HomePage

**Specializing in high quality WordPress websites.**

Sales begins with Search. More customers find you on Google than almost any other way.

Your website is your presentation to the world.

Can your customers find you online?

Do they like what they see?

Our Services

**Custom Design**

[Learn More](https://signalworksdesign.com/index.php/custom-website-design-development/)

**Mobile Optimization**

[Learn More](https://signalworksdesign.com/index.php/mobile-optimization/)

**Prebuilt Templates**

[Learn More](https://signalworksdesign.com/index.php/prebuilt-options/)

**Renovation**

[Learn More](https://signalworksdesign.com/index.php/rennovation-of-existing-websites/)

Our Philosophy

We understand that relationships are the core of a business’s success and we put this above all else. And not just our relationship with you but your relationship with your clients. A website conveys more than just your services and contact information. It creates a personal connection with your clientell. And that’s what we are about: the personal connection. There is not a business on the planet that doesn’t, in one way or another, work with people. Our philosophy is to put people in touch via technology. Not the other way around.

Why Work With Us?

 We understand  business in relationships

 We value our relationship with our clients

 We go above and beyond to serve you

 We put people first and technology second

 We believe in value

 We excel at our craft.

[Get A Quote](https://signalworksdesign.com/index.php/get-a-quote/)

##### Custom Design

#### From blank screen to fully functioning and optimized website. We can build what you want your customers to see. This will be a process where we work to bring you exactly what you want your site to look like so you can leverage your web presence for years to come.

#### [LEARN MORE](https://signalworksdesign.com/index.php/custom-website-design-development/)

##### Mobile Optimization

#### While only a large desktop screen can accurately display the full beauty of a site’s design and functionality, the fact is, over 90% of all of a site’s traffic will be from people on mobile devices. If your site is not optimized for mobile viewing you are missing out big time. In fact, you may even be doing your web presence some serious harm.

#### Get in touch to find out what we can do to make your website mobile friendly and ready for your audience to view on the go.

#### [LEARN MORE](https://signalworksdesign.com/index.php/mobile-optimization/)

##### Prebuilt Templates

#### On a budget and in the market for something not quite so customized? We can help you with our pre-built templates. As our most affordable option, you will save yourself time and money by skipping 80% of the design process. Focus instead on the last 20% where we personalize the template with your content, logo and color scheme.

#### You will have a website up and running for a very reasonable price in often just a few weeks.

#### [LEARN MORE](https://signalworksdesign.com/index.php/prebuilt-template-options/)

##### Renovation

#### Tired of your website looking like something from 1998? Your visitors probably are too. If your site looks out of date you may actually be losing business without knowing it. The quality of your presentation is, after all, one of the main deciding factors as to how your business will be received. If visitors get the impression from your site that you aren’t current with the times, you can say goodbye to their business.

#### Work with us to give your site a makeover and a whole new impact on your clientele. You will be glad you did.

#### [LEARN MORE](https://signalworksdesign.com/index.php/rennovation-of-existing-websites/)

Our Philosophy

We understand that relationships are the core of a business’s success and we put this above all else. And not just our relationship with you but your relationship with your clients. A website conveys more than just your services and contact information. It creates a personal connection with your clientell. And that’s what we are about: the personal connection. There is not a business on the planet that doesn’t, in one way or another, work with people. Our philosophy is to put people in touch via technology. Not the other way around.

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Our Process

[l](https://signalworksdesign.com/index.php/getting-started/)

[**Discover**](https://signalworksdesign.com/index.php/getting-started/)

[](https://signalworksdesign.com/index.php/getting-started/)

[**Design**](https://signalworksdesign.com/index.php/getting-started/)

[](https://signalworksdesign.com/index.php/getting-started/)

[**Refine**](https://signalworksdesign.com/index.php/getting-started/)

[](https://signalworksdesign.com/index.php/getting-started/)

[**Launch**](https://signalworksdesign.com/index.php/getting-started/)

Learn More On Our Getting Started Page

# Not Sure What To Do?

# How About Getting In Touch?

## We’d be happy to answer any questions, discuss our

## services or offer a [free quote](https://signalworksdesign.com/index.php/get-a-quote/).

Custom Design And Development

### **“Consistency is found in that work whose whole and detail are suitable to the occasion.**

### **It arises from circumstance, custom, and nature.“**

### **-Vitruvius**

##### UX DESIGN

#### UX stands for “user experience” and is one of the single most important factors determining the success of your website in terms of lead conversion, impressions and generally leveraging your web presence. Good UX will make your site easy to navigate and easy to understand.  Bad UX  will leave your visitors confused, frustrated and very unlikely to visit your site ever again.

#### So, as you can see, user experience is everything. It is the equivalent of how well organized your retail space is online. Have you ever walked into a shop and gotten the feeling that the owners don’t really care about or know what they’re doing? Or how about when you walk into a different shop and things just “feel right”? The light is good, things are clear, easy to understand and there’s just kind of a “flow” to things that makes you want to stick around. User experience.

#### To maximize the user experience we focus on the following three areas of optimization:

#### ****solid user interface design:**** ensure your users have access to all relevant navigation elements, content is easy to read and colors and design are optimized.

#### ****responsive design:**** ensure each page of your site fits entirely on the screen of the device your users are viewing from. No one like having to shift their screen around trying to find the menu, the sidebar or other relevant links out of view on some devices and visible on others.

#### ****mobile optimization:**** with some mobile screens having only 5% the viewable area as a desktop, space matters. Mobile optimization will allow the most vital elements of your web presence to reach your audience without distraction.

##### WEBSITE DESIGN

#### Good website design gives your users the feeling of being in the right place on your site. Instead of jumping around looking for the information they came to find, they can access what they want with ease based on a streamlined, user-centric design. This is what is called in the industry “information architecture” or, more simply, “IA”.  Good IA is similar to good User Experience/UX only it applies to the structure of the site as a whole. It allows users to follow a natural path of progressive disclosure based on their unique interests and needs (not everyone lands on your site in the same spot for the same reason, after all) leading them to the answers and information they want no matter where they start out on your site.

#### With our optimized design practices we can bring you the best in the industry to ensure your users get the full experience and maximum delivery of value from visiting your site.

#### Our custom designs ensure:

#### ****strategic placement of content:**** make sure your users are seeing what they came to your site to see. No one likes having to hunt down your contact information or other relevant content. No one likes not knowing where they are on the menu or what page they need to go to.

#### ****optimized page structure:**** provide a natural flow between different pages to ensure maximum conversions and ease of navigation throughout your site

#### ****SEO friendly best practices:**** ensure the search engines are reading your site the way you want them to to increase your site’s ranking and general user experience. While you may have the best content and images, the best offers and guarantees if your site isn’t constructed correctly, your audience will be lucky to find you.

##### Why Should You Have A Custom Website?

While a template can save time, a custom designed website is something unique to you and you alone. It is the embodiment of your own vision and something that is yours. It can generally take more upfront investment in terms of both capital and time but there are very few things more satisfying than knowing your thoughts and ideas have been put into full effect in your new, optimized web presence.

A custom design may not be for everyone but, should you choose to go this route, it’s very unlikely you will regret it. Having a custom site makes a difference. And it’s something your customers will notice.

Get in touch with us today to learn more.

**Fill Out The Form Below To Get Your Quote**

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#### Please include as much information as you can. This will ensure we can give you the most accurate and timely estimate. Feel free to add any further questions or information in the fields made available.

**Signalworks Design bases their business on relationships of sincerity and trust.**

**We will therefore never pressure you into services you don't really need nor sell your information to 3rd parties.**

**We view such practices as, well, really kind of dumb.**

**Thanks again for stopping by.**

Mobile Optimization

**“If your plans don’t include mobile, your plans aren’t finished.”**

**-Wendy Clark**

[Jump To Quote Form](https://signalworksdesign.com/index.php/mobile-optimization/##moquoteform)

## What Is Mobile Optimization?

Mobile optimization (also called “Responsive Design”)  is the process of ensuring your content displays on a  mobile device in a way that is easy to navigate. It fits the content inside the screen of the device you are on instead of acting like a window on a site that is too big for the screen. A site that is not optimized for mobile will require you to use sliders for left and right, up and down and  the zoom in/out feature to view and interact with content. This tends to reduce the quality of user experience by several orders of magnitude and is basically extremely bad for business. Technically, mobile optimization is geared  toward making your website’s display responsive to any device, including tablets and the plethora of online devices with varying screen sizes, on the market today. But, given the fact that over 90% of a websites traffic will typically be on a smartphone i. e. mobile device (and that figure is only increasing) the term “mobile optimization” has become more or less synonymous with “responsive design”. The two terms are, however, interchangeable.

Mobile Optimization Vs. Not

## Why Do You Need Mobile Optimization?

As you can see from the image above there is a significant difference between the visual impact made by a mobile optimized site and one that is not. Not only is a non mobile optimized site way more difficult to navigate it also says to your website visitors, effectively: “Who cares what you think of my website?” It is essentially unprofessional and just about impossible to take a website seriously if it is not optimized for mobile.

Depending on the specific device, some mobile screens may have only 1/20 (5%) the capacity of a desktop screen. This means that not only will some elements not be able to display on a single screen but may have to be done away with altogether. The combination of a device’s limited screen size and your viewers’ limited patience means mobile optimization requires a whole new approach to your site’s layout. This can make the process somewhat difficult because it requires a reduction of your presentation to only the most essential elements. If you compare viewing a website on a desktop monitor to viewing a movie theater screen, viewing the same website on a mobile screen is like seeing it through a slit under the door. For some layouts, mobile optimization may require the entire page to be redesigned. For others, some simple tweaking here and there can rein it in for mobile viewers. Whatever the case may be, mobile optimization is not something anyone serious about their online presence can afford to ignore.

 Aside from making a cleaner, more professional impression on your visitors, mobile optimization can make a huge difference in the user experience and in conversion metrics. Sometimes all the difference. Especially when you consider that skipping mobile optimization in your website is literally ignoring 90%+ of the online market. And who in their right mind would want to do a thing like that?

## How Can I Make My Website Mobile Friendly?

There are a variety of ways to make your website more mobile friendly. It is generally not necessary to rebuild your site from scratch (unless your site is really old) but a thorough look-see of the current state is strongly suggested. While there are a huge number of technologies and courses out there aimed at making mobile optimization easy, the fastest way is to simply get a free quote from us and see if you are interested in working together.  Mobile optimization is not rocket science but it takes a unique approach to the design process. It is essentially a “bottom-up” approach that selects only the most relevant and essential elements from each page on your site and redesigns it to focus on the UX of the mobile viewer. Mobile optimization may not be a complete “back to the drawing board” type of deal but, depending on the state of your website, it can be pretty darn close. In areas like this, it’s generally best to hire a pro and sae yourself the headache even if it means speding a little money. We charge the same hourly rate for mobile optimization as we do for any of our other services.

## Get A Quote

We would be happy to offer a free quote for a complete mobile optimization overhaul of your current website if you would be kind enough to fill out the form below.

## Get A Free Mobile Optimization Quote

Form text









**Does your site have any e commerce functionality?**Yes.No. We don't sell anything on our website.

**Are there any new features or functionality you would like to add while you're at it?**Yes.No. I'm happy with my site as is.

[Jump To Quote Form](https://signalworksdesign.com/index.php/prebuilt-templates-and-designs/#ptquoteform)

Why Go With A Prebuilt Template?

While a 100% customized website may be appealing it can often mean a huge investment of time and capital to see through to completion. It is not uncommon for large scale projects to pass figures of $10 to $20,000, oftentimes more, just in getting started.  For medium to large size businesses with that kind of budget, this is no problem. A website is, after all, one of the most vital components of a business’s infrastructure so you should invest in it accordingly. For the smaller business or startup, however, someone who just wants a well-built, full-featured website without having to break the bank, starting with a template can often be the way to go. Instead of starting from square one and researching, discussing and finally deciding on every design element and feature (and paying for it all  along the way) starting with a template allows you to skip a good 80% of the design process and focus instead on the last 20% where your site really comes together.

**Custom Design Vs. Prebuilt Template**

Prebuilt Template

 Starts with a blank slate

 Designed from the ground up

 Generally longer timeline

 More resource intensive

Custom Design

 Starts with a prebuilt template

 Bypasses approx. 80% of design process

 Requires fewer resources

 Significan cost savings

Is it just a template errrr….?

Yes, and much more. While we will be working with a prebuilt template, we won’t simply be offloading it onto you and parting ways. That would be, to quote the Grey Poupon commercial, “uncivilized”. By opting with a prebuilt template, you are simply selecting a framework for us to work together in.

ou will still have considerable options as far as the final look and functionality of your site is concerned.

Once you have selected the template you want to use we will work with you to:

* customize the color scheme and various design features within the main layout
* upload and integrate your content
* streamline connectivity between the different elements and pages on the site
* plug in your contact information including email, phone number and relevant social links
* add any relevant functionality previously agreed upon in the initial consultation
* install a select choice of plugins to optimize feature such as SEO
* get your final confirmation that the site is ready to go and hand over the keys

As a client you will also be eligible for our other services including consultation, maintenance, renovation and so on at the hourly rate of $60 at a minimum of 3 hours billed. If you change your mind and decide you would like more customization, we can do that too. Do keep in mind that opting for a prebuilt template entails a kind of hybrid design process. That is, something in between a 100% custom job and a ready to go “out of the box” website with almost no customizability.

How Does This Work?

Via our initial consultation, we will gather the relevant information to help us make a design decision based on the needs of the client’s individual situation. We will work together with you to formulate a general direction for the project including the design impression (colors, layout etc.), functionality and other relevant factors of your site. Based on this information, we will than make a selection of 3 to 5 templates for you to choose from (anything more than that tends to get confusing). From there we will follow the exact same process we do with our custom design clients, only slightly abbreviated.

Our hourly pricing model will apply but you can safely expect the process to take much less time (roughly 50 ~ 80% less) than a custom design contract to complete.

Get A Quote

We would be happy to offer a free quote for a complete mobile optimization overhaul of your current website if you would be kind enough to fill out the form below.

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Get A Free Prebuilt Template Quote

Insert master contact form

Website Renovation

[Jump To Quote Form](https://signalworksdesign.com/index.php/rennovation-of-existing-websites/#wrquoteform)

What Is Website Renovation?

Website renovation is taking your existing website and updating it to current standards of website design and functionality. This can include such elements as [mobile optimization](https://signalworksdesign.com/index.php/mobile-optimization/),  design overhaul and optimization of your website for faster load times and more current SEO friendly standards. Both the principles and underlying technology of web design are evolving all the time. Further search engines are constantly updating and improving their algorithms. There are a lot of variables at play concerning a site’s ranking and popularity.  So it is generally a very good idea to have your website looked at by a professional at least once a year. While it may require an upfront investment, the chances are good that it will more than pay for itself via the increased traffic and resulting conversions of visitors to customers on your site.

Why Would I Need To Have My Website Renovated?

As mentioned above, the pace of technological evolution concerning web design is extremely rapid. This means your brand new website can quickly become out of date; often in the space of a year or two. Just like fashion and music, today’s hottest trends soon become yesterday’s memories and/or something you wouldn’t want your friends and family to know about.  When it comes to your website, falling behind the times can affect your business significantly.

How Does Website Renovation Work?

While each case is unique, we do our best to preserve the vision of the original design. Meaning, instead of starting from the very beginning, we will work with the current design, layout and content to optimize it to current standards and best practices. The process begins with an initial consultation (often via our free quote) where we will decide what exactly we can do for your site and the resources and timeline this will entail. From there, we will work together to give your site a whole new look while bringing it up to the standards and best practices of today.

Also, it should be noted that having your website renovated is a perfect opportunity for you, the business owner, to reflect on some of the following points and take action:

* **who your target audience is;** it is extremely unsusual for any business to have their target audience dialed in from the beginning. It’s generally a mutual process of discovery, trial and error and sometimes happenstance that we come to know our target clientel. However, once you *do* have this information, renovating your website can be a great opportunity to optimize your presentation to your highest converting demographic. And, yes, your website’s design can have a huge impact who buys what you’re selling and who doesn’t.
* **expanding your reach:**the data you’ve gathered since your original launch may indicate that your services may be able to help an audience broader than you first expected. Renovation is a great chance to go over new ideas and implement them to reach out to even more potential clients.
* **taking advantage of market changes since your original launch:**chances are the market you entered into has changed since you first got started. Now is the time to bring your site up to speed with the times and re-tune your approach.
* **changing your presentation altogether:**maybe you want to revamp your approach altogether? Maybe it’s time to rebrand? Renovation of your website can help you with that.
* **adding new functionality to your site:** have you noticed some new, way cool features and functionality out there on your competitor’s website? Do you feel you could get higher conversions, better reviews and more LVC (lifetime value of customer) if you had some of that, too? Talk to us.

Get A Quote

We would be happy to offer a free quote for a complete mobile optimization overhaul of your current website if you would be kind enough to fill out the form below.

Contact Us

# Thank you for visiting us.

#### Please fill out the information below and we will reply with an estimate as soon as we can (usually within 48 hours).

#### Be advised we may be in touch with you to clarify any points concerning your submission before an estimate can be given.

FAQ

#### What services do you offer?

Our main services consist of the construction of new WordPress websites and the revision and updating of existing ones. We can, however, provide assistance in the areas of logo design and content management should you be in need of help.

#### What is your pricing like?

**What Is Your Pricing Like?**

Because each web project is unique we do not offer anything in the way of a package deal. Instead, we charge a base rate of $60 USD per hour. This is about average in the world of professional web design and is a figure we have chosen carefully to keep ourselves both profitable and accessible to the majority of the market.

#### How Can I Pay?

**How Can I Pay?**

At the moment we work exclusively with PayPal. And that’s because it’s the safest, most user friendly and most accomodating online payment system around.

#### Can I Make Changes Later?

**Can I Make Changes Later?**

During the initial build, we will agree on the exact parameters, functionality and features you want before we start building. Once we’ve made an agreement we will be locked into delivering that specific project.

However, if you want to implement changes down the road, (after the project is finished) yes, you absolutely can.

You can also hire us to either make the changes for you or to teach you how to make them yourself at the normal hourly rate with a minimum of 3 hours billed.

#### How Long Will It Take?

**How Long Will It Take?**

Exact figures are difficult to quote but, generally speaking most projects can be completed in 6 to 8 weeks. Simpler projects can, of course, be completed in less time while more involved projects may, on rare occasions,  approach a timeline of 2 to 3 months. A lot depends on how active the client is in engaging with the workflow and how complete both the preparation of their content to be uploaded and the general vision they have in mind for their website is.

Generally speaking, the more prepared and engaged a client is, the faster the turnaround time.

#### How Does This Work?

After initial consultation, we will enter into a four phase process consisting of 1) Discovery, 2) Design, 3) Refine and 4) Launch which is essentially a pipeline that takes in your ideas and vision in one end and outputs a fully functional website at the other.

We place a high value on the collaborative nature of the process and view it as us offering the technological experitise and implementation while you offer the general vision and direction you want things to take.

You can  [click here](https://signalworksdesign.com/index.php/getting-started/) to visit our “[Getting Started](https://signalworksdesign.com/index.php/getting-started/)” page. There you will find all the relevant links and information presented more in depth.

#### What If I Have Trouble Later?

**What If I Have Trouble Later?**

If at some point down the road after our contract has finished you find yourself in a “situation”, as often happens in the world of tech, you can always reach out to us for assistance. We would maintain our hourly charge of $60 USD at a minimum of 3 hours billed.

If that disagrees with you, Google is your friend. The WordPress community has a huge amount of documentation and free information to fix just about any problem you can shake a stick at.

#### How Can I Get Started?

**How Can I Get Started?**

Your best bet is to [click here](https://signalworksdesign.com/index.php/getting-started/) to visit our “[Getting Started](https://signalworksdesign.com/index.php/getting-started/)” page. There you will find all the relevant links and information.

In brief, however, the process begins with an initial consultation where we determine if we are a good fit for each other i. e. if we can guarantee you the type of service you are looking for. From there we would move through the four phases of 1) Discovery, 2) Design, 3) Refine and 4) Launch.

The free flow of clear and open communication is paramount to our business model so always feel free to enquire with further questions should you have any.

#### Why Do You Use WordPress?

**Why Do You Use WordPress?**

We very much prefer to use WordPress as our go to because it is a time tested and proven platform with a huge community using it. It is also highly customizeable and capable of hosting just about any application you can imagine.

Currently, of the top 1 million websites in the world, over 50% use WordPress. How do ya like them apples?

In all seriousness though we love WordPress and think that if you don’t already you will when you get started.

#### Will I Own My website?

**Will I Own My Website?**

Yes, while specifics the specifics of each situation may vary, we encourage our clients to maintain as much ownership of their sites as possible.

Generally our clientele fall into one of two types:

Type 1: you are busy and simply want to have a live site for your customers and target audience. You’re not interested in how all this tech works and wouldn’t have the time to get familiar with it even if you were. You would rather get in touch with us directly when you need something done and pay the hourly fee so you can stay focused on other things.

For this type of client we can handle everything from hosting to content management.

Type 2: you are interested in learning how to manage and modify your site. You are willing to work with us and we are willing to teach you how to do it all. You will get in touch with us to work together if their is something you don’t know how to do or if you get stuck.

For this type of client we offer as much independence as they are comfortable with. We are also more than happy to make further adjustments in the future as they become more familiar with the technology.

Didn’t See Your Question?

Well, golly… How’s about getting in touch with us?

We’d be happy to hear from you.

Ask Us Anything.

Insert contact form with fields for name, email and message content

Getting Started

**Getting Started**

## What we need from you:

#### Your Logo

#### To be used throughout your site as well as for the icon that displays in the browser tab (Favicon). Don’t have a logo yet? We can help. Just let us know.

#### Your Content

**All images, text, video and other media you would like to have made available to your online audience. “Content is king” and the best way to reach out.**

#### Hosting Credentials

**To allow us to upload your new site or make revisions to an old one, we will need to be able to access your site from the backend to streamline the process.**

#### WordPress Credentials

**We prefer the WordPress platform for building sites. If you’re already in the fold we’ll need administrative access to your account. If not, we can help.**

#### Your Contact Info

**Your best email along with a link to your preferred video chat software (we love Zoom) and a phone number if you like a bit of the Old School approach.**

#### Your Down Payment

**Yes, as a sign of good faith and a way to keep the lights on, we ask for a 50% payment of initial cost projections before beginning a project.**

What’s next?

**Once the above six points have been met we will begin working through the 4 phases of the creation process listed below.**

**Phase 1: Discover**

In this phase we will discuss and evaluate the current state of your web presence and look for ways to leverage and improve it via the modification of your current site or, if need be, the creation of an entirely new one. We will focus on a dialogue in which your needs, goals and direction as a business are put into proper context. We will “discover”, as the name of the phase implies, both 1) what exactly we can do to help you and 2) what you have in mind in that regard.

From there we will offer an initial assessment that will include:

* areas to be improved upon such as the general user experience and design features to enhance the impression given to your visiting clientel
* suggested services including what we intend to build for you and recommendations to help leverage your web presence
* a preliminary website design in the form of a “wireframe” or “mockup” (graphic document) to be used as a working model as we move forward through the remaining three phases

After the initial assessment has been approved we will form a contractual agreement outlining the specific features, functionality and layout of your website.

**Phase 2: Design**

This phase is where the real creative work begins. Here we will take the information gained in phase 1 and put it into form. The preliminary design generated in phase 1 will be built into an actual functioning website. We will essentially be taking the results of the Discovery phase and putting them into digital form to give you an initial taste of what is to come through our collaboration. This is where you will be able to “test drive” your new website.

By the end of phase 2 you should expect:

* a working prototype of your website with full online functionality including the implementation of any inbound contact channels and other media
* the chance to test it to gain insights into any changes you would like to see implemented
* a better understanding of where your project is going and the form your new web presence is taking

Once feedback on the initial website prototype has been gathered, we will move forward with refining and finetuning it into a launch ready production model via Phase 3.

**Phase 3: Refine**

Phase 3 offers the chance for all insights gained via the initial design process to be implemented. Where Phase 2, the design process, can be considered a “rough draft” of your new website Phase 3 is preparation for commercial publication.

This is the point where we will work with you to put the finishing touches on your new and improved web presence in order to prepare it for deployment into the market. The key word here is “refine” meaning we will work together to tune in on the finer points of how best to streamline the platform and wow your clientele.

Key points addressed in Phase 3 will include:

* ascertainment of key revisions desired
* implementations of these revisions
* confirmation of mutual fulfillment of the project’s contract

By the end of Phase 3 your website will be finished. The only remaining thing to be done will be the fulfillment of any remaining contractual obligations including but not limited to payment of the remaing cost and the hand off of the website to the client.

**Phase 4: Launch**

Phase 4 is where we “hand you the keys”, so to speak, to your new site and “our work here is done”. We do, of course offer maintanence services and the opportunity for future business together should you be interested.

The launch phase is the moment where the new website becomes YOUR site and where you can begin to make the most of your new and improved web presence to leverage your business and the impact you have on your audience.

By the end of the launch phase clients should expect:

* a fully functioning and optimized website with all content submitted and design revisions implemented
* an excellent relationship with us here at Signal Works Design
* a chance to make the most of their new web presence in the market

Phase 4 means the happy completion of the project but we will always be here in the future should you have any questions or need to call on us for our services in the future.

## "What you do today can improve all you tomorrows."

**– Ralph Marston**

## Still thinking it over?

[FAQ](https://signalworksdesign.com/index.php/faq/)

## Ready To Get Started?

**Insert master contact form**

**Get A Quote**

## Price is what you pay. Value is what you get.

[Jump To Quote Request Form](https://signalworksdesign.com/index.php/get-a-quote/#quoteform1)

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**Factors To Consider**

##### Size

**Just like in the real world of physical stuff, the larger your site is the more it’s going to cost you. This is simply because there is more of it to integrate and optimize and it will take more time to get it all done to a professional standard.**

**So, while the process is essentially the same, there can be a noticeable price difference between a 3 page website and a 10 page website. And so there should be. Frankly speaking, if a website seems too much of a good deal, it probably is. The saying that “you get what you pay for” applies to websites just as much as to anything else.**

**It’s important that you have in mind the number of pages your website will have before getting started.**

##### Functionality

**Do you want a simple single product landing page? A blog for your business with maybe a contact page? Or do you want a full fledged e-commerce store with password protection and potentially thousands of registered clients entrusting you with their order histories and payment information?**

**Functionality is a huge factor in the construction of a website and something you want to make sure is  done professionally. While it may cost more in the beginning, rest assured it is A LOT cheaper and faster to get going than it used to be.**

**Second to UX and the layout of the site, functionality will make or break your site. Always make sure you know exactly what kind of functionality you want to have (or talk it over with us as thoroughly as you can) before starting the initial build.**

##### Design

**This can be a rather large “X factor” in the process given that it largely depends on what the client has (or doesn’t have) in mind at the beginning of the process. While the technology of today is lightyears ahead of what it was even a few years ago, starting the design from scratch is generally going to involve more time and therefore more money than working with something the client already has in mind.**

**It’s always easier to streamline something underway than it is to start a build from square one. So, it’s really in everyone’s best interest to invest the time and energy in discussing the dynamics of the project and agreeing on everything before getting started. The clearer and more concise we can be in the beginning the smoother  and more streamlined everything will go.**

**Spend some time thinking about things like:**

**what you want your site to look like**

**who your target audience is**

**what kind of impression you want to make**

**how you want them to reach you**

**And so on and so forth. All of these things have an impact on design, even if only subtly.**

Maintenance

**Ah, yes. Maintenance. This is another factor that will vary significantly depending on**

* **the scale and nature of the project**
* **the tech savvy of the client and**
* **the budget they are willing to put forward for professional maintenance of their site.**

**The majority of clients in the market for a professional WordPress website will likely require some level of maintenance for their site; even if only hosting services.**

**This is another factor to keep in mind before starting.**

##### SEO

**SEO. Ye Olde Search Engine Optimization can be what determines your site appearing in the Top 10 on Google or the bottom 10,000. It is a nuanced art and one that generally costs a pretty penny if whoever you are going with knows what they are doing. It also takes time for its influence to be known. But, that said, good SEO can bring returns to your venture that are more than worth the original investment.**

**While the principles of SEO may be simple enough it is a detailed and generally time consuming process to implement. And a lot of it starts in discussing with us what your business is about, the “pain points” for your customers and what you want your site to do. That is, the problems you want your site to solve. Because 99% of people get on the internet to answer a question or solve a problem. Make sure you know who and what you are targeting before getting started.**

##### Scope

**This area crosses over some of the other factors but has been given its own category because the scope of the project (not necessarily the size) can have a cumulative effect on the final bill.**

**Scope essentially refers to the size and functionality of the site as a whole and the resources required to make it all work without a hitch. This can be a very confusing part of a project to navigate as there are a number of variables to contend with and no single project is the same.**

**It is extremely important you know the extent of the resources you have on hand in terms of both financial and human capital. Aside from determining your budget it will also determine what kind of project you can have done and the type of functionality etc. you can have installed. There are few things more frustrating (and expensive) than starting a project the scope of which you can’t fully accomodate.**

The Big Takeaway

**If you’ve made it this far there’s a good chance you are serious about getting started. To help streamline the process, we advise the following.**

* **know what you want: What is your site going to be used for? What are you going to be selling or sharing? Who is your audience? How many pages do you want it to have? How will they be labelled? What kind of functionality do you want it to have? How do you want it to be maintained? Who is going to be maintaining it?**
* **have some design ideas in mind: Do you have a brand? A logo? What kind of colors do you want to include? What kind of impression do you want to make? What’s your style and how do you want to inject it into your online presence?**
* **prepare as much before hand as possible: Any content in the form of text, images, videos and graphics should be made ready as soon as possible. The more organized you are at the start the faster and smoother the turnaround to launch time will be.**
* **be creative and be involved: Nothing is off the table. This is YOUR site. We don’t believe in package deals or one-offs. We want you to be involved in the process and to have your site come together the way you want it to be. Talk to us. Let us know what you want. Discuss the details. Ask questions, get answers and start moving forward. We’ll be with you every step of the way.**

**Fill Out The Form Below To Get Your Quote**

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Blog text

# What’s The Best Way To Build A Website? Hard code, CMS or the latest builder?

by [Trevor M](https://signalworksdesign.com/index.php/author/tre27/) | Dec 11, 2018 | [Bloggis Techis](https://signalworksdesign.com/index.php/category/bloggis-techis/)



Ah, yes. How to build a website? Builder? CMS? Hardcode it? In the early days of web development hardcoding a website was the only way to build one. It was therefore far more of an elite skill. It was the eqivalent of being able to build a liveable home from materials found in the environment around you. It was a hardcore undertaking that required an understanding of systems and software language that only a select few really understood. It was the realm of a few chosen nerds, to put it another way, and remained essentially a mystery to most people. Times have certainly changed. Today with services like Wix or Squarespace you can have a fully functional website up and running within minutes. Some even say that platforms like this spell the end of web design as a profession altogether. As if the whole industry is bound to go the way of the Blackberry or the horseshoe maker simply because a new alternative exists. Is this really true?

### **What’s Changed?**

There is no shortage of industries and technologies that have been wiped out over night by new inventions. But, does web development as a whole really face the same fate? Methinks not. And that is largely because the essential structure of web development, that is the process of encoding and organizing files to be stored on a server that runs your website is essentially the same as it’s always been. Languages have evolved and processors have become more powerful but hardcoding will always be the root structure from which your website runs. Services such as Wix and Squarespace simply make things easier by giving you a WYSIWYG (What You See Is What You Get) visual interface. They essentially add a user friendly layer over the tried and true framework of HTML, CSS and JavaScript. But are they really better?Well, I would say yes and no. Yes, in the sense that they save time. And no in the sense that they can add bloat to your load times as well as lack in customizability or, in some cases, actual ownership of your site.

### **So… page builders?**

So the question of whether it’s better to hardcode a website or use a builder to make it depends on what you want. Simply relying on a paid 3rd party “WYSIWYG” service as a means to build a site may be good if you want little more than a landing page. And also if you don’t have the time or budget for anything better. And that’s because a lot of these types of builders focus largely on the cosmetics of a website and allow you little or now access to the backend. This can make adding certain types of functionality or optimization almost impossible. Such builders are know to be particularly difficult for full scale SEO. They also rarely let you edit the code directly.

There are also the issues of many of these builders being based on a subscription service and the related content ownership issues this brings. Basically, if you are on a budget and in a hurry and not in the market for a very comprehensive website page builders may be the way to go.

### **So… how about coding from scratch?**

On the other hand, the other extreme of hardcoding everything from the ground up is immensely time consuming. It will often bring you the same basic visual results as a builder while generally taking far, far more resources to do it. In this day and age, building from scratch is really relagated to the realm of the hobbyist or the large firm with the budget and need for a completely customized, in-house system. Even professional software developers will rarely recommend a complete build from scratch as there are generally templates, frameworks and libraries available for just about any project that can be thought of.

Keep in mind, I am not speaking against having the knowledge to build from scratch. I am talking about leveraging resources to create a quality build in as reasonable a timeframe as possible. As with any field, the more knowledge you have the more valuable you are. Web development is no different. It is simply a matter of what knowledge and to what degree it is required to be used by a given project that makes the difference. Chances are you will rarely need all of your knowledge for a given project but you will soon find out what you don’t know.

Any business owner would understand this approach. And, as web developers, we are also business owners. Or, at the very least, we deal with business owners as our customers. And it is imporant to keep in mind that, if someone is relying on you to build a website they probably don’t have the skills or interest to do it themselves. Which means they probably don’t care about the process you use as long as the final product does what they requested and looks good doing it. So if hardcoding is a time consuming, resource intensive approach and using a builder can be hit or miss, what’s the best approach?

### **My Friend The CMS (Content Management System)**

Personally, I believe using a CMS (Content Management System) is the best approach. And that is because it cuts out a huge amount of foundation building and provides you with an optimized “empty canvas” for you to start coding or building your website right away. This goes along with the principle of maximizing time to launch and leveraging resources. As impressive as it may be to those curious enough to appreciate it, there really is no legitimate need for most projects to start from zero. It’s the equivalent of constructing a building from scratch and then starting your business. Yes, there are cases where this may be necessary but, far more often, a remodel of an existing structure is a better way to go. This is essentially what CMS platforms provide.

Further, for the typical CMS platform, there is usually a huge amount of documentaiton as well as a user community willing to share their knowledge and insights. CMSs are a time saver and a great way to get a project off the ground often weeks if not months ahead of time. They are also extremely popular  with the internet in general. A huge number of small to medium businesses use CMSs for their websites althought their ability to leverage them maximally may vary. This means you will have a huge pool of clientel to choose from many of whom will need your services if you have possession of the knowledge necessary.

There is also a plethora of hybrid, CMS oriented “Page Builder” software out there to help you leverage your resources and complete builds even faster. Some of these are extremely limited and basic while others offer a huge amount of customizability. With all of them, however, having a basic knowledge of coding and how websites work on the backend is extremely helpful. For all the cosmetic ease a page builder \*whether something like Wix or a builder that runs on a CMS( brings you, things can still go wrong and things can still not display the way you want them to. You may want to add more functionality to your site or you may simply want to tweak things in a way the builder won’t, by default, allow.

### **And Now The Answer**

So, to answer the question, what’s the best way to build a website?

My personal opinion is this: unless your client has extremely deep pockets the best way to go is to use a CMS. My personal favorite is WordPress. And it would seem, based on the fact that of the 1,000,000 most popular websites in the world over 50% are run on WordPress, that many agree with me on this. While some may believe that WordPress developers aren’t “real web developers” the fact is that, with a decent knowledge of PHP, nothing could be further from the truth. Yes, installing basic themes and plugins on the standard WordPress installation can be learned in an hour or so, probably less. But the truth is the platform is far more flexible and customizable than most realize. Add to this its unique [Plugin](https://wordpress.org/plugins/) development environment and market and there is literally nothing a software developer does that can’t be done for WordPress.

What WordPress really does, though, is offer a universal, free medium for different projects to come together and iterate on. And, further, WordPress is HUGE. At present, in late 2018, fully [30% of all websites in the world are](https://venturebeat.com/2018/03/05/wordpress-now-powers-30-of-websites/)built using it.What this means is that it is a platform that has reached critical mass in terms of use and popularity; so it is likely that it will continue in this direction. Skill with WordPress, real skill, will then likely be an extremely valuable thing for a very, very long time. And this is largely why I have chosen to focus on this CMS and building my knowledge in PHP as a means of increasing my value and marketability in the world of software.

In concluding my thoughts on how best to make a website I would say that the deeper your knowledge of coding the better. While it is tempting to rely on packaged comodities as we do with so many things in our lives such as our cars, computers and smartphones, a deeper knowledge of how these things actually work is extremely empowering. It can lead to innovation and the ability to solve problems. And innovation and problem solving are extremely important skills in life.

So, while WordPress may be my go to platform for building websites, I make it a point to understand how the platform actually works. This gives me a deep, principle based understanding of things that allows me to leverage my knowledge and appreciate what can be done with it.

**In closing, here is a picture of the bravest lego man I’ve ever seen.**

**A real knight in shining armor showing true valor in the face of certain death.**



Why I Didn’t Go To A Code Camp

by [Trevor M](https://signalworksdesign.com/index.php/author/tre27/) | Dec 4, 2018 | [Bloggis Techis](https://signalworksdesign.com/index.php/category/bloggis-techis/)



Ah, yes. The Code Camp. From everyday hack to uber-nerd in 3 to 6 months. There is a plethora of options available today and for very good reason. The tech industry is in short supply of quality people and the demand is only growing. It can be a challenging, lucrative and fun career for the right person. It can also be location independent meaning you can work from anywhere in the world. In my current position as an expat living in Japan I seriously considered attending a full time, online bootcamp. Yes, I thought to myself, I’ll go to a code camp, whip through it, learning “this’n here codin’ stuff” and be off to a super-sweet job in no time. Trust me, I know how dumb that sounds. But that is the very effect elicited via clever marketing tactics, no?

I even got as far as researching loan options from a local bank to be able to afford the tuition upfront. I was going to do it, I tell you. I was going to go all in and get s#$t DONE. Amazingly, at the exact moment I was making a final decision on which loan to go with, my friend/mentor-of-sorts/kindred spirit called me.

I told him what I was up to and he said, after only slightly concealed laughter, essentially, “don’t do it”.

“It won’t guarantee you a job”, he continued “and you’re better off learning it on your own by actually doing stuff in the real world.”

Naturally I had some resistance to the blunt nature of a statement like that. But then I had to take into account his background in both tech and entrepreneurship. Largely because it was far greater than my own. Friends like that are a blessing. People who know more than you and have done more than you are never to be taken for granted. You can save yourself years of struggle and tens of thousands of dollars if not more by simply putting your pride aside and listening. So I did. And I’m glad I did.

I don’t mean to say that code camps are a waste of time or money or ineffective or anything like that. On the contrary, for the person in the right life situation they can be a catapult to a whole new skillset and the lifestyle and income that come with it. But that’s just it: the life situation. Code camps are not for everybody. And if your life situation doesn’t put you in the particular demographic that will actually benefit from attending a coding bootcamp you will likely be sorry you ever even heard of them. Code camps, in my opinion, are for people in that rare situation where both the ideas of attending 4 years of university and or studying on the side for a year or two while working are unrealistic. They are for people with A) an extremely clear goal in and B) a lifestyle that would allow them to essentially drop off the face of the earth for 3 to 6 months to focus solely on learning to code. They are also expensive, time consuming and a huge commitment in general. The risk of burnout is extremely real.  And so is the potential to simply end up in debt with no where to go once the thing is over. Some people actually cry during their time at code camps. They CRY, I tell you. Like, seriously, they cry.

The idea of it is exciting. It feels like really taking action on something and instigating change in a big way. And well, it is. But you have to be really honest with yourself about your action plan. Consider things like:

* what kind of sacrifices will I have to make in the interim?
* how long can I commit myself to it?
* what will be the immediate steps I take on graduating to seek employment?
* what am I really signing up for?
* what am I going to learn?
* will the code camp help me find a job?

And (HUGE)

* do I really want to pursue a career in software development? (Believe it or not, some people, after going to a code camp or even after getting hired somewhere, find out that they can’t stand the work.)

I can speak from experience as an entrepreneur that you need to be very organized and smart both about how you learn new skills and the resources you use to do it. Throwing money around (especially if you don’t actually own it) wasting time on fruitless/non-vital endeavors and generally being dumb have never been, nor will they ever be, good business practices. If I were a single, 25 year old guy living in an apartment and working at a coffee shop 3 days a week I would most definitely go to a coding bootcamp. For I would be in the perfect demographic to do it. But, I’m not. Instead I am currently a 36 year old father of 3 with both on and offline business commitments. It would be a major inconvenience for just about everyone in my life to drop shop and sign up for a camp at this point in my life. Aside from the guarantee of putting me in debt and potentially risking the stability of both my business and marriage, it could also very likely leave me fat, bald and crazy to boot. No, sir. I don’t like it.

Another way to look at the decision process is in terms of opportunity cost. Opportunity cost, according to Ye Olde Google, is defined as:

1. the loss of other alternatives when one alternative is chosen

2. (economics) the benefit that could have been gained from an alternative use of the same resource

It happens all the time. Sleep in and catch up on some Zs? Say goodbye to getting anything done that morning. Or, conversely, get up early and work hard on something important? Say goodbye to catching up on those Zs. You see the point. One of the biggest examples of opportunity cost in modern life is probably that of going to university for 4 years where people spend enormous amounts of money they generally almost never have in order to learn how to do something they won’t start being paid to do until they graduate. And, even then, *maybe*. For a select few career paths, law and the medical profession being among them, the opportunity cost of attending a 4 year university is more than made up for. For many other paths, however, it may be decades before you even break even.

Ask yourself this, would *you* be willing to invest 4 years and +- $80,000 (not including living expenses) to learn a new skill at this point in your life? For some, the answer may be yes for others it will be no. It all depends on where you are in your life and what your unique sitation is. Not to say that going to University is inherently a bad idea but simply that it’s not realistic for everybody. Coding bootcamps are exactly the same.

While some degree of opportunity cost, is unavoidable in life (we can only be in one place at one time, after all) we can be much smarter about how we invest our time and energy, to say nothing of our money, in ourselves and our future. And I would say one of the best tenets toward ensuring smart investment is to focus on results over status and method. Those last two, status and method, are some of the biggest troublemakers in modern life. When I say focus on results over status and method I mean to focus on the final outcome over how it is attained and/or what others think of it. Personally, this has helped me zero in a little closer to the essence of things and helped me to stay focused more on what I should be doing and learning. More and more and largely out of pure necessity, I try to approach my life as a business. Any business that would waste its time and money playing around with ideas and chasing every shiny object that came its way would soon cease to be a business.

In the case of learning to become a software developer, we are very lucky in this day and age because the internet is literally seething with resources to help you learn how to do it. Some of them are paid (Google and Udemy are great, by the way). Others are free although they may require a little more research and networking (Youtube, LinkedIn, Facebook Groups etc.). My point is that if you want to learn to become a softward developer, a web designer or whatever you should just go learn how to do it.

You do not need to seek some kind of formal certification or recognition to get into the world of web and software development. Please remember that.

Set some time aside a few times a week and work on building projects. Build a Personal Website. Start a blog. Learn WordPress and customize a theme. Listen to Podcasts by people in the industry. Watch Youtube videos. Get involved on Facebook groups. Network, essentially. Reach out. The tech community is full of brilliant and generous minds willing to help.

In closing, based on my experience, probably the most important element for any endeavor in life is not where you went to learn how to do something or how but what you can actually do, how you get along with people and how motivated you are by your own curiousity.

Curiosity will take you far further in life than any piece of paper or memory ever will.

With that, here’s a picture of a tree that looks really surprised. Like it just saw something shocking.

Soft Skills And The Human Side Of Web Development

There is no doubt that the world of web development is vast. So vast in fact that it can be difficult to know where to start. It is also a very absorbing world full or minutiae and new developments. Someone with an interest in the world of web dev could easily spend the rest of their life learning about it. But we also must remember that the real goal of it all is relatively simple. Regardless of your area of responsibility in a given project, the ultimate goal is to deliver a functional app to a client. Nothing more, nothing less. Yet it is surprising how this simple fact can often be obscured. People are complex and all too often the time and effort they've invested in cultivating their expertise can create a layer of obscuration, distance and sometimes down-right arrogance between themselves and the ultimate arbeiter: the client. While many of us would be perfectly happy to sit in front of a computer and never speak to a client the fact is neither you or your company will make a cent doing that. Someone has to deal with the client and someone has to deal with you. The smoother and more efficient communication can be, the faster the turnaround

So the point of this post is to focus not on the many, many engaging aspects of web development itself but, instead, on the client experience and what can be done to leverage and maximize it.  Let us "de-nerd" and focus on what are often called "human" or "soft skills". This is a strikingly important point and one that can make or break your success (in a financial/professional sense, at least) as a developer, freelancer, employee and just general human being in life. After all, no one will want to work with you if they don't like you as a person. Even if you're absurdly talented people will go with someone they can at least enjoy working with a little bit over a D-bag. Below are the points I have come to realize create an excellent client experience. While some are specific to web development, many are applicable to any client focused business. Please keep that in mind.

**Know your client and know their industry:** having an understanding of a client's background (who they are, where they're from, what they like etc.) can be helpful. Knowing something about their industry can also go a long way toward making a good impression. Client's can have wildly different levels of understanding when it comes to web development so it is usually best to assume nothing and simply approach them as another human being in need of a service. Starting things off in a friendly way and getting to know them a bit establishes a connection. People thrive on connections and ensuring a positive relationship from the get go will make things infinitely easier down the road.

**Don't jabber:** all to often people conflate being a motor mouth with sounding intelligent. The fact is that talking your client's ear off, at best, makes you sound self-absorbed and/or nervous. At worst, talking on auto-pilot at a potential client will lose you the sale right then and there. It will also leave them thinking you're more interested in the sound of your own voice than you are their needs. Time is the most valuable resource any of us have. The fact that a client is meeting with you at all should tell you that they're likely intersted in your services and leaning toward signing a contract with you. Start there. Your job is to guide them into that final decision, not strong arm them with a canned speech the minute they sit down. Respect their time and open with a few questions if you have to but be sure to let them do the talking. Use the material they give you and respond to it. Don't unload your weird presentation and expect them to be impressed. You'll likely get the opposite response.

**Don't speak in techno babble:** try to keep your vocabulary simple and direct. This may not be necessary with more tech savvy clients so it's safe to say this point is case by case. However, unloading a slew of acronyms and technical terms at your client in an attempt to impress/convince them you know what you're doing can be a big mistake. If you can't explain a concept simply, you probably don't understand the subject well enough to be explaining it to someone in the first place. Most clients appreciate a sense of sincerity and connection far more than an impressive vocabulary, anyway. Your communication should be skillful and efficient, not a dry run for a technical journal.

**Focus on eliciting the details of what your client wants:**your first meeting with a client is the most important encounter with them. It's also a time for you to get a picture of what kind of project they are looking at having built. Often times they may not be entirely sure themselves. This is an excellent chance for you to get as much information about their project as possible so you can *both* make a decision as to whether it's best for you to work together. While they may not be 100% sure of the entire scope of their project, they very likely have a few ideas in mind. Get as many of these ideas from them as possible. The  more information you can have in the beginning, the faster you can make things start happening. Clients *love it* when they feel the contractor or company they are working with is on the ball and helping them. Who wouldn't?

**Listen. Just listen:**listening is one of the most important skills we can possess as human beings. It's how we've learned nearly everything we know. If you really want to help your client, listen to them. Simple as that.

**Use the information they give you fo decide with tools you will need for the project, not the other way around:**"when you have a hammer, everything in the world looks like a nail", as the saying goes. A key part of good business and productivity is matching the task with correct tools. There is a plethora of different tools and platforms out there for a reason. Unless the services you are offering are limited to a certain niche or market, don't limit yourself before you get started. Be open and receive the details of the project until they start to form a bigger picture. Focus on the key elements and the overall structure together. Then make a decision as to how best to go about making it. This will save everyone a lot of time and your client a lot of time. It may also someday save your reputation as well.

**Start from the front and work to the back:** Give them a mockup of the UI as soon as possible. The sooner you can give your client an idea of what their website is going to look like the happier they're going to be. It gives them a sense of something happening and things moving forward. It's also important for you, too. It allows you to start solidifying the project from the get go without having to go back over and revise work you've already spent time on. A mockup is, afterall, far easier to change than a website. It's always a good idea, once they've signed the contract, to send your client a questionaire designed to get their ideas on the specific content and design features they have in mind. This serves two purposes: 1) it gets them involved in the process allowing them to speak their mind and zero in more specifically on what they want. 2) it gives you a framework to work with based on *your client's ideas* and not your own. And this means you will have something of a safety net in that you are building what they told you to.

**Get feedback:** this is a useful skill in all arenas of life. Feedback, in the strictest sense is what our 5 senses do. They inform us of what's out there and of our relationship to it. When dealing with a client, feedback can inform you of how you're they feel about the project and how they are responding to things in general. It also keeps you in touch with them. Simple techniques like waiting for a reaction, asking them how they feel or what they want to happen can go a long way toward cementing a solid relationship. It can also let your client know that you're there with them and that you're a genuine person who knows how to communicate. I can't tell you how frustrating it is to sit there and wait for someone to finish unloading their canned speech of buzzwords and semi-irrelevant thoughts just so you can ask a question or speak your mind. This goes right up there with not jabbering or blowing your client out of the water with your over the top tech-speak; parse things out, communicate, watch responses, ask questions. Let your client speak. Let them relax. And, for god's sake, let them *breathe.*

**Manage expectations and get confirmation of each stage of completion. Lock them in:**this one is huge. No matter what your client's background, budget or experience level is make sure you are both signing up for the same deal. What I mean is, make sure they know exactly what you are making for them and make only that. Dedicate the time you have together in the beginning to formulate the entirety of the project and present them with mockups of each page of the site *before you begin building a single thing*. Have them sign off on  everything from the colors to the page names. From the exact type of backend functionality they need to the specific and complete layout of each page on their site. This is called managing expectations. Some may also call it "preventing scope creep" which means sticking with what was agreed on in the beginning to stop the project from going way over budget and way past the completion deadline (if it ever gets finished at all).

You see, clients may start off with a general idea something like "I just want a website that works". Fair enough. But what often happens is that, once they get involved in the design process they start *adding things*. That is all well and good but if the stage of adding features and elements to the project isn't contained to the first stage, it will never end. You will constantly be adding new features, tweaking designs and generally running in circles ad nauseum. Scope creep is one of the single greatest dangers to the success of a project. And skill management of expectations (this is what we're going to do, this is what we're not going to do) can make all the difference between a happy client with a great website and an insane nag you wish you'd never met.

**Keep your cool:**there is a reason many  companies will devote entire divisions purely to dealing with clients and customers: it's hard. By offering your services to the public, you are literally inviting anyone to come in through your door or to drop in to your site. Add to this that people are busy and, particularly with business owners, unexpected things can and often do happen. You may get people who seem to disappear and reappear at the weirdest times. You can get clients that are literally impossible to satisfy or simply seem to enjoy being difficult so they can watch your reaction. The trick is to always, always keep your cool. This means having a clear, documented process in place with stages for client confirmation (via signature) in place as well as a set payment structure to avoid either party getting ripped off. There are few things more frustrating than realizing all the work you put into a project ends up being for free because the client either disappeared or ran off with your website. Be business minded and be smart. Have a contract and stick to it. And always remember that while you may have a great relationship with a client, they are not your friend. They are a customer. And as long as things are roped in buy your agreement, a situation where it's tempting to lose your cool should never arise at all.

**Keep your client updated on progress as it's happening. Don't just send them a mail once every few weeks once something is completed:**years ago, before I got into web development myself, I hired a local designer to build a website for a business I was running in Japan. I had no experience in tech and simply went with a guy who was recommended by a mutual acquaitance. He was a jack of all trades and kind of a weird guy to boot. His communicaitons skills were lacking and I found myself constantly reaching out for updates on the project. I was facing a very tight deadline and juggling a huge amount of other tasks. Looking, back that should have been a warning sign. While in the end things worked out and the site was delivered on time, being left waiting added an element of stress and tension that I didn't forget. I would therefore never recommend this designer's services to anyone.

Conversely, with my clients, I make it a point to inform them of the process beforehand. And for each stage of the process I have a checklist of what has been done and what remains to be done, right up to the final handoff of the website's password. Keeping clients in the know is one of the most professional and courteous things you can do. It says to them that you care and you want them to feel secure in their decision of having gone with you. Any business owner worth their salt knows that time is money. If a client is not sure what you're doing with their time, you can rest assured they may be wondering about giving you their money.

**Consider LVC:** Lifetime Value of Customer is where the money is. If you're client is difficult, late and/or demanding yes it can be annoying. But you need to place the relative (and often brief) client dealings against the background of the larger picture. That larger picture includes such things as: who the client knows (other potential clients), what kinds of services they'll need in the future and any other potential for the exchange of value in future business dealings. As tempting as it can be to let an annoying client go your should always try to reconsider potential repercussions. The satisfaction of freeing yourself of a difficult client may bring a sense of immediate relief but it may also cost you more in the end than you originally realized. This is why it's important to have a solid contract, a checklist of tasks to be completed and strong expectation management skills. If a client smells a solid operation in the beginning they will be less likely to try and pull a fast one on you later on. But you should also never underestimate people and there are situations where simply walking away is the best choice. But these cases are relatively rare. More often tensions rise and the stress causes us to do things we later come to regret.

**Be accomodating but ensure they know time is money:**this can be a tough one and blends with managing expectations. Some clients know exactly what they want but simply don't want to bother with doing it themselves. These are the easiest ones to work with. Some will talk your ear off for an hour (or try to) without any real progress happening. This group can burn up a lot of your time and lead to considerable losses in a subtle but cumulative way. To hedge against this some useful tips are:

including a lot of filters and information gathering in your conversion process (online forms to give you a picture of the project they have in mind)

being specific about when a particular stage of the development process is closed (no takebacks and no redos)

billing for meeting time

charging by hour vs by project

**Always do your best to leave on a good note:**this ties into LVC and a special effort to finish the transaction on a positive note can go a long way to solidify the relationship and leave a good impression. You don't have to be fake or weird about it, either. A simple thank you email combined with good wishes for the future will do. Other things like reaching out over LinkedIn can help, too. Your current and past customers are, after all, almost guaranteed to introduce you to your future customers.

**Always try to get a referral and/or a stellar review:** legit testimonials can be extremely helpful, too. They can often be the deciding factor for potential clients. If you are able to bring a human voice to your portfolio explaining how much

The Divi Theme: What it is and what it does.

# The Divi Theme: What it is and what it does.

by [Trevor M](https://signalworksdesign.com/index.php/author/tre27/) | Dec 11, 2018 | [Uncategorized](https://signalworksdesign.com/index.php/category/uncategorized/)

While some may believe it sacrilege to use a page builder on top of the WordPress platform, I personally feel otherwise. In this post, with special emphasis on [Divi](https://www.elegantthemes.com/), I’ll be explaining  why.  In the end, the two biggest reasons have largely to do with A) saving yourself time and B) saving your customers money. There is more to it than that, of course. But, essentially, page builders  are designed to let you focus almost exclusively on the front end without putting in the time into building the back end or any of that big scary “HTMLy” and “CSSy” type stuff either.

### **To code or not to code?**

To the purists out there, you “code bros” you,  who believe only people who build a site from scratch each and every time can truly call themselves web developers, I would say, “have fun and you sure must have a lot of time on your hands”. Either that or a healthy supply of clients with deep pockets. And, if that is indeed the case, well, good for you. Well done.

Sure, there are times when building from scratch is best for the client; especially if they have the budget and they are clear on other options i. e. you are not suggesting a custom build as their first and only option/ripping them off. However, many times, especially when the product doesn’t have too many moving parts, so to speak, a page builder working on WordPress will mean a beautiful, functional site (with all the options and amazing community of WordPress) that is affordable. Most clients like affordability, in my experience.

### **For Goodness Sake, Learn To Code You Guys**

That said, however, I do believe it is extremely important to have an understanding of how the deeper dynamics of a website, the internet and software in general work. Woe unto he or she who would begin selling their services as a “web developer” with no actual understanding of true-blue web development. All it takes is one job going awry or one client finding out that you don’t actually have any idea what you are doing and your reputation is in danger of becoming toast. And, well, that would kind of suck.

Let me be clear, any web developer absolutely needs a solid grounding in the fundamentals of HTML5 and CSS3 at the very least. And, preferably, a good grasp of JavaScript and, for you “WordPress heads” out there, a working familiarity with PHP as well. The more of the stack and design principles you understand, the more valuable you are — to both yourself and your customers. And nothing can replace that. There will always be those times when you need to tweak something or add some special functionality that will require you get into the code and make alterations. Those times when you can’t deliver are best avoided.

Even with the understanding and ability to get into the code and make things happen, however, it is not entirely necessary to reiterate it every single time you build something. No more so than it is for a dancer to run through every routine they know or a doctor to perform every procedure they learned every time they go to work, now is it? A balance must be made. So, yes. “understanding good”. But productivity and faster turnaround time for clients? Even better.

### **So… Page builders, eh?**

Yessir, indeed, Page builders it is. But, of course, not all page builders are the same. Some are simply a “wham, bam, thank you mam'” type of approach with very little documentation or true functionality. Others never should’ve been released and, more often than not, make you so frustrated you won’t be able to see straight. But there are a few that can boost productivity and shorten build times like you wouldn’t believe.

Among them is “Divi”, the guest star of this post. While technically considered a “theme” because it installs as any other WordPress theme would, it is really more of a framework that rides on the WordPress platform. It combines a back end builder rooted in the dashboard along with a visual builder option which will display your alterations and editing in real time as they would appear in the browser. And you can flip back and forth between them with ease while your edits will reflect in both aspects as long as you save them.

You can also save modules, rows, sections or even entire pages in the built in “Divi library” or download them to reuse them elsewhere. They will freely integrate to any site with the divi theme (or builder plugin) installed. Divi is, plainly speaking, the most versatile, well supported and stable page builder option I’ve ever come across.

It is also, in my opinion, the perfect tool for the busy WordPress developer. And that is because while it does make building easier for everyone, it still requires a significant amount of skill and research to use properly (this ain’t no WIX here, people). And, for those, who can use it properly, it is capable of building amazing websites that are both visually stunning and highly functional.

While I could go on and on about its uses and how it works, I’ll choose instead to keep it simple. So, without further ado, here is what I love about Divi:

**Customization:** there is literally nothing that cannot be customized via the Divi builder. Everything from the menu to the footer is 100% accessible and 100% customizable. And, for the very few features not explicitly accessible through the builder menu, there is an option for custom CSS work. This last point was a huge deciding factor for me as being stuck with what a builder decides you can do can be extremely frustrating.

Further, you can adjust different display values for different devices (desktop, tablet and mobile) from directly in the builder. You can also disable elements from displaying on different devices altogether. This makes the often tedious task of mobile optimization a breeze as you can essentially design an entirely different interface with a few clicks vs digging through CSS and configuring media queries.

Elements, whether images or video can be inserted in different layers of a module to create amazing visual effects and there is a devoted “code module” which allows you to insert code snippets to generate a completely unique (and customized) element on the page essentially apart from the Divi interface.

**Multiple levels of accessibility:** Divi is not restricted simply to the visual builder interface. You can also access it from the back end.  The two different types of access compound Divi’s versatility and allow for an extra level of customization such as the insertion of elements into different layers within a module, custom spacing, and ultra fast structuring of a page’s layout.

While the visual builder will definitely steal the show, the backend editor (Divi builder) is not to be underestimated as it  adds an amazing (and fast) level of functionality for designers. Using color coded sections which contain rows and columns, respectively, layouts can be whipped up in short order and dragged and dropped, saved, downloaded or even split tested as ideas and desires change.

**Excellent support from manufacturer:** makers of the Divi Theme, [Elegant Themes](https://www.elegantthemes.com/), have fantastic support as well as an active blog complete with video content. The blog is constantly updated with high quality content concerning the ins and outs of Divi as well as WordPress, popular plugins and many, many other web design related topics.

It should also be noted that while the Divi Theme has become something of their flagship product, Elegant Themes offers a variety of other [plugins](https://www.elegantthemes.com/plugins/) and [themes](https://www.elegantthemes.com/gallery/) when you sign up with them.

**Huge amount of documentation:** aside from the efforts of  [Elegant Themes](https://www.elegantthemes.com/), there is a large amount of documentation available for Divi via their 3rd party themes and plugins market. This makes things like trouble shooting or finding the perfect global CSS are very easy to handle as, chances are, there is already an article or YouTube video out there to show you how to do it. I would highly recommend looking up some of the devoted Divi Facebook groups, as well. Fine folks over there, let me tell you.

**Huge community of users:**at present, here in late September of 2019, Divi boasts an impressive 601,772 customers. Of these, thousands are involved in blogging, vlogging and selling Divi content. Elegant Themes is also involved in [creating meetups](https://www.elegantthemes.com/blog/divi-resources/divi-nation-meetup-network) so you can network with other users and maybe learn a thing or two while you’re at it.

If you’re too busy to get out and about, the numerous Divi devoted Facebook groups may be your next best bet. So far, I have found the groups I’ve joined to be immensely supportive and helpful not to mention great opportunities to network.

**Outstanding 3rd party plugins:**as with all software products, users have a way of consistently finding ways to improve and make things better. Which brings me to Divi’s amazing 3rd party plugin market. From UI darkeners, to mobile menus. From visual footer builders to libraries of 2,000+ icons. There is an amazing amount of creativity and variety at play in the Divi plugin market.

My only advice would be to research thoroughly before buying as some of the plugins are plugins for plugins; meaning you’ll have to buy the pro WordPress plugin to be able to use the Divi extension plugin.

**Excellent pricing:**finally there is the pricing. Here Elegant Themes offers[two options](https://www.elegantthemes.com/join/): 1) their annual subscription plan for $89 a year or 2) their lifetime access plan for a one time fee of $249. Both plans include access to 800+ pre-made designs and 100+ full website packs,  all plugins (6 at last count), theme updates, premium support, unlimited website usage and a risk-free guarantee.

**Conclusion**

So, will Divi make all your web design dreams come true? Is it the all-in-one tool to leverage WordPress mastery? Of course not. Nothing. And I mean NOTHING will ever replace good coding skills, sound understanding of design principles, back-to-front-top-to-bottom familiarity with WordPress and the innate curiosity and drive to learn that is the hallmark of any successful developer. Please remember that.

However, Divi is an amazing tool. And an amazing way to optimize and beautify a WordPress website. Keep in mind, however, that there is a learning curve with Divi. In light of that, you would do well to read some of the documentation and watch some of the tutorials. They actually include a pop-up window offering you access to these services with every fresh install.

While you may not instantly master the interface and fall in love with Divi, if you are curious and patient and put in the time (often just an afternoon or two with some tutorials) you will come to see how user-friendly and powerful it really is.

Conclusion to the conclusion (who Divi is and isn’t for)

## Who Divi Is For

1. designers and developers looking to deliver affordable value (always tricky) to clients with simple websites i.e. light on API and database calls and small to medium site size

2. potentially someone looking to add the design features they’d like to see to their own site without hiring a professional (professionals should use Divi for the above reason, not to oversell themselves as “a developer”) provided they have the time and patience to learn to use the Divi builder. Yes, it’s far easier than coding your own HTML, CSS and JavaScript but there is still a learning curve steep enough to frustrate you

3. designers and developers who rarely go beyond the intial layer of UI/UX in there day to day work (you know you’re out there) and generally work with smaller, lower budget clients

## Who Divi Isn’t For

1. designers or developers working with clients seeking very large, complex sites with a lot of custom functionality and coding on the backend

2. beginners in web development subconsciously avoiding their fear of actually learning to code (it’s not that hard as long as you stick with it). Trust me, after a year of consistent effort, HTML and CSS, heck, even JavaScript won’t seem nearly as big and scary. You might even have learned to like it by then.

3. people who like to always do things the hard way and when they don’t have to.