

## ONLINE TIPS

# Web Terminology 101: What You Need to Know [with Illustrations]

Philip Westfall, July 10, 2018

The first step in becoming a website expert is understanding the fundamental terminology related to the Web.

Why is this important?

Well, once you grasp these important definitions, good things start to happen:

You can have two-way conversations with Web designers and developers which can lead to cost savings as well as better decision-making.

Think of it like having a strong understanding of how engines work before heading to see a mechanic.

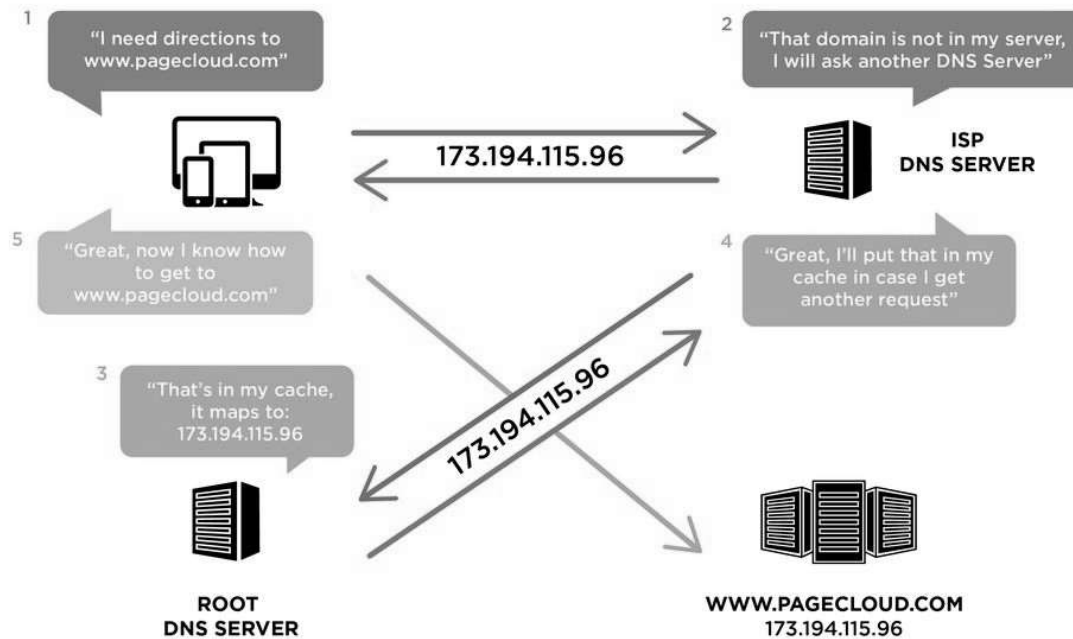
Also, if you decide to build your own website you will have a better sense of what to look for in a website builder, and where to invest your time and money.

Here are simple definitions to the most important web terminology related to:

- Viewing a website
- Building a website
- Types of websites
- Website tracking and analytics

## Web Terminology - Definitions

### Viewing a Website



## Domain name

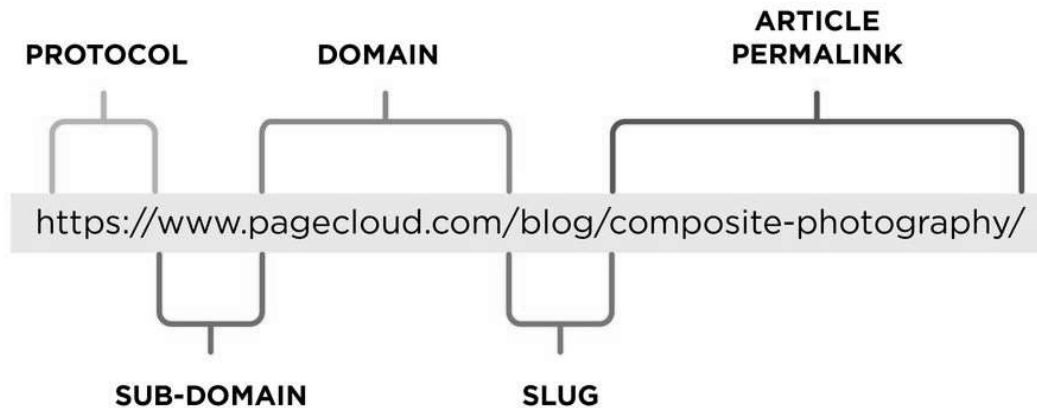
A domain name is a unique name (e.g. `google.com`) used to identify the location of a website on a web server. When you access a website through a web browser like Google Chrome, the domain name is translated to an Internet Protocol (IP) address (e.g. `172.217.12.206`) which represents the server on which the website is hosted. This translation is dynamically performed by a domain name server (DNS).

## DNS

Domain Name Servers are the Internet's equivalent of a phone book or directory. They keep an updated list of domain names and translate them back into IP addresses. This is necessary because, although domain names are easy for humans to remember, computers (which include all devices that can connect to the internet) use IP addresses to access websites.

## URL

A Uniform Resource Locator (URL) is the file address of a resource on the Internet. A URL can represent a web page, an image, a video, a style sheet, and much more. A URL typically consists of several components, including but not limited to:



### Web Server

Web Servers are used to store, process and deliver web pages to clients (e.g. web browsers like Google Chrome). Although you could purchase a server to run your website, most businesses use cloud storage services such as Amazon Web Services (AWS) to host websites due to the cost savings and added security.

### Web Browser

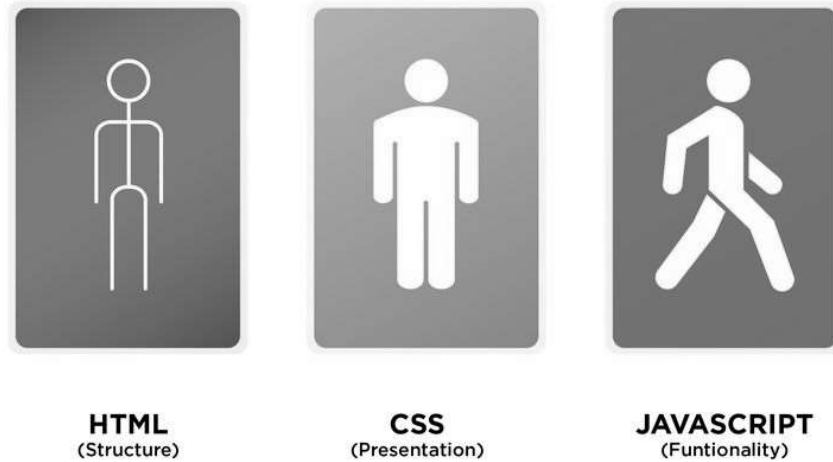
A web browser, often referred to as a “browser” is a software application used for accessing information on the Web. Some of the most popular web browsers include Chrome, Firefox, Safari, Internet Explorer, Edge, and Opera. As with all software applications, web browsers have different features and functionality, appealing to different user types.

### IP Address

An Internet Protocol address is a unique numerical label assigned to each device connected to the Internet, including computers, phones, tablets, servers, cars, and more. A quick Google search for “what is my IP address” will bring up the IP address associated with your internet connection.

### HTML, CSS, JavaScript

Websites consist of an array of content (like images and text) as well as interactive elements like forms, games, and animations. To render the desired results, your web browser relies on programming languages, primarily HTML, CSS and Javascript, to accomplish what is required.



**HTML**, which stands for HyperText Markup Language, is used to identify the different elements on a page such as paragraphs, titles, images, and links.

**CSS**, also known as Cascading Style Sheet, is used to give your website its style. Fonts, colors, sizes, spacing, borders, backgrounds, and shadows are just a few examples of what can be adjusted using CSS.

**Javascript** is a client side programming language which means the source code is processed by the client's web browser rather than on the Web server. This allows the language to run actions on a page after a page has been fully loaded. An example would be sending an error message if there are missing form fields without having to submit the request to the Web Server.

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## HTTP/HTTPS

HyperText Transfer Protocol Secure (HTTPS) is the secure version of HTTP, the protocol over which data is sent between your browser and the website you're connected to. To ensure a safe connection for your website, you will need to get an HTTPS certificate.

## Building a website

### WYSIWYG

WYSIWYG is an acronym for "what you see is what you get". A WYSIWYG website builder is a program that allows you to visually edit your site in an environment that is almost identical to your live website. Tools

like PageCloud help users avoid having to hand-code their websites or rely on rigid content management systems (CMS) to edit their sites.

### **Drag and Drop**

Drag and drop is the action of moving computer files from one application or location to another using a click and drag motion. Drag and drop is typically used in the website builder space to highlight the ability to position elements on a page using your mouse.

### **CMS**

Content management systems help to manage the creation and modification of digital content. Unlike WYSIWYG builders, CMS's use backend interfaces to push changes to live websites. CMS's like WordPress are typically used for blogs and large-scale websites.

### **Head & Body**

A web page consists of two main sections: the <head> and the <body>. Elements contained within the <head> are not visible to visitors and include elements such as meta tags, links, and tracking pixels. The <body> contains all the visible elements of a HTML document including text, images, hyperlinks, tables, and lists.

### **Client / Server-Side**

Typically, client or server-side is a label given to a type of coding language. Website code can run in the browser (client-side) or on the server. There are advantages and limitations to both types of code. Javascript and flash are examples of client-side code while Python and PHP are examples of server-side code.

### **Hosting**

In order to get a website online, you need to host (or save) your website files on a Web server connected to the internet. Hosting service providers are a type of business that enables individuals to save and access their website quickly without having to purchase and connect their own web server. Most website builders include hosting within their subscriptions.

### **SEO**

Search engine optimization (SEO) is the process of improving the rankings of a web page (or website) in a search engine such as Google. Proper SEO allows a website to maximize its visibility in a search engine result page (SERP), resulting in "free" or "organic" traffic. Check out other SEO related terms.

## **Types of Websites**

### **Blog**

A blog is an information-based website that revolves around a specific topic. Blogs typically consist of several entries, known as "posts", that discuss an array of subtopics. These posts are often text-based and displayed in reverse chronological order so that the most recent posts appear at the top of the blog's home page. Modern websites use blogs for several reasons, including educating customers and driving organic visitors to the site from search engines like Google.

## RSS Feed

Really Simple Syndication, is a type of web feed which gives users the ability to get immediate updates from websites in a standardized, computer-readable format. Similar to signing up for a website newsletter, users can subscribe to a website's RSS feed and use a News Aggregator to manage the incoming information.

## Landing Pages

In digital marketing, a landing page is a standalone web page used to optimize the number of visitors who take action after clicking an ad or a call-to-action on a website. Landing pages are typically stripped of all navigation to maximize the number of users who "convert" (buy, fill out a form, etc). Conversions can be optimized by running split tests, also known as A/B tests. Free tools like Google Optimize can help for running these types of experiments.

## E-commerce

E-commerce is the activity of buying or selling products or services online. E-commerce websites, also known as online stores, can vary quite a bit in terms of functionality and cost. Simple E-commerce websites can be created for almost nothing, while large E-commerce sites like Walmart can cost millions of dollars to build and maintain.

## Responsive/Adaptive

Responsive and adaptive web design are two web development approaches that allow websites to properly display on multiple screen sizes, such as desktops and mobile devices. Responsive designs dynamically change the appearance of a website based on the screen size. Typically, website building platforms that use the responsive design approach do not allow as much flexibility when designing without code. Adaptive design platforms create two or more versions of a website and then deliver the correct version based on the device requesting the page. For example, it delivers a desktop version and a mobile version. This distinction allows users to freely customize the look of their website without having to write custom code.

*Related: 10 Types of Websites You Can Build in 2019*

# Website tracking and analytics

## Cookies

A website cookie is a small text file created by a website or application that is stored within a visitor's computer. A cookie can be session-based or persistent, where it is saved onto the visitor's hard drive. Cookies provide a way for websites or applications to recognize visitors and keep track of their preferences (e.g. saving items within a shopping cart and returning later to make a purchase).

## Pixels & Tags

A tracking pixel, or pixel tag, is a graphic with dimensions of 1×1 (a single pixel) that is loaded when a user visits a website or opens an email. Pixels are typically used by marketing teams to track certain user-based activities. Popular tools like Facebook, Google Analytics, and MailChimp all use pixel tracking to provide campaign analytics.

Written by