

Trap or Trade-off

WHAT SMALL BUSINESSES
SHOULD KNOW BEFORE
GETTING A WEBSITE



The No Script Show



Web design is changing

- The website builders market was worth \$3.06 billion in 2025. Projected to reach \$6.68 billion by 2030.
- Hand-coded websites have declined from 76% in 2011 to 33% in 2022. It is expected to be under 9% by 2030.
- 58% of web designers have been in business fewer than 6 years, with 40% in their first 3 years. A much higher "newness" rate than most professions.
- Web design is the #1 freelance skill (offered by 36%). 72% of workers in 2025 have considered a freelance side hustle.



Web design is changing

- WordPress dominates the CMS market with a 60% share. Approximately 60% of WordPress sites use a commercial page builder. Elementor is 30% of that.
- Wix dominates the dedicated website builder market with a 45% share
- Wix reports that DIY builders account for 73% of active sites, while 27% are managed by “professionals”. 80% of active Wix sites are owned by small businesses with fewer than 10 employees.



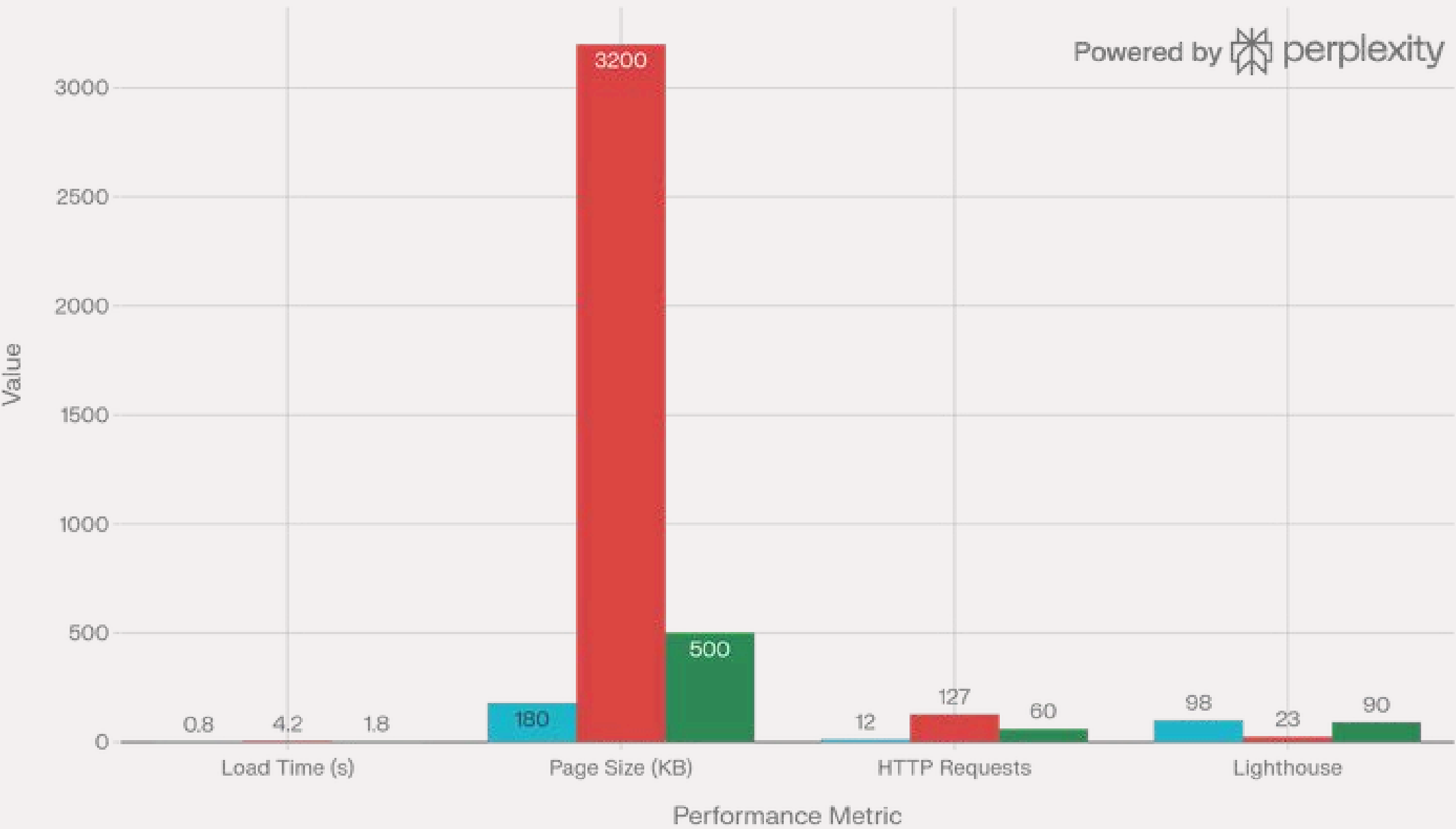
Hand-coding wins on quality

Hand-Coded Sites Outperform Page Builders Across Metrics

Astro achieves 5x faster loads and 4x higher quality scores

Hand-Coded (Astro) Page Builder (Elementor) AI Builder

Powered by  perplexity



Understanding the web

- The web was invented (initially for scientists) to make information-sharing around the world easier. It used simple document tags so everyone could use it
- Seeing commercial opportunities the “brochure” website appeared. This advanced the web, but brought significant problems:
 - 1 Mimicking print layouts involved complex code hacks, which made learning CSS difficult and led to the commercial WYSIWYG builder.
 - 2 WYSIWYGs always fail eventually because, unlike print, the designer has no control over what the end user sees. It depends on the users device and preferences.
 - 3 It created a back to front understanding. The web is not a visual vehicle into which content is added, but a flexible vehicle for content that can be visually enhanced.



HTML First

- HTML is a website's structural foundations.
- It defines content and allows it to be shared and understood by people with disabilities as well as machines for search engines.
- It's simple, yet over 90% of sites do not use it correctly.



Meet Paul Brown

- Paul (a plumber) is one of the 25% of small businesses who did not have a website.
- He contacted professional developers, but they were too expensive. He tried DIY builders, but got confused.
- A friend reminded him that a web page is only a document of content. Start there.
- Paul looked at his competition. Most sites were an overwhelm of animations, stock images and sales brags.



Paul's process - part one

- Paul decided his authenticity was his main selling point.
- He looked up the basics of writing web copy, got a few photos of him working and created a Google document.
- He next found free resources on how to turn this into HTML, which he did with the VSCodium editor.
- With a few lines of added CSS this was presentable, not well branded.



Paul's process - part two

- Paul created a logo using a free Canva account.
- For now a one page site is enough to establish his presence. He knows he can get free hosting and uploads his HTML to Github where he can edit his site and collaborate should he need a professional.
- Knowing his HTML is semantic he gets an LLM to add CSS. Knowing AI is not intelligent he asks a CSS coder to check it. He goes live!




Paul's site

Website URL

Github repository

Google doc



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PAUL BROWN

I'm Paul, a fully qualified plumber since 2001. I can help with:

- **Boilers:** installations, repairs and servicing.

Paul learned

- The web is a form of communication. Not a funfare of carousels or a game of hide and seek.
- HTML is the easy part. Finding empathy and making the message clear and understandable is the hard part.
- CSS styling can be easy if the HTML is right and the design is simple, but is best overseen by an expert.
- He did not need a minimum of \$5k to get started.



Branding, SEO and UX Design

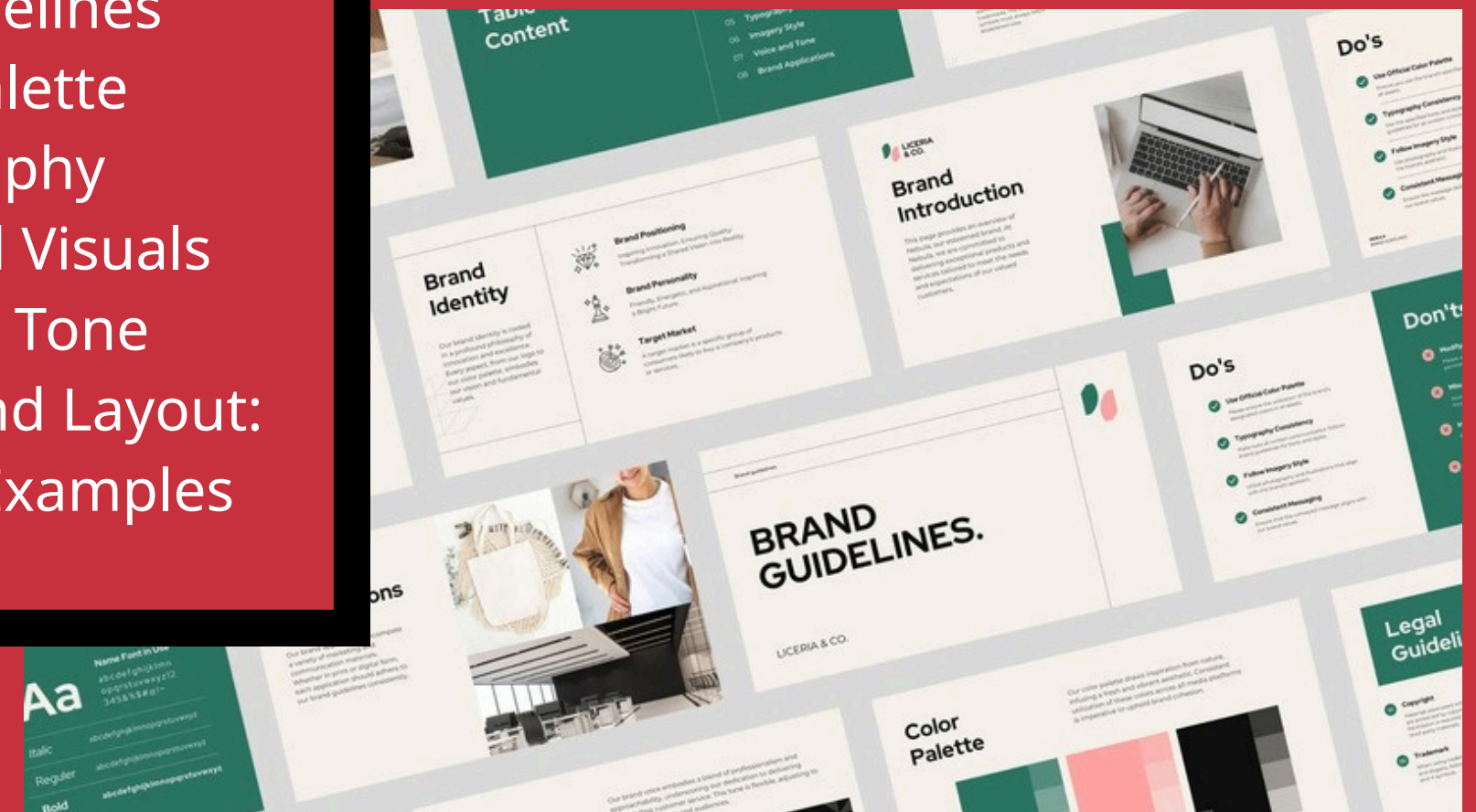
- Branding (The Soul): The emotional, visual, and verbal identity that makes you memorable and fosters trust.
- SEO (The Bridge): The process of optimizing your site so search engines and users can find you easily.
- UX Design (The Experience): The structure and functionality that makes interacting with your brand easy, enjoyable, and efficient.



Brand Guidelines



Brand Story & Core Values
Logo Guidelines
Colour Palette
Typography
Imagery and Visuals
Voice and Tone
Formatting and Layout:
Application Examples



Trap or Trade-off?

Trap

- Vendor Lock-In
- The "90% Done" Problem
- Performance & SEO Limitations
- Hidden Long-Term Costs

Trade-off

- Speed and Time-to-Market
- MVP (Minimum Viable Product)
- Budget & Resource Constraints
- Standardized Use Cases (templates)

