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Web Site

Web Pages – every author should have a web site to help promote their books. Just like Social Media many writers don't know how to get a web site started or where to turn to get information about starting one.

Everyone has somewhat grandiose ideas about what they want their web site to look like and accomplish. I know, I did. It can certainly fit that ideal, if you have the bank account to afford it. When you are starting out it is a good idea to keep it simple. Think of your web site as an interactive brochure. It will have a home or front page open the fold to find a middle page, and of course the back page.

On the home page you want to show case your books, after all isn't that what you want people coming there for? You'll have another page that has the author bio on it. You may possibly want another page, offering the visitor the ability to purchase your books. If you blog, you'll want that on a separate page. If you aren't being diligent about doing your blog, having it on the front page makes your site look static and possibly out of date.

Remember this web site is another tool to help you build your brand. Don't forget to incorporate your logo, colors, fonts and images. Basically anything you are using on your print material, business cards, book marks, post cards, should all be present on your web site. On each page of your site you should have something that helps tie the whole site together. Placing your Logo somewhere on each page is helpful. Or maybe you have a signature color that you use? Try a border or background of your color, keep in mind some colors don't make good backgrounds, making the text unreadable. Some people create a header, previously called a masthead, with their logo appearing on each page. Here's a bad example, also notice that the links take you away from the main site.

Don't be afraid to physically sketch out on paper what ideas you have about the whole web site and each individual page. As you see more web sites you may want to incorporate some of the ideas you see. It's OK to borrow, as long as your site isn't an exact copy of someone else's site. Remember that anything you put on your web site needs to be accessible and easily visible on the screen of a smartphone. Use all available space, why limit the size of your web site?

SEO - Search Engine Optimization, this determines how well your site will show up in the search engines (Google, etc.) lists. If you skimp on this then all the work you've put into your site will basically be for naught. You will end up on the second page (or worse) of the search results. When was the last time you looked past page one?

Now that you have a plan for the look and feel of your site, what are you going to call it? What ever name or title you write under should be the name of your web site. You will need a domain name (www.yourname.com) for your web site. Depending on where you get it, and what extension (com, org, ed, biz, etc.) it shouldn't cost you more than twenty dollars a year. Namecheap.com is often offering domain names for five dollars a year. (Not a paid

spokesperson)

The actual construction of the site is your next decision. If you are techie, like a challenge and have time on your hands give it a try. I've been creating web sites for nearly twenty years, and I found WordPress, not user intuitive, your mileage may vary. There is also [wix.com](https://www.wix.com), I've not used it.

Copyrighted images, you can't just copy something you see on the web. However, [freeimages.com](https://www.freeimages.com), [freerangestock.com](https://www.freerangestock.com) and [everystockphoto.com](https://www.everystockphoto.com) have free or next to free images that you can use. The same goes for music. Find someone local you like, and contact them about using their work, they will probably be flattered and say yes. Content, if you run across a great quote or article you will need to ask the owner if you can use it before sticking it on your site.

Email addresses, if you have an email address for your domain/web site check it regularly. It is possible to forward it to your main email account. You don't want to miss a customer trying to contact you.

Hosting, your web site will need to be uploaded to where it will be physically located. Again, depending on the size of your site, and where you host it, it shouldn't cost more than twenty-five dollars a year. Many hosting companies may offer a deal on the domain name in conjunction with hosting your site with them. Do your homework and find out what others recommend for these services. Not all hosting, or domain name providers are the same. Ask others how they like the support staff. If you can't get in touch with someone, or they don't speak your language, you can be in a world of hurt. If you are planning or think you might be planning on using a certain software program to create your site, or maybe you want to use a specific language on your site, verify that the hosting company isn't planning in the near future to discontinue support.

When considering hiring a web site designer, check them out just like anyone else you would hire. Look at examples of other sites they have done, ask them specific questions. Don't worry if you can't speak 'jargon'. The person should understand you, and give answers in English. There is no tried and true rule as to what it is going to cost you. The bigger and more involved the web site the higher the price. Keep in mind that a web site is not static, and information on it will need to be changed/updated often (maintenance). This too will cost money.

Having a web site is as necessary as having a phone for your customers/clients to contact you. Like any other part of your media/brand building campaign the web site needs to be planned and needs to be updated regularly. Don't be afraid of it, and don't leave it on the back burner. Hopefully, the above information has answered some questions, or given you confidence to sit down and build a web site or put a new face to your current web site.