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Helping you with your Web development needs

What to consider when thinking about a new Web Site.

So you would like a new website but are not sure how you should go about it. Well this is one of the first places to start; Read through this document and answer any questions you can. Anything you don't understand or need help with please send me an email at eckley@gmail.com and I will be happy to help.

Terminology; What is:

A Website?

The basics:

A website is a collection of web pages that are linked together via the use of hyperlinks. A hyperlink is simply something that when a user clicks on it they are taken to a web page. Each individual page within your site is known as a web page.

More detail:

Web sites come in two main types, static web pages and dynamic web pages. Static web pages are constant, ie they don't change, kind of like this web document, if you wish to update a static web site, each of the files must be updated individually and then uploaded back to the web server. Dynamic pages however are capable of responding to change. For example the mirror website www.mirrorassocwa.org is a dynamic web site and this allows users, who have access, to add news items, the site will then automatically update itself by displaying the new news item and archiving old ones.

A Domain Name?

A domain name is used to make it easy for people to find your website. Addresses on the web are known as IP addresses eg. 201.59.100.200, every web site you've ever looked at is stored at a location using an address like that. Now imagine that every time you wanted to go to a website you had to remember that number. Fortunately however there is a solution, domain names; for example www.abcomputing.net.au . When you type this into your browser it transforms that into the IP addresses with the help of a domain name server. If you want your website to be easy to find then you will need a domain name.

Web Hosting?

Your web site has to be stored somewhere, this somewhere is known as a web hosting server or web host. A web host provides a computer that is connected to the internet 24/7 with all the

necessary software to store your website and allow people the world over to access it. They will also connect your site to your domain name so that people can easily find it.

Details on Domain names and Web hosting:

Do you have a Domain Name?

If you do, then I will need the details when setting up a new website for you.

If not you do not already have a domain name, what name would you like to use? You can find out if a name is available by going to <http://www.ausregistry.com.au/whois.php>.

Do you have any web hosting?

If you currently own some web hosting space I will need the details of it and be able to access the files hosted in order to setup a new site.

A lot of ISP (the people who provide your internet access e.g. iinet or Bigpond) often provided basic web hosting. However this is normally very limited and only any good for very basic web sites, I usually don't recommend using this space.

Things to check when looking at web hosting:

- Web space at least 50mb for small sites.
- If you would like to use your domain name with emails check the number of POP3 email accounts available.
- If you want a dynamic web site check that the host supports PHP and MySQL also check the number of databases they allow you.

If you don't have any web hosting check out the plans offered by jumba internet. They are an Australian host. I use them for my hosting and would recommend them. www.jumba.com.au

Basics of your Site:

What is the aim of your website?

In order to efficiently setup a site I need to know the aim of the site, for example is it to distribute news to a community or to help sell a product or service.

Does your site need updating? If so, how would you like to do it?

Nearly all websites should be updated regularly. If you understand HTML and would like to keep your site updated yourself that's easy. However if you don't understand HTML, the prospect of updating a website can be quite daunting. There are two ways to go about this; I can set up your site using a dynamic system that gives you the ability to update the site via a control panel, or I can update the site for you.

Using a Dynamic system:

The Mirror Class Association of WA's website (www.mirrorassocwa.org) uses a dynamic update system, where the committee members can log on using a secure username and

password. Once logged into the control panel they can add and remove items on any of the sites various pages using a system that even my Father can understand. The site then automatically updates the respective sections.

Pros:

- Easy to update
- Can be updated by someone with no web developing skills
- Can be updated by more than one person with ease
- You don't have to pay someone else to update your site.

Cons:

- Costs more to setup

Getting ABComputing to update your site:

If you wish I can update your site on your behalf. To do this you would need to email me any new material and changes whenever you would like to make changes and I will update your site, charging an hourly rate.

Pros:

- Cheaper to setup

Cons:

- Requires ABC to be available to update.
- Slower update process
- Costs involved with updating.

What is the structure of your site, what pages will your site include?

What pages is your site going to comprise of? What information would you like on your site? To help develop your site for easy access over the internet setup a tree diagram showing which pages will link to where. See the following for some examples of common pages used on websites.

Home page:

The home page is the first page the visitors will see when they head to your site. It is a good idea to keep this page simple have a look at the home page for CDC (www.cdcwa.com.au). Alternatively you may wish to include a small brief about your site as well as latest news, for example www.mirrorassocwa.org.

News Page:

A news page is a very common page on websites. Simply it is a page where items of news are displayed so that visitors can quickly and easily see any news you may have to offer. Both sites mentioned in the last section feature news pages.

Contacts page:

The contacts page will simply hold information on how to contact the people relevant to your site. People often limit this to an email address or a phone number for privacy issues, remember that anyone that has access to the internet will be able to see your website.

Links page:

Another common page is a links page. A links page is simply a collection of links to other sites with relevant information.

Content specific pages:

The pages mentioned above make up only the first part of your site, as the pages are generic to most websites. The part that makes your site unique is the rest of your pages. For example the Mirror Association has pages for buying and selling mirrors and pages for events. CDC's website has pages for upcoming training courses.

If you see another website with a similar page to one you're thinking of be sure you mention to me as it helps when I create your site.

What content have you already got that can be used for the site?

If you have any documents that you wish to use the text from, .doc (word) is the best format to use.

Any documents that you would like to make the whole document available for people to download, then PDF is the best format.

Logos or colour schemes that you currently use can be incorporated into the site.

And finally any other marketing documents you may have, can probably be adapted for use on a web site.

Finally:

Have a look at other people's web sites, as this is often the best way to get ideas for your own site. If you find other sites that you like the look of please tell me of them, as I can use them to help design a web site that is what you want. If you have any questions or feedback please send me an email.