

Do-It-Yourself (DIY) Web Design Starter Kit

What you must have and need to know to get started creating a Web site from the ground up.

Getting Started

1. Develop a Web Plan: See *Web Plan Worksheet.pdf* on your USB drive.
2. Learn HTML & CSS: See *Learn HTML and CSS_ An Absolute Beginner's Guide.pdf* on your USB drive.
 - a. Wonderful way to learn HTML and a solid reference book: HTML, XHTML, and CSS, Sixth Edition (Visual Quickstart Guide) http://www.amazon.com/XHTML-Sixth-Visual-Quickstart-Guide/dp/0321430840/ref=cm_lm_f_tit_6_rsr_srs_0
 - b. W3School.com: <http://www.w3schools.com/html/DEFAULT.asp>
 - c. HTML.net <http://www.html.net/>
3. Editor
 - a. Text Editor: a program that allows you to edit plain text files (like Notepad on Windows). You'll use this to write your Web pages in HTML.
 - b. WISYWIG: an acronym for "What You See Is What You Get," this type of program allows a developer to see what the end result will look like while the document is being created. Examples include Adobe Dreamweaver & Microsoft Web Expressions – both cost money
4. Browsers (Internet Explorer, Firefox, Safari and Opera)
 - a. When developing web pages you want to ensure your site will look the same so you should use all when developing your site.
5. Photo editor
 - a. Need a way to prepare your images for the Web.
 - i. A professional image editing program like Adobe Photoshop or Adobe Fireworks can cost hundreds of dollars. It's hard to recommend that you go out and pay that price to only use it for cropping photos. Programs like Paint Shop Pro or Photoshop Elements (a slimmer version of Photoshop) are more reasonably priced.
 - ii. Free programs include:
 1. GNU Image Manipulation Program (GIMP): It is a freely distributed piece of software for such tasks as photo retouching, image composition and image authoring. It works on many operating systems, in many languages. <http://www.gimp.org/>
 2. Photoshop Online: Photoshop.com is your online photo sharing, editing and hosting resource. Upload, organize, edit, store (up to 2GB free) and share your photos. <https://www.photoshop.com/>
 - b. Photoshop Tips for the Web: http://www.webmonkey.com/tutorial/Photoshop_Tips_for_the_Web
6. FTP Client to transfer your files to your Web server
 - a. FileZilla – the free FTP solution: <http://filezilla-project.org/>

Develop the Design

You Design Your Site

1. Sketch out ideas
2. Use a photo editing program to layout the design
3. Use HTML, CSS & images to turn your design into a web page template

4. Use the template to create the pages of your site
5. Add images to enhance your site

Tips on Finding Photos

You cannot just take any image you found and post it on your business Web site because of copyright laws. You must remember you need to ask for permission before using photos that are not yours.

1. There are places where you can purchase royalty free images which can be a bit pricy
 - a. Corbis: <http://www.corbis.com>
 - b. Jupiter Images: <http://www.jupiterimages.com>
 - c. Veer: <http://www.veer.com>
2. There are places where you can purchase images from peers on the Web and for cheap
 - a. iStock Photo: <http://www.istockphoto.com>
 - b. Dreamstime: <http://www.dreamstime.com/>
 - c. Big Stock Photo: <http://www.bigstockphoto.com/>
3. Free places to get stock photos (remember to read the terms and conditions before using)
 - a. Free Digital Photos: <http://www.freedigitalphotos.net/>
 - b. Microsoft Office Clipart: <http://office.microsoft.com/en-us/clipart/default.aspx>
 - c. Remember to check out government places too (these are just a few examples)
 - i. US Government Photos and Images: <http://www.usa.gov/Topics/Graphics.shtml>
 - ii. US Department of Agriculture: <http://www.ars.usda.gov/is/graphics/photos/>
 - iii. NOAA Photo Library: <http://www.photolib.noaa.gov/otherphotos.html>

Tips on Designing Your Site

1. You want your site to appear clean, uncluttered, professional and attractive.
2. Your design should reinforce you business and message.
3. Your site is easy to navigate at all times (no matter where you are in the site).
4. Your design downloads quickly.
5. Only uses relevant photos and images that reinforce your topic.
6. Ensure your text is readable. You do this by making it large enough for your audience. Also make certain your text has enough contrast with the background also. (Check if your contrast ration is acceptable: <http://juicystudio.com/services/luminositycontrastratio.php>)
7. Set your content up so it facilitates scanning. Use headings and sub-headings to help break up your content. Use color and emphasis to make important things stand out (but limit yourself to no more than a few per page).

Using a CMS

Content Management System (CMS) is a tool that allows you to edit Web page content without knowing HTML. There are lots of companies that offer templates where you select the template, add your text and they compile it all into a Web site that you manage through a CMS.

Read this article to get a better understanding of working with a CMS called WordPress:

<http://www.graphicdesignblog.co.uk/wordpress-as-a-cms-content-management-system/>

Accessibility

You must be concerned with the accessibility and Section 508, 1194.22 Web-based intranet and internet information and applications (16 rules). These provisions of the standards provide the requirements that must be followed by Federal agencies when producing web pages. These provisions apply unless doing so would impose an undue burden.

1. The law: 1194.22 Web-based intranet and internet information and applications.
<http://www.section508.gov/index.cfm?FuseAction=content&ID=12#Web>
2. A Guide to Understanding Section 508: Web-based Intranet and Internet Information and Applications (1194.22)
<http://www.access-board.gov/sec508/guide/1194.22.htm>
3. Where to Learn More:
 - a. W3C: <http://www.w3c.org>
 - b. WebAim: <http://www.webaim.org/>
 - c. SitePoint: <http://www.sitepoint.com/article/accessible-web-design/>
4. Test Site's Accessibility:
 - a. Wave at WebAim: <http://wave.webaim.org/>
 - b. Cynthia Says from HiSoftware: <http://www.contentquality.com/>
 - c. Web Accessibility Tools: <http://www.wat-c.org/tools/index.html>

Usability

See *Usability 101 & What to Avoid.pdf* on USB drive

1. A great book on this subject is "Don't Make Me Think! A Common Sense Approach to Web Usability" by Steve Krug (New Riders Publishing, copyright 2000). Cost is \$26.40 for a new copy at Amazon.com
(http://www.amazon.com/Dont-Make-Me-Think-Usability/dp/0321344758/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1249254595&sr=8-1)
2. Expert Jakob Nielsen: <http://www.useit.com/>
3. Guru Jared M. Spool <http://www.uie.com/>

Search Engine Optimization (SEO)

Simply stated, this is the optimizing a Web site within the results page of a search engine. More specifically, this is the process of improving the volume and quality of traffic to a Web site from search engines via natural (organic) search results. Typically, the higher the ranking the more searchers will visit that site. SEO can also target different kinds of search, including image search, local search and industry-specific vertical search engines.

See *Search Engine.pdf* on your USB drive

1. SEO Tools 101, Part 1: <http://searchenginewatch.com/3633455>
2. Search Engine Submission 101, Part 2: <http://searchenginewatch.com/3633773>
3. SEO 101 - Basic Optimization Techniques: <http://www.searchengineguide.com/jim-hedger/seo-101-basic.php>
4. Search Engines and Frames: <http://www.searchenginewatch.com/Webmasters/article.php/2167901>
5. Yahoo! Help: <http://help.yahoo.com/l/us/yahoo/smallbusiness/Webhosting/index.html>
6. Google Webmaster Guidelines: <http://www.google.com/support/Webmasters/bin/answer.py?answer=35769>

Web Analytics/Statistics

Read Digital Web's article, [The Dollars and Sense of Web Site Analytics](#) for an insight into how the professional Web developers think about Web stats and log analysis.

Free tools (if your hosting company doesn't provide any):

1. PMetrics: <http://pmetrics.performancing.com/>
2. Google Analytics: <http://www.google.com/analytics/>
 - a. Article on Google Analytics: Geek to Live: Improve your web site with Google Analytics
<http://lifehacker.com/software/web-publishing/geek-to-live--improve-your-web-site-with-google-analytics-200935.php>

Additional Resources

1. Web Content.gov <http://www.usa.gov/webcontent/index.shtml>
2. Online Training and Tutorials at Lynda.com <http://www.lynda.com>
3. About.com: Web Design/HTML: <http://webdesign.about.com/>
4. A List Apart: <http://www.alistapart.com/>
5. Sitepoint: <http://www.sitepoint.com/>
6. Smashing Magazine: <http://www.smashingmagazine.com/>
7. The Ultimate Guide to Your First Website 100% Free Tips: <http://www.startyourfirstwebsite.com/>