

TEN STEPS TO YOUR OWN WEBSITE

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A domain name is your website's address or "URL". For instance, www.blueorchard.ca is a domain name. Domain names can have different extensions, including .com for "commercial", .ca for "Canada", .org for "organization", etc.

When you purchase your domain name, you will likely be provided with a username and password. You will need these later; keep them in a safe place!

Summary of Passwords:

- Website host server username and password for FTPing.
- Email username and password for accessing your email.
- Domain name username and password for redirecting your domain name.

Metatags are special words added to your homepage "behind the scenes". Your users will not see them but search engines will use them to help rank your site.

Keywords are a kind of metatag. These are the words users will type into a search engine to find your website.

To help you develop a list of keywords, try:
www.wordtracker.com.

Uploading files to your website's host server is called "FTP"ing (File Transfer Protocol). To access your host server, you will need the username and password supplied by your service provider.

To make FTPing files easy, download a free application called "FTP Explorer": www.ftpx.com

Step 1: Analyze why you want a website

- Research your competitors.
- Define your goals:
 - First-line versus second-line point of contact.
 - Marketing vehicle versus sales vehicle.

Step 2: Choose a domain name

- Choose the best name(s) for you.
- Find a name that is not taken through a "whois" search.
- Purchase your domain name online from a Domain Name Registrant.

Step 3: Find a website hosting company

- Identify your options.
- Decide what you need.
- Evaluate their customer support – talk to them.
- Ask about their server reliability and package scalability.
- Choose the package with the best value.

Step 4: Create your web pages

- Articulate your company's image.
- Determine your site structure.
- Collect images for your pages.
- Compose search engine metatags.
 - Choose your keywords.
 - Determine your keyword phrases.
 - Craft your title tag.
 - Craft your description tag.
- Write text for your pages.
- Write necessary legal text, including Copyright, Privacy, and Terms & Conditions statements.
- Lay out the content for each page.
- Proofread your content.

Step 5: Upload your web pages to your web space

Why have a website?

- Establish trust.
- Free your employees' time.
- Shorten the sales cycle.
- Help potential customers find you.
- Because your competitors do.

Websites are not about technology, they are about communication and facilitation. Know what you want to say and do on your website and the rest will follow.

Choose a domain name that is...

- Easy to guess.
- Easy to remember.
- Easy to type – short and sweet.
- Includes keywords.
- Preferably .com rather than .ca.

Understand the difference between a Company Branding Exercise and a Website Design. The branding exercise comes first and the website design is based upon it.

Website copy-writing tips:

- Limit word count per page to 300 words, maximum.
- Use an "inverted pyramid" structure.
- Highlight key phrases.
- Say as much as possible in as few words as possible.
- Use active language.
- Guide your visitor – tell them where to go or what to do next.

Website technology terminology to understand:

- **HTML** – Hypertext Mark-up Language – the basic language used to code website pages.
- **Flash** – A newer language used to code website pages that are more “dynamic”.
- **CSS** – Cascading Style Sheets – a single file used to control formatting on all the pages of your website.
- **SSI** – Server-Side Includes – special code files that can be reused over and over inside HTML files to make the coding of your website more efficient.

Confused by all the “techie” terms? Use the “What Is” website to find definitions:

<http://whatis.techtarget.com/>

Summary of Expenses:

- Domain name registration and renewal – yearly
- Website hosting – monthly or yearly
- Website design – one-time fee
- Search engine registration – optional
- Website maintenance – usually an hourly fee

Step 6: Complete some usability testing

- Test different browsers and versions.
- Test different monitor resolutions.
- Test different colour palettes.
- Test different user capabilities.
- Proofread the content *on* your web pages.

Step 7: Point your domain name(s) to your website

- This act will send your website “live” – launched into cyberspace.

Step 8: Help search engines find you

- Understand how search engines rank your site.
- Register your site with the search engines.
 - Submit to the major search engines using automation.
 - Submit to the major search indexes manually.
 - Submit to the general “2nd-tier” indexes manually.
- Get your site link on other sites.

Step 9: Monitor your site’s traffic

- Spikes in traffic.
- Drops in traffic.
- Click-through reports.

Step 10: Maintain your website

- Keep your site up-to-date.
- Make continuous improvements.

Remember: This is *your* website. Hiring a website designer does not remove you from the process of creating your site. The more actively you participate, the more your site will reflect you. Be prepared to invest as much time in this project as your website designer. Good luck!

The most popular browsers are...

- Microsoft Internet Explorer
- Mozilla’s Firefox

Search engines rank according to...

- Keyword density.
- Body content.
- Metatags.
- Page Titles.
- Domain name.
- Links from other sites to yours.
- How often your site is updated.

Popular Search Engines include:

- Google
- Yahoo
- MSN
- Lycos
- AltaVista

Major Search Indexes include:

- Yahoo
- The Open Directory
- About.com
- Inktomi

For invaluable help with search engine promotion, go to:
www.selfpromotion.com



Questions?
We’re here to help.
We’d be delighted to help you make your website vision a reality.
Contact Blue Orchard today!

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