
What Time is a Good Time for FTP?

What is FTP good for? It's simple - FTP is the Internet standard for file transfer (and that means transferring the whole file - not just accessing it!). FTP (File Transfer Protocol), was designed from the start to have a couple of very significant features.

1. It was designed to work between different hosts, running a variety of operating systems, using a multiplicity of file structures and even character sets.
2. It includes the Anonymous FTP facility - which, when supported on a server allows anyone to login and use FTP to transfer files.

There are three very significant ways that FTP is and can be used by home business owners (why it's important!).

1. As a method of publishing your web site to your web hosting provider's servers. FTP is, in fact, *the* most common way this is accomplished - even if it *is* often hidden by your web design software. Most software just wants to know what to publish, where, and it handles the FTP details.
2. As a method of download your web log files from your hosting provider's servers. If you're like us, you'll often find that the reports you get from your host provider just don't "do the job". So, you'll probably have to FTP the file back to your computer so you can "work" on it using a web analysis tool (we like the one from Alentum Software - WebLog Expert (<http://www.weblogexpert.com>)).
3. As always the *best* way to get at the myriad of files and software available on the Internet - through Anonymous FTP.

You can access FTP hosts through your browser, however, to perform FTP transfers you'll need some FTP software. We like CuteFTP from GlobalScape (<http://www.globalscape.com>). It's simple to use and pretty inexpensive - the Home version is \$39.99.

So when do you use FTP? To publish your web site, download the logs - or download any file/software available on a server supporting Anonymous FTP. Now, if I have that \$39.99 FTP software - just *think* what's out there ready and waiting for me!

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