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**cPanel basics**

cPanel is a control panel system that allows you a choice of graphical or shell-based access to web hosting options. For example, you could use the cPanel system to host HTML files, run Python programs, install WordPress, Drupal, PHP, Ruby, or more.

There's a difference between making a cPanel account and making a website account. cPanel accounts give you control at the server level; you can have several different websites running under a single cPanel account. People who want to contribute content to those websites usually don't need cPanel account access.

However, since you'll need a cPanel account before continuing on to make websites or databases, we'll begin with cPanel account creation.

**Setting up a cPanel account**

1. In a new browser window, visit [https://web.illinois.edu/](https://web.illinois.edu/) and click the Login link.
2. In the Login window that appears, choose **Login via Illinois Azure**.
3. Select your **Illinois.edu address** from the Azure identity list that appears.
4. In the University of Illinois authentication window, enter your **NetID and NetID password**.
5. **Choose your account**: If you're associated with more than one account (for example, if you have both a regular account and a reseller account), you'll receive a prompt to choose which of your accounts you wish to log in to.

>> Account choice example

![Account choice example](https://example.com/account-choice.png)

Note: This is a preliminary screen shot from a development site. You won't have "dev" in your cPanel paths.

>> Logged in and looking at dashboard

![Logged in and looking at dashboard](https://example.com/login-dashboard.png)
cPanel dashboard orientation

Your cPanel dashboard will look something like this.

Illinois Actions

This section will contain University of Illinois-specific information and resources, including links to documentation, password management, and service status tools.

Softaculous Apps Installer

Softaculous is one of the simplest ways to install and maintain web software. Key features include:

- Simple, web-based, guided installation for basic HTML websites, WordPress, Drupal, jQuery, and many other web-based tools
- Automatic updates and patching offered for any software installed via this method
- If you didn't install your software via Softaculous, but it's a Softaculous-enabled item, you can register your separate software installation in order to receive the automatic updates Softaculous provides. (We'll go through this in more detail later in the workshop.)
Commonly Used Features

Because cPanel offers so many tools, we've selected some of the most popular ones to highlight in the Commonly Used Features section. These include:

- **Manage cPanel Access**
  If you have a collaborator who need access to cPanel itself, rather than to a website hosted on cPanel, this is where you give that access to others. (This should rarely be used for a personal account, but is necessary for to manage membership in shared accounts.)

- **SSH Access**
  Shell access allows you or your collaborators to have a command-line-based alternative to the web interface. We'll be discussing shell access in more detail later in the workshop.

- **File Manager**
  File Manager acts like Windows Explorer or Mac Finder for the cPanel server. You can upload and download, navigate folders, click to open or run files, and more.

- **Backup**
  cPanel offers several types of backup options, including full backups and partial backups of specific elements. We'll discuss backup options and storage considerations later in the workshop.

- **Site Publisher**
  Site Publisher is a simple and graphical way to create single-page sites such as CVs, resumes, and “coming soon” pages.

- **More Softaculous Apps**
  Softaculous offers dozens of applications. We've highlighted the most popular ones in the Softaculous bar above, but more are available through this icon.

Advanced

The Advanced features are less frequently used, offering a look under the hood to advanced users and IT pros.

- Cron Jobs
- Error Pages
- Apache Handlers
- MIME Types
- And the contents of the sections below the "Advanced" heading.

Getting back to the dashboard

If you've been exploring the dashboard and aren't sure where you are, clicking the nine-square grid in the top left corner will return you to the dashboard.

Next: Making websites

Next stop: 2 · Creating simple websites in cPanel