

Website Development Stages

A Step by Step Guide

- **Establishing and focusing on your requirements**

- What do you want your website to be able to do for you?
- Think about the possibilities. Even if you think that something is impossible, set it as one of your goals, as often it is achievable. Leave the technicalities to your web developer.
- Do not stray away from the goal later on in the project. Remain focused on what you are trying to achieve.

- **Your Content**

Plan your web pages with the use of a flow diagram, take care in the placement of sub pages. Make sure they are easy and logical to find.

Shorten or bullet point your content. Generally you have 2-3 minutes to captivate a users interest, so big scrollable pages about your company history will often result in a user leaving a site. Use relevant photographs where necessary. Too many photos can result in long download times, and can clutter a page.

- **Graphic Design**

Quite often brochures are developed before websites. If you have a brochure already it is a good ideal to affiliate the brochure with the website through its design. Someone looking for more information on your site needs to feel that they have found the right place, so design consistency is essential.

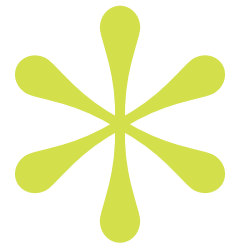
Be sure to have your website navigational menu in the same place on each page, so a user doesn't get lost between pages. Be sure to be consistent with your layout and use of fonts. Don't overcomplicate the page by having too much going on.

- **Domain Name Registration**

You will need to purchase a domain name for your website, so that it can become active on the internet. Typically businesses in the UK register with the .co.uk extension, but it can be of great benefit to your corporate image to appear to be international by registering a .com address also. Once you have purchased a domain name it needs to be attached to web space that also needs to be purchased.

Both domain names and web space are renewable annual costs.

The registration of both domain names and web space are usually done by the developer, as well as the transfer of any existing names.



- **Building**

As your website is being developed; it will usually be accessible on a temporary web address so you can see how it is progressing. One of the major time delay factors with building a website is having the content ready for the developer. To save time, be sure to proof read your copy before you hand it over.

- **Hosting**

Once your site has been completed, and you are happy with it, you can then instruct the developer to site it LIVE on your domain name. Registering your own web space can be quite tricky. There are lots of different technical compatibilities that have to be taken in to account, so it's best left to the developer to arrange this for you.

A site can be online almost instantly after you have approved the version on the test area. There is usually an annual renewal cost for hosting.

- **Search Engines / Promotion**

Your developer most likely will offer you a submission service to the search engines. You will be asked for keywords to use with the search engine. These are simply just possible words that a user could enter in to a search engine to find your site. You will need to think laterally as to what someone could possibly enter in to the search engines to find you. You can have up to 25 keywords for your site, as well as a paragraph describing your website. The description will also be taken in to account as possible keywords, and on some search engines, this paragraph will be displayed in the search results. Most importantly, your website textual content is taken in to consideration, so you need to make sure that you are using as many keywords as possible in your copy. Your developer will take care of the technical aspects.

- **Content Management**

Another element that is quite often brushed aside at the start of a new website is what content needs updating on a regular basis. You may have a news page, an events page or an FAQ page that needs some attention each month. It is a good idea to have a 'Content Management System' facility put in place so that you don't keep incurring developer costs each time you want to make a small update to your website. A good package that I recommend is Macromedia Contribute. It is inexpensive, easy to use, and a sister product to the renowned industry package for developing websites. Your developer can also offer training for this package which generally will take no more than an hour of your time.

By Terry Harris –

terry@nexuscl.com Web Development Manager

Nexus Creative, Worcester. November 2005


nexuscreative

nexus creative ltd. the cider mill and stables, court farm, church lane, norton, worcester, wr5 2ps
t: 01905 821919 f: 01905 821313 info@nexuscl.com www.nexuscl.com

Registered No. 05189359 Registered Office: Ashford House 95 Dixons Green Dudley West Midlands DY2 7DJ