DirectAdmin

What the Exponential sources say about DirectAdmin hosts (tier 3, expected to work, in the same row as cPanel), the Exponential requirements translated into generic panel tasks, the questions to answer about your…

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This page is for hosting companies that run DirectAdmin servers and want to offer Exponential on them. It answers what the Exponential sources say about DirectAdmin, which panel tasks an Exponential site needs, and how to test the combination before you sell it.

> **Warning**
>
> `.htaccess` **slows down every request.** When `.htaccess` files are enabled (`AllowOverride` anything but `None`), let alone used, Apache looks for them and reads and evaluates them on every request, in every directory of the path, and page loading times go up drastically (measured). The only real fix is to switch the feature off for the virtual host: `AllowOverride None` in the HTTPS virtual host, and the rules in the virtual host's own configuration as mod_rewrite rules. That is far faster in production speed tests and well worth the time it takes to optimize a production configuration. Switch over right away: copy the rules of the example HTTPS virtual host into your virtual host (with the static cache, also `staticcache_offload.conf`), set `AllowOverride None`, run `apachectl configtest`, reload Apache and test the site. The same rules for other servers: nginx, LiteSpeed, Caddy, IIS, Velocity (built in); where virtual host rules go in a control panel: Plesk, cPanel, DirectAdmin, ISPConfig. **On LiteSpeed or OpenLiteSpeed,** the server's own page cache can also answer anonymous visitors and crawlers without PHP: Page caching with LiteSpeed and OpenLiteSpeed.

> **Note**
>
> The Exponential sources describe no DirectAdmin screens, menus or file locations. This page refers to panel features generically; check DirectAdmin's documentation for how your version does each task.

Contents

1. What the sources say
2. Questions about your DirectAdmin servers
3. The panel tasks for an Exponential site
4. Web server choices on the server
5. A test plan
6. Checklist

What the sources say

DirectAdmin appears in exactly two places in the sources, both in Operating system support:

- In the tier 3 table, in one row shared with cPanel: "EasyApache (EA-PHP 8.x), per-account PHP" as the reason the row should work, and "shared hosting may forbid long-running processes, so Velocity may not be allowed; use Apache or LiteSpeed with `.htaccess`" as what to watch. The point that applies to DirectAdmin is a per-account PHP 8.x (Tier 3).
- In "Containers, cloud and hosting panels": "cPanel and DirectAdmin are tier 3; on shared hosting without shell access, the setup wizard in the browser is the installer" (Containers, cloud and hosting panels).

Tier 3 is "a reasoned expectation, not a test result". Nobody in the project has watched Exponential run on DirectAdmin.

Questions about your DirectAdmin servers

Answer these for your own server build before writing a product description:

Question	Why it matters for Exponential
Which PHP 8.x versions can an account choose, and are `intl` and `xsl` built in?	both are critical tests of the setup wizard (2.4)
Does PHP run as the account's own user (PHP-FPM per account or equivalent)?	the one-user rule for `var/` and isolation between accounts (8.7.2)
Which web server serves the accounts, and does it read `.htaccess`?	the rewrite rules ship as `.htaccess_root`
Is `open_basedir` set per account?	the wizard only warns, but tools that look for system binaries are affected (ezupdate)
Which functions are in `disable_functions`?	the cronjob page needs `proc_open`, `exec` and `posix_kill` (Cronjobs)
Do accounts get a shell?	Composer and the console need one; without it the setup wizard installs
Which database servers can accounts create databases on?	the official order and its practical minimums

The panel tasks for an Exponential site

Task	What Exponential needs	Details
PHP version	8.0 or later for web and command line, the same extensions in both	PHP selection and FPM pools
PHP settings	`memory_limit` 64M or more, `max_execution_time` 30 or more, `date.timezone`, `file_uploads`, `allow_url_fopen`; upload sizes for the editors' files	2.5
Document root	the installation root, where `index.php` is	8.5.1
Rewrite rules	`.htaccess` copied from `.htaccess_root`; with a shell, as the account's user: `php bin/php/console exp:setup:htaccess --apply`	13.2, from the console

Task	What Exponential needs	Details
`config.php` (optional)	`config.php-RECOMMENDED` copied to `config.php`: `php bin/php/console exp:setup:config --apply`, values with `exp:config:set`	from the console
Database	in the official order: 1. SQLite 3 (no server) · 2. PostgreSQL · 3. MongoDB · 4. MariaDB · 5. Oracle · 6. MySQL; Microsoft SQL Server is known to be possible with additional work at this time	Databases and users
Cron	`runcronjobs.php` with the account's PHP, every few minutes for `frequent`	Cron and shell access
Certificate	HTTPS for every name of the site, redirect from HTTP	TLS certificates in panels

Web server choices on the server

The sources do not say which web server a DirectAdmin server runs. What they say about the candidates:

Server	Status in the sources
Apache httpd 2.4 with PHP-FPM	tier 1; rules in `.htaccess_root`
nginx with PHP-FPM	tier 2; the server block is "derived, not shipped" (8.6)
LiteSpeed, OpenLiteSpeed	tier 3; "reads Apache's rewrite rules in most cases"
nginx in front of Apache	Apache reads `.htaccess`; set the trusted-proxy settings as for any proxy in front (13.10)

Source: Web servers. If accounts are served by nginx alone, an account cannot use `.htaccess`; the derived server block must then be part of the server configuration you manage.

A test plan

Step	Pass when
Fresh account, setup wizard	every critical test passes; site and `/admin` answer
`/settings/site.ini`, `/.env`, `/composer.json` from outside	404 or an Exponential page, never the file
Upload an image	image and variations served
Cron line from the panel	the run appears on **Setup > Cronjobs**
Backup and restore into a second account	restored site works
Two accounts on one server	neither account's PHP can read the other's `settings/override`

Report a successful run to the project so the tier can move up (The four tiers).

Checklist

- ☐ The questions above answered for your server build and written down.
- ☐ PHP 8.x with every required extension; one PHP user per account.

- ☐ Document root, `.htaccess` and database ready.
- ☐ Cron and certificate set up.
- ☐ The test plan passed, including the isolation test.

The LiteSpeed page cache on DirectAdmin. With LiteSpeed as the web server, its page cache answers anonymous visitors and crawlers without PHP. Switch it on per site with the commented block of `.htaccess_root` in the domain's `.htaccess`, or paste `litespeed-page-cache.conf` into Custom HTTPD Configurations for the domain. Step by step: Page caching with LiteSpeed and OpenLiteSpeed.

Related pages

- Control panels: overview, cPanel
- Shared hosting, Multi-tenant isolation
- Operating system support
- Setting up .htaccess and config.php from the console
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