



Tips for web design

What do I need to consider when I want to get a web site started?

This question is important to consider. Proper planning can provide a better result and lower expenses by reducing wasted effort.

Ask your self what do you want to do with the website.

- **Product Catalogs** - You may want to put catalogs of merchandise or other items on pages or if you have a lot of items in a searchable database. If you expect enough volume you can justify the resources to setup online stores where customers can browse and select items to later purchase with a credit card, [e-gold](#) [1] or other wealth transfer
- **Documentation** - Do you want to provide online documentation which can reduce traditional publication costs (like printing and mailing catalogs or policy updates).
- **Profiles** - You can offer information about what a company does. Biographies of the service provider or artists.
- **Information Gathering** - You may want to setup polling and opinion gathering through interactive forms.
- **Magazines** - You may want to make an electronic copy of an exiting publication or an original version of periodical information.
- **Special Interests** - You may want to put information about a special interest and become a destination to find out about it.
- **Education** - You could setup training information, coursework, and interactive testing
- **And many other ideas are feasible.**

Ask yourself what are the objectives and goals.

What is the website to accomplish? For example if you know you want the website to reduce your postage and printing costs, how many viewers and how many printed publications do you want it to replace?

Having a set of goals to meet objectives is so important and necessary to reduce the wasted effort of creating something not necessary or required. Wasted effort costs time and labor.

Make the necessary technical arrangements with your [Internet Services Provider](#) [2]

- **Have you asked an Internet Service Provider about registering and supporting a domain name?** Setting up a domain name requires choosing a name that makes marketing sense, the potential customer can remember it, and the name being available. The fees associated usually are for about 1/2 hour labor and the registration fee which in the past has been about \$70.00 for two years. We recommend you make an appointment and learn about the details.
- **Have you asked an Internet Service Provider about [hosting](#) [2] your web site?** To have information available to the world seven days a week twenty-four hours a day,



7x24, requires having computers on all the time and expensive leased communications circuits used all the time. Your website can be economical to operate because it reside on the Internet Service Provider's premise and share the resources. To that end arrangements for recurring service fees should be investigated in advance of your needs.

- **Have you considered out sourcing all our part of the [web page creation \[3\]](#) and publishing to the web pages?** You or a friend can create the pages yourself and publish, or you may want to obtain the services of someone who does it for a profession. Some persons would work on their own car others pay the shop even if they know how to fix it. If your site does not need much complexity doing it yourself will take time but be educational. If needs only minor corrections periodically you may want to have a professional set it up and then you can make the minor changes. You may decide you can better spend your time generating revenue in your specialty and then pay someone to make the website and still be ahead. These are things you will need to decide when budgeting.
- **Have you reviewed the potential costs for registering the domain name, creating the web pages, and hosting the website?** You may want to ask yourself if the costs associated with Internet marketing return more than they cost. If your goals and objectives can reduce expenditures for traditional marketing (save postage and printing, answer 7x24, etc...) then you should proceed. If you are depending on the website to produce new revenue consider whether the costs are acceptable. You can compare the costs of websites with traditional advertising as a guide.

Gather and organize all the information relevant to the website.

- **Gather past publications and electronic copy.** You can save a lot of effort by not reinventing the information that already exists. Also past effort can help suggest future efforts. Find pictures, brochures, newspaper articles, advertisements. Find examples of your competitors. When possible get the electronic version to save the labor costs of having the information rescanned and typed.
- **Break up your information into main topics.** Like writing a book or manual with topics, having the information arranged by topics on the website makes sense. The time you spend organizing into topics will make the website better and reduce wasted effort.
- **Think about how you would organize and navigate the information.** With the information arranged in topics you may have a good idea how you would navigate the information.
 - **Hierarchies** - Many web sites are hierarchical. They may start with a home page which branches out like a tree.
 - **Linear** - Some web sites are in sequence like a book one page follows another.
 - **Linear with Alternatives** - Some of the pages of a Linear site could branch of and jump back in.
 - **Combination of Linear and Hierarchical** - This is a popular way of setting up a website. Its like have the information descend from the home page like a tree but the top branches connect to each other.

Sketch the layout, storyboard, of your website. This activity is very important. *Without a storyboard it is likely unnecessary labor and resources will be consumed to make the website!*

- **Create a rough outline and sketch of what your web site will look like.** A simple approach is that you can draw squares and arrows linking the squares on a piece of paper. Put some notes in the squares. The squares could be the topics. Some squares might be: Introduction, How to Contact Us, Products, Services, Frequently asked Questions, and About Us. Another way is to use index cards. Or you could use a presentation application to show the concepts (like power point).



- Think about what topics will go on what pages
- Think about how you would have the page hyperlink, jump, to each other
- Think about the introduction, first, page and what it needs to provide to the viewer (some readers judge whether to read the rest of the site by the first page).
- Review the goals and objectives of the web site. Go back to the storyboard and have the storyboard reflect the goals and objectives of the web site.

Make arrangements to create the web pages and publish them to a website

You or a friend can create the pages yourself and publish, or you may want to obtain the services of someone who does it for a profession. Some persons would work on their own car others pay the shop even if they know how to fix it. If your site does not need much complexity doing it yourself will take time but be educational. If needs only minor corrections periodically you may want to have a professional set it up and then you can make the minor changes. If you can use Microsoft Word and other Office applications you can use Microsoft FrontPage. It is usually a good idea to get the latest version and accept that in less than two years you'll need to have budgeted to upgrade versions.

You may decide you can better spend your time generating revenue in your specialty and then pay someone to make the website and still be ahead. We can work with you to do all or part of your web site.

Don't forget to make arrangements to promote the web site

Just because you build a better mouse trap does not mean that people will buy it. They have to know that you built the better mouse trap. Helping people locate the website, promoting, takes an labor and resources. A lot of marketing books now have sections devoted to the Internet. Consider the following:

- **Traditional Advertising** - Put the address of the website, URL, on all your publications, business cards, advertising, bill boards, radio, letter head, send letters and faxes to customers letting them know about it, and so on.
- **Search Engines** - Get listed on search engines. Getting a good listing take effort and time. We have web pages with suggestions and offer a service to do this.
- **Internet Advertising** - You may want to consider getting special interest web sites to advertise and hyperlink your site.
Caution: Be careful about advertising with unsolicited email, Spam, because it is unwanted and will void almost all contracts with Internet Service providers:

Source URL: https://cocoavillagepublishing.com/services/website_design/tips/index.html#comment-0

Links

[1] <https://www.e-gold.com/newacct/newaccount.asp?cid=109133>

[2] http://www.cocoavillagepublishing.com/exhibits/exhibit-information_servers.html



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[3] <http://www.cocoavillagepublishing.com/exhibits/exhibit-authorwebpages.html>