

Easypanel Ships What Your AI Writes

Self-hosted deployment panels for AI-assisted teams, with Coolify, Dokploy, CapRover, cPanel, Plesk and Render compared

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About this report

Every substantive claim in this report carries an evidence classification and, where applicable, a numbered source. Facts are separated from vendor claims, third-party estimates, the author's assessments, and untested hypotheses. Forward-looking sections use scenarios with observable tripwires rather than point forecasts. Stated assumptions are listed before the analysis begins.

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Scope and evidentiary standard

This assessment covers self-hosted deployment panels: software you install on a server you rent, which then builds your code into containers, routes traffic to them, and gives you a web interface for the whole thing. Easypanel is the subject. Coolify, Dokploy and CapRover are the direct alternatives. cPanel and Plesk appear because they are the incumbents being displaced, and Render appears because it is the managed option buyers weigh against running their own box.

The question driving it is narrower than a feature comparison. A developer working with an AI coding agent produces more deployable changes per week than the same developer did two years ago, and the bottleneck moves to whatever stands between a commit and a running container. This report asks which panel makes that gap smallest, what it costs, and what an agent can do with each one.

Every price, feature and limit attributed to a vendor here was read off that vendor's own live page or repository on 12 September 2026, not recalled and not taken from a comparison site. Where a vendor states a number about itself that nobody can check, such as how many servers run its software, the number is labeled as a vendor claim and no conclusion rests on it. Adoption figures in this category are especially weak: the product is self-hosted, so the vendor sees installations phoning home rather than customers, and the denominator is never defined. Easypanel publishes two different adoption figures on two pages of its own website, and this document treats both as marketing rather than measurement.

Comparison sites and vendor-published roundups were read to check that a complaint or a strength recurs. None of them are used to quantify anything, because most are written by hosting companies that sell the servers these panels run on.

Label	Definition	How to treat it
FACT	Verifiable in the cited primary source: a filing, press release, official documentation, or standards body announcement.	Reliable as stated. Check the source if the exact wording matters.
VENDOR CLAIM	Reported by a vendor about its own business or product. Self-measured and not audited by any third party.	The vendor said it. Directionally useful, not a measurement. Definitions of the metric are usually undisclosed.
THIRD-PARTY ESTIMATE	A research firm forecast or survey result. Methodology is proprietary and generally not reproducible.	Use for direction and order of magnitude only. Do not build a model on it.
ASSESSMENT	The author's reasoned judgment from the cited evidence. Falsifiable, and the reasoning is shown so it can be argued with.	This is analysis, not reporting. Disagree with it where your evidence differs.
HYPOTHESIS	A proposition offered for testing. Not currently supported by sufficient evidence to assert.	Treat as a research question, not a conclusion. Each one names what would confirm or refute it.
SCENARIO	A structured future state with a stated subjective probability. The probability is the author's judgment, not a calculated figure.	Use the leading indicators attached to each, not the probability. The indicators are observable; the probability is not.

Assumptions this analysis rests on

First, that the reader already rents servers, or is willing to. Every cost comparison in this document prices a licence and a machine separately, and treats the operator's own time as free. If nobody on your side wants to patch a box at nine on a Sunday, the managed comparison against Render is the only part of this report that applies to you, and it points the other way.

Second, that speed from commit to running container is worth paying for. That is the premise behind recommending a container panel over a hosting panel at all. A team deploying monthly rather than daily gets far less out of the difference, and the cPanel migration argument weakens to a price argument.

Third, that a vendor's documentation reflects what the vendor intends the software to do. Three documentation sets covering the API, the CLI and the MCP server are read here as statements of intent. Where the documentation and a marketing page disagree, this report weighs the documentation more heavily and says so at the point it matters.

Fourth, that Coolify's Apache 2.0 licence and Easypanel's absence of a public core repository mean what they normally mean: one you can fork and one you cannot. The licence files and the repository listings were checked. Neither codebase was audited, so claims about code quality appear nowhere in this document.

The call

ASSESSMENT Run Easypanel. If you are writing code with an AI agent and still deploying it by hand, or still paying for a hosting panel built for a world of cPanel accounts, this is the cheapest credible way to a real deploy pipeline. A single command installs it, its builders turn a repository into a running container, certificates and custom domains cost nothing, and its agent interface is designed better than anything else in the category. The gaps are honest ones. Backups are paid, scoping an agent to part of a server is paid, and there is no source to fork if the company stops. A release that closed the agent interface would move me.

My judgment on the evidence assembled here, nothing more. There is data I can't see and data I may have missed. New evidence can move me, including to the opposite position, and I reserve the right to move.

Executive summary

Easypanel is the most finished product in this category and it is priced like the cheapest. Its top tier costs about what cPanel charges for a single hosting account, its free tier ships continuous deployment and certificates that most competitors hold back, and its agent interface is the best-designed one on offer. For a developer whose code is now partly written by a model, it closes the gap between a commit and a running service better than anything else you can install in a minute.

FINDING 1 The install is one command and the first deployment lands inside an hour

FACT One command run as root on a fresh Ubuntu server with at least 2 GB of memory and ports 80 and 443 free. The script installs Docker if needed, initialises Docker Swarm and starts the panel. Easypanel also ships one-click images through eight cloud marketplaces: DigitalOcean, AWS, Vultr, Linode, Hostinger, Kamatera, Cloudzy and LetsCloud. This is the criterion the category is actually chosen on, and it is the one Easypanel is engineered to win. ^[4]

FINDING 2 Continuous deployment is not a paid feature

FACT Auto-deploy from GitHub, external webhook triggers, custom domains and automatic Let's Encrypt certificates are all marked available on the free plan. A developer can push to main and watch a container swap with zero downtime without paying anything. Most free tiers in this category withhold certificates or custom domains specifically to force the first production upgrade. Easypanel withholds neither. ^{[1] [2]}

FINDING 3 Four builders mean most repositories need no Dockerfile at all

FACT Railpack, Dockerfile, Cloud Native Buildpacks and Nixpacks. Easypanel selects Dockerfile automatically when the build path holds one, and otherwise falls back to Nixpacks for services with no saved build settings. The vendor names Railpack as the preferred automatic builder for new applications and the successor to Nixpacks, so select it explicitly rather than accepting the default. ^[5]

FINDING 4 The agent interface is the best-designed part of the product

ASSESSMENT Easypanel exposes four stable tools rather than one per operation: a search tool that returns matching procedures with their input schemas, and three execution tools

split by risk into query, mutation and destructive. A client can demand human approval before anything destructive without understanding what each of hundreds of operations does, and the client's tool list does not grow as the panel gains features. That is a better shape than a flat list of dozens of tools, and it is the part of this product worth copying elsewhere. [3] [24]

FINDING 5 Easypanel undercuts the incumbents it is replacing, at every tier

FACT Easypanel Business, the top tier with white-labeling and priority support, is \$29.90 per server per month on annual billing. cPanel Solo, the entry tier limited to a single hosting account, is \$27.46 on annual billing and \$29.99 monthly. A buyer moving off cPanel to Easypanel's most expensive plan pays roughly what they were paying for cPanel's cheapest, and gets unlimited projects, container builds and a Git-driven deploy pipeline instead of one account. [1] [16]

FINDING 6 Five managed database engines are included on the free plan

FACT MySQL, MariaDB, Postgres, MongoDB and Redis, alongside unlimited services across three projects, unlimited deployments, per-service custom domains with thirteen Traefik middlewares, Cloudflare Tunnel and two-factor authentication. This is the combination that explains the product's reputation, and it is why the people who try it recommend it. [1] [2]

FINDING 7 Self-hosting beats the managed option on price by roughly a third

FACT A two-person team running one 2 GB service on Render Pro pays \$50 a month before bandwidth, because the workspace fee sits on top of compute. A \$24 DigitalOcean droplet with two virtual CPUs and 4 GB, running Easypanel, comes to between \$24 and \$35 a month for twice the memory, four times the disk, unlimited services and no cold starts. [1] [18] [20]

FINDING 8 Render's free tier is unsuitable for the preview work it looks suited to

FACT A Render free web service has 512 MB of memory and less than one CPU. Render spins it down after fifteen minutes without inbound traffic, and spinning back up on the next request takes about one minute. A one-minute cold start is long enough that a reviewer clicking a link assumes the deployment is broken. [18] [19]

FINDING 9 Coolify has the better security model for agent access, and it is not close

FACT Coolify's MCP documentation states that environment values, configuration snapshots and full deployment logs are not returned, and that log summaries are capped and best-effort redacted. Its tokens are bound to one team, its read and deploy operations carry separate permissions, and two settings can each switch MCP off. Easypanel's documentation instead instructs the operator to assume procedure results may contain credentials, environment variables and configuration. Both servers use the same transport and they made opposite decisions about what leaves the box. [3] [11] [25]

FINDING 10 There is no core source to fall back on, and that is the real risk

FACT The easypanel-io GitHub organisation publishes twenty-three repositories: templates, sample applications, an installer script, a WHMCS billing plugin. None of them is the panel, which is distributed as a Docker image under terms reserving all rights. Coolify is Apache 2.0,

CapRover is Apache 2.0, and Dokploy is Apache 2.0 with a proprietary directory carved out. Self-hosting Easypanel gives you control of the server, not of the software. [\[7\]](#) [\[9\]](#) [\[12\]](#) [\[14\]](#) [\[15\]](#)

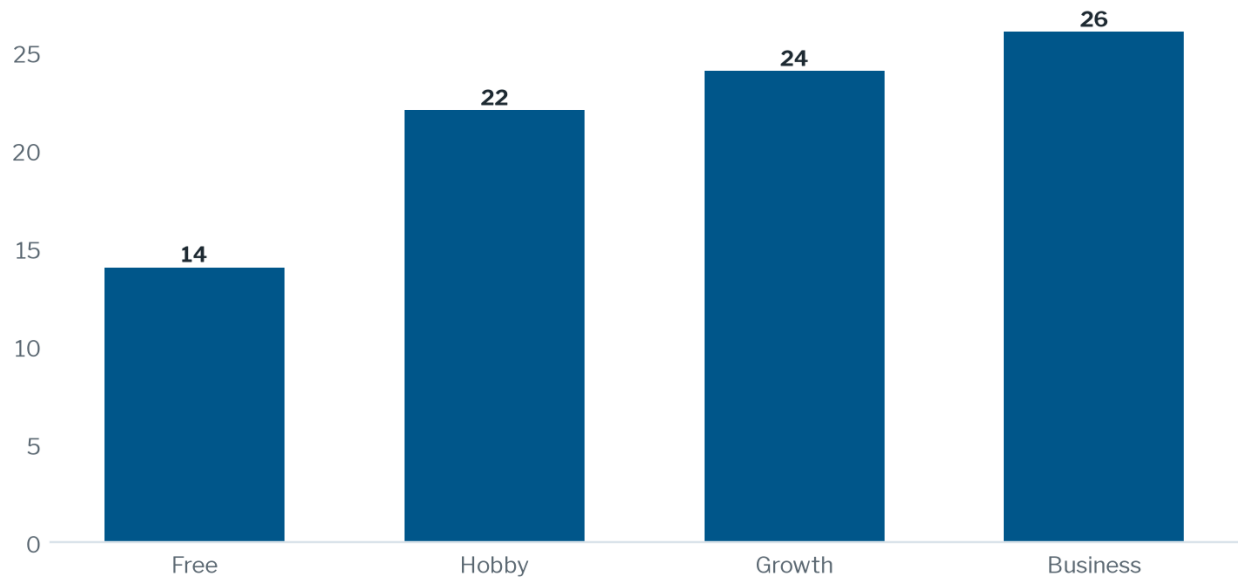
What the free plan actually gives you

FACT On Free you get unlimited services across three projects, unlimited deployments, automatic Let's Encrypt certificates, all four build methods, managed MySQL, MariaDB, Postgres, MongoDB and Redis, per-service custom domains with thirteen Traefik middlewares, Cloudflare Tunnel, two-factor authentication, and automatic deployment from GitHub with webhooks. [\[1\]](#) [\[2\]](#)

ASSESSMENT That combination is unusual and it is the whole reason this product has the reputation it has. The first production deployment is where most free tiers stop you, by holding back a certificate or a custom domain until you pay. Easypanel lets you take a real domain to production on a real certificate for nothing, which means the evaluation and the thing you keep are the same installation. [\[1\]](#)

FACT What the pricing grid says Free withholds is everything operational. No database backups and no volume backups. No notifications, so nothing tells you a deploy failed or a disk filled. Detailed per-service monitoring is paid, leaving a server-level overview. Wildcard domains for service URLs are paid, as are the three programmatic interfaces. [\[1\]](#)

Withheld from Free, as published	Free	Hobby	Growth	Business
Database backups and restore	no	yes	yes	yes
Volume backups	no	yes	yes	yes
Notifications (Discord, Slack, SMTP)	no	yes	yes	yes
Per-service metrics and live monitoring	no	yes	yes	yes
Wildcard domain for service URLs	no	yes	yes	yes
API tokens	no	yes	yes	yes
MCP server	no	yes	yes	yes
Command line	no	yes	yes	yes
Multiple users	no	no	yes	yes
Project-level access control	no	no	yes	yes
White-labeling and custom error pages	no	no	no	yes
Cluster support (alpha)	no	no	no	yes

FIGURE 1 Features included, by Easypanel tier, as published

FACT Count of the 26 yes/no rows in Easypanel's published feature matrix that each tier includes. This chart reports the pricing page rather than the software. Counting rows also treats priority support and Cloudflare Tunnel as equal, which they are not, so read this as shape rather than value. ^[1]

ASSESSMENT The split that page describes is coherent and I would defend most of it. Backups and alerting are what separate a hobby box from a production one, and charging for them is fair. The free tier is a good demonstration and a bad production system, and the upgrade is driven by fear rather than by features. If anything you build on Free matters, either pay or run your own backup job against the volumes. ^[1]

FACT Cancelling a paid plan does not brick the installation. Easypanel's terms and its pricing FAQ both say a cancelled subscription reverts to the free plan and existing projects keep running. That is a real commitment and it is unusual enough to name. ^{[1][7]}

The deploy loop, and what an agent can drive

ASSESSMENT The reason to care about a deployment panel in 2026 is different from the reason in 2021. A developer working through Claude Code or Codex generates deployable changes faster than a manual deploy process can absorb them, so the panel stops being a convenience and becomes the throughput limit. The question is no longer whether the interface is pleasant. It is whether the tooling already open on your desk can drive it.

FACT Easypanel's MCP server is remote rather than local. It runs on your own panel at a path under your server's domain and speaks Streamable HTTP, so there is no process to install on the developer's machine. Authentication is a per-user API key, passed either as a bearer token or appended to the URL path. ^[3]

FACT The catalogue the agent sees is not a fixed list. Easypanel exposes four tools rather than one tool per operation: a search tool that returns matching procedures with their input schemas, and three execution tools split by risk into query, mutation and destructive. The vendor states

that only operations explicitly enabled for MCP appear in search results, and that the catalogue follows the installed version. ^[3]

ASSESSMENT Risk-tiered execution is the design decision that makes this usable rather than alarming. A client can be configured to ask for human approval before a destructive call without needing to understand what each of hundreds of operations does. The four-tool shape also means the tool list does not grow as the panel gains features, which is a real problem with MCP servers that enumerate everything. ^{[3] [24]}

ASSESSMENT One handling note. Putting the key in the URL is offered as a convenience for clients that accept only a server address, and it is the option many people will take because it is the one that works everywhere. URLs end up in shell history, client configuration files, screenshots and log lines in a way that headers do not. Prefer the bearer header, and treat the path form as the fallback it is. ^[3]

What the panel hands your model

ASSESSMENT Give an AI client a key to your deployment panel and you have created a new path for configuration to leave your server. What travels down that path is a design decision, and Easypanel and Coolify made opposite ones. This is the one place in this report where Easypanel is genuinely behind, and it is worth knowing before you connect anything.

FACT Easypanel's documentation instructs the operator to assume procedure inputs and results may contain credentials, environment variables, configuration or executable content, and not to paste API keys, secret output or connection URLs into prompts, screenshots, issue reports or source control. The guidance is honest. It is also guidance to the human rather than a boundary in the software. ^[3]

FACT The read-only side of the catalogue includes procedures that return configuration. Searching a connected instance for environment and secret access returned, among the query-risk procedures, one that returns the raw Traefik environment file and one that returns the configuration and deployment details of an application service. Neither was executed. The schemas were enough. ^[24]

FACT Coolify states a different contract. Its MCP documentation says environment values, configuration snapshots and full deployment logs are not returned, and that log summaries are capped and best-effort redacted. Its tokens are bound to one team and its read and deploy operations carry separate permissions. An instance-level setting and a per-team setting can each switch MCP off, returning 404 and 403 respectively. ^{[11] [25]}

ASSESSMENT A kill switch at two levels, team-bound tokens, separate read and deploy scopes, and a documented refusal to return environment values are four controls Easypanel does not offer at any price. If you have a compliance reviewer, that sentence decides your choice and nothing else in this report outranks it. Easypanel's per-project scoping, its nearest equivalent, is listed at \$16.90 per server per month and still returns configuration once the agent is inside a project. ^{[1] [3] [11]}

HYPOTHESIS Easypanel adds response redaction within twelve months, because the gap is visible in a side-by-side reading of the two documentation sets and the fix does not require architectural change. Confirmed by a changelog entry describing redaction, filtering or secret masking on MCP responses. Refuted if release 2.40 or later ships with the current guidance unchanged. ^[6]

Getting off cPanel and Plesk

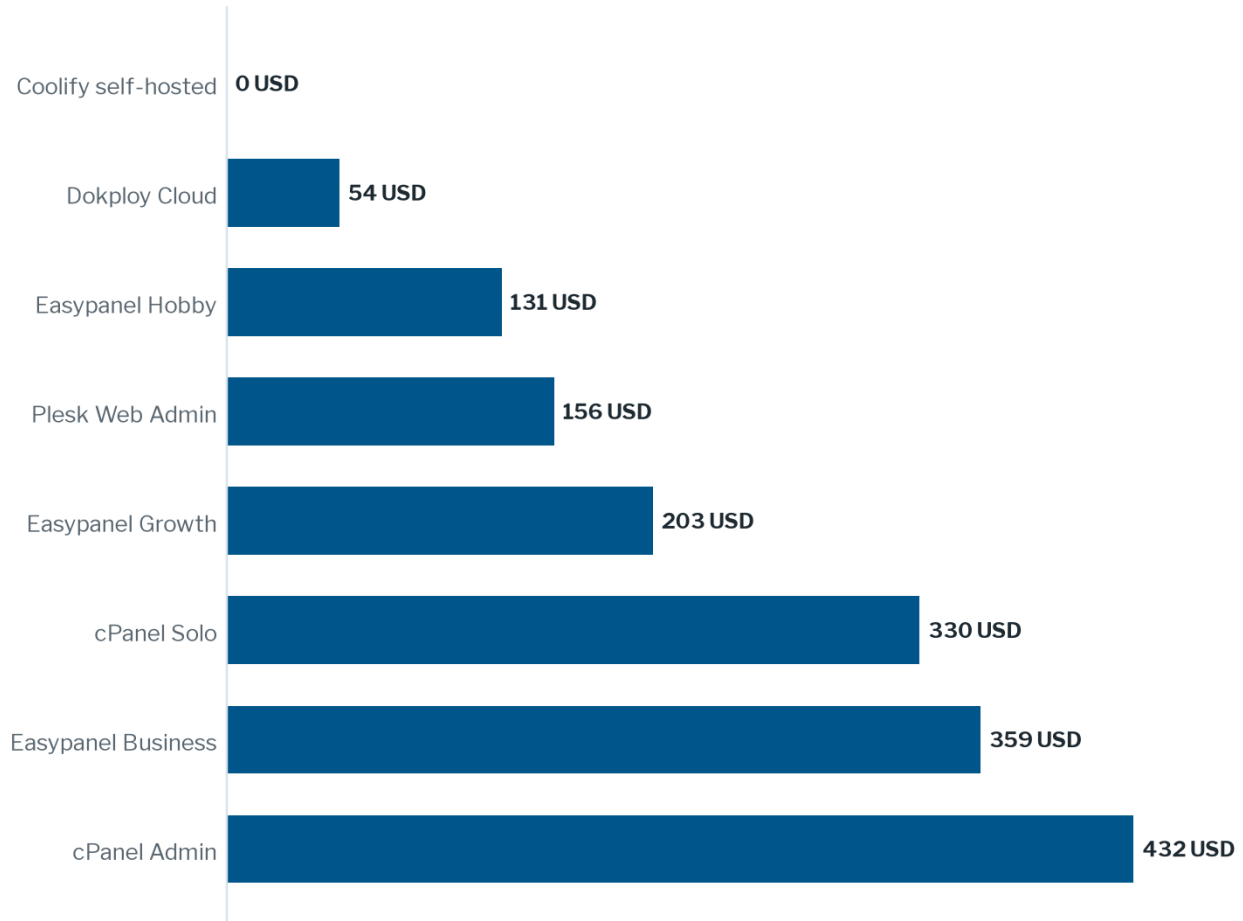
ASSESSMENT This is the least contentious recommendation in the document. If you are running containerised applications on a panel built to manage hosting accounts, the mismatch is costing you money and time in both directions, and the per-server licence model is the same one you already pay, so the comparison is like for like. ^{[1] [16] [17]}

FACT cPanel's entry tier, Solo, is limited to a single account and is available on cloud and VPS only. It lists at \$29.99 per month, or \$27.46 on annual billing. Admin, at \$35.99 monthly, covers up to five accounts. Pro covers thirty at \$53.99 and Premier covers a hundred at \$69.99 with additional accounts at 49 cents each. ^[16]

FACT Plesk licenses per server and meters by domain count. Its Web Admin edition for a VPS is listed at 12.04 euros per month for ten domains, Web Pro at 18.29 euros for thirty, and Web Host at 31.38 euros for unlimited. The pricing page displays two conflicting price blocks and carries a promotional notice that expired in December 2025, so treat these as indicative and check at purchase. ^[17]

ASSESSMENT Easypanel's whole top tier costs about what cPanel's single-account bottom tier costs, and it comes with unlimited projects, container builds and a Git-driven deploy pipeline rather than a single hosting account. On price against the incumbents the argument is settled. The interesting comparison is not cPanel. It is Coolify, which charges nothing and puts that in writing. ^{[1] [10] [16]}

FACT Coolify self-hosted is free with, in the vendor's words, full access to all features and no limitation or restrictions. Coolify Cloud, which hosts the control plane while your applications still run on your own servers, is \$5 per month for two connected servers and \$3 per month for each one after that. Dokploy's cloud starts at \$4.50 per server per month; its core is Apache 2.0 and self-hostable. ^{[10] [13] [14]}

FIGURE 2 Annual licence cost for one server, best available price

FACT Licence only, excluding the server itself. Annual billing where offered. Plesk Web Admin for VPS is listed at 12.04 euros per month and converted at 1.08 dollars to the euro, so that bar carries currency risk the others do not. cPanel Solo covers one account and cPanel Admin covers five; the Easypanel tiers are unlimited projects. Zero means no licence fee, not free to operate. [\[1\]](#) [\[10\]](#) [\[13\]](#) [\[16\]](#) [\[17\]](#)

Architecture, and one thing to know before committing

FACT The install is one command run as root on a fresh Ubuntu server with at least 2 GB of memory and ports 80 and 443 free. The script installs Docker if needed, initialises Docker Swarm, and starts the panel. Easypanel also ships one-click images through eight cloud marketplaces: DigitalOcean, AWS, Vultr, Linode, Hostinger, Kamatera, Cloudzy and LetsCloud. [\[4\]](#)

FACT Azure is not among them. Descriptions of Azure offering a prebuilt Easypanel image are mistaken as of this date, though the install script runs on any Ubuntu virtual machine including an Azure one. [\[4\]](#)

FACT Four builders turn source into an image: Railpack, Dockerfile, Cloud Native Buildpacks and Nixpacks. Easypanel selects Dockerfile automatically when the build path holds one and otherwise falls back to Nixpacks for services with no saved build settings. The vendor names Railpack as the preferred automatic builder for new applications and the successor to Nixpacks. [\[5\]](#)

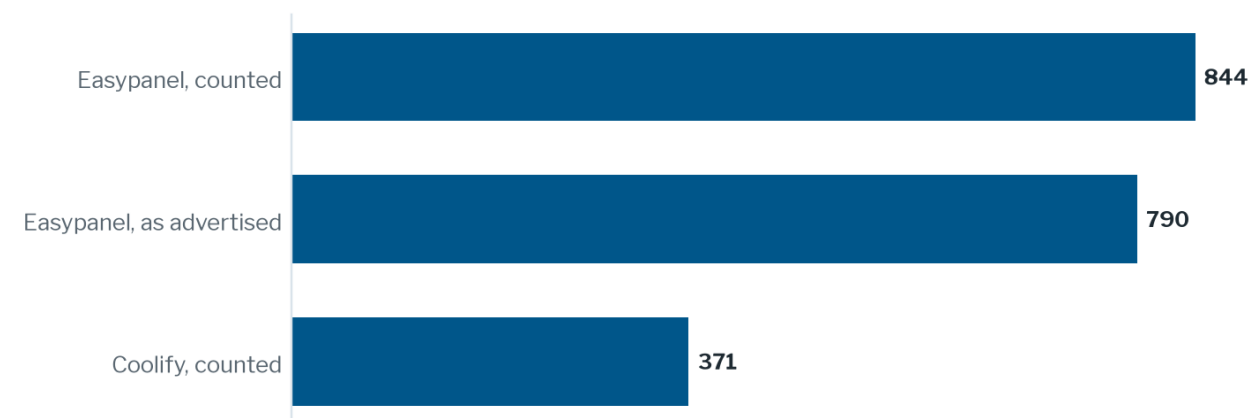
ASSESSMENT Choosing Railpack explicitly on a new service is worth the extra click. The default fallback is the older builder, so a service created without touching the build settings gets Nixpacks rather than the one the vendor recommends. That is a small trap and it will catch people who assume the default is the recommendation. ^[5]

ASSESSMENT Docker Swarm as the orchestrator is the commitment most buyers will not notice they are making. It makes single-server operation simple, which is the point, and it is why the multi-server feature is still labelled alpha at the top tier while Kubernetes tooling has had a decade of investment. If your plan ends at one or two servers, Swarm is the right trade. If your plan is thirty servers, this is the wrong product and the alpha label is telling you so. ^{[1] [4]}

One-click services, claimed against counted

VENDOR CLAIM On 12 September 2026 the Easypanel homepage said 750+ open-source services while its pricing page tooltip said 790+ built-in templates. Neither figure is defined or reconciled. The same pages carry two different adoption numbers, 66,000+ active servers on the homepage and 145,000+ self-hosters on the pricing page, and both are treated here as marketing rather than measurement. ^{[1] [2]}

FIGURE 3 Template catalogues, counted from the public repositories



FACT Template directories in `easypanel-io/templates` and compose template files in `coolabsio/coolify`, read on 12 September 2026. The middle bar is Easypanel's own published figure, included because it sits below its own repository count. Coolify's advertised figure was not read, so only the counted bars are comparable. ^{[2] [8] [12]}

ASSESSMENT Catalogue size does not decide these purchases, despite dominating the marketing. Nobody picks a panel because it has 844 templates rather than 371. They pick it because the six services they actually need are all there, and both catalogues clear that bar comfortably. ^{[8] [12]}

What twenty-five dollars buys, managed or not

ASSESSMENT The common complaint about Render is that the machines are small and slow. Both halves check out, and the free tier is where it shows. This matters to the reader of this report because Render is the thing you are choosing against, and the honest version of the comparison is not the one either vendor publishes. ^{[18] [19]}

FACT A Render free web service has 512 MB of memory and less than one CPU. Render spins it down after fifteen minutes without inbound traffic, and spinning back up on the next request takes about one minute. Each workspace gets 750 free instance hours per calendar month, and free services draw on the same bandwidth and build-minute allowances as paid ones. ^{[18] [19]}

FACT Render's workspace fee sits on top of compute. Hobby is free with up to twenty-five services and 5 GB of bandwidth, Pro is \$25 per month for unlimited seats and services plus 25 GB, and Scale is \$499 per month. A two-person team running one 2 GB service on Pro pays \$50 a month before bandwidth. ^[18]

FIGURE 4 Monthly cost for one 2 GB service, self-hosted against managed



FACT List prices read from both vendors on 12 September 2026. This is not like for like and should not be read as one: the Render figure includes the platform, the build pipeline and the operator, while the droplet is a bare machine you must install and patch yourself. The droplet is the \$24 tier with two virtual CPUs and 4 GB, which is twice the memory of the Render service it is compared against. ^{[1] [18] [20]}

ASSESSMENT That \$50 is the number to hold against self-hosting. The droplet wins on price and on headroom, and it loses on the thing nobody prices, which is who gets paged when the box stops. Render is not the wrong answer for a team without an operator. It is the wrong answer for the reader this report is written for, who already rents servers and already patches them. ^{[1] [18] [20]}

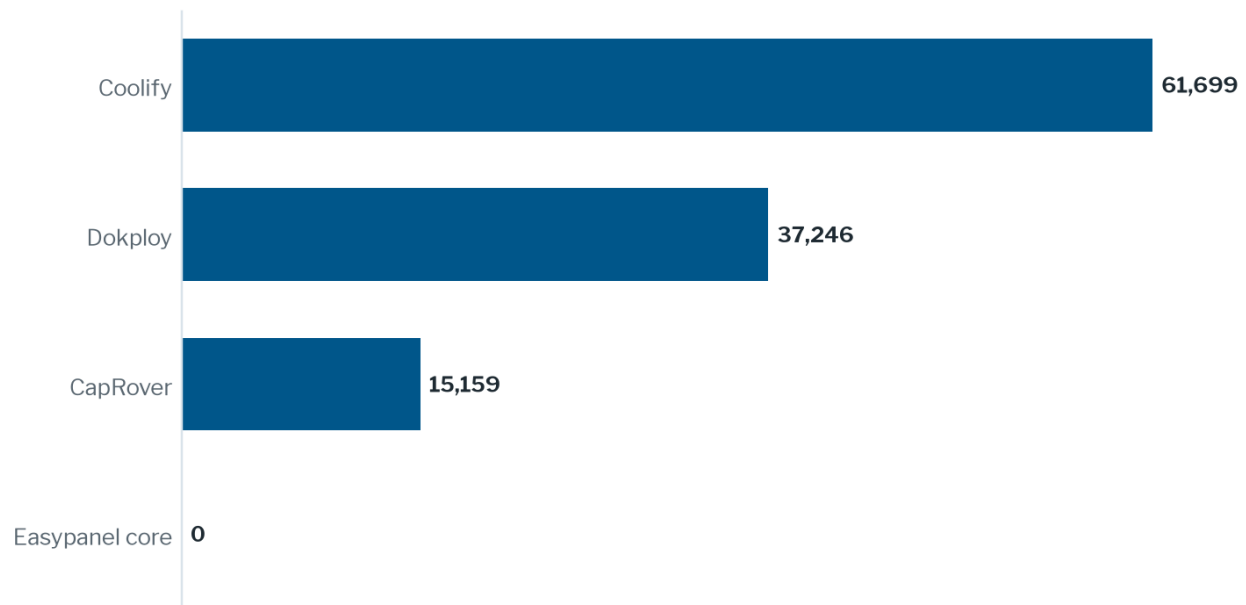
Self-hosted is not the same as yours

ASSESSMENT Easypanel gets compared to n8n: a generous community edition you self-host, with paid tiers when you are ready. The business model matches. The property that makes people comfortable with n8n does not, and anyone making a multi-year commitment should understand the difference before they make it. ^{[7] [21]}

FACT n8n publishes its source. The repository carries a Sustainable Use License covering everything outside the enterprise files, which are marked by an .ee suffix and need a separate licence. It is not an OSI-approved open source licence and n8n does not claim it is, but the code is there to read, patch and fork. ^[21]

FACT Easypanel's core is not published anywhere. Its GitHub organisation holds twenty-three repositories covering templates, sample applications, the install script, a Docker packaging tool and a WHMCS plugin. The panel is distributed as a Docker image. The terms reserve all rights in the software, which is how a proprietary product describes itself. ^{[7] [9]}

FIGURE 5 Public repository attention, 12 September 2026



FACT GitHub stars, read from the API on the date shown. Stars measure attention, not quality, and a young project is penalised. The Easypanel bar is not a low score; there is no core repository to score, which is the point the chart is making rather than a defect in it. ^{[9] [12] [14] [15]}

ASSESSMENT Self-hosting Easypanel gets you data residency, no per-seat billing, no vendor egress fees, and a box you can reboot. It does not get you the two things people usually mean by self-hosting: the ability to keep running the current version on your own terms if the vendor changes direction, and the ability to fix something yourself. Those are licence properties, not deployment properties, and the words get used as if they were the same. With Coolify the equivalent access is written into an Apache 2.0 licence, so no release can take it away from an installation already running. ^{[10] [21]}

THIRD-PARTY ESTIMATE Tracxn, a commercial company-data aggregator, lists Easypanel as an unfunded company founded in 2021 and based in Oradea, Romania. Aggregator records are compiled from public signals and are wrong often enough that this is offered as background rather than fact. If it is right, it bears on how you should size the continuity risk: an unfunded team of this size ships monthly because the work is the business, and it also has no runway to absorb a bad year. ^[22]

Pricing and packaging

FACT The tiers work out as follows. One server with one operator and one agent needs Hobby, at \$130.80 per year on annual billing, \$178.80 paid monthly. A team, or anyone who wants an

agent restricted to a subset of projects, needs Growth, at \$202.80 per year or \$286.80 monthly. Business is \$358.80 per year and adds white-labeling, custom error pages and alpha cluster support. Licences are per server, so a staging box and a production box are two subscriptions. ^[1]

ASSESSMENT Per-server pricing means your cost scales with your server count and your environment strategy rather than with your revenue. Three environments across two regions is six licences. For one or two boxes it is the cheapest thing in the category that a small team would actually enjoy using. At twenty boxes the arithmetic stops being charming and Coolify's zero starts to matter more than Easypanel's polish. ^{[1] [10]}

ASSESSMENT The three-project limit on Free is the constraint most likely to push a working team to pay, and it is wired properly to licence state in the software. Per-story preview environments and per-branch test stacks consume projects quickly. A team that designs a workflow around three projects will hit the wall in its second sprint, so price Hobby per server into the running costs before that happens rather than after. ^{[1] [24]}

One row group on the pricing page worth a second read

FACT API tokens, the command line and the MCP server are listed under a heading called Team & Access, subtitled as collaborating with your team and controlling access to resources, alongside multiple users and project-level access control, which are genuinely team features. Two-factor authentication sits in the same group and is marked available on Free. The grouping does not describe what those three rows are, and the CLI documentation, the API reference and the MCP page name no plan requirement for any of them. ^{[1] [3] [26] [27]}

ASSESSMENT As of 12 September 2026 the software is more generous than that page. On an instance running release 2.34.0 with no licence recorded, a single operator had working access. I am noting it because a reader comparing panels on published matrices would price this product wrongly against Coolify, and because the wording is the problem rather than the product. I hope it stays as it is. Nothing here is a bypass: no check is circumvented and nothing is patched, so an operator connecting a client to their own installation is using the product exactly as shipped, and Easypanel's terms prohibit evading licence limits, which this is not. ^{[1] [7] [24]}

HYPOTHESIS Easypanel clarifies those rows within two releases, in one direction or the other. Confirmed by a changelog note or an edit to the Free column of the matrix. Refuted if release 2.40 or later ships with the current wording unchanged. Either way the practical advice does not change: if programmatic deployment is how you work, buy Hobby at \$130.80 a year rather than depend on a reading of a feature matrix, because behaviour is not an entitlement and the team deserves paying. ^{[1] [6]}

Competitive assessment

Platform	Licence and source	Agent interface	Principal constraint
Easypanel	Proprietary, no public core repository, per-server licence from \$10.90 monthly	First-party MCP, four tools sorted by risk, no response redaction	No source to fork if the vendor stops, and the interface returns configuration to the model
Coolify	Apache 2.0, 61,699 stars, self-hosted free with no feature limits	First-party MCP, team-scoped tokens, redacted responses, two kill switches	Larger surface and a heavier upgrade path; polish lags Easypanel by most accounts
Dokploy	Apache 2.0 core with a proprietary directory, 37,246 stars	Public API; no first-party MCP documented	Youngest of the four, created April 2024, with the shortest production track record
CapRover	Apache 2.0, 15,159 stars, running since October 2017	CLI and API; no first-party MCP documented	Oldest design of the four and the least active; suits existing users more than new ones
Render	Managed service, no self-hosting option	No MCP documented; deployment driven by Git and the platform API	Free tier spins down after fifteen minutes; compute costs roughly double a droplet
cPanel and Plesk	Proprietary, per-server licence, metered by account or domain	CLI and API built for hosting accounts, not container builds	Built for a hosting-account model that does not describe a containerised application

ASSESSMENT One entry in that table rests on weaker evidence than the rest and should be marked. The claim that Easypanel feels more polished than Coolify comes from practitioner write-ups, including a comparison published by the hosting provider Contabo, which sells servers that both products run on. It recurs often enough to report and it has never been measured, so it belongs in the constraint column as sentiment rather than as a finding. ^[23]

ASSESSMENT Two names get listed as Easypanel competitors that are not. Portainer manages containers but does not build code from a repository, so it solves a different half of the problem. Vercel and Netlify compete for the frontend deployment that Easypanel also handles, but nobody runs Postgres on them, and a buyer choosing between Vercel and a self-hosted panel has not yet worked out what they are building.

What actually decides these purchases

ASSESSMENT Feature grids are not what closes these deals. Three things are, and only one of them appears on a comparison site. First, whether the first deployment works in under an hour. This category is chosen by developers evaluating on a Saturday, not by committees running a scorecard, and the product that gets a repository live fastest usually wins before any comparison happens. Easypanel's reputation rests almost entirely on this. ^{[1] [4]}

ASSESSMENT Second, what happens the first time something breaks at two in the morning. Backups, restore, alerting and log access decide whether the panel survives its first incident, and that set is exactly what the free tier withholds. Buyers upgrade out of fear, not out of desire for a

feature, and any vendor in this category with a commercial reason to hold something back holds back this. ^[1]

ASSESSMENT Third, and newly, whether the tooling the developer already uses can drive it. A developer working through Claude Code or Codex now evaluates infrastructure partly on whether the agent can reach it. This criterion did not exist eighteen months ago and it is not on any comparison grid, which is why the vendor that gets it right early is buying market position cheaply. ^[3]

ASSESSMENT Charging for programmatic access is the wrong axis for anyone in this category to compete on. A developer whose agent cannot call an API will point the same agent at the web interface instead, which is slower, worse for both sides and produces no licence revenue. The panels that win the AI-assisted buyer will be the ones that make the documented path the easiest path, and then charge for the operational features that genuinely cost money to build.

Scenarios to 2028

ASSESSMENT Point forecasts fail in this category for a visible reason. Easypanel has shipped seventy-six releases and added its entire agent interface in a single release six weeks before this document was written. A product changing at that rate does not have a predictable feature set two years out, so what follows is five structured futures with subjective probabilities and, more usefully, the earliest sign of each. The probabilities are the least reliable content in this document. The visible signs are the most useful. ^[6]

SCENARIO A Agent-driven deployment becomes table stakes 35 percent

Dokploy, CapRover or a hosting provider ships a first-party agent interface, and driving a deployment panel from a coding client stops being a differentiator and becomes an expectation.

Consequence. Easypanel's current lead on interface design compresses to a lead on execution quality. Buyers stop asking whether the panel has an agent interface and start asking what it returns.

Earliest visible sign. Dokploy's or CapRover's documentation naming a first-party MCP server, or a marketplace image advertising one.

SCENARIO B Security scoping becomes the axis of competition 20 percent

An incident involving credentials pulled out of a deployment panel into a model context gets public attention, and buyers start asking what the agent interface returns rather than whether it exists.

Consequence. Coolify's redaction boundary becomes a selling point and Easypanel ships a matching control quickly. Enterprise buyers add agent scoping to procurement checklists and the free-tier comparison stops mattering.

Earliest visible sign. A CVE or disclosed incident naming any deployment panel's MCP or API surface as the path.

SCENARIO C Easypanel ships response redaction 20 percent

A release adds filtering or secret masking to MCP responses, matching the contract Coolify already publishes.

Consequence. The strongest objection in this report disappears and the remaining case against Easypanel narrows to the licence question alone. The product becomes recommendable to buyers with a compliance reviewer.

Earliest visible sign. A changelog entry describing redaction, filtering or secret masking on MCP responses.

SCENARIO D The incumbents ship container-native deployment 15 percent

cPanel or Plesk adds a Git-driven container build pipeline that is genuinely usable, giving their installed base a reason to stay.

Consequence. The migration this report recommends slows, and the argument shifts from capability to price, where the incumbents are weaker anyway. Easypanel's addressable market stops growing at the rate its template catalogue suggests.

Earliest visible sign. A cPanel or Plesk release note naming Git-driven container builds rather than application installers.

SCENARIO E Consolidation squeezes the independents 10 percent

A hosting provider or a larger platform acquires one of the independent panels, or the unfunded ones run out of runway as maintenance load grows with the template catalogue.

Consequence. Template catalogues stop growing, release cadence drops, and buyers face a migration they did not budget for. The licence question becomes the only thing that matters.

Earliest visible sign. A release gap of more than four months from any of the four, against current cadence.

Leading indicators

If this happens	It means	Moves toward	Where to watch
Dokploy or CapRover documents a first-party MCP server	The category has converged on agent access	Scenario A	Each project's documentation site
Easypanel ships response redaction on MCP	The vendor read the same gap this report describes	Scenario C	easypanel.io/changelog
A CVE names any panel's MCP or API surface	Agent scoping becomes a procurement question	Scenario B	CVE feeds and vendor advisories
cPanel or Plesk ships Git-driven container builds	The incumbents are defending the base	Scenario D	cpanel.net and plesk.com release notes

If this happens	It means	Moves toward	Where to watch
Cluster support loses its alpha label	Multi-server operation is being taken seriously	Neutral, widens the buyer set	easypanel.io/pricing and changelog
A public core repository appears under easypanel-io	The licence objection is being answered directly	Weakens the continuity risk	github.com/easypanel-io
Any of the four goes four months without a release	Maintenance load has outrun the team	Scenario E	Repository commit history and changelogs

ASSESSMENT The first two rows are the ones to actually watch, and both are single page loads that resolve in seconds. Everything below them is slower and less decisive. ^[6]

Implications

Business owners

ASSESSMENT Your exposure is not the licence fee, which is trivial next to what you already spend on AI coding tools. It is that a closed-source product from a small unfunded team sits underneath your production systems. Buy the tier that matches what you actually use, and budget a migration as a known risk. The practical hedge is cheap: keep your Dockerfiles and compose files portable, and avoid depending on anything panel-specific. ^[22]

Decision makers in engineering and IT leadership

ASSESSMENT Per-server licensing means cost scales with your server count and your environment strategy, not with your revenue. Three environments across two regions is six licences. The business case that works is the one that compares against Render's workspace fee plus compute rather than against nothing, and that prices your own operator time honestly, because that is the line item self-hosting actually spends. ^{[1] [18]}

Developers

ASSESSMENT Select Railpack explicitly rather than accepting the default, which falls back to the older Nixpacks builder. Use the bearer header for the MCP connection rather than the key-in-URL form. And do the honest thing about the free tier: it has no backups, so if anything you build on it matters, either upgrade or run your own backup job against the volumes. ^{[3] [5]}

Vibe coders

ASSESSMENT This is the product for you and the reasoning is short. You are already paying for the tool that writes the code, and the thing that stops you shipping is everything after the code. A single command gets you a panel, a repository connection gets you deploys on push, and a certificate and a custom domain cost nothing, so the app you built on Saturday can be a real URL on Sunday. Keep it to one server and three projects until the limits bite, then pay. ^{[1] [2] [4]}

Scrum Masters

ASSESSMENT The free plan's three-project limit is the thing that will bite your team, not the price. Per-story preview environments and per-branch test stacks consume projects quickly, and unlimited projects start at the first paid tier. If your definition of done includes a reviewable deployed environment, price Hobby per server into the team's running costs before the team designs a workflow around a limit it will hit in the second sprint. ^[1]

Product leaders

ASSESSMENT You are making a two-to-three year bet on a vendor with no published source and, on aggregator evidence, no funding. That is comfortable for internal tooling and a question worth answering for anything a customer depends on. Write down now what you would do if the vendor stopped, and check whether anyone has costed it. The answer is usually no, and the answer is usually cheap once someone does. ^{[9] [22]}

Recommendations

ASSESSMENT For a solo operator or a small team who values finish and will pay for it, run Easypanel. Install it on a \$24 droplet, point it at a repository, and take the first service to production on a real domain before deciding anything. If programmatic deployment is how you work, buy Hobby, because \$130.80 a year is less than two weeks of the AI tooling that is writing the code. ^{[1] [4] [20]}

ASSESSMENT For anyone who needs an AI agent restricted to part of the system, or who has a compliance reviewer, run Coolify. The team-scoped tokens, the documented refusal to return environment values and the two kill switches are controls Easypanel does not sell at any tier, and they cost nothing. Accept that the interface is rougher and the upgrades need more attention. ^{[10] [11]}

ASSESSMENT For anyone still on cPanel or Plesk hosting containerised applications, move. The incumbents were built for a hosting-account model that does not describe what you are deploying, and Easypanel's top tier costs roughly what cPanel's entry tier does. Migrate one service first and keep the old panel running until the second one is boring. ^{[1] [16] [17]}

ASSESSMENT For a team with no operator and no appetite for one, stay on Render and stop reading comparisons. The self-hosted saving is real and it is paid for in attention. Teams that will not pay that get a worse outcome self-hosting than they get managed, regardless of the numbers in the chart above. ^[18]

ASSESSMENT And for Easypanel, offered as a user rather than a critic: the agent interface is the best thing in this product and the pricing page is the quietest place it could have been put. Ship response redaction, say clearly what the programmatic interfaces are and who gets them, and then advertise the deploy loop to the population that is currently writing more code than it can deploy. ^{[1] [3]}

What this document cannot answer

Five questions came up repeatedly while assembling this and none can be settled from public sources. Each would need primary research.

Whether the MCP response surface leaks secrets in practice, and how often. Establishing this properly means instrumenting an Easypanel instance, running realistic agent sessions, and auditing what appeared in the model context. That is a lab exercise, and this report deliberately stops at the documented contract and the published tool schemas.

How Easypanel and Coolify actually compare on reliability under load. Every claim that one is more polished than the other traces back to individual practitioner impressions, several of them published by hosting companies. Nobody has run both through the same workload and measured anything, and until somebody does, the polish comparison here should be read as reported sentiment rather than a finding.

How many production systems run Easypanel, and of what size. The vendor publishes two incompatible figures and neither defines what it counts. Answering this needs either an instrumented survey of hosting providers offering the marketplace image, or install telemetry the vendor has no reason to release.

Whether the operational features withheld from the free plan behave as published. Backups, notifications and detailed monitoring were not tested, because testing them means changing an instance rather than reading from it. A reader who tests them on a disposable server would produce genuinely new information, and I would revise this document on it.

What the real migration cost is from cPanel to a container panel for a hosting business with customer accounts. This report addresses the developer running their own applications. The reseller case involves customer data, email, DNS and support expectations that no panel comparison touches, and it deserves its own assessment.

Half-life of this assessment

Six months, expiring around March 2027. Every price, the tier feature matrix, and the agent capability comparison. Easypanel added its whole agent interface in one release and ships roughly monthly. The four repository star counts are stale the day after publication and are included only as an order-of-magnitude read.

Twelve months, expiring around September 2027. The competitive ordering of the four panels, the scenario probabilities, and the claim that Easypanel's security model trails Coolify's. Any of these can be overturned by a single release from either project, and the redaction gap is the most likely to close.

Two years and beyond. The licence structures, which change rarely and loudly, and the per-server pricing model shared by Easypanel, cPanel and Plesk. A vendor moving off per-server pricing would be a strategic repositioning rather than a price change.

Architectural, and not expected to decay. The distinction between controlling a server and controlling the software on it, which is a licence property and does not change because a product improves. The observation that free tiers in this category withhold backups and alerting, which is how the business model works rather than a choice any one vendor made. And the point that an AI agent holding panel credentials is a new path for configuration to leave a system, which will still be true when every product in this report has been replaced.

Limitations

No vendor commissioned, reviewed, funded or saw this before publication. No affiliate relationship exists with any company named. The author operates an Easypanel installation and has connected the MCP server described here to a working AI client, which makes the first-hand observations unusually direct and also makes the author a user of one of the products being compared, and an enthusiastic one. Readers should weigh that.

Coolify, Dokploy and CapRover were assessed from documentation and repository metadata rather than from running them. Easypanel was assessed from both. That asymmetry favours Easypanel on everything experiential and does not affect the licence, pricing or documented-capability comparisons, which is why this report's recommendations rest on those and not on which interface feels better.

Almost every source here is a vendor's own page, because in this category there is no independent data. That is appropriate for prices and published matrices, which vendors have no reason to understate, and it is worthless for claims about reliability, adoption or quality, so no such claim appears without a label saying where it came from.

Timing compounds all of it. Easypanel's agent interface is six weeks old. A capability that young has not been through a security review by anyone outside the company, has no incident history, and may change substantially in the next two releases. The comparison against Coolify's MCP server is a comparison of two documented designs, not of two track records, and neither has one yet.

The first-hand observations rest on one instance running release 2.34.0, on one date, with one client, and no mutation or destructive procedure was executed against it. That is enough to describe how the interface authenticates and what its read-only catalogue exposes. It cannot establish how the software behaves across versions, licence states or configurations, and this report does not claim it does.

Prices were read on 12 September 2026 from live pages. The Plesk figures carry extra uncertainty because that vendor's pricing page displayed two conflicting blocks and an expired promotional notice on the day it was read. Currency conversion on the Plesk bar uses 1.08 dollars to the euro and will drift.

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