available for more than 44.6 minutes in total this month.

Full Page Load Monitors

Monitoring Location: All   December, 2020

Monitor Name	Avg Test Duration(sec)	Uptime(%)	Failures(#)	Apdex - (S/T/F)
ResearchAsaHobby.com tests: Site2 (HawkHost)	0.82	100	0	1 - (100/0/0)
ResearchAsaHobby.com tests: Site7 (GeekStorage)	0.79	99.95	1	0.99 - (99.5/0.4/0.08)
ResearchAsaHobby.com tests: Site9 (A2Hosting)	0.65	97.71	51	1 - (100/0/0)

These tests are performed with 20-minute interval from two locations. It makes it a perfect real-user performance monitor. This monitor's activity is equal to 144 unique visitors per day (about 4,320 unique visitors per month).

Avg Test Duration is the **Full page load time**, which is very clear and important factor for the Hosting Performance Contest.

We don't need *Uptime* from this table because we have got a better (more precise) *Uptime* indicator from the previous table.

Also, we don't need *Failures* from this table, because it's less precise than the same indicator from the previous table.

But we will need *Apdex*, particularly its *S (Satisfactory)* part. This shows how much time (in %) the website loaded *faster than 2.5 seconds*.

The hosts that I recommend considering all the possible nuances are on <u>this page</u>.

Conclusion

The tow hosts were really great in December 2020:
[A2Hosting](#) and [HawkHost](#).

And as reagrds the third participant, alhtough it had a comparatively bad uptime (compared to the best possible performance), for shared hosting such uptime is acceptable.

P.S.: Speed, uptime and performance apdex are important metrics, but they are not everything that determine the best hosting for clients. See my **recommended hosts** and my reviews of the hosts [here](#).
You can see **real-time performance charts** of the hosts I monitor as well as **historical data since 2016** on the hosting performance on [this page](#).
Hosting Performance Contest methodology is [here](#).
Other monthly roundups of this Hosting Performance Contest are available [here](#).

ORIGINAL BLOG POST URL: [HTTPS://RESEARCHASAHOBBY.COM/HOSTING-PERFORMANCE-CONTEST-DECEMBER-2020-ROUNDUP/](#)

I hope you enjoyed the article!
You can read my free researches on resources and tools for bloggers and small business owners on this website.
By the way, if we haven't met before - my name is Michael Bely.

If you have any questions, visit my website and ask any questions in the comments or privately via the Contact Form. Don't be shy!

Do you know that…

[More expensive hosts do NOT always mean better hosts?](#)

My Best Materials:

- [As full as possible list of EIG companies and brands with details (beware EIG hosting!)](#)
- [Non-stop hosting monitoring reports](#)
- [One best security plugin or combination of plugins?](#)
- [Protect your website from hacking step-by-step – easy, free and very effective](#)
- [How to migrate WordPress website to HTTPS the right way for free](#)
- [How to copy, clone, migrate big WordPress site easily and for free](#)
- [The best email opt-in plugin I could find for my use](#)
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