Self-Hosting Companion Sheet

Self-Hosting to Kill Your Subscriptions: Companion Sheet

Free with the book, by Axel Verne. Project names, prices, and free-tier terms checked as of late 2026 — verify current status before relying on any of them.

The subscription audit (Chapter 1) — sort before you build anything

For each recurring charge, answer in one sentence: what does this actually do for me? Then sort it:

Bucket	What it means	Self-host candidate?
Storage-shaped	Really just a hard drive somewhere else, with an app on top	Yes — this book's main target
Real service	Genuine computation or delivery you couldn't easily replace	No — leave it alone
Convenience	You *could* do it yourself, but you're paying for polish/support	Maybe — only if you're willing to spend upkeep time

The five words (Chapter 2)

Word	Plain meaning
Server	A computer whose job is to do something for other devices
Network	The connections between your devices
Container	Software packed into its own sealed "lunchbox" — doesn't touch anything else
Self-hosted	Software running on a computer you control, not one you rent access to
Open source	Software whose instructions are public — usually free to run yourself

Choosing your box (Chapter 4)

1. Do I already own something that qualifies? (An old laptop almost always wins.)
2. How many jobs, how demanding? (1–2 light jobs → single-board computer is fine.)
3. How much do I want handled for me vs. how much do I want to learn? (NAS = more handled. Laptop/mini PC = more learned.)

Electricity math: watts × 24 hours × 30 days ÷ 1000 = kWh/month. Multiply by your own utility rate (on your bill, not a guess) for the real monthly cost.

Projects named in this book (as of late 2026 — check current status before installing)

Job	Project mentioned as the example
Photos (Ch. 6)	Immich
Files, general sync (Ch. 7)	Syncthing (simplest) or Nextcloud (more features)
Passwords (Ch. 7 — needs tested backups FIRST)	Vaultwarden
Media / audiobooks (Ch. 7)	Jellyfin (video/music) or Audiobookshelf (audiobooks/podcasts)
Safe remote access (Ch. 8)	Tailscale

None of these names are required reading — the decision method in each chapter transfers to whatever the current best tool is when you're actually building.

The 3-2-1 backup rule (Chapter 9)

- **Three** copies of anything you can't afford to lose
- **Two** different kinds of storage
- **One** copy somewhere other than your house

Then: actually test a restore, on a calm day, before you need it for real. Delete something you don't mind losing, restore it, confirm it looks right, time how long it took.

What NOT to self-host (Chapter 10)

- **Email.** Deliverability/reputation problems are a deep, ongoing project, not a weekend one.
- **Anything life-critical.** Medical monitoring, security you depend on for actual safety — the cost of a maintenance window is too high.
- **Anything you couldn't fix at 11 PM.** If you wouldn't know where to start troubleshooting, you're not ready to depend on it yet.

Your weekend plan (Chapter 10)

- **Saturday AM:** set up your box (chapter 4), reserved network address (chapter 3)
- **Saturday PM:** pick exactly ONE job — Syncthing is the gentlest start
- **Sunday AM:** set up Tailscale, test reaching your server from off your home network
- **Sunday PM:** set up your second backup copy, and actually test restoring from it

One job, safely reachable, genuinely backed up and tested by Sunday night = a complete success. You don't need to do everything in this book to call it a win.

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By Axel Verne. More at axelverne.com/listen.