

Planning a Node

Decisions

The two big things you *can't* change about your node once you've started it is your **domain name**, and your **software**. There are currently no known migration options for migrating from one federating software to another, and ActivityPub is **extremely** reliant on the domain name.

It's effectively impossible to change either without effectively starting over with your instance, and re-using the same domain can have complications (although, you could use a (different) subdomain without problems.) You will want to make sure you are comfortable moving forward with the two things you choose in this regard.

Domain Name

As far as domain name goes, you'll need to purchase it from a domain registrar - there are several options available to you in this regard. Choose one that's trustworthy, and one that you feel would have your back in the event of a security issue (i.e. your account gets hijacked.) The author of this document uses [Porkbun](#), but there are other options out there; a few that have been mentioned are [Namecheap](#), [Glauca](#), and [Cloudflare](#).

Keep in mind that name registrars will often offer a deeply discounted price for their domain names, and a much steeper price for subsequent years. Assuming you will be running this node for at least over a year, be mindful of what the normal renewal price will be, so you don't get stuck with a \$40 renewal for what you thought was a \$2 domain!

Once you've picked out your registrar of choice, go looking for a domain name! Keep in mind this domain will be at the end of your (and your users, if this is a multi-user node) username, so pick something that's both available and that you'd like at the end of your username! (For example, if you chose the domain sickos.social and your username was critter, your full username would be @critter@sickos.social.) You don't have to necessarily be elegant with this, but it can be fun coming up with a good domain!

Once you've come up with (and purchased) a good domain name for your instance, it's time to think about the software you'll use.

Fediverse Software

As far as software goes, you have a few options. The two known/adapted to work for the Website League as of writing this are [GoToSocial](#) and [Akkoma](#).

Akkoma can be a little bit more difficult to install and may require more resources than GoToSocial, but it has a lot of flexibility, as well as its own front-end as well as multiple options to choose from as well.

GoToSocial, on the other hand, can be more lightweight and simpler to spin up, but it lacks some of the flexibility Akkoma has, and does not come with a way to serve a front-end of your choice.

There are other federating software choices out there - such as Sharkey or the well-known Mastodon, but these are not included here as they either lack features or have flaws which disqualify them for use with the Website League. You may be able to patch the software to make it work, but this is out of the scope of this guide.

Server

Now that you've picked what software you'd like to use, and the domain name you'd like, the last thing you need to choose is where to put your instance! There are, again, multiple options for this - [Vultr](#), [Hivelocity](#), [Linode](#), [DigitalOcean](#), and [OVH](#) are options. ([Oracle](#) is *also* an option, and you *may* be able to get it for free, with the caveat that it's Oracle. However, Oracle and Hetzner, two major hosting options, disallow adult content on their servers, which mostly takes them out of the running for use on a social network that permits adult content.) For this guide, we will be using Hivelocity.

Note the \$4.20 "Starter" VM from OVH may be sufficient, as it touts 2 GB of RAM - however, the author of this guide has had negative experiences with OVH in the past, and tends to avoid using them as a result.

For this guide, you're going to be getting their \$7 VM - that is, 2 vCPUs and 4 GB of memory. For your operating system, choose **Ubuntu 24.04**. Hit Add to Cart and then checkout.

Ubuntu is just one operating system: we're suggesting it here because the rest of the guide is written assuming you're using Ubuntu, but if you're already an experienced linux user and have a preference for another distribution, you're welcome to use that and adapt the few Ubuntu specific sections that there are.

Once you've finished and logged in, you should be brought to your device list. You're now the proud owner of a virtual machine! Click on the one you just purchased, then "View All" under IP Assignments. Under "Service Details", take note of the IP addresses it's given you as we move on to the next section - configuring your domain name!

Service Details

Bandwidth

10TB on 1Gbps port

IP Addresses

10.13.12.25/32

Primary Assignment - Virtual



fd42:694:2069:acab:6969:4

20:fe00:048f/128

Additional Assignment - Virtual



A Note About Email

Both Akkoma and GoToSocial have the capability to send email. Both can use email for verifying accounts during creation and various administrative tasks; Akkoma also uses email for password resets. *(At the moment, password resets in GoToSocial can only be done via the command-line console, though logged in users can update their passwords from their settings page.)* Neither explicitly requires a mail service, but you may want to consider using it to avoid having to handle these tasks by hand. Both support using either an internal mail server or an externally-hosted service and they can be configured to do so at any time with relative ease by editing their configuration files and relaunching. The configuration guide for GoToSocial can be found [here in their documentation](#), and for Akkoma you can check the [Configuration Cheat Sheet](#).

That said, not all hosting providers allow clients to run their own mail server, and the rules around doing so depend highly on the host. On top of that, it's a fair amount of additional work to do so, and outside the realm of what we can really cover here. There are a number of reliable mail services you can choose from on the relative cheap such as [Mxroute](#), or you could find your own if you'd like. Unless you are certain you are both *allowed to* and *know how to* run your own mail server, it's probably best to avoid that route for now.

Revision #6

Created 6 October 2025 10:22:26 by alloyed

Updated 29 October 2025 23:36:32 by Alyaza Birze