

Questions To Help You Design Your Website

<http://www.focowphelp.com/wordpress-resource/questions-to-help-you-design-your-website/>

Building a new website? Rebuilding an existing website? Evaluating your existing website?

The Skeleton Of Your Site:

Zerorth: Know not only what you want but also what you don't want. Know the things you want to avoid and the things you want to create. Have a clear vision for your website. Why are you doing this? If you don't know why your are creating a website stop right here and don't proceed until you do.

First: Write out your menu structure. Top level and sub-menus. Think about what menu items people will look for. What menu items do you want them to find. These are the most important pages on your site.

Second: Draw a sketch of what your site should look like and what should be where. Do you have sidebars? A footer? What does your header and menu look like and is it the same on every page?

Third: What functionality are you going to need that isn't part of WordPress and will require plugins or other services. Want to display your Twitter feed? You'll need a plugin. Want to display a series of rotating photos that link to pages? You'll need a plugin. Want to have a mailing list? You'll need to sign up for a service that provides that.

Fourth: Always ask yourself "what's the point?" Do this for everything you are thinking of adding to your site. Don't plaster you website with cat photos just 'cause they are cute. Unless your website is about cute cats.

Details, Details and Details:

1. What is the purpose of your site? Personal, business, hobby, education, sales, venting, selling a book, something else?
2. What are the things (ranked in order) that you need your site to do for you? Examples: Present products, present services, teach people, convey opinions, build mailing list, provide pricing information, allow people to contact you, leave reviews of your services, read your opinions, participate in polls, leave their opinions.
3. What do you want the site to say about you, your business, your product, your ideas?
4. What are the most important pieces of specific information you want your site to convey to a visitor? Pick and rank in order the top three. You can have more but know the top three.
5. What are the sections your site needs to have? How should it be organized? Most all websites have "home", "about" and "contact". What other sections and sub-sections do you need?
6. Draw a picture of what you want your homepage to look like. It doesn't have to be great art. You need to know what the site should look like so you can decide where everything fits. You may find all

the things you want to add don't fit. Focus on what is above the fold. Especially on the home page and other important pages.

7. Social media links and feeds? Which social media do you use and how do you want those to be displayed on your site?

8. How does it need to be organized from the view of a reader? How should people be able to search for things? How should they be able to find things? Categories? Tags? Menus? Icons?

9. What colours should the site be? If you don't have specific ideas then think generally. Bright? Subdued? Neon? Earthy? Pastel?

10. What font do you want to use? Typography is very important. You don't notice it when it's done right. You will notice it when it's done wrong. So will your readers.

Replacing/Updating An Existing Website:

1. What do you like about your existing site?

2. What do you not like about your existing site?

3. What is your site currently doing well?

4. What is your site currently not doing well?

5. What is your site not doing at all that you need it to do?

6. What is your site doing or what does your site have that you never use and can go away?

Content Questions:

Much of this part applies more to bloggers than to someone with a static site. However you should still work through this section for any aspects that do apply to your site.

Is your site going to be actively updated (such as a blog) or will it be more of a static site (such as a business site with updates only as needed)?

What is your strategy for advertising your site?

What is your strategy for creating content for your site?

Why do you want a site and do you need a website?

Why do you want a blog and do you need a blog?

Should you be writing your blog or should you have someone else do it?

How often will you update the blog?

1. Who are you talking to?

What do you have to teach?
Who is reading your blog?
Why are they reading it?
Who is your ideal client or reader?

2. Is your content compelling?

How do you stand out?
How do you spin things?
Use jargon, corporate speak and PR talk only when required or if that is your audience.
What is your central theme?
Are you telling stories? People like stories.

3. Are you able and willing to provide fresh content?

Do you have a schedule and will you keep it?
Is your schedule realistic for your life?
Will you really be able to keep it up?
Are you sure?
Are you sure you're sure? It's harder than you think. Failed bloggers outnumber successful bloggers 1,000 to 1.

4. How will people find your blog?

Where and how will you tell people about your blog?

5. Are you communicating interesting information or are you advertising (direct promotion)?

Write how you speak.
Gain trust. Don't be spammy.
Don't be something or someone you are not.
Read your blog post to someone else. Does it sound like how you would talk to another person?
If every fourth sentence is a sales pitch you might be wrong.
If you are only talking about yourself you might be wrong.

6. Are you using social media? Are you using it correctly?

Are you posting to the right social media for your audience?
Are you linking your post on each network in a way that specific audience will find interesting?

7. If you have a business and you have a blog are they integrated?

Make it easy for a person to find out about you (your blog) and your products/services (your website).

8. Do you have your own domain name?

Do you really care so little that you will not spend \$15 a year?
Do you really care so little that you're only willing to invest in free website hosting?
If you don't care that much why should anyone else?

9. Are you willing to engage with an audience?

When people comment on your posts are you willing to take the time to communicate with them?
If not, why are you blogging?
Why do you expect your communication to be one way?

Credit Where Due:

Some of this information is based on (stolen from to be more precise) a presentation by Molly McCowan who owns Inkbot Editing. If you need an editor she is worth your consideration.

<https://inkbotediting.com/>

Conclusion:

I hope these questions assisted you in clarifying your intentions and the design of your website.

If you want help with:

- the process of creating your website
- modifying an existing site
- buying a domain name and hosting
- or if you need someone to administrate your WordPress site for you

Contact Adrian at WordPressArtAndScience.com and let's find out if I can assist you.

Now go look at some cat pictures on the internet. You've earned a reward after all that thinking.