

7 Effective Ways to Build Your Own Web Site

By Herman Drost

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Running a business without building a web site, is like a fish swimming in a small pond. The fish needs a vehicle to reach the ocean. If you are a small business person who wants to reach millions quickly and easily, building a web site is a necessity. There are many ways to build a website but I'll just give you an overview of the most popular ones.

Before you begin to build your web site, register a domain first (read my article "How to choose, register or transfer domain names" www.isitebuild.com/domainnames.htm). This means you are serious about your business.

1. Web Site Templates - Free and Paid

This is a quick and simple way to design your site without spending a dime. With a free web site template, you can add text and graphics and host it on a free web host.

Free - these will give you a quick and simple design.

www.freesitetemplates.com

www.steves-templates.com

Paid Templates - generally these provide better looking designs.

www.templates2go.com

www.thetemplatestore.com

Pros - quick set-up, saves time on design time.

Cons - lack of uniqueness and flexibility, not custom built to suit your business.

2. ISP Site Builders

Some ISPs provide site building software as part of their package i.e. AOL, Bigstep.com.

Pros - "all-in-one" package, no html required. This may consist of just site building (AOL), or a combination of site building, hosting, search engine submissions and newsletter management (Bigstep)

for one monthly fee.

Cons - template pages, page links generically named, pages can't be individually optimized for search engines.

3. Learn HTML

This will allow you to build your web site from scratch and have total control over any changes you may wish to make.

Pros - total control, flexibility, inexpensive (you can even use the text editor, notepad, that comes with your computer).

Cons - steep learning curve to become proficient, takes a lot of time to change hundreds of pages.

4. Use Web Editing Tools

There are two kinds of web site editors.

a) HTML Editors - these will help you with writing and editing your html (i.e. automating repetitive tags and color coding the different tags used).

Macromedia Homesite (www.macromedia.com/software/homesite)

www.coffeecup.com

www.notetab.com

b) WYSIWYG (what-you-see-is-what-you-get) editors

These graphical editors will help you to design a professional looking web site after a lot of practice. Here are the two most popular editors. These editors also allow you to see the code as you design your site. You can also manipulate the code within the editor.

Dreamweaver MX (www.macromedia.com/software/dreamweaver)

Frontpage (www.microsoft.com/frontpage)

Pros - complete control over the design and maintenance of your website, can write or edit code as you please, maintain hundreds of pages, many useful features.

Cons - can be expensive, learning curve, some WYSIWYG editors add unnecessary code, creating bloated web pages.

5. Browser Software Netscape Composer (www.netscape.com)

Netscape has always had a basic Web page editor built-in.

Netscape 7's version of Composer fills a huge gap at the lower end of the market for WYSIWYG editors and still has something useful for the more experienced designer.

Pros - free, easy to use

Cons - some learning curve needed, lack of features and integration with graphics software, when compared with other high-end web design editors.

6. SiteBuildIt (<http://quicktour.sitesell.com/webselling83.html>)

This is an all-in-one system of tools to build, host and promote

your web site. It includes one year of:

Domain name registration

Web Site Hosting

Graphic Tools (LogoCreator and NavBar creator)

Search Engine Optimization

Automatic Search Engine Submission and Re-submission

Pay-Per-Click Search Engine Research

Traffic Stats and Click Analysis

E-zine Subscription and Delivery

Cost: approx \$300/year

Pros - all-in-one solution for creating, promoting and analyzing your web site, no need to learn html, add your own text and graphics.

Cons - use of template generated web pages, lack of business uniqueness, limited flexibility over html code, expensive.

7. Professional Web Site Designer

If you choose a professional web designer, make sure he has the qualifications and at least several years experience designing web sites. Take a look at his portfolio to give you some idea of the sites that have already been designed.

(Read my article "How to Choose a Web Site Designer"

www.isitebuild.com/webdesignerarticle.htm).

Pros

Working with a specialist in designing and optimizing websites.

Professional image for your business

Years of experience building, optimizing and promoting web sites.

Saves time - leaves you time to concentrate on building your business while the technical aspects and maintenance of your web site is taken care of.

Cons

Can be expensive

You have less control (must work with your designer).

Recommendations

Do-it-yourself

If you want to build it yourself and have the time to do it, then learn some html and invest in a professional web editor. Learning html will enable you know what's wrong with your site (particularly when a web site editor doesn't write proper html or adds unnecessary tags). The editor is very helpful if you have to maintain a large web site that contains hundreds of pages.

If you don't have much time and wish to do-it-yourself without learning html, then download a web template.

If you don't want to learn html and want an all-in-one solution for building, hosting, promoting and web traffic analysis, then

SiteBuiltIt is a great way to go.

Hiring a Professional Web Site Designer

This will save you a lot of time instead of doing it yourself. You can also be assured of having a professionally designed web site built to reflect your business. A good web designer will know how to build a web site that sells, which is the ultimate goal for your business.

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