



How to Make / Create a Website

The Beginner's Guide to Get
a Small Business Online

firstsiteguide



Table of Content

About this guide.....	3	Content management systems (CMS)	16
Website Building Tool or System	3	Select the right tools to build a website.....	16
Design and Content	3	Website builders	17
		E-commerce software	17
Chapter 1	4	HTML and CSS.....	18
Why you need a website	4	Website design	19
Site ownership puts you in control.....	5	Website content.....	20
The essential steps to launch a website	5	Beta testing.....	21
Determine what type of website will work best for you.....	6	Website content.....	21
Develop your online strategy and website plan.....	8	Conclusion.....	21
What is online strategy?	8	Chapter 2	21
Developing your online strategy	8	Types of content management systems	23
What benefits do you want from a website?	8	Costs to run a self-hosted CMS website.....	23
Who are your visitors?.....	9	CMS comparison.....	23
What is your unique value proposition (UVP)?..	9	Creating a WordPress website	25
Who are your competitors?	10	One-click install	25
What features and functionality will the site include?	10	Installing WordPress manually.....	25
How long does it take to build a website?	11	Using the WordPress and managing your website	25
What are the building costs?	11	The dashboard	26
What tools, skills or personnel do you need to build a site?	12	Changing the design of your website.....	27
What is the structure of your website?	12	Read the description	27
What content are you going to use?.....	12	Check the ratings	27
How do you want the website pages to look?	13	Preview the theme	27
What colors and fonts will be used?	13	Check for responsiveness	27
The name itself.....	14	Notes	27
Top-level domains.....	14	Creating a Joomla website	28
Find the right website name.....	14	Installing Joomla	29
		Using Joomla and managing your website	29
		Changing the design of your website (view video).....	30

Adding content (view video)	30
Notes	30
Creating a Drupal website	31
Installing Drupal	31
Using Drupal and managing your website	31
Changing the design of your website	32
Notes	33
Creating a Prestashop (e-commerce) website	33
Using Prestashop and managing your website	34
Changing the design of your store	35
Notes	36
Conclusion	36

Chapter 337

Creating a website with Wix	38
Costs	38
The benefits	38
Using Wix and setting up your website	39
Notes	40
Creating a website with Weebly	40
Getting started and signing up	41
Choosing your theme	41
Choosing your website domain	41
Costs	41
The benefits	41
Using Weebly and setting up your website	41
Customizing and designing your website	42
Notes	42
Creating a website with Squarespace	42
Costs	42
The benefits	43
Choosing a template	44
Selecting a name and site purpose	44
Using Squarespace and setting up your website	44

Customizing and designing your website	44
Notes	45
Conclusion	45

Chapter 446

Web page design (DIY)	46
Page layout	46
Visual (graphic) design	47
DIY design and editing tools	49
Web page development (DIY)	49
What is HTML?	49
The basics of HTML	50
What is CSS?	50
Example of a simple web page	51
HTML and CSS source file	51
index.html	51
kitchen.css	51
Image file used on the page	51
Publish a page on the web	52
Web page development tools	52
Hire a professional web designer/developer	53
Choosing a web designer/developer	53
How much will it cost?	54
The key to success is to know exactly what you want to be done.	55
Outsource web design and development services	55
Conclusion	56

Chapter 556

Content strategy and development	57
Content strategy	57
Content development	58
Testing your website	59
Promoting your website	60
Search engine optimization (SEO)	61
Conclusion	62

About this guide

Whether you're considering building an entirely new website or want to redo your current website, you're faced with a number of basic, but important, decisions, including the following.

A domain name and web hosting plan are basics that everyone needs. There are a lot of options for these two items, but they're pretty straightforward.

Website Building Tool or System

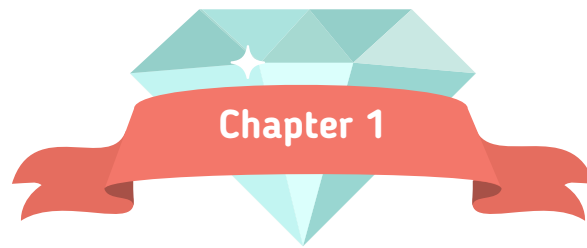
You need to choose the tool or system that you'll use to build and manage your website. This is a bit more complicated, because there are so many options from which to choose.

Design and Content

You have to address the design tasks that make your website inviting to visitors and reflect your business's brand. You'll also want to fill your site with content, images and graphics before you start promoting it.

In this guide, we are going to help you with these decisions by showing you a number of options and explaining how specific methods and products will fit your unique needs. We'll cover everything from understanding what type of website you want and choosing a domain name, to the finishing touches that will help you launch your website successfully, no matter what your goals are.

In addition, we'll show you how to use specific tools or systems to create your website. If building your website is too daunting or time consuming, we'll show you how to find someone to do the heavy lifting for you.



Introduction

Why you need a website

You may be asking yourself if you really need a website. Let's look at the facts.

Today, in the information age, people expect you to have a website that makes information about your business readily available. According to Internet Retailer magazine, 83 percent of customers research the company, product or service online before they make a purchase decision. Yet one out of two small businesses is not online.

The main reasons for having your own website are to:

- establish your online presence
- attract new customers/buyers/fans
- control your brand's reputation

Many people think this can be accomplished with a Facebook page or a third-party website placement, but they are missing the point.

Verisign and Merrill Research conducted a global survey (Benefits And Barriers Of Bringing A Small Business Online) of 1,050 small businesses about their online experiences. It was discovered that most businesses understood the importance of having a website. They also found that 82 percent of small businesses with an online presence would recommend investing in a website, yet many decide to have a social media listing instead.

For selling online, many businesses use third-party websites—like Amazon.com, Etsy, Shopify or eBay, instead of setting up their own online shop. Why? Primarily because these sites and social media platforms offer a somewhat simple, template-based way to get a business listed. Additionally, a majority of people believe they lack

the technical skills needed to create a website. Other obstacles include cost, support, time and security.

Site ownership puts you in control

Those who choose not to provide a website are missing out on the true value. Your website is yours—yours to control the content, yours to control what you sell, yours to grow your business and yours to keep competitors at bay. You don't have to worry about someone changing the rules of what you can or cannot present to your site's visitors. (Social media and third-party websites have "terms of use" that are notorious for frequent and awkward changes.)

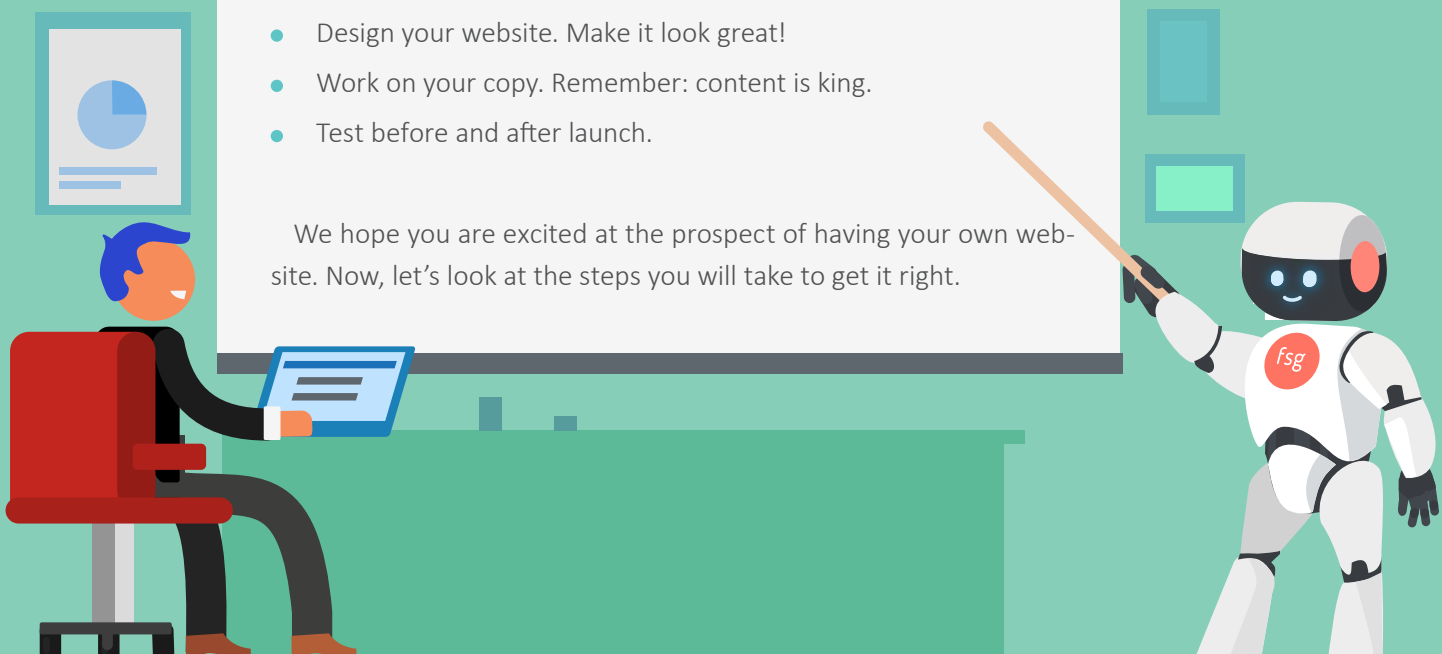
The value of your own website with a unique domain name is more significant than many think. Businesses that engage with customers online can grow 40 percent faster. Yet more than half of small businesses don't have a website. This represents another competitive opportunity for you.

Many business owners don't realize that today there are plenty of affordable and effective ways to make a website. There are free, easy-to-use tools and paid platforms. There are even people who will help you make your website for less than \$500. We'll cover all of these options and more in this guide.

The essential steps to launch a website

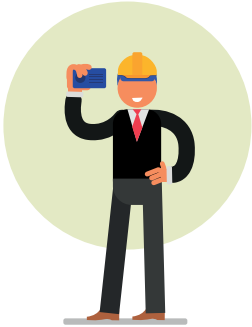
- Understand what type of website you need.
- Develop an online strategy and website plan.
- Determine the most effective website name.
- Select the right tools to build your website.
- Design your website. Make it look great!
- Work on your copy. Remember: content is king.
- Test before and after launch.

We hope you are excited at the prospect of having your own website. Now, let's look at the steps you will take to get it right.



1. Determine what type of website will work best for you

Websites come in different forms and types, and each serves a different purpose. In this section, we'll describe the main types of websites a small business can launch. Keep in mind that you may choose a combination of any of these types.

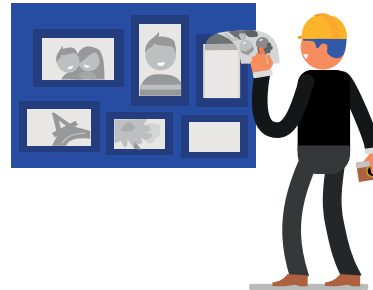


Business-card website. For some small businesses, a simple one-page website with the company's name and logo, description and contact information meets their needs. Some product information may be included, but the basic idea is that this will be a one-page website, representing your company or yourself.

Examples: <http://davymacca.com/>
and <http://www.dfunkydogg.co.uk/>.

Portfolio website. A portfolio website is similar to business-card website, with the addition of a section where you can showcase your work. This type of website common for photography studios, design agencies and other creative fields.

Examples: <http://justinmezzell.com/>
and <http://edwardyau.co.uk/>



Product brochure website. This type of website is a direct extension of your company's sales and marketing efforts. With this website, you will include products and services your company offers. This website may provide some pricing information but doesn't enable customers to buy online.

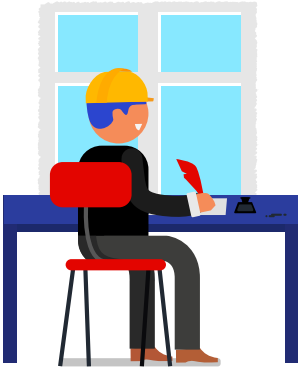
Examples: <http://www.grarchitects.co.uk/>
and <http://www.ghyllmountdental.co.uk/>

E-commerce website. With an e-commerce website, you will be able to showcase your products or services, and allow visitors to purchase them online. Setting up an e-commerce site may seem daunting, but there are many simplified tools and services available on the internet today that enable you to sell online.

Examples: <http://www.harveynichols.com/>
and <http://shop.marissa-webb.com/>



Extra features you should consider for your website include:

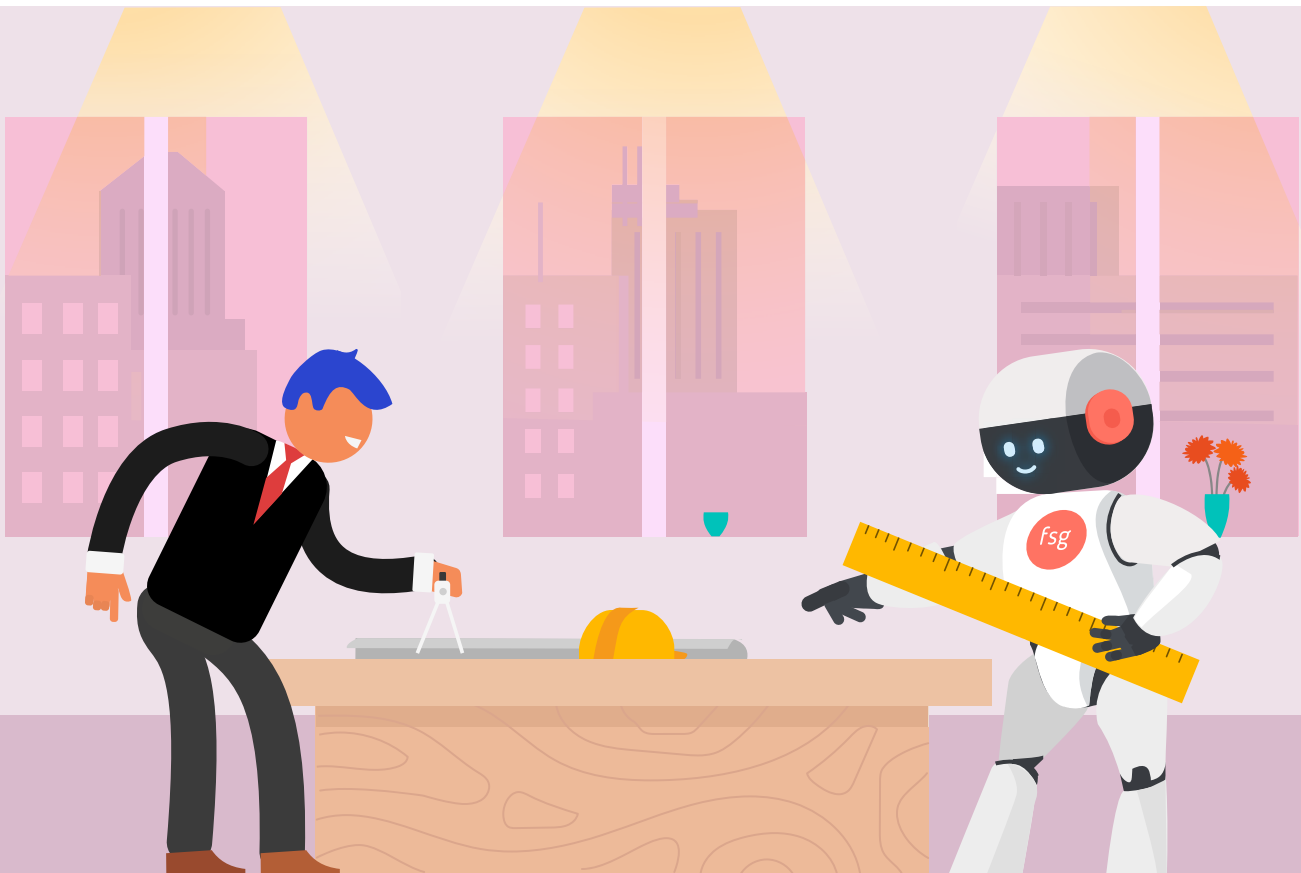


Blog. A blog is an extra feature for any of the website formats described above. But it also can be a separate website. A blog is a type of website that usually provides commentary arranged in chronological order, from the most recent entry at the top of the main page to older entries toward the bottom of the page.

Examples: <http://www.markforrester.co.za/>
and <http://huwshimi.com/>

Forum or Q&A. These two options can be used as an additional feature for your small business website in order to create a community around your niche. This enables visitors to hold online discussions in the form of posted messages. They may also ask questions of the experts.

Examples: <http://www.modelmayhem.com/forums>
and <http://moz.com/community/q>



2. Develop your online strategy and website plan

An online strategy lays the foundation for a successful online presence.

First and foremost, you'll need a plan for your website. An online strategy will help you minimize your efforts and costs. You can't just say "I want to make my website attractive and I want to rank high in Google." This is like building a house without floor plan. There will be some tweaks to the design, functionality or website content as you are building it, but the foundation shouldn't deviate too much from the original plan.

What is online strategy?

An online strategy should outline your main goals. What are you willing to achieve using available technology, and how you willing to achieve it? Developing an online strategy will involve thinking about:

- content you plan to include
- tools you are going to use
- features to be included on your website
- search engine (Google and Bing) optimization—the ability to be found on the Internet

Developing your online strategy

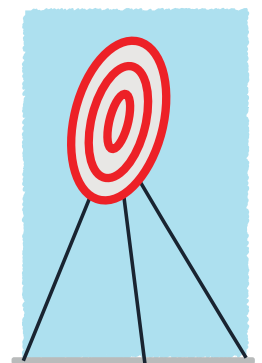
The process of developing your online strategy will vary depending on your needs. But answering the following questions will help you devise the most effective strategy for your business.



What benefits do you want from a website?

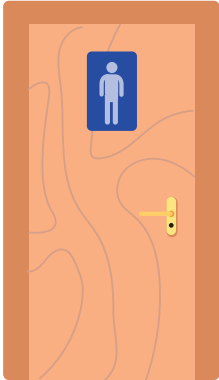
Your website strategy should consist of the main goals for your website. For example, do you want to:

- establish an online presence
- attract new customers
- develop better feedback
- sell more products
- reduce support cost



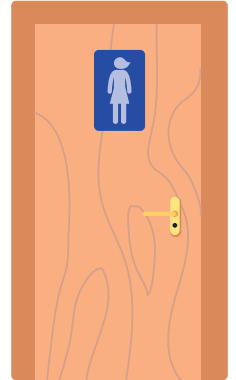
A clear set of goals is the crucial first step in developing a plan that will help drive visitors to take the action you desire. Your website should draw visitors to do something actionable—something that en-

gages them further with your brand (e.g. subscribe, download report, contact sales, purchase product, etc.).



Who are your visitors?

The best practise is to identify future visitors to your site and to create user personas—character profiles with the same needs and desires as prospective visitors. Interview real people these personas represent; you may be surprised at all you uncover. Personas help you better understand the motivations of visitors to your site. This will help you make a website that will resonate with your target audience and motivate them to take the desired action.



The following questions will help you create personas:

- age of the person
- gender of the person
- level of education
- professional background
- the way they'll access the website
- goals they're trying to achieve
- what matters to them (What's their top priority? What's a win? What keeps them awake at night? What frustrates them?)

It's up to you how specific you want to get. You can create a brief sketch of persona or be really specific. Here is an example of [user persona](#). Read an in-depth article on “How to create personas for your website.”

What is your unique value proposition (UVP)?

A unique value proposition is a promise of value that only you can provide. If you attract a high number of new visitors, in most cases they won't be familiar with you and what you do. You need to immediately communicate that the product or service you provide is right for them. And you need to give them a reason to buy/convert/stay on your website.

Your value proposition should be the first thing people see on your website's homepage. It should be a clear statement and touch on the following:

- Define value. What is the specific benefit you deliver?
- Point the difference. Why is your offer better than the competition's?



- Relevancy. How does your product solve or improve specific problems?

Who are your competitors?

Analyze your competition by delving into the details of who they are, what they do and what they offer that you don't. This doesn't mean you should copy them; this is the last thing you want to do. What this process accomplishes is to help you identify opportunities and define why you are the better choice.

Visit competitors' websites, make notes of things you like and don't like. Use the following technique to analyze your competitors:

- Identify competitors' websites
- Determine their strengths and weaknesses
- Recognize opportunities and threats
- Decide how to position your website (Do you offer the best price or value? Is your product the absolute top of the line? Do you provide services your competitors don't?)

What features and functionality will the site include?

What do you want your website to be capable of doing? By re-searching your competitors and understanding general requirements for your website, you will be able to better determine what technical options you require. Ask yourself:

- Will your site include blog or forum?
- Do you need calendar, map or contact form?
- Are you going to have share buttons or social bookmarks?
- Will people subscribe to your site's RSS / newsletter?
- E-commerce websites normally include a shopping cart, order forms and various product options.

Also, you will have to make sure your website is optimized for search engines.



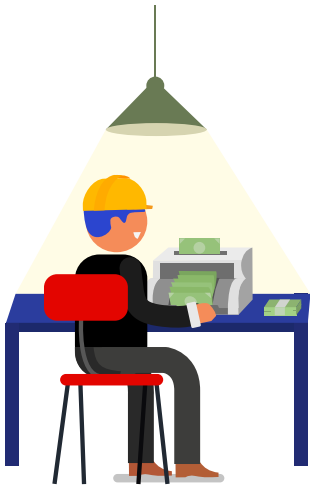


How long does it take to build a website?

How fast are you planning to get your site live? Figure out a launch date and work backwards to establish the milestones. Be real, do not set unrealistic targets. Small (2–3 page) websites can be created in days, but more complex websites can take months to develop. As a rule of thumb, project managers recommend establishing what appears to be a reasonable timeline—then allocate twice the estimated time.

Following are time estimates for developing different types of websites:

Website type	Template/theme website	Custom website
Business-card website	3 – 5 days	5 – 7 days
Portfolio website	5 – 7 days	2 – 4 weeks
Product-brochure website	5 – 7 days	2 – 4 weeks
E-commerce website	1 – 2 weeks	1 – 3 months
Blog (stand-alone or extra feature)	1 – 3 days	1 – 2 weeks



What are the building costs?

The cost of making a website will vary, depending on what you want to get out of your website and whether:

- you're going to create it yourself
- you plan to get help with some of the tasks
- you want to hire a company to complete the entire project for you

This [costs and benefits comparison chart](#) can help you maneuver the process.

When setting a budget for your website consider two things:

- Establish costs for initial site development, including content development, web tools and legal services.
- Estimate your ongoing costs, such as hosting services, web builder tool, domain name and technical maintenance.

What tools, skills or personnel do you need to build a site?

Do you know all the technology required to build your website with the features you want? With our guide, you will be able to make a website on your own. But in some cases, you might be planning to get others involved in the project. In this case, list the team of people who will be working on the website and determine their requirements. Your team may consist of:

- company stakeholders (you or anyone else)
- web developer (for complex projects)
- web designer (for additional graphic work)
- content writer and/or editor



As a small business owner, you may well be covering all of these roles yourself. Throughout this guide we will be showing you the best DIY website practises.



What is the structure of your website?

Create a map for your website. Think of it as an organizational chart listing the hierarchy of the pages in your website. It can be displayed as an organizational chart or with simple bullet points. Following is an [example](#).

What content are you going to use?

Content for your site is more than just text. Unless you want your site to look like a Simple Text document, you'll want to enhance the text with visuals. To make your website appealing and useful, consider adding some of these content types:

- written copy
- graphic images
- PDF documents
- audio and video files
- photos and galleries
- presentations



If you are working on an e-commerce website, prepare your product descriptions, photos and other materials you want to have on the site. **Read more about content in Chapter 5.**



How do you want the website pages to look?

It always helps to understand how your website will look and to identify what might be missing. Sketch out a rough layout for your website. You can use available web tools or simply draw it on a piece of paper. It doesn't have to be pretty, it just needs to show page layouts, called wireframes. One wireframe should be created for each unique page of the website. Here is an [example](#) of the wireframe:

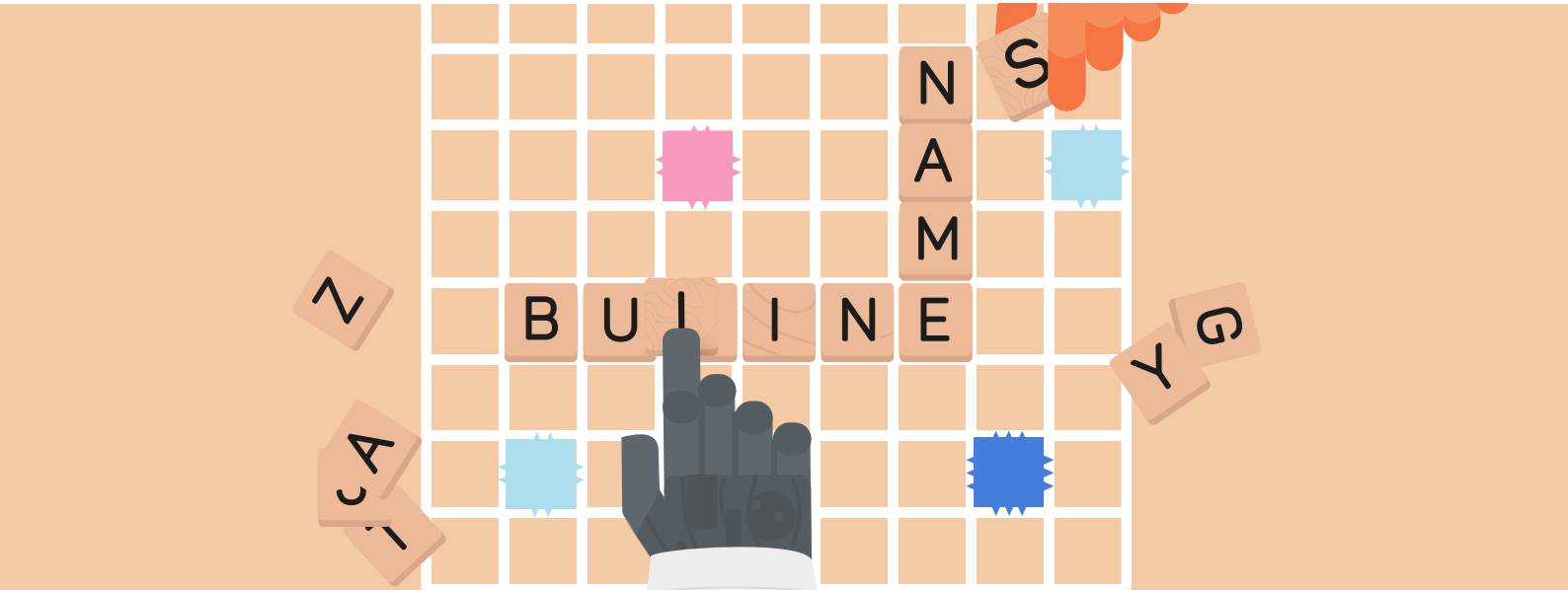
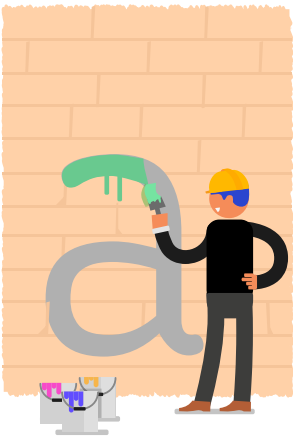
What colors and fonts will be used?

The colors used on your website are an important part of your brand identity. You will want to select an appropriate color scheme that's consistent with your existing graphic identity.

Many people don't realize that different colors influence our mood and can greatly affect how visitors perceive your website. In 85 percent of the cases, [colors influence your purchase decisions](#). And it's a no-brainer that color can affect factors like conversion rates. Here are some basic rules you can follow: [How to pick the perfect color combinations](#).

The fonts should be part of your website design and match your brand identity. Choosing great font combinations is an art, not a science. While there are no absolute rules to follow, it is important that you understand and follow best practices when combining fonts in a design.

One of the biggest mistakes people make is to use too many different fonts or to use unusual fonts that lack professionalism and are hard to read. The smart course of action is to keep it simple and use two fonts, typically one serif font and one non-serif font. If you want to learn more about typefaces read this: [How to select the right font for your website](#).



3. Find the right website name

Once you've developed your website strategy, you'll be ready to start thinking of a domain name. This domain will be yourname.com, yourbusiness.com or something similar. Following is what you need to know about choosing your domain name.

The name itself

If you are marketing yourself, you'll want to use your first and last name. Think johnsmith.com. Even if you aren't marketing yourself, it's not a bad idea to get your name as a domain now, in case you want to use it in the future.

If you are marketing your business, you will want to use your business name. Think yourbusiness.com.

If you are in the process of developing a name for your website or business, there are a few ways to research what name will be most effective.

- Start by doing a Google search for your intended name to see what sites come up, what they're linked to and decide if they're companies with which you would want to compete.
- Search for your intended name in the trademark database to see if it's trademarked. [Visit Trademark Electronic Search System](#) and perform a basic name search with one of the options available.
- If you're planning to use a popular name as part of your domain name, find out if it conflicts with prior trademarks or copyrights. For example, you can't use the domain name mywordpressguide.com because of the [WordPress trademark policy](#).
- If you do find that your intended name isn't used elsewhere, and isn't trademarked or copyrighted, check social media sites to see if profiles with the same name are available. Use [KnowEm](#) tool to see all the available options in one place.

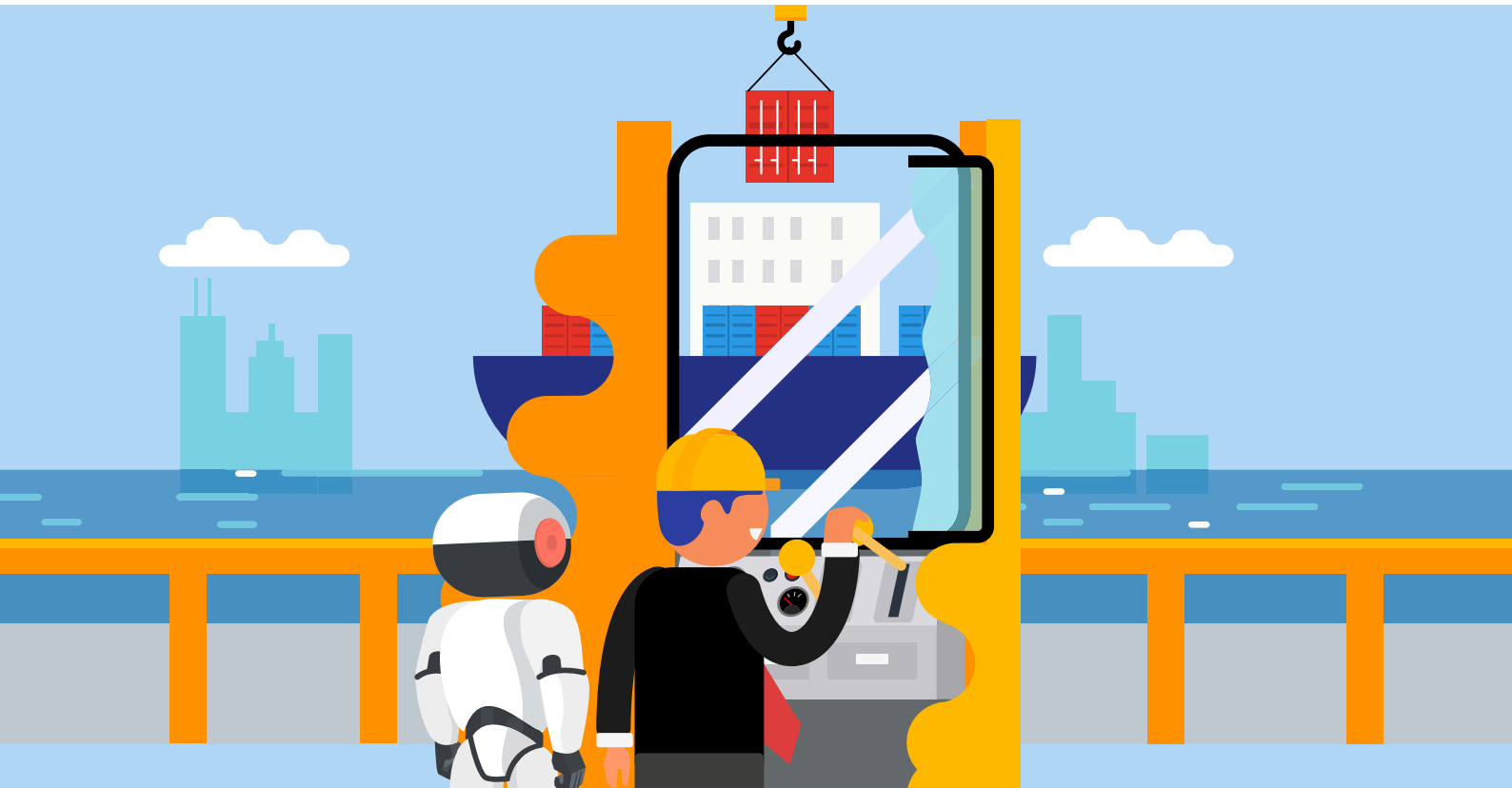
Top-level domains

When you choose a domain name, you will choose your intended name. (dot) top-level domain. There are hundreds of top-level domains from which to choose:

- The original top-level domains include: .com, .net, .org, .int, .gov, .edu and .mil
- Examples of country-specific top-level domains include: .au (Australia), .cn (China), .in (India), .jp (Japan), .ph (Philippines) and .uk (United Kingdom)
- Examples of topic-specific, top-level domains include: .accountants, .agency, .business, .city, .digital, .photography and .social.

Not sure what to choose for a top-level domain? For most websites, the first goal when choosing a domain name is to get the .com top-level domain whenever possible.

If your intended audience is outside the United States, you may wish to choose a country-specific, top-level domain. Look at your key competitors to see which top-level domain is going to be the most memorable for your intended audience.



4. Select the right tools to build a website

With so many options and different platforms available today, it can be difficult to select the best tool for the job. Choosing the platform upon which you want to build your website will be one of the most important decisions you make. Why? Because you will be tied to that platform for some time and it's never easy (or even possible) to move your website from one platform to another.

Depending on the type of website you plan to create, your tool selection may vary. Once you pick the tool, you'll have to make more decisions. Some tools require you to get web hosting (like BlueHost, InMotion or WebHostingHub) in order to install them. Others offer all-in-one hosted solutions (like Wix, SquareSpace or Shopify). If you decide to go with one of the content management systems (CMS), you may want a web hosting plan that caters to a specific platform such as WordPress or Joomla. Each option has pros and cons, and can be used in a different cases, based on your needs.

Now, let's look at a quick overview of the website development platforms and options from which you can choose. We will explain each option in detail in the upcoming chapters.

Content management systems (CMS)

What is CMS?

A CMS is a web tool/application that enables you to manage your website and site content from an internal user interface or dashboard.

Different types

There are plenty of options when it comes to choosing a CMS for your new website. Depending on the type of the website or content, how advanced you want it to be, and who will be managing and using the website, there's a lot to consider before selecting the right CMS. The most popular content management systems include WordPress, Drupal and Joomla. These three systems are open source, which means you can use them for free.

When to use CMS

You can build any kind of website with CMS. However, initially it was created for the websites that require constant content updates. So if you are planning to include or start a blog or news site, nothing beats the ease that CMS offers. Once set up, most content management systems are easy to maintain.

Find more details on how to make a website with CMS in Chapter 2.





Website builders

What is web builder?

Web builders (or website builders) are tools that allow you to create a simple website using templates and drag-and-drop interfaces.

Different types

There are two main types of website builders, online and offline. In recent years, the the many online web builders have become very popular. In this guide, we'll focus on online tools since these offer the most up-to-date features for your website. Many also include hosting as part of their services. The most popular website building platforms include Wix, SquareSpace and Weebly.

When to use web builders

With a web builder, you can build any kind of website, but people tend to use it for smaller personal projects. These tools are mostly suited to freelancers, photographers, restaurants and small businesses that want to create a good looking, static website. Yes, most of these tools include features like blogs or shopping carts, but they are not always well suited for them.

Find more details on how to make a website with web builder in Chapter 3.

E-commerce software

What is e-commerce software?

E-commerce (or electronic commerce) platforms are tools that were developed specifically for users to set up their online businesses.

Different types

There are several big players that provide services to build an online store. Basically, they offer another type of content management system. Some e-commerce software platforms are created with the store owner in mind—they're easy to setup and configure. Other e-commerce software platforms are created with the developer in mind—they're harder to set up for the general user, but easier to configure and customize. Some popular e-commerce software platforms include Shopify, Bigcommerce and PrestaShop.

When to use it

With e-commerce software, you can create an online store. However, if you're planning to sell just few products, you may not need



the software. These tools are mostly suited for people who wants to create website with hundreds or thousands of items to sell. These systems are usually easy to use but on the back end, e-commerce software is a complex mechanism.

Find more details on how to make an e-commerce website in Chapter 3.



HTML and CSS

What is HTML

HTML (or Hypertext Markup Language) is a computer language that allows you to create a website from scratch. Once created and properly uploaded to the World Wide Web, it can be viewed by anyone who has an internet connection.

What is CSS

CSS (or Cascade Style Sheets) is a style sheet language used for defining how HTML elements will be displayed on the website page. It's used to create visually attractive websites, user interfaces and web applications.

How and when you can use HTML and CSS

The basics of the HTML and CSS are not hard to learn. It's handy to know how these things work, especially if you are planning to make some unique customizations to your website. At the same time, with modern technology there are plenty of ready-made templates and themes available, so you don't have to start everything from scratch. You simply choose a design you like and edit the HTML coding to customize it to fit your business.

Find more details about HTML and CSS practises in Chapter 4.



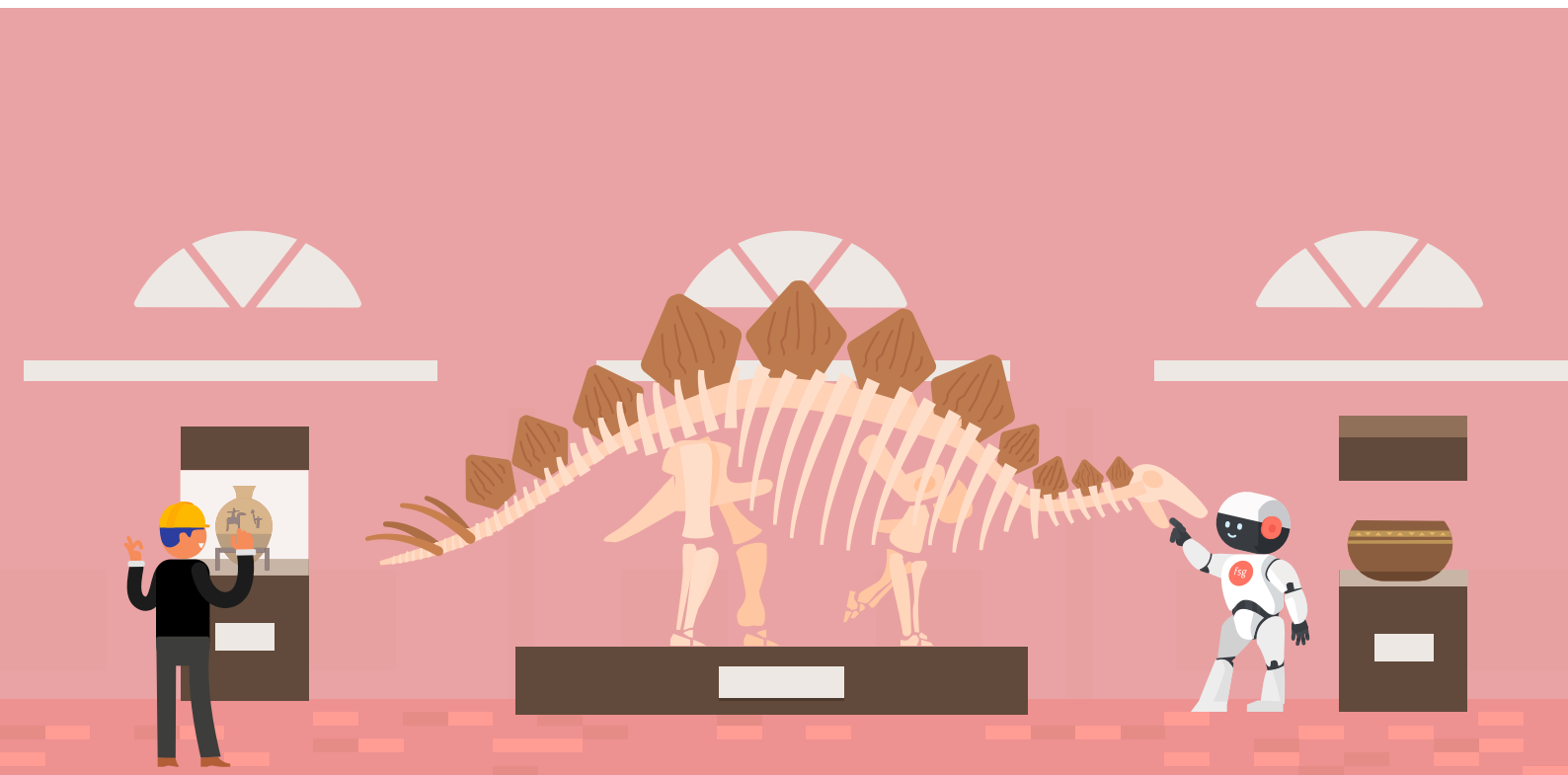
5. Website design

Design of your website is very important. People will form an opinion about your business based on the look and feel of your site. Visitors will often make a decision in 10-20 seconds whether to stay on your site or move on. To make an impact, it's important to have great design.

Depending on the type of the website and the way you choose to build it, you'll have a number of design options. If you decide to use CMS or a web builder, you'll be dealing with the pre-made theme and templates. Key things to keep in mind about your website design:

- use clean design
- make sure it's mobile optimized
- it's appropriate for your website's niche and goals
- one- or two-column layouts are normally the best option
- use unique design elements
- make it easy to navigate

If you are looking for customized options using some of the above-mentioned platforms or to create a website from scratch, you can turn to professional web designer/developer.



6. Website content

Content is an information that will be presented on your site. It's important to create and maintain useful, unique and clear content so your visitors can easily understand your message. Poorly written and badly presented content can frustrate and discourage visitors from staying on your website or returning to it in the future.

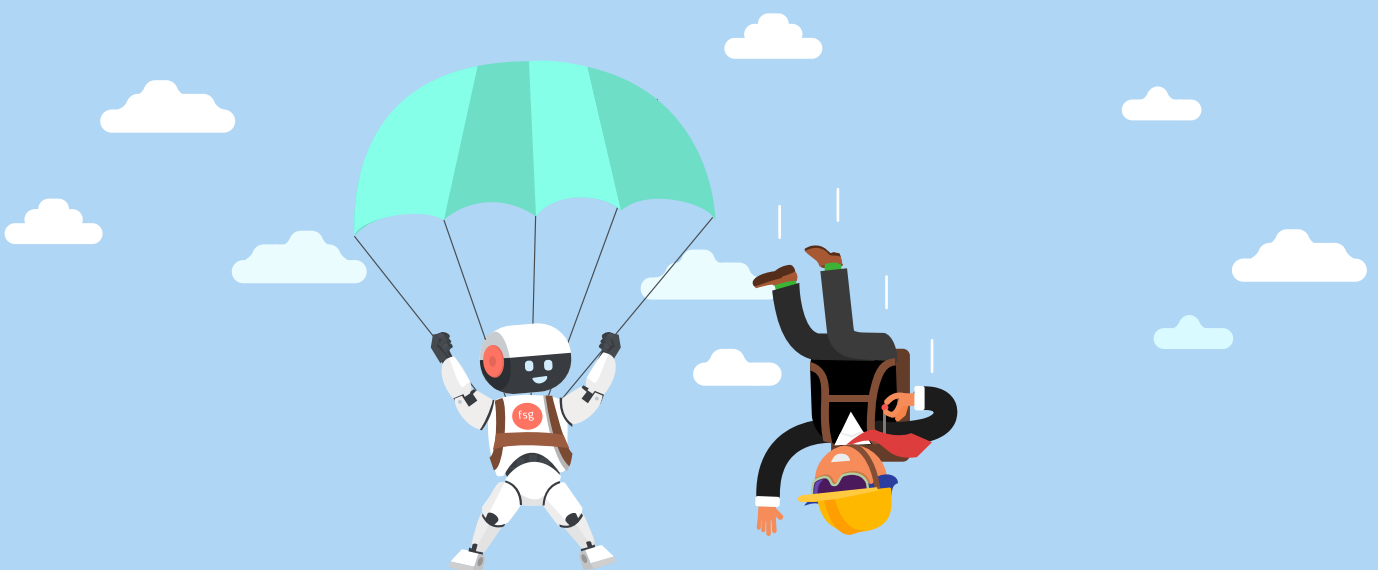
There are two questions you have to consider when creating content:

- Is the content relevant and interesting to your audience? (Think about the personas you developed.)
- How should the content be presented to your target audience?

Today, search engines reward websites that make an effort to create quality content to educate people in their niche by ranking them higher. You will have to make sure your content is: unique, relevant, legitimate and current.

Once you have an overview of your website plan and site map, you can drill down to the specifics of the content you need to create for a website launch. It will be important to create evergreen content (content that will not be changing much and will appear on the static pages). But it's also important to have fresh content added to your website on a regular basis.

Find more detail about content planning in Chapter 5.



7. Website content

Beta testing

Launching a new website is exciting and people tend to be eager to get it live as soon as possible. However, it's important to not jump the gun by failing to test your website before launching it. The testing process can seem overwhelming and you may not be sure where to start. But it's not that complicated; you just have to carefully check the following details to make sure everything is correct and functioning properly:

- content (spelling, punctuation, etc.)
- design-related elements (images, fonts, etc.)
- web development details (live URLs, broken links, etc.)
- search engine optimization factors (title tags, meta data, etc.)
- network administration (hosting, backup system, etc.)

Post-launch. Once your website goes live, you need to have a strategy in place for promoting and maintaining your website. Here are some basic things to consider:

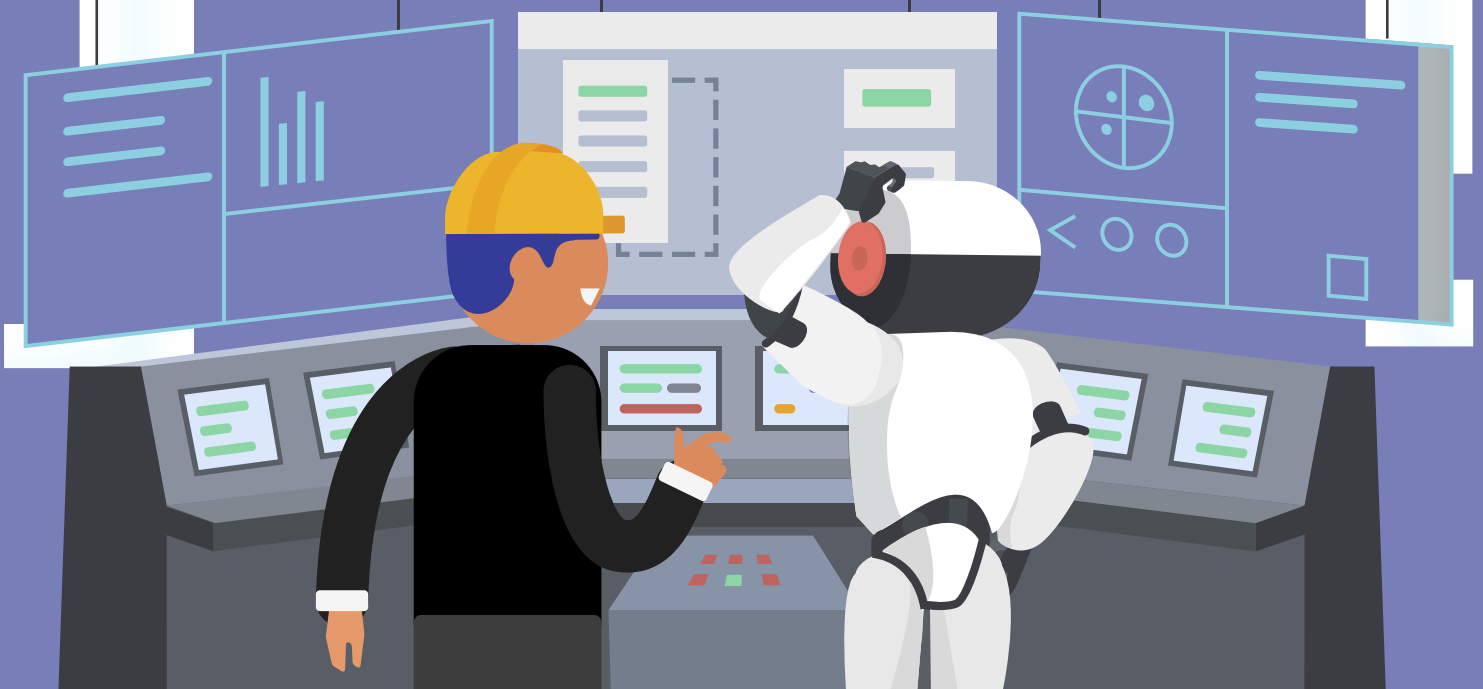
- preparing your site for promotion
- measuring website stats
- conducting maintenance if and when needed
- making sure you backup your site
- collecting visitor feedback

Find more details about before and after launch testing in Chapter 5.

Conclusion

This chapter has given you a basic idea of what you'll need to build and launch your own website. In the following chapters, we'll dive into the specific ways you can build your website, starting with content management systems and ending with professional developers and designers.

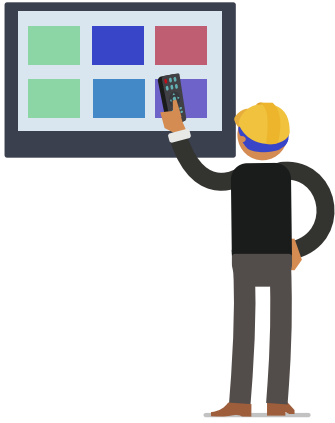
Making a website with CMS



- How to get started (domain and hosting)
- Comparison of the main CMSs
- Creating website with WordPress (benefits of WP)
- Creating website with Joomla
- Creating website with Drupal
- Creating e-commerce site (PrestaShop, Magento, etc.)
- Other popular CMSs you can use

As described above, a content management system (CMS) allows you to create and maintain a website within a central dashboard. You start with the software installed on your web hosting account. Once installed, you can log in to your administration area—the dashboard of the CMS. From the dashboard of a website, an administrator can handle a multitude of tasks. These include the following, depending on the content management system you choose:

- adding, editing and deleting website pages and blog posts
- adding users with specific user roles and permissions
- adding, editing and deleting themes
- applying or deleting add-ons (plugins) for functionality
- moderating comments on blog posts



Types of content management systems

There are two main types of CMSs: self-hosted—open source and hosted—proprietary.

Self-hosted (recommended) CMSs are open sourced and free to use. They enable you to create a website using one of the CMS platforms on your own domain and web-hosting account. The greatest advantage of using a self-hosted content management system is that you have full control over design and functionality. This is the recommended option.

Hosted CMSs are all-in-one solutions. They allow you to create a website using the platform without storing it on your own hosting account. The advantage of this solution is that you don't have to worry about CMS installation processes and software updates. But you will not have as much control over the design and functionality of your website. Also, companies that provide hosted CMSs retain all proprietary right to the website you made and you are required to abide by their terms of use.

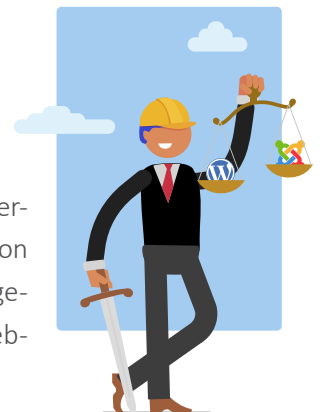
Costs to run a self-hosted CMS website

Establishment costs	Min and max cost	Time period
CMS	Free	open source
Domain name	\$10 – \$15 (for .com domain)	per year
Web hosting	\$60 – \$200 (shared hosting) \$300 – \$1000 (VPS hosting)	per year
Website backup *	\$10 – \$30 (offered with hosting)	per year
Domain privacy *	\$10 – \$20 (offered with hosting)	per year
Website security *	\$20 – \$500	per year
Website acceleration (CDN) *	\$9 – \$300 (depends on GB used)	per month

**These items are not necessary in the start-up phase of your site.*

CMS comparison

The most popular content management system used on the Internet today, according to [BuiltWith](#), is WordPress. More than 14 million websites use WordPress. The second most popular content management system is Joomla. Joomla is used on more than 2 million websites. Next, you have Drupal, with more than 750,000 websites.



WordPress is the most popular CMS and our recommended choice. It is a clear winner because:

It's free/open source

You'll have access to all the free goodies the WordPress community has created.

No coding knowledge needed

You don't need coding knowledge to handle tasks related to creating and maintaining your website.

Automatic updates

Software updates are done automatically or can be done within the dashboard with the click of a button.

Support

You'll get support for anything you need: including customization, design, functionality and maintenance.

In this chapter, we'll explain how to make a website with the three most popular CMSs: WordPress, Joomla and Drupal. Each platform is powerful and can be used to make any type of website. These platforms require you to have your own hosting account where you will install it.



Creating a WordPress website

There are two ways to install WordPress: one-click install (recommended) and manual install (advanced).

One-click install

Depending on which hosting company you sign up with, you may find it very easy to setup a WordPress site. Major hosts offer pre-installed or one-click installation of WordPress. While each host has slightly different control panels, the installation process will be similar. Once you sign up for the hosting services, you'll find an icon on the host's control panel that says something like, "One-click installation," "Install popular software" or "WordPress installation." To install WordPress onto your site, it's as simple as clicking the icon and following the step-by-step instructions to install the latest version of WordPress.

 [Watch how to install WordPress](#)

Installing WordPress with Host 1

Installing WordPress with Host 2

Installing WordPress with Host 3

Installing WordPress manually

If your host doesn't have a one-click installation (this may indicate that this host is not the best choice), WordPress has complete instructions on how to install it manually at wordpress.org.

Using the WordPress and managing your website

WordPress consists of two areas: front end and back end.

The front end is what your visitors will see when they come to your website. Many of the tasks performed in the back end will be visible on the front end, such as theme customizations, plugin functionality enhancements and content publication. There are also actions that can be performed by you and your visitors directly from the front end of the website, including commenting and social sharing.

The back end, also known as the WordPress dashboard, allows you to fully manage your site's content, community, functionality and design. It is accessible only by users who you assign to an account on your site. In order to access your WordPress dashboard, you need to type `yourwebsite.com/wp-admin` in the address bar of your browser and log in using your WordPress username and password.

The dashboard

The Dashboard is the center of website administration. It consists of three main parts: left side menu, top toolbar and middle section. The left hand column of your WordPress dashboard is where you'll find all of your administration options. This is where most of your creative effort will be focused.

The left side menu content includes the following tabbed options:

Home

Takes you to your dashboard.

Updates

Indicates if any themes or plugins need to be updated because a new version has been introduced. If WordPress itself is updated, you'll see a number in a red circle next to this menu item.

Posts are usually blog posts. They're usually time-sensitive news items.

Media

Here you'll see every photo, video and file you've uploaded as part of a post or page. You can also upload files directly to the media section.

Pages

Usually contains evergreen, static web pages. Examples include the "About Us" section on a company website or the "Services" page.

Comments

Notifies you when people comment on to one of your posts or pages. If you have comments, there'll be a number inside a red circle next to this.

Appearance

This is where you'll find themes, design and appearance features.

Plugins

These are extra mini-programs that help increase the functionality of your site. You can use plugins to turn your website into a membership site, add social media sharing, eliminate comment spam or just to do something cool or fancy with your graphics.

Settings

Settings has a number of uses. It's the first place you want to go when setting up a new site.

Changing the design of your website

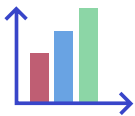
Once you've installed WordPress on your domain name, by default you'll get a basic automatically selected theme on your website. This theme and your website design can be easily changed by choosing from more than 1,500 free themes available in WordPress.

Themes can be found under "Appearance" menu item by selecting "Themes" subcategory. From this menu, you can select a new theme from the WordPress repository. Here's a quick checklist for choosing your theme by searching within the dashboard:



Read the description

Each theme usually comes with the short description of its features and functionalities. By reading it you should have a rough idea if the theme matches your needs and how customizable it is.



Check the ratings

Popular themes will have star ratings that are visible in the preview and under theme details. They should give you a clear idea how good the theme is.



Preview the theme

Preview the theme to get an idea of the overall look and layout.



Check for responsiveness

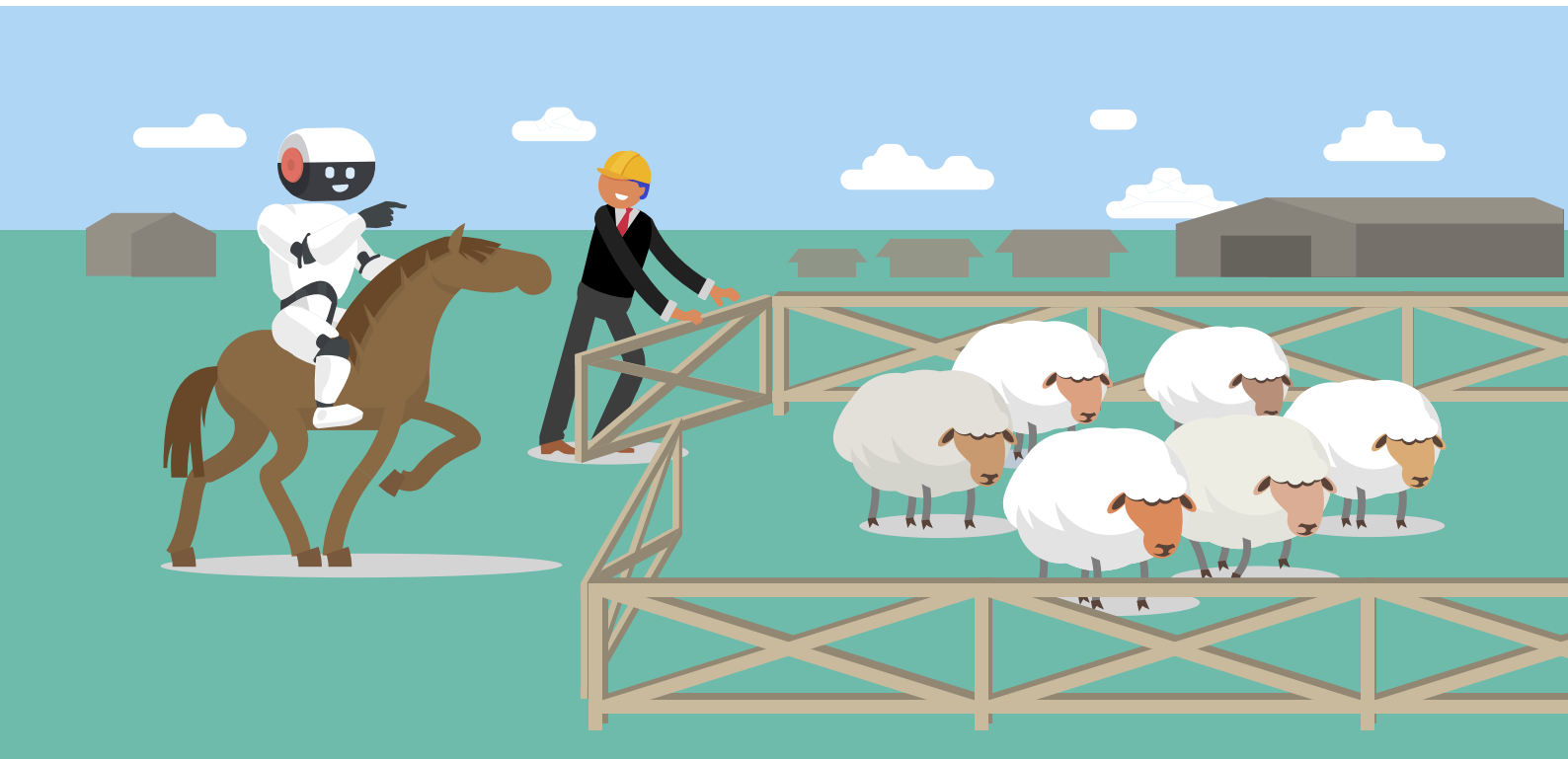
Aim for a responsive design that will work on desktop browsers and mobile devices. This is recommended by Google.

If you find a theme that takes your breath away, cool down. Once you install the theme you like, don't be surprised if it doesn't look quite right. Your theme is just a skeleton of your website—to make it appealing you will have to fill in content (text, photos, videos, etc.).

Notes

The reason that WordPress is widely used is because it's so versatile. WordPress is user-friendly, so small businesses can use it without a major investment of time learning how it works. Yet WordPress is robust enough to be used even for large corporate or commercial websites.

Because it is so prevalent, there are a lot of developers, programmers and coders who work with WordPress. And there are a lot of tech-savvy people who continually design themes, plugins and new features to add to your WordPress site.



Creating a Joomla website

Joomla was released to the public in August 2005. With each passing year, it has continued to grow its presence as one of the most powerful content management systems.

As a free and open-source CMS, Joomla is not only simply to install (one-click install option is available with the most hosting providers) but it also provides the ability to make customizations based on the user's specific wants and needs. Written in PHP, Joomla includes a variety of features that have helped increase its popularity. These include blogs, news flashes, polls, RSS feeds and page caching.

Benefits of Joomla CMS include:

Powerful, simple-to-use menu creation tool

This is just one of the many reasons why Joomla is the number-two CMS option.

Strong community support

This holds true with other platforms, but Joomla is a strong player in terms of this benefit.

Extensions

Approximately 9,400 [extensions are available](#) for Joomla that can help you customize your site.

Installing Joomla

For those who want to give Joomla a try, it doesn't take long to get up and running. As with WordPress, you have two installation options:

 [Watch how to install Joomla](#)

- One-click installation is the recommended option and can be completed within minutes.
- Manual installation takes anywhere from 20 to 30 minutes to complete.

Installing Joomla with Host 1

Installing Joomla with Host 2

Installing Joomla with Host 3

Once the installation is complete, you have a website that is live to the world. It will be very simple, but remember that you can customize every element of your website. From the layout and color to the menu content, you have the ability to make as many changes as you want.



Using Joomla and managing your website

With Joomla, you'll find that most of your activity as the administrator of the website will be focused inside the "Control Panel." To log in to your control panel, add the word /administrator/ to the URL of your site. For example, YourWebsite.com/administrator/. Easy to understand and navigate, the control panel has all the information and tools you require to make changes, add content and get an overall picture of your site's status.

Generally speaking, there are three key areas of the control panel:

Left menu bar

Contains: Find Content, Structure, Users, Configuration, Extensions and Maintenance.

Header menu

This is where you can access many of the same areas as the left sidebar, as well as a dropdown menu for System, Menus, Components and Help.

Main content area

Shows Logged-In Users, Popular Articles and Recently Added Articles.

Changing the design of your website (view video)

After you set up a basic website, it's time to consider your options for customizing each page. To get started, head to the "Extensions" tab in the header menu and drop down to "Template Manager." Here you can dive deeper into the template that is installed, while also considering other layouts that may suit your website. If you click on "My Default Style" and then the "Options tab," you can change the text and background colors, upload a new logo and add fonts.

The "Module Manager" is also important from a customization standpoint. It allows you to add, delete and edit modules.

Adding content (view video)

A visually appealing website is a great start, but it won't take you far unless you add high quality content. With Joomla, this is a simple process. On the left sidebar, under the "Content" header, you will find the following:

- Add New Article
- Article Manager
- Category Manager
- Media Manager

If you click on "Add New Article," for example, you will be taken to the page where you can add your content, choose your publishing options and click "Save." There are more features on this page, such as publishing, image and links, so be sure to experiment with each one.

Notes

If you know you'll be hosting a lot of articles on your site and don't need many features, Joomla can certainly be the CMS of choice. It gives you the power to create a website quickly, and with a bit of training, offers the shortest development cycle in the CMS arena.



Creating a Drupal website

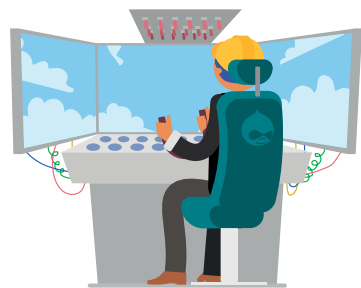
If you're looking for a content management system that's more robust than WordPress but still gives you a lot of free options for themes and modules, consider working with Drupal. Like WordPress, it's a free CMS that lets you build a website easily. But Drupal is more robust and allows greater flexibility than WordPress.

Drupal is more challenging to use than WordPress or Joomla, but with many free plugins and themes, it's a great choice for a larger or more robust website that's going to require greater functionality than a simple one-page website.

Installing Drupal

Similar to other CMSs, you'll have two options:

- Many of the popular hosting providers offer a one-click installation of Drupal. And installation can be completed in as little as ten minutes using the single-click installer provided by your web host.
- If you're planning to use custom setup options or your host doesn't offer one-click option, you'll need to install Drupal manually. Instructions are available from Drupal [here](#).



Using Drupal and managing your website

When you open your website's homepage, it should take you to a login page (or simply choose the Login tab). Log in with your username and password from the installation process. Once you've logged in, you'll see your site's homepage and the administrator menu bar at the top. This is where you'll do most of the customizations. The tabbed menu bar consists of:

Dashboard

Gives administrators a customizable overview of important site information. You can add and remove items from the dashboard or you can disable the dashboard completely.

Content

This is where you find, manage and create new pages. You also manage comments here.

Structure

Edit blocks, define new content types, configure menus, administer tags and configure some contributed modules.

Appearance

Switch between themes, install themes and update existing themes.

People

Manage existing users or create new user accounts.

Modules

Update, enable, disable and install new modules under this tab.

Configuration

Lets you configure the settings for certain functionality features, including some modules: user settings, general site information and other general administrative settings.

Reports

Displays information about site security, necessary updates and information on site activity.

Help

Displays links with information and online documentation about the functionality of all modules installed on the site.

Right side

Includes user-specific items such as user account and log out.

Shortcuts submenu

This is where you can add the most commonly used menu items.

Changing the design of your website

The Appearance menu item allows you to select a new theme or customize your existing theme. Like WordPress, Drupal gives you the option of setting a different theme for your front and back ends. To install a new theme, click on the text at the top left-hand corner of the lightbox that says, "Install New Theme."

Installing a new theme on Drupal is slightly more challenging than on WordPress. Once you've found your new theme, you can down-

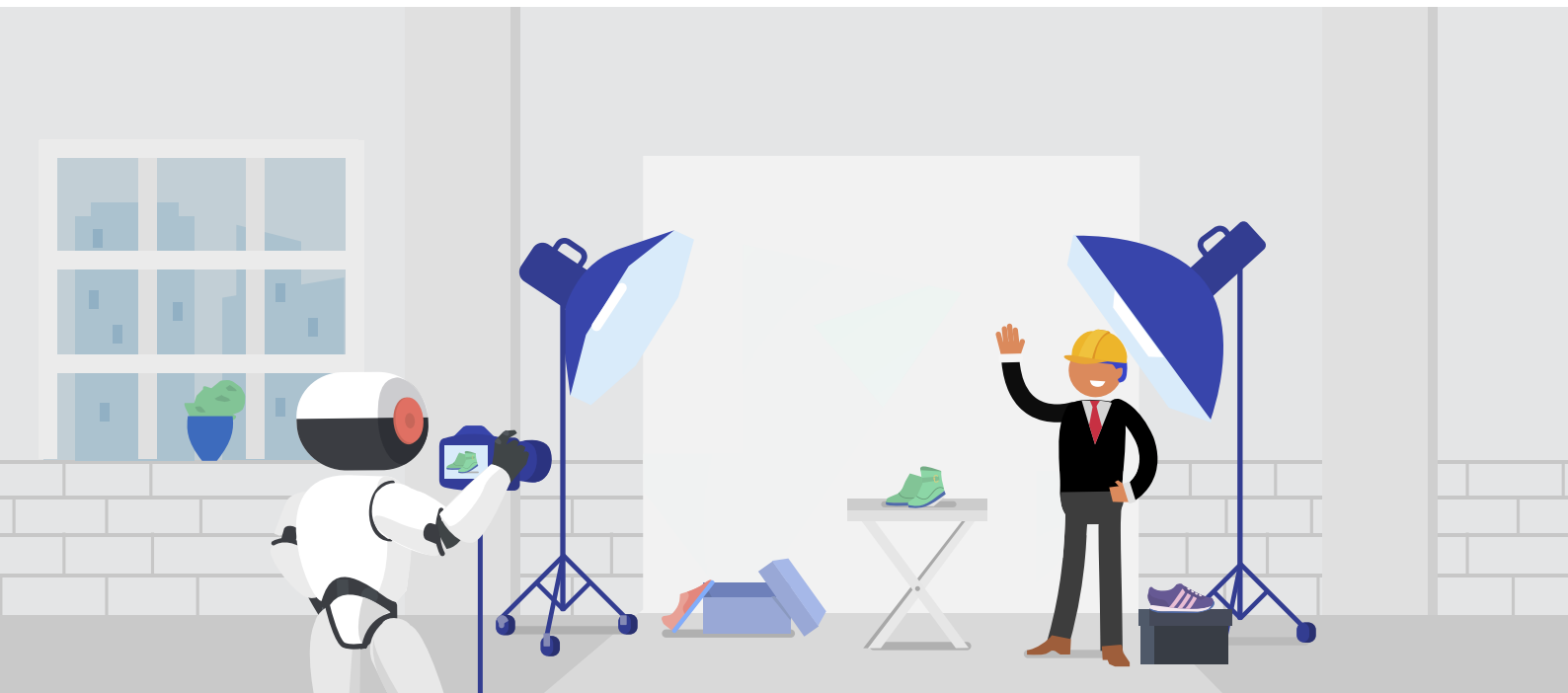


load it in a compressed (.zip or tar.gz) format. When you've clicked on the Install new theme, you'll then select your compressed file using the "Upload a Module or Theme" section of the lightbox.

Basic settings can be altered by using the Settings tab of the Appearance lightbox. This allows you to determine whether a logo, site name, secondary menu and other items will be displayed on your site.

Notes

Like many forms of software, the more options you have, the harder it can be to figure out how to use it. Drupal has many options that allow you to have maximum customization, but it does take some time to learn how to use it effectively. Give Drupal a shot; play with its various features and functions and you'll have a unique and beautiful website in no time.

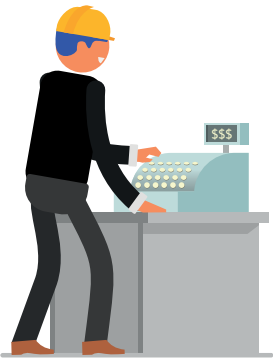


Creating a Prestashop (e-commerce) website

If you want to create an e-commerce store, you'll need to choose a content management system that will help you with the process of selling products as opposed to solely serving posts and pages. It can be challenging to know where to begin navigating with so many options available.

For many people who want to sell online, Prestashop is a viable solution. It's an open-source shopping-cart software designed to give businesses the flexibility to build a functioning online store.

As with regular CMSs, Prestashop can be installed manually or with easy one-click install processes. Most hosting providers offer a one-click install option, which we recommend. You should easily find it within your host's control panel.



Using Prestashop and managing your website

After you install Prestashop, you'll get login instructions that will enable you to access the administrator control panel. To help you get your online store setup faster, Prestashop will offer to take you through the setup tutorial and perform the following steps. (Or you can skip the tutorial and go directly to the administrator control panel.)

- Customize your shop's look and feel
- Add products to your catalog
- Set up your payment methods
- Set up your shipping methods

We recommend that you install the default free theme. You can always change it after you're more familiar with the platform. Once theme installation is finished and you've completed the setup tutorial, you can return to the main administrative area. This panel is the center of store administration. It consists of two main parts: a left-side menu and a middle section. The left side menu contains all of your administrative options. This is where most of your creative effort will be focused. The middle section displays all of your store's operational information such as the number of registrations, orders and sales totals.

Let's look at each tabbed option in the left side menu:

Dashboard

Takes you back to the main page of your admin panel.

Catalog

The heart of your shop, where you'll perform tasks such as adding products, creating categories and setting up carriers and suppliers.

Orders

Contains orders with the invoices. This is where you'll manage tasks such as handling merchandise returns, credit slips and per-order customer service.

Customers

Access information about your clients. Here you may edit customer addresses, apply special discounts and handle customer service.

Price rules

Create vouchers and price reductions through a set of rules.

Modules

Extends the power and usefulness of your shop. More than 100 modules are available by default and many more can be purchased from the Add-ons Marketplace.

Shipping

Where you manage everything related to carriers and shipping costs, as well as marketing.

Localization

Customize your shop with local values, such as language and translation, currency, units, taxes and tax rules, and geographical entities.

Preferences

Fine-tune the way your store functions and manage every aspect of the customer experience.

Advanced parameters

Contains links to specific tools and informational pages, such as the Web service settings, the database backup tool and the performance page.

Administration

Lets you set the administration panel, including the content of the Quick Access menu, the employee list and permissions, and the order of menu contents.

Stats

Provides access to all the statistics and graphics that are gathered and generated.

Changing the design of your store

Prestashop has done a great job creating documentation that covers the basic aspects of the platform. There are separate guides for designers, developers and merchants.



When it comes to changing the look of your online store, Prestashop has more than 3,000 themes and modules. The company offers tips for installing themes, as well as a demo store that enable users to preview a theme. While users have to pay for add-ons such as social media and PayPal integration, there are out-of-the-box features that command user attention. Tools such as sales tracking, wish lists, unlimited currency support, one-page checkout, international shipping, MailChimp and Olark make it easy to customize your website and make a retail business.

Notes__

While Prestashop has its shortcomings, such as expensive modules and limited marketing opportunities, it proves itself as a powerful adversary to other shopping-cart solutions. For the backend, the dashboard gives you everything you need to manage your business. It supports all major shipping carriers and comes with more than 10 payment methods, giving you flexibility to meet demands of different customers.

Conclusion

Now that we've looked at CMS platforms that can help you manage both content and product sales, let's move on to the next way to build websites.

Chapter 3

Making a website with web builder

- How to get started (the pros and cons of web builders)
- Comparison of the main web builders
- Creating a website with Squarespace
- Creating a website with Wix
- Creating a website with Weebly
- Creating an e-commerce site with web builders (Shopify, Bigcommerce, etc.)
- Other popular web builders

Are you looking for the all-in-one solution to building your website? If so, then a website builder might be just what you are looking for. Unlike CMS platforms that have to be installed and configured on your web hosting account, website builders allow you to create static websites, blogs and e-commerce stores with ease. Many give you drag-and-drop functionality and hundreds of designs. They even host your website for you. Plus, you'll have access to support that will help you develop and maintain your site.

The downside of website builders is that once you select your builder and create a website, you cannot take what you created and move it somewhere else. Your website is designed and built to be hosted only on this platform as outlined in web builders' terms of use. So it's

important to choose an option you can live with into the future.

In this chapter, we're going to look at how you can build your website using three of the most popular website builders: Wix, Weebly and Squarespace.








Creating a website with Wix

Wix is a website builder that can be used to create stunning, professional websites. It features a user friendly Drag n' Drop Editor, and can be used by anyone, without any knowledge of coding.

Costs

Wix offers free accounts and you can sign up to test their tools without paying a penny. Of course, you will want your website on your own, professional domain. Free sites have names that look like this `yourwebsite.wix.com`. But opening a free account gives you the opportunity to test what they have and decide if you like it or not.

Once you've created your website and are happy with the outcome, you can upgrade to one of the plans and establish a custom domain for your website. Wix offers five different plans:

Connect domain	Combo	Unlimited	eCommerce	VIP
Most basic	For personal use	For entrepreneurs	For small business	Priority support
				
\$4.08/month	\$9.25/month	\$12.42/month	\$16.17/month	\$24.92/month

The benefits

Wix is all about giving users the freedom they need to design their sites exactly as they want them. They've introduced praiseworthy features over the years; the following ones command your attention:

Templates

Wix offers over 280 beautiful templates in different industries and categories. You'll find everything from baking to finance to law. These pre-made templates give users the overall structure and guidance they desire. Take your time in making a decision as you can't switch from one template to another. This shortcoming aside, templates feature a wide array of tools and useful applications.

Customizable add-ons

The [Wix app market](#) has dozens of add-ons to set up a website to your specifications. As a result, you can engage customers with live chat, social interaction, coupons, surveys, or even sell them items using eCommerce features such as shopping cart and payment gateway. Wix offers instructions on how to integrate these apps in your site and one-click installation.

Drag & Drop Editor

If you're new to website building, being able to position elements exactly where you want them, without having to know coding basics, is amazing. This is made possible by the Drag & Drop Editor. It also works as a prop for advanced users who are trying to refresh the design of their site.

Customer support

Wix offers a user-friendly interface, and most of the elements and features are accompanied by additional details and practical advice. If users run into problems, they can get help from the forum or [Support Center](#). There are FAQs, video tutorials and the option to contact the most relevant department at the company. The customer service team answers queries within 24 hours.

Using Wix and setting up your website



[Watch how to install Wix](#)



[Read Wix web builder review](#)

After you sign up, you can choose a template for your site. Click on the “Edit” button to launch the Drag ‘n’ Drop Editor. You can edit anything in the template, including images and text.

A great feature of Wix is that you can save the work in progress while modifying the template. This saves you the hassle of having to start again from scratch if you get disconnected from the internet or have to work in intervals. And at any point in the customization process, you can see the site in your web browser, so you can preview exactly how it will appear once live.

To make additional website customizations use menu on the left side, which includes the following tabs:



Pages

Add pages by clicking “Add page”. You can open “Page Settings” to change the name of the page and its URL. Enter SEO details to help search engines find your pages.

Design

Customize your background, colors and fonts.

Add

Change the background of different elements and select a particular color palette. With “Add” option you can add a text, image, gallery, media, buttons and menus.

App manager

Integrate features into your site such as a contact form, Google Maps, PayPal and Flickr Gallery.

Setting

Connect a domain name, update SEO settings to make your site visible in search engines, add social profiles and set up a Google Analytics account to keep track of your stats.

Tips. In the default plan, your site will be online on a domain address that starts with wix.com, but you can upgrade your account to get your own free domain and remove all Wix advertisements. Once you’ve done this, you can utilize Wix-powered email for your domain. To set up your email, go to My Account - > Mailboxes. The email system relies on the Google Apps framework, so you’ll need a Wix plan that includes a custom domain.

Notes

Wix has all product features tested by its private development team to ensure seamless functionality. It’s one of the easiest website builders to use. All you have to do is place elements on your site exactly the way you want them to appear to your site visitors. As a result, you enjoy the benefit of WYSIWYG (what you see is what you get) when you create a website with Wix.

Creating a website with Weebly





Weebly was founded in 2006. For the past nine years, it has grown to become one of the top website building platforms in the world. While some people have web design experience, others don’t know the first thing about getting started. This is where Weebly comes into play.



Weebly is built on the premise that anybody can create a website. It doesn't matter if you are creating a personal blog, an online store or a website for your small business, this platform allows you to do so with ease.

Costs



You are probably wondering how much Weebly costs. If you only need to test the tool, you can opt for the free version. This gives you unlimited features, free of cost. You will also get an access to a fully integrated eCommerce platform in addition to all the standard features. Following are four plan options offered by Weebly:

Free  \$0/month	Starter  \$4/month	Pro  \$8/month	Business  \$25/month
---	--	--	--



The benefits

Using Weebly and setting up your website

-  [View Weebly overview video](#)
-  [Read Weebly web builder review](#)

Step 1

Getting started and signing up

You can do this for free via the Weebly website. Simply provide your full name, email address and password. Once you enter the information, you're taken to the next page, which has an "Add Site" button. Here you will be asked one very important question. "What's the Focus of Your Site?"

You have three options: Site, Blog or Store

Before making a decision, think carefully about your target market and the information your website will provide. A small business that doesn't sell anything online may opt for the "Site" option. If you are starting a blog, the "Blog" prompt is your choice. And if you plan on selling a product online, choose "Store."

Step 2

Choosing your theme

This step shows why it is so important to make the right decision when selecting a focus. At this point, you are provided with themes based on your site's purpose.

For example, if you choose "site," there are hundreds to choose from, so you shouldn't be in a rush to make a decision. Instead, check out each one, including the layout and features, to decide which is best for your website.

Tips. Weebly makes it simple to change your theme at a later date, so don't dwell on this too long. Flexibility is an aspect of Weebly that shines over competing website builders such as Wix.

Step 3

Choosing your website domain

Now that you've selected a theme, you'll need to set your site name. You should do this before you start adding content, choosing colors and moving design elements around.

Your options include the following.

- Use a subdomain of Weebly.com (free).
- Register a new domain.
- Connect a domain you already own.

We recommend starting with the free Weebly subdomain. You can add your custom domain name after you've determined that you're happy with what Weebly has to offer.

Customizing and designing your website

Now its time to explore the dashboard and customize your site as you see fit. As with any CMS, Weebly has a dashboard from which you can do anything and everything. Your dashboard will have these admin options:

The left sidebar

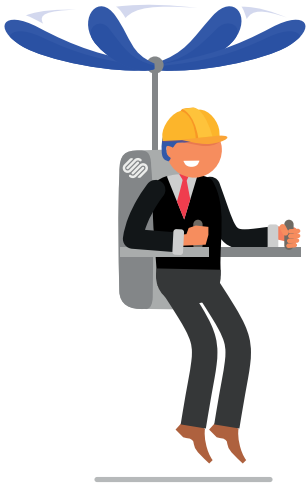
This is your jumping off point. Here you'll have the ability to drag and drop components from these categories: Basic, Structure, Media, Commerce and More.

The top navigation bar

Provides you with even more options. In addition to Build, which displays the left sidebar, you can click on: Design, Pages, Store and Settings.

Notes

With four distinct packages, a boatload of high-end features and a simple-to-use platform, it's clear why Weebly is trusted by approximately 20 million site owners, according to WebsiteToolTester.com. Weebly's Help Center offers a wide range of support in the form of email, chat, videos, webcasts and guides.






Creating a website with Squarespace

Squarespace is one of the most popular all-purpose website builders in the marketplace—and it has only improved since the introduction of Squarespace 7. It is a hosted solution, which means it's easy to setup and customize a fully functional website without getting too involved in how the hosting works.

Costs

Squarespace doesn't offer a free plan, but there's a 14-day, risk-free trial. Users can sign up to test their website before making a decision. Beyond that, there are three packages.

Standard	Unlimited	Business
		
\$10/month or \$96/year	\$20/month or \$192/year	\$30/month or \$288/year

For existing domain names, you have to configure your domain with Squarespace. This involves editing your DNS records and point-

ing them to Squarespace servers. (Squarespace offers a [video highlighting major registrars](#).) The customer-support department will assist users who run into problems integrating existing domains with the Squarespace platform.

The benefits

Squarespace has no shortage of power in terms of the following:

Templates

Squarespace provides a wide variety of highly professional templates that command user attention. Options include templates that are detailed or minimalistic, e-commerce oriented or designed to work as an online portfolio—so you can choose the type depending on the nature of your business. Each template is mobile-friendly and responsive.

Style editor

The style editor makes it easy for users to customize their website without modifying the CSS code. There are options to adjust background images, colors, width of sidebars, spacing and padding, opacity of pages and typography. In addition, there's a CSS editor for users who are familiar with coding.

Marketing & SEO

Squarespace has impressive SEO and marketing features. Users can edit meta descriptions, URLs, page titles and XML sitemaps. Plus, HTML code is already included. There's also social integration for Facebook, Twitter and other social media platforms.

Commerce

Squarespace enables you to create an online store to sell products and services. The Commerce feature supports different product variants including weight, color and size. Advanced e-commerce features, such as express checkout, integrated account functions, label printing and carrier shipping are included in the paid package. Users can receive payments via Stripe.

Customer support

Squarespace offers free 24/7 live chat and telephone support. The company also provides instructional documentation, video tutorials and an active forum where you can get questions answered. The customer-care team consists of experienced users and nothing is ever outsourced.

Using Squarespace and setting up your website



[View Weebly overview video](#)



[Read Weebly web builder review](#)



Step 1

Choosing a template

Visit Squarespace, select “Get Started” and choose a template. You can choose a different template later if your initial selection doesn’t suit your business needs. After selecting the template, click “Start With This Design,” and enter your credentials.

Step 2

Selecting a name and site purpose

Next, you will see a Welcome message and you will be asked to select the site purpose with the following options: Business, Personal, E-Commerce, and Non-profit. Then you will have to fill in Site Title and depending on the site purpose, you may choose to include your business information.

Customizing and designing your website

Once you complete the signup process, you’ll be redirected to the website administration area. Inside the administration panel, you’ll see left side menu bar. In the middle, you’ll see the website layout you are actually working on. You can point at your website and see some of the basic admin functions available to you right on the website itself. However the most customization work will be done within the left side menu bar, which includes the following tabbed items:

Pages

Create new pages for a blog, site or online store in the main navigation menu. Content is added to the page blocks, and different blocks can be created for different types of content.

Design

Customize the appearance of your site and create a unique look to match your existing brand. Includes logo and title changes, switching the template and making style changes.

Commerce

Under the Commerce tab, you can add products, pricing and “on-sale” tags. There’s also an option to provide additional information about the product (physical or digital), select a carrier and connect a payment account.

Metrics

Provides a comprehensive overview of visitor interaction on your website and helps you track recent traffic statistics. Activity in Metrics refreshes with new data about every 90 minutes.

Comments

Interact with your visitors and build a community. In Comment Settings, you can control how comments are posted, approved, replied to, and more.

Settings

Here you can manage multiple tasks such as: changing basic information of your site, including site style and description, and connecting a custom domain name, email account or social media profiles. Also you can modify blogging and SEO settings.

Help

Find answers to your questions in the form of in-depth articles, videos and workshops to help you create and manage your site.

Notes

Squarespace offers multiple plans and you will have access to professional templates, drag-and-drop editing and 24/7 customer support. So the value of setting up a Squarespace website is compelling when you weigh in the many benefits the platform offers.

Conclusion

We hope you have enjoyed our introduction to the popular website builders that are available for you to create your static website, blog or e-commerce site. Next, we’re going to look at another way to build websites for those who are comfortable with a little coding.



In this chapter, we'll cover the basics of website design and development. This will include core technologies that are used to build a site (HTML and CSS). These are useful if you plan to make your own website from scratch, without using pre-made themes/templates, or if you just want to learn something new.

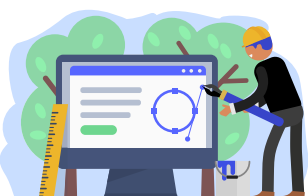
Also, we will present graphic design principles and tools that can be used to create custom graphic elements for your site. If you are planning to hire a professional to do the custom design work for you, this chapter will help you understand costs and how to find a pro who will best meet your needs.

If you decided to make a website on your own (from scratch) without using pre-made templates and web builders, you will have to wear many hats. That means you'll be part-time graphic designer and an information architect—and you'll need to know HTML and CSS. But don't get too overwhelmed, think of it as simply creating web page. This process can be divided into two broad areas: design (visual) and development (HTML and CSS).

Web page design (DIY)

Page layout

When you are creating a web page for the first time, knowing what direction to go when it comes to its anatomy can be mind boggling.



But there are common rules of thumb that will guide you in designing your site.

Most mainstream web pages have the following structural elements:

Header

The header contains content relevant to all pages on your site, such as a logo or website name, and a navigation system. The header is seen on each page.

Main body

This occupies the largest area on a web page. It contains content specific to the page being viewed.

Sidebar

The sidebar contains additional information, which may be associated with the main body of content. It may also include an alternative navigation system.

Footer

Footer content usually includes contact information, a shipping address or legal notices. Like the header, the footer appears on every page, but it's positioned at the bottom.

These structural elements are common in all webpages, but can be used in different ways:

- A one-column layout (header, main body and footer)
- A two-column layout (header, main body, sidebar and footer)
- A three-column layout (header, main body, two sidebars and footer)

Most websites use a one-column or two-column layout. Single-column layouts also work well for mobile screens, while two-column layouts are especially well suited for tablets. Three-column layouts can get trickier and are only appropriate if you know they'll always be viewed on desktop computers with large screens.



Visual (graphic) design

When first visiting your website, visitors will decide whether or not they want to stay on your site in three seconds or less. Because of

this, it's critical that the design of your website is appealing, presenting graphics and information that make visitors want to see more.

Graphic design encompasses all the elements that make up the “look and feel” of your website. This includes: logos, graphics, fonts and colors. It should be consistent with the visual identity of your brand as it appears on your logo, signage, letterhead and brochures, or other promotional materials.

Visual design is usually presented in the form of sketches and graphic files showing how the website will look. Important elements of visual design include:

Logo

Your logo is the most prominent element of your business identity. If you don't already have a logo, it's important to create one that's professional and reflects well on your business. There are many professional tools and easy-to-use logo design tools that you can try. We'll discuss this more later in this chapter.

Graphics

Graphics are additional visual elements that you might use on your website. It may include banners, widgets, clipart, icons, photos and images. These should be placed on the page appropriately and match the content of the web page.

Colors

The color combination used on your website also represents your brand identity. You'll want to pick an appropriate color scheme for your business and industry niche. [How to pick a perfect color combination.](#)

Fonts

Fonts should be selected as part of your website design. You'll want them to be consistent with your brand identity. While there are no absolute rules to follow when choosing a font, it is important that you understand and follow some basic precepts when combining fonts in a design. [How to select the right font.](#)

DIY design and editing tools

Logo design	Graphics design	Colors
Squarespace logo (Free)	GIMP (Free)	Adobe Kuler
Logogarden (Free)	Canva (Free)	COLOURlovers
LogoYes (\$0.99)	Picmonkey (Free photo editing)	ColorRotate
DesignMantic (\$29)	PiktoChart (Infographics free and paid)	Color Scheme Designer
GraphicSprings (\$39.99)	Infogr.am (Infographics free)	Fonts
Page layout	Google Charts (Free)	Google Fonts (Free)
WiteFrame.cc (Free and paid)	Picfull (Free photo editing)	TypeTester (Free)
Gliffy (Free and paid)	Adobe Photoshop (From \$9.99/month)	Adobe Typekit (Free and paid)
lplotz (Free and paid)	Adobe Illustrator (From \$9.99/month)	FontDeck (From \$7.50/year)
Balsamiq (\$79)	Corel Paint Shop Pro (\$79.99)	



Web page development (DIY)

HTML and CSS are the two core technologies used to build web-sites. This section will give you the steps needed to develop a web page using the two internet markup languages—HTML and CSS. But before we begin, it is important to understand some basic terminology of the two.

What is HTML?

HTML is the markup language for the structure of Internet content. It refers to the technology that is supported by modern web browsers, and it is an open standard that can be used by anyone without requiring a license. HTML can be used to build a rich, interactive web-site.

HTML5, the latest markup language, can be used to create web pages that:

- function when you're not connected to the web
- handle HD videos
- deliver visual content and media-rich graphics
- organize the structure and presentation of the website

The basics of HTML

The best way to create a web page with HTML is learning by doing. But before getting started, it's helpful to know some basic terminology, including tags and elements. You should note that an HTML document contains text that includes tags that describe the structure of the document. In other words, they guide the web browser in how to present the document.

HTML tags

HTML has over 100 tags that allow web browsers to interpret and display content. They can be used to emphasize phrases, add media or provide metadata, which describes other data on the site. Some tag examples are: `<h1>`, ``, `<p>`.

HTML elements

These consist of opening tags and corresponding closing tags, and text in between the two. An example is the following: `<p>` I am learning HTML5 `</p>`. This is where `<p>` is the start tag and `</p>` is a closing tag.

HTML document structure

The basic structure is created with special tags. Elements defined by these tags often occur only once in an HTML document. Common elements include: Head, Body and Title.

What is CSS?

CSS is the acronym for Cascading Style Sheet. It is a plain text format used by web pages to organize content in proper format for display. It can help define HTML information with size, spacing, border, color and location on a webpage. It can also help create a consistent style throughout multiple web pages.

CSS can be added to HTML elements using a style attribute (inline), using a `<style>` element in `<head>` section of HTML (internal) or using a single or more CSS files (external).

A CSS syntax takes the following form: `element { property:value; property:value }`

- Element = HTML element name
- Property = CSS property
- Value = CSS value

Example of a simple web page



HTML and CSS source file

index.html

```
<!DOCTYPE html>
<html>
  <body>
    <title>Jen's Kitchen</title>
    <link rel="stylesheet" href="kitchen.css" type="text/css">
  </head>
  <body>
    <h1> Jen's Kitchen</h1>
    <p>
      If you love to read about <strong>cooking and eating</strong>,
      would like to find out about some of the best restaurants in
      the world, or just want a few choice recipes to add to your
      collection, <em>this is the site for you!</em>;
    </p>
    <hr>
    <p>
      <small>Copyright 2011, Jennifer Robbins</small>
    </p>
  </body>
</html>
```

kitchen.css

```
body { font: normal 1em Verdana; margin: 1em 10%; }
h1 { font: Italic 3em Georgia; color: rgb(23, 109, 109); margin: 1em 0 1em; }
img { margin: 0 20px 0 0; }
h1 img { margin-bottom: -20px; }
small { color: #666666; }
```

Image file used on the page



food.png



spatula.png



Publish a page on the web

Although you see it as single page, this web page is actually assembled from the four different files shown above: HTML document (index.html), a style sheet (kitchen.css) and two graphics (foods.gif and spoon.gif).



Once you've created these files and saved them on your computer, you can upload them via FTP (File Transfer Protocol) to the web hosting server to make your page available online. For more information read our guide "The beginner's guide to web hosting."

Tips. A simple website can be a collection of static HTML documents, CSS files and image files (see example above), with one file linking to another. However most larger websites have advanced functionality such as forms and dynamic pages handling, databases, shopping carts and content management.

These functions are created by different programming languages (PHP, Python, Ruby, JavaScript, etc.) and are handled by applications on your hosting provider's web server. This is totally different territory and doesn't belong to web design. If you need these capabilities, you can get most of them as a pre-packaged solution (CMSs, shopping carts, etc.) without programming them from scratch.

Web page development tools

As you can see, you can create a simple web page that is just an HTML document. But you will need some tools to do that:

Learn to code (online)	HTML editing	Networking (FTP)
Codecademy (Free)	TextPad (Windows only)	CuteFTP (Windows only)
Udacity (Online paid classes)	Sublime text (Windows, Mac)	FileZilla (Windows only)
Code.org (Free and paid)	Coda by Panic (Mac only)	Cyberduck (Mac only)
CodeSchool (\$29/month)	TextMate (Mac only)	Fetch (Mac only)



Hire a professional web designer/developer

Are you comfortable doing all this yourself or should you hire a web designer? This is the question you ask yourself when planning to set up a website. And for good reason. With a wide array of do-it-yourself website builders, cheap templates and coding instructions available, why pay someone to do something you can do yourself?

If you do not have any complex requirements of your website, there are tools that will help you build it. For example, if you don't have design/development skills or funds to hire a professional, you can still build a great-looking website with pre-made templates that are available with CMSs or web builders.

However, if you have a decent budget and want to create complex or custom-designed website, it's likely you will need help from a web professional. Apart from getting a professionally designed website, the benefits of partnering with a web designer can include the following:

Fresh insight

A web designer can give you a fresh, outside perspective on your business after learning about your potential clients.

Custom functionality

Web designers know how to add custom functions to your website and partnering with them makes the entire development process much easier.

Less chance of error

A web professional can ensure that your website is built properly and you will be able to make a great first impression on website visitors when the site goes live.

That's where the services of a professional web designer/developer can make a difference.

Choosing a web designer/developer

It's important that you find the right talent to help you build your site. You need to have a good idea of what help do you need—design and/or development services. You will find that some people specialize only on a specific area of expertise, but many can offer you full-service package.

When selecting a web professional, it's important to:

- Understand what level of expertise they have (designer, developer or both).
- Know what tools and resources will be used to create the website (CMS or builder).
- Make sure you own the intellectual property; don't get locked into ownership issues.
- Make sure the web pro is familiar with search engine optimization (SEO).
- Get price quotes from several people/companies to compare rates.

How much will it cost?

If you have specific requirements for your website and develop an online strategy, you can hire a professional with the specific knowledge to help you with some of the tasks.




Following are typical fees for different web professionals:

Type	Local	Outsource
 Web designer	 \$30–\$120 per hour	 \$10–\$50 per hour
 Web developer	 \$30–\$120 per hour	 \$10–\$50 per hour
 Copywriter	 \$30–\$120 per hour	 \$20–\$100 per hour

An offshore web designer may charge anywhere from \$10 to \$50 per hour while an established web designer from the US may charge between \$30 and \$120 per hour, or more.

If you are not planning to do any of the work related to making a website, there are companies that will complete the entire project for you. Make sure you understand what technology they will use, it can be divided in two categories: template based (using specific CMS or builder) or a fully custom solution. It's important you know this and understand how you are going to maintain your site.

Typical costs to develop different types of websites follow (domain name and hosting are not included).

Type	Template/theme site	Custom made site
Business card site	 \$200–\$800	 \$1,000–\$2,000
Portfolio site	 \$1,000–\$2,000	 \$5,000–\$20,000
Product brochure site	 \$1,000–\$2,000	 \$5,000–\$20,000
E-commerce site	 \$1,800–\$4,000	 \$10,000–\$80,000
Blog	 \$400–\$800	 \$1,000–\$2,000

If you decide to hire a web development company to create a website at a one-time cost, fees may range anywhere from \$400 to \$20,000. A custom website design with advanced functionality such as social networking may cost \$10,000 to \$80,000.

The key to success is to know exactly what you want to be done.

Remember that all the costs are estimates, especially on the minimum end. These numbers should only be considered as a starting point in your negotiations.

The other thing you can do is make a list of everything you want to be done, from menus and content to colors and fonts. Giving exact details about the kind of design you want and your budget will help the web designer to give you the most accurate quote for their services.

Tips. Make sure you buy and register a domain name and hosting account under your own name or your company's name.

Outsource web design and development services

- [oDesk](#) - freelance design, copywriting and web development services
- [Elance](#) - freelance design, copywriting and web development services
- [Freelancer](#) - freelance design, copywriting and web development services

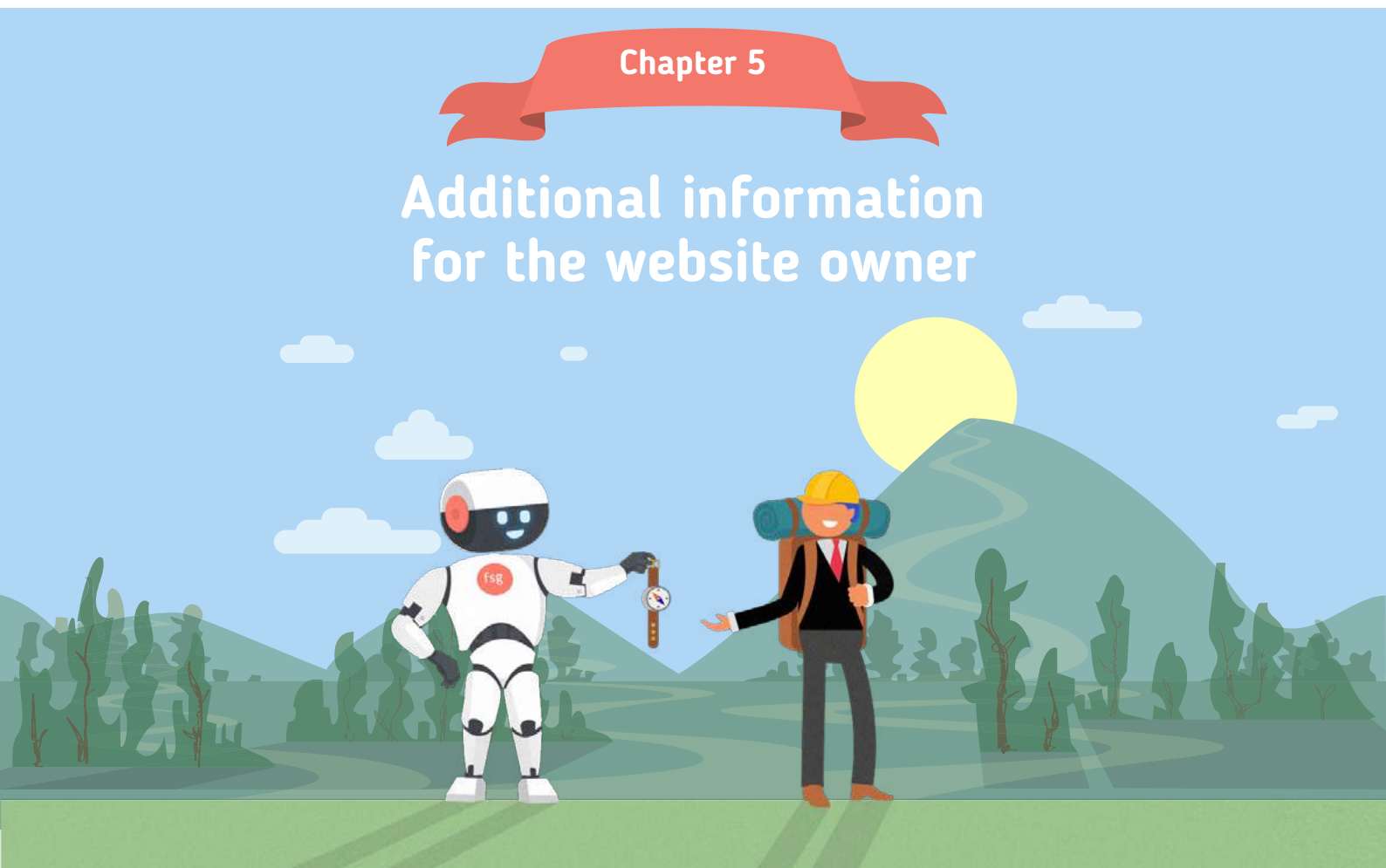
- [Fiverr](#) - graphics, marketing, fun and more online services for \$5
- [Dribbble](#) - a community of designers sharing screenshots of their work, process and projects
- [DesignContest](#) - thousands of professional designers compete for your business
- [99Designs](#) - a community of designers

Conclusion

Simplicity is at the core of web pages created with HTML and CSS. The features in these two programming languages enable you to create web pages with plenty of wiggle room. And with browser support for HTML elements and CSS properties consistently being improved upon, the capability to deliver a rich user experience will be greatly extended.

Chapter 5

Additional information for the website owner



- Filling your website with content (text, photos and graphics)
- Testing your website after it's completed
- Getting your site noticed (including site structure and basic SEO)
- Other stuff (social media, marketing and blogging)

Congratulations! At this stage, we hope you have a good idea of how you want to create your website. But that's only the first half of the battle. It's what you do after your website has been created that will help you take the field. Following are additional considerations for your website.



Content strategy and development

Often overlooked, this should be one of the first steps in the website creation process. Website content, in all the possible forms (text, images, docs, photos, etc.), has to be created and prepared for your website launch and it has to be maintained and refreshed once website goes live.

There are two content related areas you have to think about:

Content strategy

Make sure that text on your website supports your business identity and goals. It includes content management, such as content planning and scheduling.

Content development

Content should be presented logically and it must be easy to use by your targeted audience. This includes functionality and usability of the content on your website.

Content strategy

Today, search engines reward websites that make an effort to create quality content to educate people in their niche by ranking them higher. To get a coveted ranking, you'll have to make sure your content is: unique, relevant, legitimate and current.

Once you have an overview of your website plan and site map, you can drill down to the specifics of the written content you need to create for a website launch. It will be important to create a static content for the following pages: About, Contact, Partners, Vendors, Products and Services. It's also very important to have a fresh content posted on your blog or self-generated content on a forum or Q&A.

A blog will need the most comprehensive content plan of all of the website types. Your blog content plan should include the following:

- Topic categories you plan to cover on your blog. For example, a social media blog would likely cover general social media strategy and strategy for specific social networks.

- Specific post titles for your initial posts. If you're covering multiple topic categories, you should aim to either focus on filling one category with several posts and then move on to the next, or write one post per each main category.
- How often you plan to publish content. Blog owners who are working alone should aim for one new blog post per week, then build up to multiple posts per week as they get used to blogging. Blog owners who plan to invite others to contribute as guests or paid contributors can plan to do two to three posts per week, building up to one post per day.
- An editorial calendar that shows what specific post titles will be published on particular dates. This will allow you to stay on track with your blog post publishing schedule. Here is a sample of the Blog Content Schedule.

An e-commerce website will need content planning as well. This will include fleshing out the products you plan to sell. For example, if you plan to start a mobile accessories online store, here's what content you will need for a specific category of a product type.

- Phone Cases
- Sub-Categories: iPhone cases, Nokia cases, Samsung cases, HTC cases, etc.
- Sub-Categories for iPhone cases: iPhone 4 cases, iPhone 4s cases, iPhone 5 cases, iPhone 5s cases, iPhone 6 cases, iPhone 6+ cases, etc.
- iPhone 4 cases: Multi-color, Black, White, Red, Blue, Green, Purple, Yellow

Thus, depending on the number of products you plan to sell, you will have to create specific unique content for each item.

Content development

Content of the site is not just text. Unless you want your site to look like a SimpleText document, you will need to add some visuals to illustrate the text. To make your website functional and useful, consider adding some of these content types:

- written copy
- graphic images
- PDF documents
- audio and video files
- photos and galleries

- presentations
- surveys



If you are working on an e-commerce website, compile your product descriptions, photos and other materials you want to have on your website.

Testing your website

Before you officially launch your website, you will want to do extensive testing to make sure it performs correctly for your users.

Content and functionality checklist:

- Check if your core content is live and ready for promotion.
- Test a menu bar and all the links to make sure your pages, posts and archives open properly.
- Check titles and meta descriptions. Make sure you use proper titles that relate to the page content on each page. The goal is to ensure that your website pages can be easily found in the search engines.
- Use [Google AdWords Keyword Planner](#) or another keyword research tool to find the keywords you will target for your website. If you are not sure where to start, research the keyword phrases your competitors use on their pages.
- Check contact information and test your contact form to make sure anyone who wants to contact you can do so easily.
- Create all the social profiles such as Twitter, Facebook, Google+, LinkedIn, Pinterest and Instagram, and make sure you include your site description, contact information, and link back to your site.
- Test the social sharing buttons on your website, make sure people can share your pages and content on the top social networks.
- Give your visitors one or more ways to connect with you and subscribe to your blog including an option to subscribe by email.

Technical checklist:

- Test the website on the main browsers (Chrome, Firefox, Safari and Internet Explorer) to ensure that everything looks correct.

- Test your website on different devices. If you don't have access to a variety of devices, use [MobileTest.me](https://mobiletest.me) to test the display and basic functionality in several popular mobile devices.
- Check your page-load speed. Many Internet users still have slow connections and mobile users are particularly sensitive to download time. Users expect a site to load in two seconds or less. Tools like [Pingdom](https://pingdom.com) and [WebPageTest](https://webpagetest.org) will allow you to see how quickly your website loads.
- Set up [Google Analytics](https://analytics.google.com). This will help you learn all about your website traffic—where people come from, what they do on your website and what leads them to completing conversion goals such as making a purchase.
- Another free tool you should connect to your website is [Google Webmaster Tools](https://search.google.com/webmaster/tools). Although it's not exactly analytics, Google Webmaster Tools can help you optimize your website for search engines.
- Check to see that you have a proper error page (404 page). With the standard 404 error page, visitors get the generic "File Not Found" message. Make sure you include additional useful information that keeps visitors from leaving your site in frustration.
- Make sure you add a sitemap file (sitemap.xml) of your website. This will make it easier for major search engines to crawl and index your website. Use the [XML-sitemaps](https://www.xml-sitemaps.com) free services to automatically generate it. After creating the file, upload it to your root directory so its location is `website.com/sitemap.xml`. If you are using WordPress CMS, install the [Google XML Sitemaps plug-in](https://wordpress.org/plugins/google-xml-sitemap-plugin/), which automatically updates the sitemap when you write new posts.



Promoting your website

Website promotion should be an ongoing task. Aside from creating major social media profiles and pages for your website, you can promote your website in a number of ways, including the following.

- Put your website link in every profile you create for yourself. This includes social profiles, forum profiles, author bios for guest posts, Q&A networks and any other website that allows you to create a profile.
- Place your website link in your email signature so that every contact can discover your website.

- Add your website link to your business card and other printed materials so that people you meet at networking events can learn more about you or your business through your website.
- Share your website link when you participate in interviews, on-line or offline.
- Contribute quality content (guest blogging) to authoritative blogs within your niche to get exposure for your new website through the author biography.
- Monitor the web for mentions of your name or your business name, and make sure that each includes a link to your website.

Once your website goes live, your goal is to promote it on an on-going basis. You can promote the homepage, your product pages or your content as applicable. Each promotion should lead to more visits.

Search engine optimization (SEO)

SEO consists of building links to your website. Here are some basic ways to get links for your website.

- If you create amazing content within your niche or industry, you should start to attract links from other websites, such as other bloggers.
- If you have a specific type of business, such as a wedding planning business, you can ask high-quality, niche directories and advertising directories to add your website. [The Knot](#) is an example of a wedding planning directory.
- If you have a local business, you can create profiles on a variety of local business directories like Yelp, Merchant Circle and Google+ Places.
- Any website can get links from social profiles such as Twitter, Facebook, Google+, LinkedIn, Pinterest and Instagram.
- You can look for resource pages in your niche or industry to see if they would be willing to add your website as another resource on a specific topic. Target high-quality websites that are relevant to yours.
- You can use link research tools like Moz to find the backlinks of your competitors to see if you can gain links from the same or similar websites.

[Chapter 7](#) of the Free Beginner's Guide to SEO can help you with ideas on links. You can also refer to free guides by [Backlinko](#) and [Point](#)

Blank SEO for more ways to build links to your website. Also be sure to thoroughly review Google Webmaster Guidelines to ensure that you are only using link building methods that are not frowned upon by Google.

Conclusion

We hope you've enjoyed this guide to creating a website. Remember that nothing you do in website creation is permanent. Many websites evolve as time goes by. The key is to do the best you can in the beginning with your website and to always look for opportunities to improve it.