

Planning A Web Site



Objectives

- Analyze your audience
 - Create a site specification
 - Identify site technology needs
 - Build a web team
 - Register a domain
 - Plan for all contingencies
 - Your plan should grow with your site
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Analyze Your Audience

Produce an audience definition:

- What is it that users want when they come to your site?
 - How can you attract them and entice them to return for repeat visits?
 - What type of computer and connection speed does your typical visitor have?
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Create a Site Specification

Answer the following questions:

- Why are you building the Web site?
 - Can you write a two or three-paragraph mission statement that briefly states the site's goals?
 - What do you envision as the goal of the site?
 - What do you hope to gain from creating and maintaining a Web site?
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Identify Site Technology Needs

Three Basic Types of web sites:

- **Basic** — Simple, Static Content
 - Publishing — e.g. newspapers
 - Single Topic — How to do something
 - **Dynamic** — Usually Database Driven
 - Publishing — newspapers, etc.
 - Blogs — Diary of activities
 - Portal — Aggregate content from other sites
 - **Transactional** — where you keep track of visitors
 - E-commerce — catalog, online shopping
 - Product support
 - Intranet/Extranet — usually for employees
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Build a Web Team

Number of People Needed:

- **Basic** — 1 Person performs all duties
 - Writing, designing, etc.
 - Tech support usually provided by a third party
 - **Dynamic** — Usually 2-3 People
 - Writer/Editor/Content Creator
 - Graphic Designer
 - Software Developer
 - **Transactional** — 3 or more people
 - Writer/Editor/Content Creators
 - Graphic Designer
 - Software Developer
 - In-house Tech Support or third party software solution
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Find an address

- Registering a domain provides a unique address to place your content
 - Domain Names should be short, informative and as unique as possible
 - Short Names are ideal because they cut down on typing errors and are easier to remember
 - Domains cost between \$5 and \$35 each per year for most common names
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Plan for All Contingencies

- Make sure your host site has a fast enough server and enough internet bandwidth to handle all the traffic you hope to generate and then some.
 - The Slashdot/CNN Effect — Your site is mentioned on CNN and immediately millions type in the address only to find it can't be reached because they're all trying to get there at the same time.
 - Register misspelled domain name variations so that if someone mistypes the name, they'll still get to your site.
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Your plan should grow with your site

- A quiet site serves less than 50,000 pages per month
 - An intermediate site serves between 50,000 and a million pages per month
 - A busy site serves more than a million pages per month
 - As your site grows, figure out ways to turn your increased traffic into revenue
 - Bring on additional team members as needed
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Suggestions

- Write a site specification document and present it to management.
 - Get management to sign off on the whole plan, not just the idea of having a web site; If there are problems or cost overruns, you can refer back to what management approved.
 - Don't be afraid to bring in outside technical help, but remember they have a different agenda than you or your organization.
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Summary

- Analyze your audience and try to create an audience profile.
 - Focus your site on the user's needs, and continue to meet those needs by adapting the site based on user feedback.
 - An effective site is more commonly the result of a team effort. Leverage different skill sets and experience to build a Web team.
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Summary

- Murphy's Law says, "Anything that can go wrong will go wrong," and no where is that more true than on a web site. Plan for anything and everything that can go wrong.
 - As your traffic grows, figure out ways for your site to earn its keep and bring on additional people as warranted and needed.
 - Communicate Well.
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What you should know

- Your site should meet the needs of your target audience.
 - A good site requires a thoughtful plan.
 - Build a team of people inside your company
 - Where possible, choose short domain names and paths to the content of your site.
 - Communicate Well.
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