Creating a Web Presence

What's a web presence?

- Content
- Hosting
- URL

Why is it important?

If you want to work on the web, people expect to find you on the web.

It's useful to have a place to show the web what you or your company do.

It's fun to express yourself on the web.

Content

You should have your content in mind before you pick a hosting provider and domain name. Some of the basic types of websites are:

- Personal (With a resume, portfolio, etc)
- Informational (About a company, about a topic, etc)
- E-commerce (With a shopping cart)
- Community (With social networking or forum features)

Hosting

Ask yourself: How much control do you want? How much setup work do you want to do? How much coding do you want to do?

From most to least work, from most to least coding, from most to least control, the options are:

- Host your content on a 3rd party system
- Have a server that you can install & use content platforms on
- Have a server where you code all the content pages yourself

3rd party systems

Blogs

- Posterous (e.g. Paul Kinlan)
- Tumbler (e.g. Brittany Bohnet)
- LiveJournal (e.g. LizBee)
- Blogger (e.g. Headius, jChyip, Other Fancy Stuff)
- Wordpress.com (e.g. SteveO, JodieM) - No ads, no JS.

Other

- Google Sites (e.g. Chris Dibona) - No JS.
- PBWorks (e.g. BarCamp Sydney)
- Flavors (e.g. Michael Koukoullis)

Web Hosting Providers

Differentiating Factors

- Reliability / Uptime (99.9%)
- Disk space (Consider # of images)
- Bandwidth
- Tech Support (24/7)
- OS (Unix vs. Windows)
- Language/DB support (LAMP? Ruby?)
- Installable modules (CMS, forums, e-commercE)
- Control Panel
- SSL
- Email
- Price

Hosting Types

- Free hosting
- Shared hosting
- Virtual private server (VPS)
- Dedicated hosting
- Cloud hosting
- Home server

Hosting Providers

Most of these offer shared hosting, and dedicated hosting, and some offer VPS:

- <u>GoDaddy</u>: "100% uptime, 24 hour support", "other websites can get you banned"
- <u>WebFaction</u>: "Well documented,good control panel"
- <u>MediaTemple</u>: "Not cheap but good UI, fast, easy, good support", "unreliable uptime"
- <u>DreamHost</u>: "Good", "Awful", "Too-geeky admin"
- <u>BlueHost</u>: "Good knowledge base"
- <u>A2Hosting</u>: "Well setup, good value & quick"
- <u>Rails Playground</u>: "Cheap for rails devs"

Virtual Private Servers

Some companies **only** offer VPS solutions, targeted at developers that want a high degree of control.

- Linode
- Slicehost
- GigeVPS

Cloud Hosting Providers

Cloud hosting providers vary in how they work and how much control they give you over the cloud setup:

- RackSpace
- Joyent
- Amazon EC2
- Windows Azure
- App Engine

Installable Software

Once you have a server, you can often install software on it that provides out-of-the-box functionality:

- WordPress (e.g. Delic8 Genius, Pure Caffeine, Kate Carruthers)
- Drupal (e.g. Jaime Kristene)
- Other blogs, CMSes, Ticketing systems, Forums, E-commerce, Polls, Wikis

Hand Coding

You can also create your webpage from scratch, using static HTML/CSS/JS files or server-side scripting.

Examples: <u>Linda Gehard</u>, <u>Pamela Fox</u>

URL

Are you happy with a subdomain or folder on someone else's domain?

http://pamelafox.posterous.com

http://flavors.me/pamelafox

or... do you want your own domain name?

http://www.pamelafox.com

Domains

Anatomy of domain names

subdomain.domain.topleveldomain

Examples:

www.google.com

www.google.es

mail.google.com

www.googlelabs.com

Top level domains (TLD)

`subdomain`.`domain`.*topleveldomain*

The most common TLDs are:

- `.com`: "Commercial entities"
- `.net`: "Networking companies"
- `.org`: "Non-profits"
- `.edu`: US Education sites
- `.gov`: US Government sites

As `.com`, `.net`, and `.org` use isn't restricted, they are used more flexibly than as originally intended.

Country-code TLDs

Each country has its own TLD (ccTLD), and they can decide who can register for domains with that TLD. Some also specify a set of "second-level-domain" for the TLDs.

- `.us`
- `.fr`
- `.tv`
- `.uk (.co.uk)`
- etc..

Australian TLDs

The Australian TLD is ".au" and there are several second-level-domains (2LDs) under it. Some are <u>restricted</u> in use.

- `.com.au, .net.au`: Must have an ABN.
- `.org.au, .asn.au`: Must be a non-profit
- `.id.au`: Intended for personal names/nicknames
- `.edu.au`: For educational institutions
- `.gov.au`: For government bodies

What TLD should you get?

Most users expect to type in a `.com` domain, so you should always try to reserve that name (though it's often taken).

If you're worried about competitors, you should purchase related TLDs (`.info, .net, .biz`).

If your company targets a particular geographic market, it makes sense to get the ccTLD.

Domain names

`subdomain`.*domain*.`topleveldomain`

The domain name must follow these rules:

- No spaces or underscores
- Dashes and numbers are OK

The domain name is not case-sensitive - google.com = GOOGLE.com.

Good domain names

A good domain name follows these guidelines:

- Represents your name or business name
- Short and memorable
- Easy to say aloud
- Easy to spell without mistakes
- Uses ASCII characters
- Doesn't infringe other's copyright

But good domain names are often taken. You can try using hyphens (experts-exchange.com) or making a TLD form part of the name (del.icio.us) to make it more likely the name will be available.

Generating domain names

If you're having trouble thinking up a name, you can try NameTumbler, BustAName, Domainr, or just writing a bunch of keywords down and mashing them together in different forms.

Subdomain

subdomain.domain.topleveldomain

Once you own a domain name, you can make subdomains for different aspects of your product/company.

For example:

- www.twitter.com
- api.twitter.com
- search.twitter.com

Domain Registrars

You must use a "domain registrar" to purchase a domain. Consider these factors when picking one:

- Good customer service
- Easy-to-use admin interface
- Pricing (no hidden fees)
- Allows transfer of names to other registrar
- ICANN Accredited

Domain Registrars

The most popular registrar is GoDaddy, which offers good pricing and services but also tries to up-sell alot.

Other good registrars are:

- Domain.com: environmentally friendly
- NameCheap
- PairNic: "more expensive but more trustworthy"
- Name.com
- Hover: "clean and painless"
- DNSimple
- MyDomain
- HostGator
- NearlyFreeSpeech: pay as you go hosting

Australian Domain Registrars

You may want to use an Australia-based registrar if registering a .au domain or if you just like local service. Popular AU registrars:

- CrazyDomains: "cheap, easy to manage"
- NetRegistry - "responsive, competitive pricing"
- PlanetDomain: "reasonably priced, good support"
- CheapDomains: "easy to use UI and cheap"

Some local developers are resellers:

- James Purser
- Graham Weldon

Check Whirlpool forums for reviews.

Registration Tips

When you register, register the domain name for multiple years, and think about getting whois privacy to keep your contact details confidential.