Lecture 2.2: Site Plan

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Objectives

- understand website development process
- create a site specification
- identify the content goal
- analyze your audience
- create conventions for filenames and URLs
- set a directory structure
- create a site storyboard
- publish and test the website

Website Development Process

- need a good project plan, larger projects need a project manager
- adopt a development framework
- project life cycle encompasses the entire project from start to finish

Requirements and Specifications

- client presents the requirements for the site
- project team breaks the requirements down to tasks
- team prepares project specs: page layout sketches, audience definition, tech requirements

Information Design and Taxonomy Creation

Taxonomy: classification and naming of contents in a hierarchy.
User analysis guides the design of site content. The goal is to create meaningful content navigation. The taxonomy of the site structures the *topic hierarchy* and *navigation.*

Graphic Design and Page Template Creation

Designers prepare sketches and page *mockups* to represent page layouts. **Wireframes** document a more stable page design and offer a more complete view of what the final design will look like.
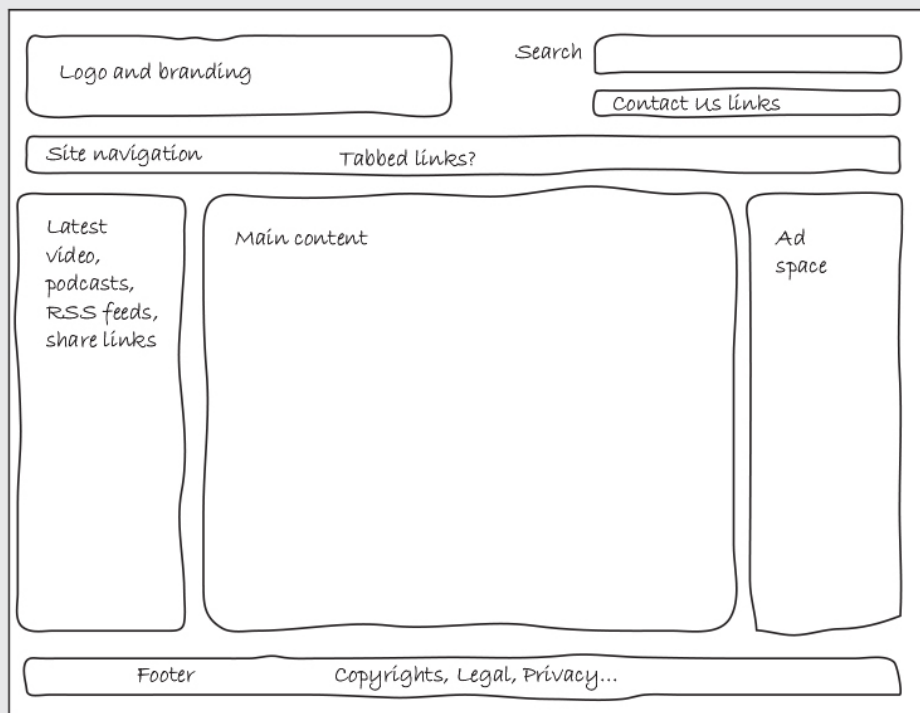
Figure 3-2: Web page mockup
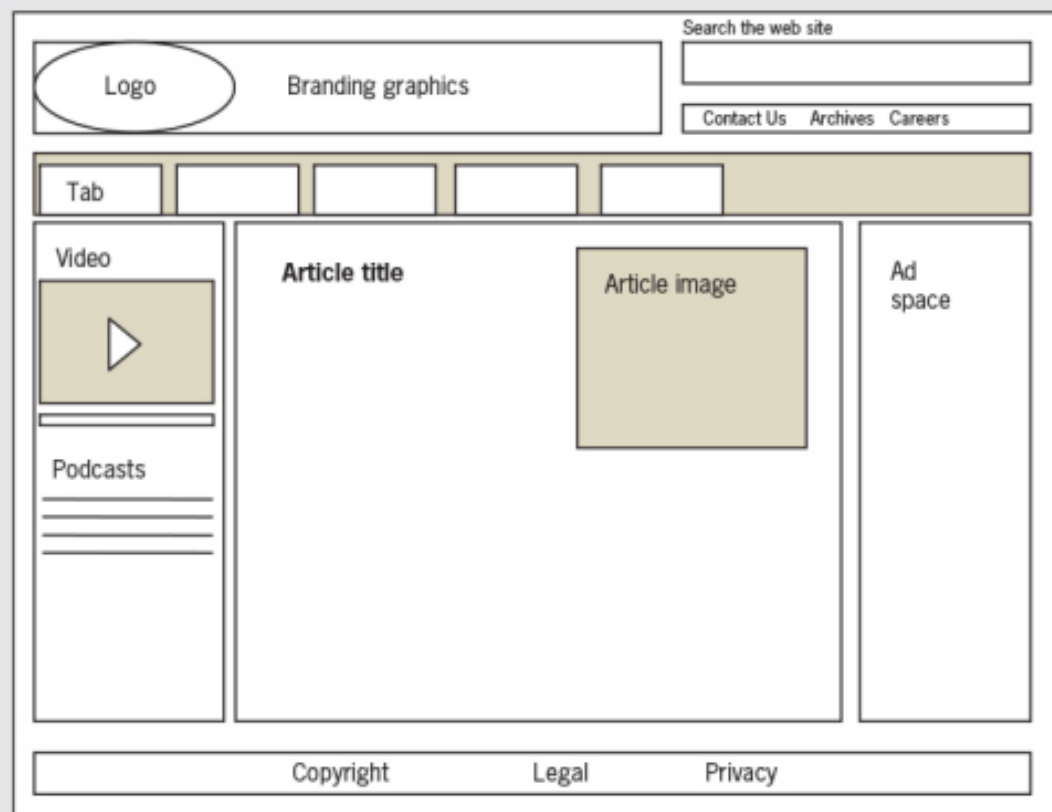© 2015 Cengage Learning®

Logo and branding

Search

Contact Us links

Site navigation   Tabbed links?

Latest video, podcasts, RSS feeds, share links

Main content

Ad space

Footer   Copyrights, Legal, Privacy…

Figure 3-3: Sample wireframe for page layout
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Logo   Branding graphics

Search the web site

Contact Us   Archives   Careers

Tab

Video

Podcasts

Article title

Article image

Ad space

Copyright   Legal   Privacy

Construction, Content Development, Quality Assurance, and User Testing

1. Construction begins when design is mostly complete. This stage includes technical development of the site, with some testing occuring.
2. Quality assurance validates the technology of the site. User testing validates the design. Cross-platform testing and usability testing ensures users can access content easily.
3. Site is then published to the web and promotion of the site begins
4. Ongoing maintenance begins when the site goes live and continues throughout the project's life

Site Specification

Creation of Site Specification

- who is the client for the site?
- write a 2-3 paragraph mission statement that briefly states the site's goals. What are the requirements? Are they feasible?
- what do you hope to gain from creating and maintaining a website?
- what are the limiting technical factors? What is the budget?

Analyzing the Audience

Produce an **audience definition**: What do the users want from the site? How can you create repeat visitors? What type of computer and network speed do typical visitors have? Who are the typical members of the audience?

Web Analytics: stats gathered by web servers. Can analyze where visitors come from, which pages they like best, and track user activity. Reporting tools can analyze the statistics.

Technology Issues and Accessibility Constraints

Consider user's geographical location, technology level, physical capabilities. Follow **WCAG Section 508** guidelines.

Building a Web Site Development Team

- project managers
- HTML developers
- Designers
- Writers and information designers
- Application developers
- Database administrators
- Server administrators

Naming Files

Use ISO 9660 standard to ensure compatibility with all systems.
* leave out special characters * use correct file extensions * use underscores instead of spaces * use all lowercase letters

Windows: max 255 characters, /*"<>|:? not allowed
Mac: max 255 characters, : not allowed
UNIX: Max 255 characters, case sensitive, / not allowed

Complete URL: unique address of a file on the web. Example: `http://www.site.ca/folder/file1`
Partial URL: address relative to current directory. Example `file.txt`
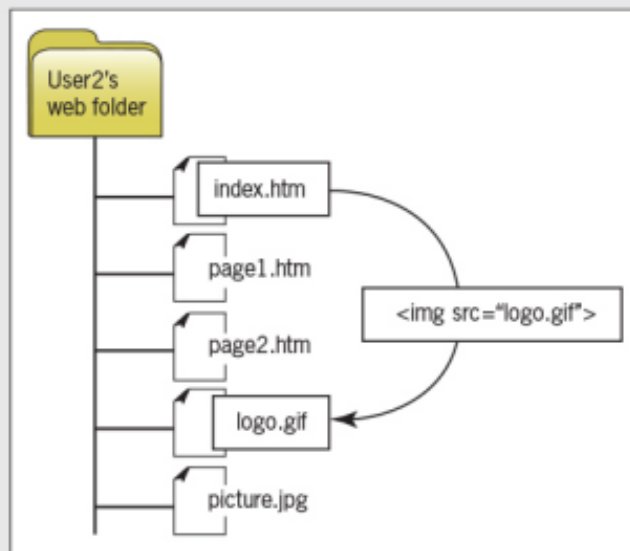
Single Folder Structure

Figure 3-8: Simplified single folder structure
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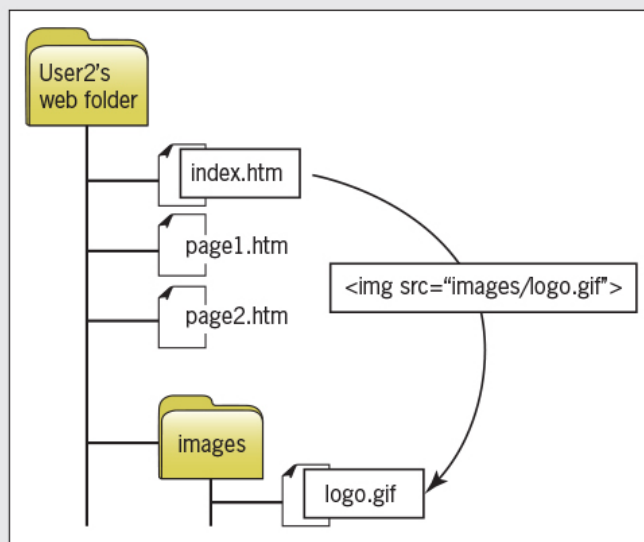
Hierarchical Folder Structure

Figure 3-9: Basic hierarchical folder structure
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Segregated Hierarchical Folder Structure

Figure 3-10: More segregated hierarchical folder structure
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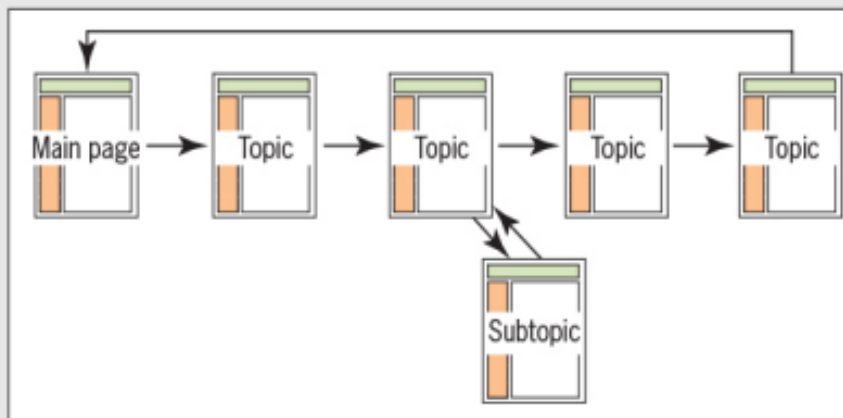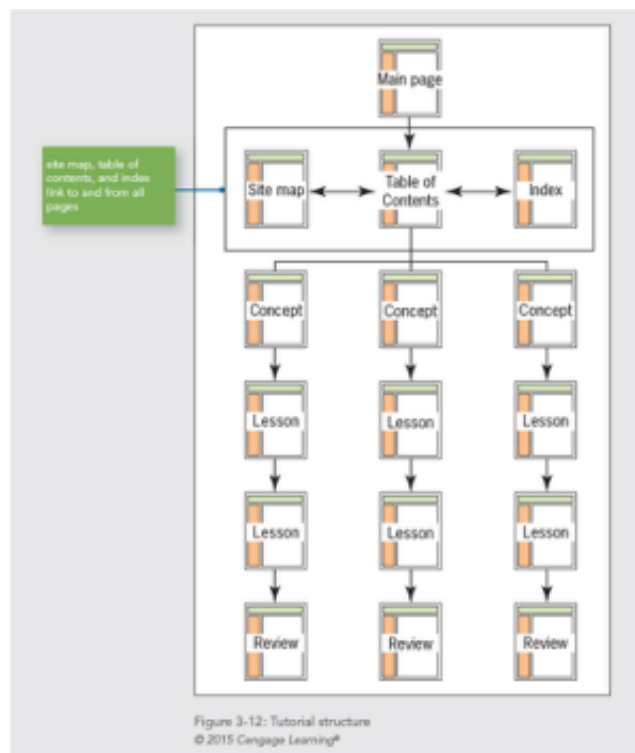**Linear Information Structure**

Figure 3-11: Linear information structure
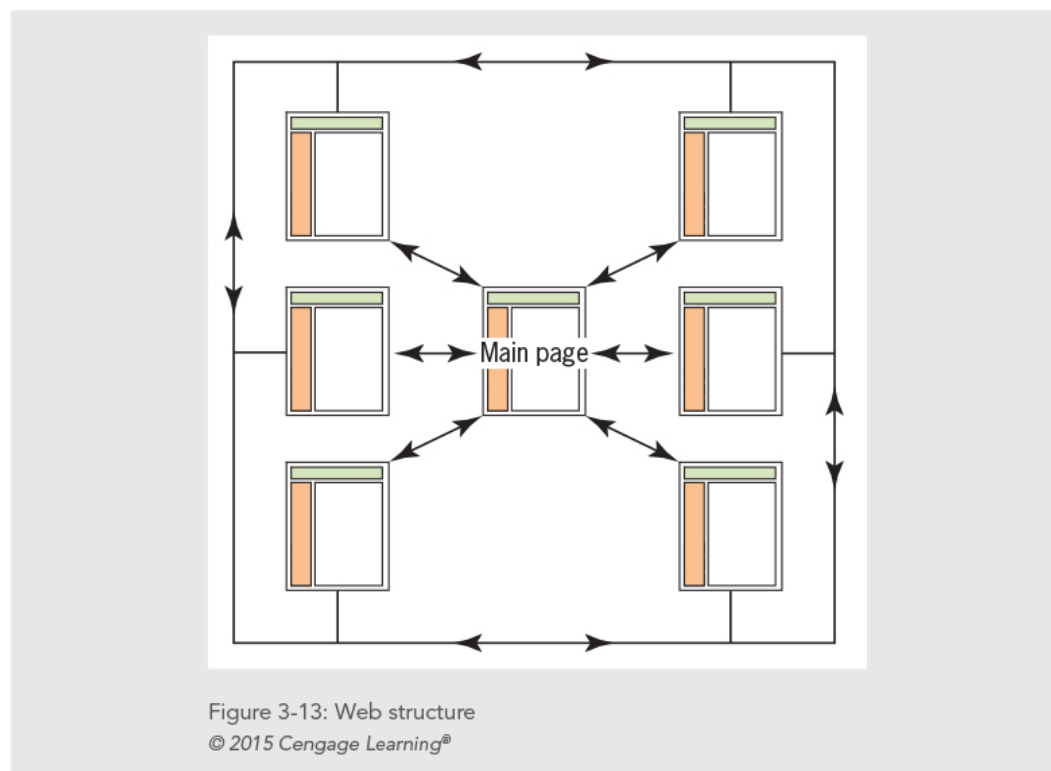© 2015 Cengage Learning®

- guides the user along a straightforward path. Book-like presentation.

Tutorial Information Structure

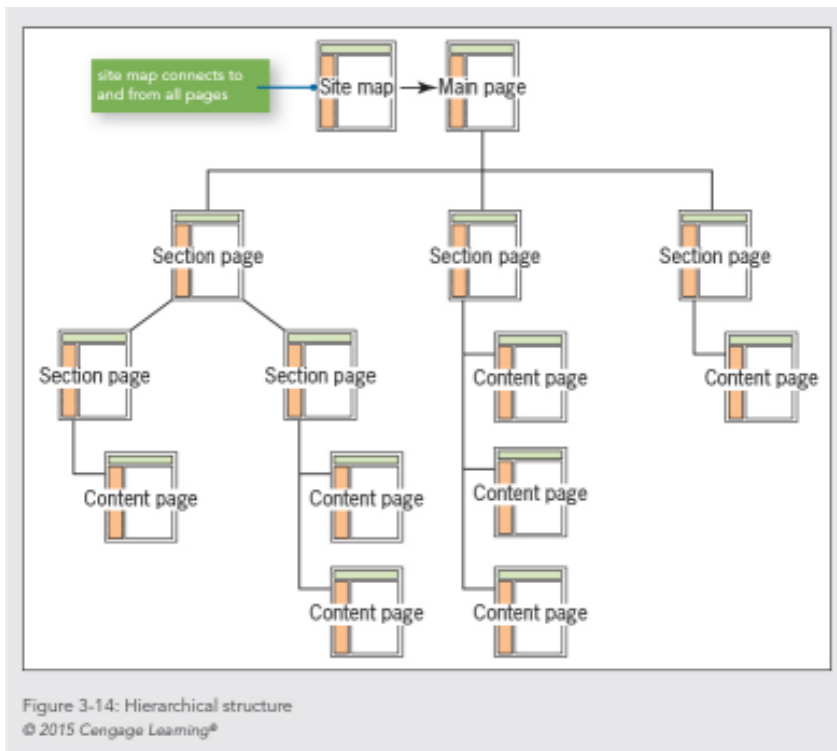Figure 3-12: Tutorial structure
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- good for computer-based training content. Users can leave lesson structure and return at any time
- table of contents, index, site map pages are linked to and from all pages in the site
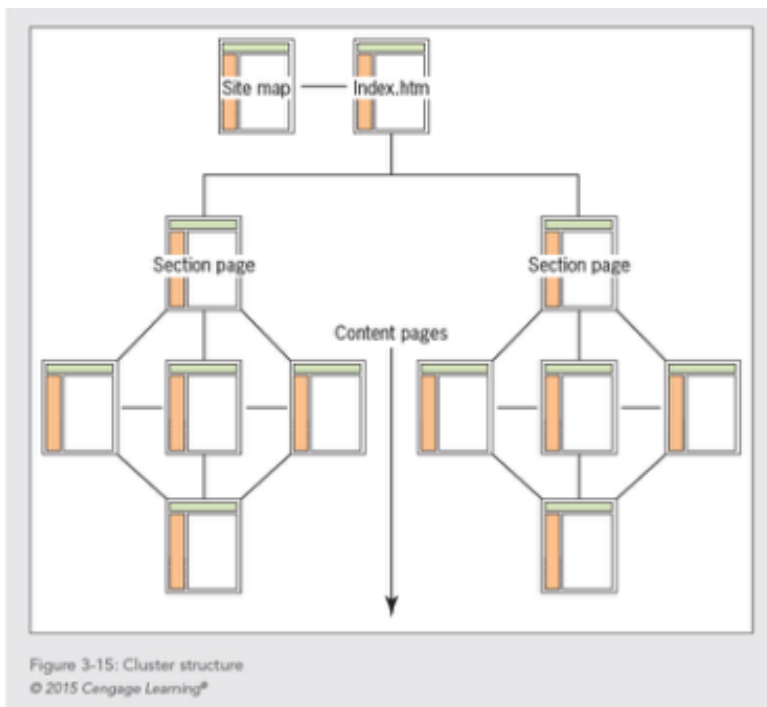
Web Information Structure

Figure 3-13: Web structure
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- non-linear browsing freely
- needs standardized navigation bar

Hierarchical Information Structure

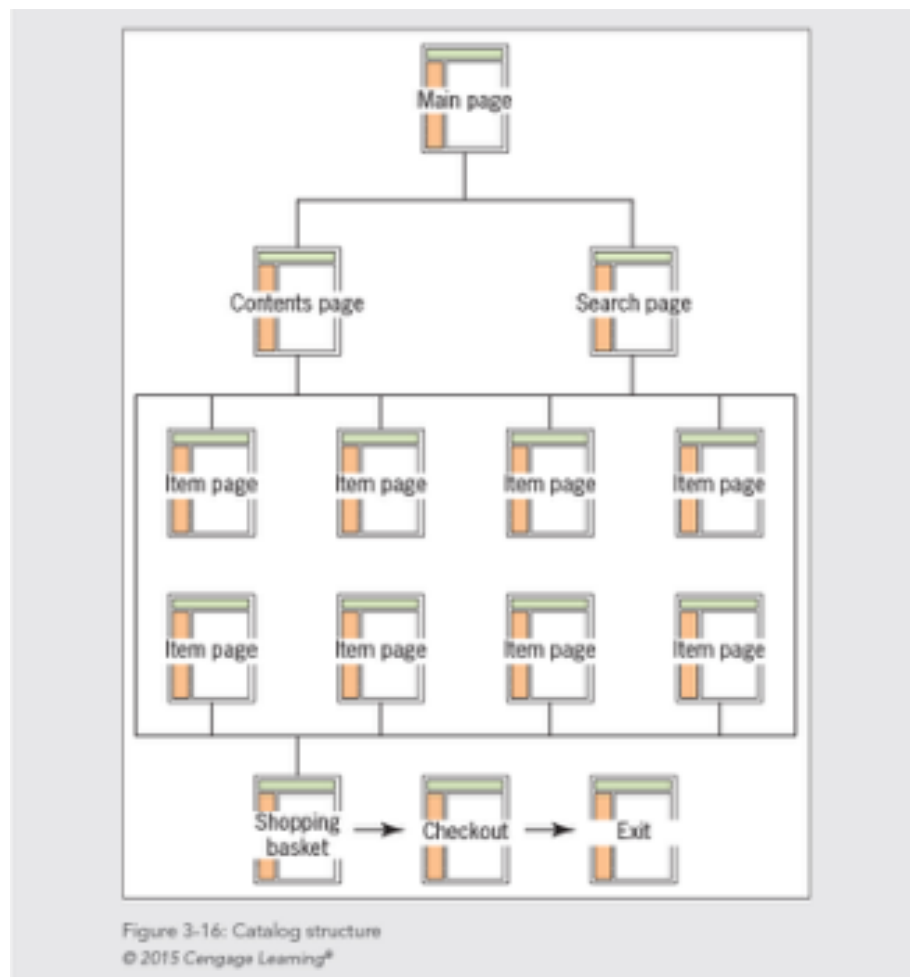Figure 3-14: Hierarchical structure
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- most information design
- section pages break up and organize the content at different levels throughout site
- navigation is primarily linear w/in content sections

Cluster Information Structure

Figure 3-15: Cluster structure
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- similar to hierarchical struct, except every topic area is an island of info
- all pages contain nav bar with links to section pages, main page, site map

Catalog Information Structure

Figure 3-16: Catalog structure
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- ideally suited for online shoppping
- user can browser or search for items, add/drop items to shopping cart
- user can review items then checkout
- site processes payments using credit cards, shopping cards

Web Hosting Service Provider

- select a web host appropriate to the size of the website
- check for: tech support, email addresses, SQL database support, SSL support
- web host local or national? Details of diff hosting packages?
- are there bandwidth limits for the # of visitors/month?

Testing the Site

- multiple browsers, operating systems, devices
- connection speeds
- display types
- link testing
- formalize testing, develop feedback form

Feedback Questions

- did you find the info you needed? Was it easy or hard? Did the info have enough depth?

- did you find the site visually attractive? Content easy to read?
- is the website easy to navigate?
- is information presented correctly?
- what area of the web site did you like the most/least? why?

Summary

- careful planning results in a successful website
- become familiar with the web development lifecycle
- start with pencil and paper
- write a site specification document
- identify the content goal
- analyze your audience
- an effective site is a team effort
- create portable filename conventions
- create information structure for your site
- shop carefully when seeking a web host
- learn to use FTP software
- test the site

Key Terms

Secure Socket Layer (SSL): communication software that allows transmission of encrypted secure messages over the internet.

Uniform Resource Locator (URL): global address of documents and other resources on the web.

Web Analytics: analysis of statistics that are gathered by web servers.

Web Server: computer connected to the Internet that runs server software. The software lets the computer use HTTP to serve HTML files to web clients.