

PLANNING YOUR WEBSITE

USE INDUSTRY BEST-PRACTICES TO PREPARE YOUR IDEAS FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF YOUR NEXT WEBSITE

Building a website can be a daunting task, even for those who do it every day. NetMinistry has created this simple guide for planning the different pieces to your website in order to prepare for ordering the construction of your next site. We encourage you to contact our sales department with any questions you have on the way to planning your dream site. You can reach us at (877) 318-7994.

STEP 1: YOUR DOMAIN NAME

Your domain name is a unique name that identifies your website, like google.com or redcross.org. It service as your address on the web, similar to your street address in the real world. You will want to begin choosing one as the first step of your website planning process.

- Choose a memorable name. Stay away from abbreviated names that are difficult to remember.
- If your organization's name is not available, find a name that best describes what you do. For example, if redcross.org is not available, try medicalcharity.org or disasterrelief.com.
- Go to <http://www.netministry.com/domains> to check on the availability of your domain name before finalizing your choice.
- Try to think of multiple domain names and alternate TLDs (Top Level Domains – like .com, .org, .net, etc.) and consider registering them all.

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Your Domain Name List

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_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Once you have chosen your domain name, you are ready for step two.

STEP 2: FIND WEBSITES YOU LIKE

Now that you have a great domain name, it is time to do some web surfing. Go to <http://www.google.com> and search for organizations that perform similar functions to yours. For example, if you have a plumbing business, type in the keyword “plumbers”. If you are a charity, you might type in “Baptist church” or “world hunger”. What you are looking for is websites that can serve as an inspiration for your website.

Another great website to visit is <http://www.cssremix.com>. This website contains an archive of websites designed by top industry designers using the latest techniques. You might find quite a few you like from their collection of links.

Stop when you have found three to five sites. More than five websites will make it difficult for the designer working on your website to determine what you are looking for. Write down what you like about each website so that your designer can create a unique design combining the best of each site.

Websites That Inspire Me

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Once you have your website list, you are ready for the next step.

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STEP 3: GATHER YOUR VISUALS AND CONTENT

Now, you’re ready to begin organizing the information for your website. This is a critical step because it will determine the **structure** of your website. A website is much like a brochure – you have to plan the cover as well as the inside pages to the brochure. A website contains a **homepage** and **secondary pages** that work together to create the entire website.

Gather all of your materials together. Gather your logo, pictures you want to publish on the website, sales materials, membership information, and donor solicitations – just about anything you have ever written about your organization that is not dated. Catalog this information into **categories of information**. For example, all of the basic information about your organization, such as history, mission statements, and contact information should be placed in a pile called ‘About Us’. However, information about your products and services should be placed in a pile called ‘Products’. Once you determine the information you have ready to present, and what general categories they belong to, you can begin creating a **site map**. A site map is a basic outline of your website. For example:

- Homepage
- About Us
 - History
 - Mission and Vision
- Products
 - Books
 - Training Materials

- Press Releases
 - Individual Press Releases
- Contact Information
 - Address and Phone
 - Driving Directions

This provides us with the full understanding of what your website will need and how the menu needs to be designed.

My Site Map

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Once your site map is complete, you are almost done!

STEP 4: PLAN YOUR HOMEPAGE

The homepage is the “cover” of your website. It needs to contain references to the latest, greatest, and newest information contained within your website. For example, your homepage **should not** contain details about your upcoming event. But, it **should** contain a prominent, eye-catching banner that provides “teaser” information and links people to a full page within your website about the event.

Determine what type of “teaser” information you would like to place on the homepage and write it down. Be careful not to create a homepage that is too busy with more than 5-6 points of information. Otherwise, the clutter will lose most website visitors.

Elements For My Homepage

STEP 5: PLAN YOUR FUNCTIONALITY

What makes a website different from a brochure is that it can actually interact with the reader. Interaction is handled by technology that is referred to as an **application**. In order to insure that we know what you want your website to do beyond simply presenting information, you will want to write down the various “special functions” you feel it needs. For example, you may want to be able to take online orders or donations. You may want visitors to register for an e-mail newsletter subscription. Whatever you choose, you will want to make a list of the functionality you need.

Functionality My Website Needs

Once you are finished listing your application requirements, you are ready for the final step.

STEP 6: WRITE NEW CONTENT

Your website will most likely need some new content to be written. Content is the words and images that are used on each of the pages. The best way to organize your website content is to create one MS Word per page of your website. Write all of your information on each document and save it in a folder with the images for that page. Once you have folders for each page, simply create a zip file of all of your folders and send it to our staff.

If you do not currently have a website account, contact us to get started. We would love to help you build your new site, and can provide you with the very best resources for your web hosting needs.

Call us today at (877) 318-7994.



NetMinistry Technology Corporation - Tampa, Florida. Find out more about NetMinistry by
going to: <http://www.netministry.com>