

Website Basics

An Introductory Guide to the Process and Terminology
of Website Development



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Congratulations on your decision to explore the development of a website. Regardless of the nature of your business, you can only benefit from an online presence!

This booklet was written as a guide for those who are not familiar with the basics of website design, *hosting* and *maintenance*. It will help to familiarize you with the process, and some of the terms we use. (Words in italics are defined in the Glossary at the end of this booklet.)

The first step we take is to meet with you to determine a number of things about your business and what you hope to accomplish with a website. (In a long-distance situation, phone and email communication is suitable.) This includes obtaining detailed information about your products or services, whether you plan to sell directly through the site or set it up for information only, and so forth. We will also discuss design options, such as a company logo, color schemes, the number of photos (*images*), the anticipated number of pages, etc., as well as the necessary *meta tags* to be programmed into the site. We will also discuss the proper *hosting* requirements for the site.

It's important for you to be as specific as possible during this initial stage. In fact, to assist us in this process, we have prepared a preliminary questionnaire which we ask most new clients to fill out. This gives us an excellent starting point!

From here, the actual design process begins. If a logo is required, we will usually start with it, since a company logo will generally appear on all the pages of a site, and quite often the colors will be used in the design scheme of the pages. We will usually come up with a rough idea or two for you to see, make any necessary adjustments, then continue with a basic page design. If you already have an existing logo, we can use it as the basis of the overall design scheme.

The basic page design will consist of the logo placement, the overall color scheme, any photos, *buttons*, a possible *background image*, the initial text and *links*. Quite often, we will do this in multiple stages, consulting with you and getting your approval each step of the way. This entire process saves us time (and you money) since it reduces the possibility of having to backtrack and redo stuff!

During this process, we will *upload* pages to a temporary *server* for you to view at your leisure. If you do not have internet access, we can come up with alternative

methods, however, when one is doing business on the internet, it is practically a must to have internet access, or at the very least, access to email, and possess adequate emailing skills! (The only exception would be a small, informational site where prospective customers have to call you for further details.)

Please be aware that this initial design process can be slow at first, but once we have a page with the aforementioned components in place, we can use it as a template to create the other necessary pages for your site. This makes the additional page development progress fairly quickly! Also, keep in mind, the more prompt you are in providing us with the necessary content, the faster your site will be developed!

Once a site is ready to be published (made available for public viewing), we then set up the *hosting* package, and *upload* the site's pages and *images* to the *server*. Generally within 72 hours, the site can be accessed by the public, by entering the *URL* into their *browser*.

After a site is published, on-going *maintenance* can be performed at any time by the *webmaster*. This can include adding or removing *images*, changing text, adding *links*, making minor design changes, etc.

In terms of cost, there are generally three costs involved. First, if you wish to have your own *domain name*, there is an annual fee, which varies, depending on the registry (currently \$15 to \$20 for .com .net and .org). For other domain name services, such as *URL forwarding* and *transfer lock*, there are additional annual fees. Keep in mind, in some cases, depending on the *hosting*, you can also opt for a *sub-domain*, in which there is no domain name registration fee!

Second, is the design fee (expressed as an hourly rate). Whenever possible, we provide an up-front rough estimate based on our preliminary evaluation of your needs. (The design fee is also imposed on any future site *maintenance* as well.)

Finally, expect to pay a monthly fee for the *hosting* of your site. Most sites have relatively inexpensive hosting fees, but it depends on the amount of *server* space and *transfer* your site will require.

A Word On Website Promotion

Although we do not provide website marketing services, we can certainly help with ideas to help drive traffic (potential customers) to your site. This can include inserting *meta tags*, search engine submission, "pay-per-click" ads and developing those very important reciprocal *links* with other websites.

Most importantly, don't overlook the basics, such as printing your website address

on all print-related items, like business cards, letterheads, print advertising, etc. Always look for ways to spread the word about your website—right down to the “signature” on all your emails!

You can also help yourself immensely by educating yourself about the ins and outs of website promotion. There are numerous books on the subject, and many resources on the web, by searching for “website marketing” or “website promotion.”

Essentially, it comes down to how much effort you are willing put forth, especially in the early stages, to make your site stand out from the rest!

Thank you for considering The Site Barn! Feel free to contact us with any questions. We provide personal, one-on-one service for all the sites we design and maintain. We look forward to working with you!

GLOSSARY OF BASIC WEBSITE TERMS

BACKGROUND IMAGE: A photo, or some other design in the background (behind the text and any other images) of a web page.

BANDWIDTH: The amount of traffic, or visitors a website can accommodate at one time.

BROWSER: The “window” with which you use to view a web page online. Different browser types and versions can render web pages differently.

BUTTONS: Generally rectangular, circular or tab-style links that take the visitor to other areas of the site. “Rollover” buttons change appearance when the mouse (pointer) is moved over them.

CROSSLINK: Links which interconnect pages within a site, making navigation simpler.

DOMAIN NAME (Also known as a TLD or Top Level Domain): This is essentially “www.yourname.com.” The suffixes, .com, .net, .org, .biz, .ws, etc., are known as “extensions.”

DOMAIN NAME REGISTRY: The company with which you register your name. Domain names can be registered for 1, 2, 5 or 10 year periods.

FLASH: A type of graphics and photo animation for websites. A browser must be able to reproduce it with the use of a “plug-in.” Also, flash can sometimes slow the time it takes for a page to load (be viewed).

FTP (FILE TRANSFER PROTOCOL): The application used to upload pages and images to the server.

GIF: A type of image file used for graphics, drawings, etc. (But generally not photos.)

HOSTING (or WEB HOSTING): This is the server disk space and file transfer needed to publish a website. Hosting “packages” come in a variety of configurations (memory, file transfer, etc.) and with numerous extras, like daily statistics, daily backups, multiple email addresses, and so on.

HTML (Hyper Text Markup Language): This is the basic “language” of the web--the “behind-the-scenes” code which is the basis for the design and functionality of a web page.

IMAGES: A collective term for graphics and photos displayed on a page.

JPEG (or JPG): A type of image file used primarily for photos, or other graphics with photo-like colors involved.

LAYER: A type of HTML code that allows designers to arrange elements in various places on a page. Is essentially a table which can be placed over other tables.

LINK: A clickable segment of text, a button, photo, menu or other area that when clicked, will take the visitor to another page on the same website, or to an entirely different website.

MENU BAR: A strip of categorized buttons or tabs, which when clicked, will take the visitor to a different page of the website.

META TAGS: These are special lines of HTML code which are inserted into what is called the “head” of a page. The two most common meta tags are the keywords (descriptive words about your site which someone may enter into a search engine), and the description (just that—a sentence or two that best describes the site). Meta tags are detected by search engines, but are not seen on the page itself.

PASSWORD-PROTECTED DIRECTORY: An area of a website in which the viewer must enter a username and password in order to view the page.

SECURE SERVER: A system whereby pages are encrypted. Used for transferring

sensitive information, like credit card processing.

SERVER: The “cyber location” where a website is published (uploaded) and can be viewed. Think of this as the “land” upon which your building (website) resides! Is expressed in a certain number of Megabytes. (Only the largest of sites--like an Amazon or eBay for example, would require Gigabytes of server space!)

SUB-DOMAIN: A “section” of the main domain used to create a separate website. The address would be something on the order of:
www.yourname.themaindomain.com, or www.themaindomain.com/yourname

TABLE: A type of HTML code that allows designers to arrange text and images in various places on a page.

TRAFFIC: The number of “viewers” (visitors) to a webpage.

TRANSFER: The downloading of a page and it’s corresponding images from the server to the viewer’s browser. (This is what causes your browser’s cache to fill up and bog down--you should empty it often!) Is expressed in Megabytes or Gigabytes.

TRANSFER LOCK: A safeguard from a domain name registry which prevents someone from transferring your domain name to another registry without your permission.

UPLOAD: The process of electronically transferring pages and images to the server, through the use of an FTP application.

URL (Universal Resource Locator): The address to a website:
(http://www.yourname.com), or a page within a site:
(http://www.yourname.com/yourproducts/gizmos/widget_1.html)

URL FORWARDING: The redirection of one or more domain names to another location (website or page). For example, you can have any number of .com, .net, etc. domain names all “pointing” to one website.

WEBMASTER: The person who designs and maintains a website, and addresses any technical issues associated with the site.

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