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What is a Hypervisor for a Virtual Private Server?

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When you first start trying to understand virtual private servers, you'll probably hear the term "hypervisor" a lot. But what is a hypervisor, and what does it have to do with your virtual private server?

To understand what a hypervisor is, you must first understand what a virtual private server is, and how they work. A virtual private server is one server that's split up into many different servers. Each virtual server is completely its own, and doesn't have any effect on the other virtual servers within that physical machine. Think of a VPS as an apartment building. While there is only one building, it's separated into different units and people rent just one unit for their own use, without any one unit really having an effect on another. This is the same way that a virtual private server works.

The hypervisor within a virtual private server is what divides the physical server into many different virtual servers. The hypervisor allows for true virtualization so that each owner of each virtual website can do whatever they'd like to their VPS. They can install their own operating system, and use their own drivers and software on their own VPS. This is not true with OS level virtualization. Because a hypervisor allows for true virtualization, nothing on a virtual private server will rely on any underlying software.

So you've heard about the hypervisor on a virtual private server; but in fact, only VPSs that use hypervisor visualization will come with this type of technology. If you're looking at OS level virtualization, you'll be receiving a much different VPS, and you need to know what that difference is.

With OS level virtualization, the VPS will already have an operating system, a kernel, hardware, drivers and more that will need to be used by every virtual server that's located on the virtual private server. You'll still have your own virtual server in the way that you'll be able to use as much bandwidth and storage space as you want, and you can reboot your own virtual server without having any effect on the other websites being run off the physical server. However, you won't be able to fully customize it as you would be able to with a virtual private server that works with a hypervisor.

Virtual private servers can be a great help to a great many companies. They are a wonderful bridge between shared and dedicated hosting, something that many businesses struggle with; and they are much more affordable than some options out there. However, so many business owners think that the term "virtual private servers" covers every type of VPS that is out there, and that's not the case. When you need true virtualization, and you do if you're choosing VPS, make sure that you're choosing Hypervisor-based VPS, and not OS level virtualization. It's the only real way to make sure that you're getting exactly what you thought you were.

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