The simple, visual guide

by John Williams

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Lewis Philips signature books

Email

Recommended Resources

- **Web Site Hosting Service**

- **Internet Marketing**

- **Affiliate Program**

Please Read This First

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About the Author

John Williams has been helping people with their web-related questions for a few years.

After his book, "Make Your Own Web Site" was published by eBookwholesaler a couple of years ago, he realized that many of the people that built sites with the information in that book might want some help with promoting their sites.

So, John started to research the best ways to improve web sites to make them easier for web site owners to maintain and for visitors to enjoy as well as buy from.

John hopes that this book will help you improve the results you get with your web site, whether it is a personal or business project, and reduce the time and effort needed to get those results.

Introduction

This book will help you to improve the response you get from your web site without spending a lot of money on computer programs, equipment or other resources.

I've made everything as simple as possible, using pictures whenever I thought that they would make the information clearer.

I have used very few technical terms (jargon) and explain those I do briefly when you first see them as you read through the book, so that you will know what web designers, technicians, and other professionals are telling you or trying to sell you.

The programs I've used for the demonstrations are mostly free or low-cost but they should give you good results as they have for me. They work on the Windows® operating system because that is what I am most familiar with.

But, many of these same programs are available for Macintosh and Linux based computer systems as well.

I also have tried to include information about alternative programs with similar features.

Please carefully read my comments about each program and the instructions which come with each one before you try to use it.

Some programs may have been changed since I used them and you may find that some features are set up to work differently in the updated version.

There are some more advanced topics in the book, such as using Style Sheets and adding special features to your web site. I've kept each section brief, but tried to give enough about each topic so that you can use it without much effort or delay.

With this book on your computer (you can print out a personal copy, of course), you can set your own pace and go back to review anything you need to at any time that suits you.

Plan to Avoid Problems

When you set up your web site, did you plan that it would look like it does today?

Many people start with a plan for their web site and its development, but the pressure of other personal and business commitments push this important task into the background.

Sometimes, they get their web site designed by a friend or a professional designer and believe that the web site will look after itself.

One day, they suddenly realize that their web site is not giving them the results they need to pay the costs or return a profit.

Maybe, their web site is displaying out of date information.

Or, it may be just too hard for people to understand why they should do business with them.

Laying out the basic parts of your web site does not take long.

If your web site not well set out or needs major renovation, the best time to start is now.

Otherwise, your web site will reach a point where you may decide that starting from scratch may be easier and faster.

I hope that my suggestions will help you to turn things around and start that profit line upward more steeply before you take that extreme step.

Please read through the rest of this chapter, whatever the current state of your web site.

You will get suggestions that will save you time if you do not have to rework your site. If your site is okay at this point, you will get useful tips to help you avoid problems in the future.

Who is Your Site For?

Two questions you need to answer when you design your web site or start to work out the type of site that you are going to pay someone to prepare for you are:

1) *"What sort of person do I want to attract to my site?"*

Try to answer this question in some detail. The more you know about the type of person that is likely to need your services or products, the easier it will be for you to sell to them and build an ongoing relationship.

2) *"What problems do they have which I can help them solve with my products or services?"*

This question holds the key to your success. If you sell drills, remember that people don't want a drill, however colorful or powerful; they want a hole.

You must convince them that buying your drill is the best way to get what they desire.

When you are focused on your visitors and their needs, you will produce a web site which is more likely to be successful and profitable, if you have something to sell from the site.

Draw Your Web Site

You can draw it on paper, a whiteboard (or a blackboard with chalk) or with your favorite computer program.

Give yourself plenty of space to make changes and additions.

Use different colors for different areas if you like.
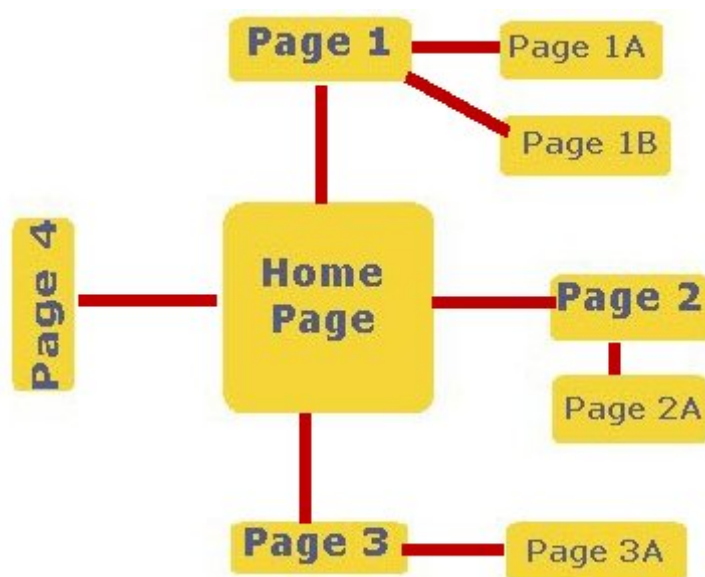
Some people have their web site arranged like a wheel, with the home page (the one which most of their visitors see first) in the center and the other sections radiating out like the spokes on a wheel. Then, any other pages which relate to a particular topic are grouped under

the main page for that topic.

You may prefer to have new additions to your web site grouped with those sections that are already in place and relate most closely to the new section.

Then, you just add links between the home page and the most important pages in each section too.

It may be worthwhile to assume the role of a first-time visitor to your web site and see if you can navigate to each area while just using the directions on the draft of your web site.

This is likely to have only limited value for some people because they have put so much time and effort into the development of their site that they will be unable to see any errors.

So, when you have the first version of your web site in place, ask an employee or a friend that has not been involved in setting up the site to visit it and see if they can get around it without any problems.

The 3 Clicks Rule: A good rule of thumb is to arrange everything so that none of the important pages are more than three clicks from any other page.

Navigating Your Site

This is very important.

If your visitors cannot easily find what they are looking for on your web site, they will click away and look elsewhere.

You might have links on almost every page to every other page, but this is only suitable for small web sites.

Another way to link the different areas on your site is to put links to all the main sub-pages for each topic on the home page

Most sites have a menu with links to the main pages on the site across the top of each page, or down one side.

These are easy to construct with any web page editor and there are also many programs available which will produce these menus when you enter the information about your web site.

If you use CSS (Cascading Style Sheets), there is a free program for producing tabbed menus called **CSS Tab Designer** that is available from **http://www.highdots.com/css-tab-designer/**.

You can construct tabbed menus where each tab contains a drop-down menu that appears when someone clicks on the Main tab.

Another approach is to have a line of "breadcrumbs" below the main menu. Breadcrumbs are a series of links which show the path from the home page to the viewer's current location on your website. They can move to any point on that path by clicking on the appropriate breadcrumb link.

Links for your Visitors

There are two kinds of links on your web site:

   1) The links between different areas of your site and

   2) The links to other web sites.

1) You need to check regularly that your internal links are all working correctly so that your visitors do not have problems.

2) These links are very important for the success of your web site and your business.

The search engines check for links with other web sites to help them define the rank of your web site.

You can use the free program, Xenu's Link Sleuth, to check that all the links on your web site are working properly. Get it from from **http://home.snafu.de/~tilman/xenulink.html**

Many web site owners used to put a lot of time into arranging links between their own web sites and exchanging links with other web site owners, even if those sites were not focused on a similar topic to theirs.

These tactics are much less useful since the search engines started to use more sophisticated formulas to rate different web sites.

It is obvious that the quality and relevance of links to your web site is much more important than the number of links which you have.

I've read that the search engines may discount links between sites that are on the same web server. This may mean that links between your own sites may be less valuable.

Major players like Google have the bulk of their data about web sites collected by search bots which crawl around the Internet. But, they also have many human researchers who can check on individual sites and help make the results as displayed in the Search Engines more closely reflect reality.

Just linking to another site that deals with the same broad topic as your web site is no longer good enough.
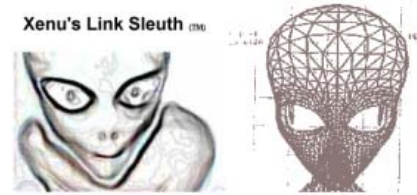
A Free SiteMap for your Visitors and Search Engines!

Many people provide a special page with a map that shows visitors the location of all the various parts of their web site.

That's a good idea, even if you have already set up a clear system with a tabbed menu and breadcrumbs for your visitors.

There are several options that you might use:

1) Draw the map by hand and then use your web page editor program to put it on its own web page. That's likely to take time to get right.

2) Buy a program to produce the map after you input the information.

3) Use an online service to produce the map for you.

I used the first option as a learning exercise when I had just one small web site. That method became less attractive as my first site expanded. Then, I made more web sites and started looking for a program or service to produce the site maps from my information.

That's the method which I suggest you use. The site I recommend will provide you with a map on a web page for your visitors to use and it will
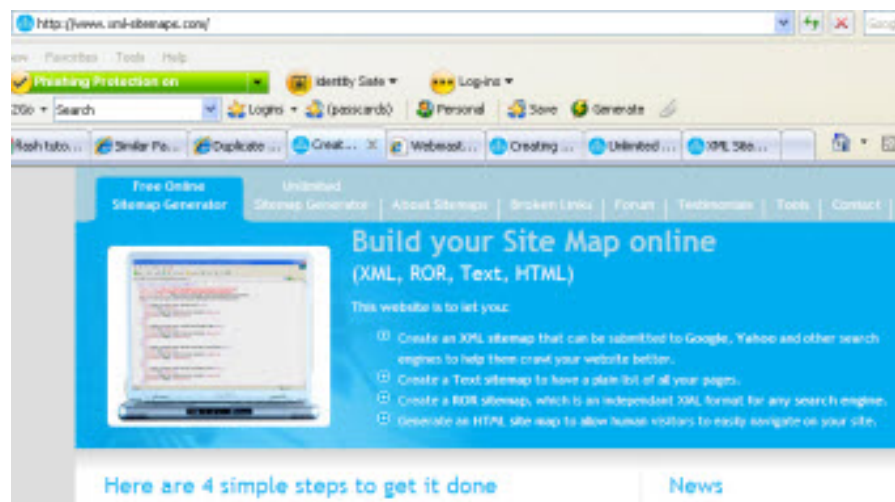
also produce an xml version which can be read by the robots that collect web site information for Google and some other search engines.

You can produce as many site-maps as you need up to 500 pages each at **http://www.ezy-internet.com/xml-sitemaps/** The service is free for both personal and commercial sites.

They offer a downloadable, unlimited version for people that have more than 500 pages on their web site. This is about $USD 20 at this time.

To use the free online sitemap generator, go to the site **http://www.ezy-internet.com/xml-sitemaps/**.

Fill in the URL (web address) of your web site and other details. They even provide explanations about what information you need to enter alongside each box on the (very short) form.

You might want to use a similar method to show your visitors how to fill out forms on your own web site.

Check the information you have entered, to avoid spelling mistakes or other errors.

Then, left-click the Start button.

Wait until your site is checked and the Map produced. They provide a visual indication of the progress for you.

When you see the XML Map, you can download it to your computer.

You can also get a version on a regular HTML page to offer to your visitors.

Transfer the XML map to the /public_html folder on your web site.

Then, go to your Google WebMaster Account at:

http://www.google.com/webmasters/sitemaps/siteoverview.

You can use the username and password for any account you already have with Google, such as Gmail or AdWords, to access this service, or just sign up on the spot.

Submit the URL of your XML Sitemap.

You put the HTML page with your sitemap anywhere in the same folder. Add a link to the HTML version of your sitemap on your Menu.

Add the location of the XML version to the robots.txt file in your public_html folder.

Creating a robots.txt file

If you don't already have a robots.txt file, create a new, blank text file and type in (You must change the domain name example.com to your own domain name):

User-agent: *

Sitemap: http://www.example.com/sitemap.xml

If you want to stop the robots from recording details of certain folders on your web site, use the disallow command:

disallow: /cgi-bin

disallow: /secret

Rename the file robots.txt and transfer it to your /public_html folder.

You may give the XML file and the page with the HTML version of the Sitemap different names.

Don't list the HTML version in your robots.txt file.

Some robots from certain search engines may ignore the disallow instruction but it should work for the ones we are most interested in.

Google's own advice for stopping some pages being collected by their robots or to ask that some or all your pages be removed from their index is currently located on:

http://www.google.com/support/webmasters/bin/answer.py?answer=35301

Your Pictures

A picture (usually described as a **graphic** when used on the Internet) can be worth the space it takes up if it is appropriate to the theme of your site and holds the interest of the people that you want to attract to your web site.

But, many of the problems which reduce the effectiveness of web sites can be related to the pictures on them and the way they are displayed.

Here are some of the most important things to consider about each graphic which you are thinking about using on your web site.

All graphics need to be of a professional standard.

Large graphics can significantly slow the appearance of your whole web page in your visitor's web browser unless they have a high-power broadband connection (those people are still a relatively small group).

These delays can cause people to click away from your web site, never to return.

Use the smallest size and resolution for your pictures which gives the effect you want on the Internet - 72 dots per inch is still the default resolution.

Crop the pictures to remove busy backgrounds and unnecessary detail from your pictures. Focus your visitors' attention on the most important features by removing unimportant ones.

If you want to offer large versions of some pictures on your web site, put them on a separate page instead of the home page.

Put a small version (called a thumbnail) on your home page with a link to the larger version, so that those who want to see them can do so.

This will reduce the time which your home page takes to load for all your visitors.

If you have several small images on one page, you may save some loading time by combining into one larger picture with a border between them.

Specify Image Size and Alt Text

When the visitor's web browser starts to load your page, it reads the source version of your page to find where the various pictures and blocks of text are to be displayed.

When it has to put an image on the screen, it needs to know how much space to reserve for the image.

If you have written the correct height and width for each picture on the page, the browser can assign an appropriate space for the image before it has finished downloading, and continue to download and display other parts of the web page.

This will help all the different web browsers display your graphics more quickly and accurately.

If you do not include the height and width for each picture, the browser has to stop loading the other parts of the webpage until the actual image file downloads so that the picture can be given the right amount of space on the page.

You will also help your visitors by putting clear and accurate information in the Alt Text part of the image's properties. This is especially helpful to those that have switched off the option to display graphics on their monitor and people with limited vision that depend on devices that read the source to tell them what is on the screen.

The search engines may also look for this information.

Many people just put something like "picture09.jpg" as the Alt Text which is accurate, but useless to visitors. If you put something like "pretty woman on beach" instead, your visitor may look at the picture which you spent time selecting and displaying.

Take care with Permissions

You need to ensure that you have the right to use each picture, including pictures which are in web page templates or other material that you buy or get for free from other people, to use on your web site.

If you buy pictures with people in them for use on your web site, make sure the supplier has the appropriate model releases which give them permission to use their likenesses and give you the same rights.

Always print and keep the license you get with any graphics you buy for use in any commercial activity.

Simple Video Options

Promoting your business with video is becoming very popular.

The cost has been be coming down rapidly, but you need to get it right when any mistake might reflect on your business and reputation.

Doing it well requires careful preparation and some practice sessions before you put your first opus on your web site or a video site like **Youtube.com**.

You can get free, or low-cost, software to start. As you get some experience and develop your skills and ideas, you can tackle bigger or more complex projects, and buy some more sophisticated programs if you have the need.

I suggest that you consider these two very simple and low or no-cost options to people that wanted to produce videos from their own photos or recordings of activity on their computer screens.

Jing

Jing is from Techsmith at **http://www.techsmith.com/jing/default.asp**
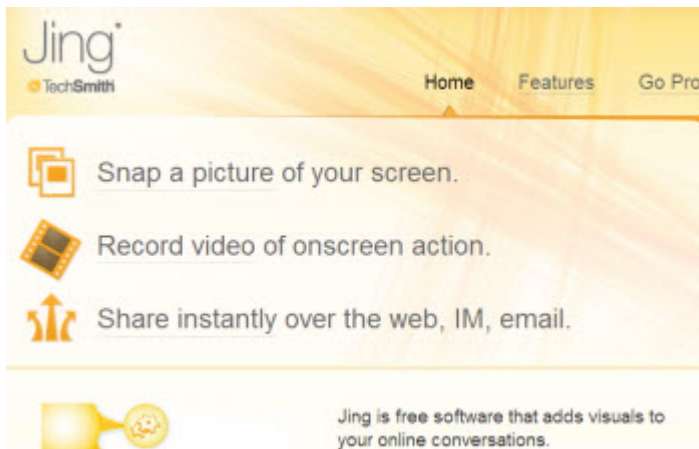
Techsmith's main product is Camtasia Studio which is a powerful program used by many professionals to produce videos for promotion and education. Even people with even limited experience can use it to produce quality screen-capture videos. You have to decide if you want to start with Camtasia or start with Jing.

Jing produces quality output too but, naturally, is more limited. Videos can only be up to 5 minutes long with both the free and the paid (Pro) versions of Jing.

But, that is sufficient for many people, at least to start with. It's a very easy program to use and Techsmith provides excellent tutorials for you, just as they do with all their products.

Users of either version get some storage space for their videos on Techsmith's own site, **http://www.screencast.com**. This means you don't have to set up the videos on your own web pages. That means that people watching the videos are not using up the amount of data transfers, including email, documents and videos, which your Internet Service Provider allows you to have to and from your web site before you may have to pay extra money!

Important differences between the two versions include:

The free version of Jing can only record your videos in Flash format. But, most computers have the Adobe® Flash Player which is all that is needed to view the videos. You can download the latest version from **http://get.adobe.com/flashplayer/**

Jing Pro can record your videos in either Flash or MPEG-4 AVC. Flash is widely used and most computer users can watch Flash videos. The MPEG-4 AVC format gives higher quality playback.

Download the free Quicktime® Player for both Macintosh® and Windows® computers from **http://www.apple.com/quicktime/download/** .

Your Jing Pro output can be used on FaceBook and Viddler, among other Web 2.0 sites.

Jing Pro users can just click one button to send their videos to their account at **youtube.com**

Videos produced with the free version are branded with the Jing logo.

There is no branding on videos produced with Jing Pro.

Jing Pro costs about $15 a year at the time I am writing this.

Animato

You can use this site to transform some of your own photos into a high-quality, eye-catching video presentation.

Like Jing, there are free and paid options available.

This is incredibly easy to use, even if you have no experience with producing videos.

Other features of the service include:

- It's automatic

- Easy to customize

- Preparing your video for processing should take just a few minutes

- They say that no two videos produced with the system are ever the same

- You can make an unlimited number of short videos for free

- The system was created by experienced TV and film producers

To create your first video;

1) Select your pictures and gather them in a single folder on your computer. You must have the right to use and broadcast every picture.

2) Then, log in to your account at **http://www.animato.com**.

3) Transfer your pictures to the Animato web site, and also your music if you are going to use some in the video. The music must be royalty-free music which <u>you</u> have the right to use for broadcast.

4) If you have a commercial Animato account, you will be able to use high-quality music from their library.

5) Choose the options that you want for your video; title, short description, short or full-length video etc.

6) Sort the pictures into the order you want them to be used in the video.

7) Then, click the key to set the process in motion.

When the video is ready, you can preview the video.

If you are happy with it, you can download it in MPEG-4 format.

This format can be used on your web site. Visitors will need the Quicktime Player to view the video.

If you want to change it to Flash or some other video format, you will need to get a suitable program (some are available for free from **http://www.snapfiles.com/freeware/**)

Another option is to use a free online service like the one at **media-convert.com**

You might want to make it a Flash movie and set it up on your web site, or convert it to .avi format and then edit it.

Then, you can upload it to youtube.com or your own web site.

Many people use a service like **tubemogul.com** to deliver their video to a number of different video sites without charge or hassle.

You just select the sites you want your video sent to and fill out your details.

Media-convert.com and **tubemogul.com** are both free services.

Promote Your Web Site and Off-line Business

If your main business is not located on the Internet, you can get many advantages by setting up a web site to promote your products or services.

Having a web site dedicated to your off-line business may give you immediate access to a broader market as well as the opportunity to make contact with new suppliers in your country and just about anywhere else in the world.

You can use your web site to show your products and other features of your business in full-color at minimal cost.

While full-color, printed brochures are still effective, they are also very expensive to produce and circulate. Put your brochure on your web site and potential customers will download it to their computers and print out the sections which most interest them on their own printers.

If you find an error in your printed brochure, you may not want to spend the extra money to have them reprinted.

But, most errors in your web pages can be fixed and updates added at almost no cost and in much less time than it would take to get a replacement set of printed brochures.

Your web site gives you the opportunity to use email to reach customers and potential suppliers more quickly, wherever they are located. And their replies will also be much faster than if they were sent by regular mail.

You can promote your web site every day as you go about your normal business activities.

Put your website address and your email on your business cards, and all your signage. Make sure that they're included in your phone book advertisement.

Your web site, packed with color (and audio and video as well if you like) will probably cost you much less than you pay for your advertisement in the phone book and your local newspaper. It's a low-cost powerful promoter of your business which works for you 24 hours every day of the year!

Answer Questions

You'll get questions about the content of your web site, no matter how hard you try to make it as clear as possible.

Answer them all as promptly as you can.

Then, put them in a file for later reference.

You might put the most useful ones on a page of Frequently Asked Questions on your web site. Do not include any personally identifiable information about the people that sent the questions to you.

This will help to build your credibility.

It will also help to keep visitors on your site longer so there is more chance that they will buy your product or those you promote.

You can also use the questions as the basis for articles in your newsletter or for submission to article directories.

The newsletters can be put into a folder on your site for people to refer to. They can't help seeing your advertisements at the same time.

Turn them into tips and put together a booklet which you offer to visitors who sign up for your newsletter or include with products that you sell.

Put some advertising material about your products and services and a link to your site in the booklet.

Search Google or your other favorite search engine for forums related to your topic. Type in something like forum: and the topic. Here is an example:

forum: tropical fish

Join the most active of the forums and look for questions which you can answer.

Your answers must comply with the rules of the Forum. Most do not let you promote anything of a commercial nature, but you can probably put a simple link to your web site in the signature which you attach to your reply to each question.

A good forum will probably have some great questions which you had not got on your own web site. You can add the questions to your file but be careful not to copy the answers which other people have given.

All the material in the Forum, including the questions, is subject to copyright which belongs either to the Forum operator or the person who makes a particular post.

So, you must not reproduce any of the material just as it is in the Forum.

Tips to Power Up Your Web Pages

The <u>most important page</u> on your site is the home page; usually index.htm, index.html or index.php

That is the page which all visitors to your web site see and they may leave without looking at any others if you haven't carefully planned how you show your site has the information they need. You know what they want; the product or service to solve their big problem which brought them to your web site.

If your message is not clear and focused on their needs and desires, they will probably click away to another site, never to return. Some experts suggest that you have <u>less than twenty-five seconds</u> to get them interested.

The <u>most important part</u> of any web page is the area from the top of the page to the point which sits at the bottom of the visitor's web browser window.

This area is usually referred to as "above the fold".

You need to put your most powerful message in that space so that you get the best value from it.

Many people fill most of the area with a large logo or other image that may increase the time taken for the page to appear in the visitor's browser window. That annoys people.

Keep your logo to a reasonable size and optimize it for use on our web site. A resolution of 72 dots per inch is all you need.

Some people use a small logo or just a colorful text heading.

Many web pages are filled with information about the web site owner or their business instead of being focused on helping visitors to the web site with their questions and problems.

The visitors come to your web site because they want to know how your products or services can help them, and why they should take your offer instead of one from your competitors.

You need to identify your business with a header image or logo.

Put a menu across the top of the page or down the side with links to the other main areas of your web site.

The rest of that area above the fold should be concentrated on the needs and desires of your potential customers.

One common and highly successful approach is to have a headline that addresses the main concern which your product can help them with.

It's a good idea to have a link to your order form in this area or in your menu at the top of the page.

Put a box where your visitors can subscribe to a newsletter or a series of helpful tips related to the topic that brought them to your web site.

You can get a variety of programs to run your email newsletter.

PHPList is one. It's free to download and use.

This is one of the programs which you may be able to install almost hands-free through your web site's Control Panel.!

DadaMail from **http://www.dadaproject.com/** is another newsletter program This one has free and paid versions. It has on-going development, many powerful features and is also a conceptual art project!

Having your own newsletter allows you to get some value from visitors who do not stay to read through your main offer. It also gives you another chance to persuade them to consider your product or service when you send the emails containing the promised information.

You need to keep your visitors focused on your main offer, so you should think carefully before putting any advertisements for other products, your own or ones that you are affiliated with, in this high-value area.

Do you get enough value from these extra advertisements or would you do better to put them on their own pages deeper in your web site and keep your visitors focused on your most valuable offer while they are on your home page?

The colors and words you use should be appropriate for the topic and the sort of person who will visit your site.

Use care when selecting any music or other audio which you have on your website. You should make sure that your visitor is able to easily adjust the volume or turn off any background music which you play while they are on your web site.

Control Panel and Fantasio

If you have a Control Panel in your web site, you probably have a feature called Fantasio.

If you are not sure, please ask your Hosting provider's support team.

If you go into your Control Panel and left-click on Fantasio, you will see options for (almost) hands-free installation of several powerful programs including PHPList and Wordpress (for blogging) among many others.

Definitely worth checking out.

Old Versions of Programs may be Dangerous.

Most good programs and scripts for your computer are updated from time to time. This may be done to fix problems, add new features or remove some security flaw which has been found.

The third reason is more common than ever now.

If you continue to use old versions of any program or script, you may leave your web site or your computer open to malicious attack.

Many companies offer low-cost or free upgrades to customers that have recent versions.

The best time to get and install an upgrade to a program or script is usually soon after the release of the new version.

Coffeecup software is unique in my experience because they offer free upgrades for your lifetime of any of their commercial programs which you buy. I have a few and I know they produce a new version almost every year. They also provide downloads of the programs you own if your computer crashes – that's happened to me and many other people.

Research

When you are developing your plan for your web site, set aside some time for research.

You need to talk to your customers about why people buy your products and take careful notes about anything which may be a clue why someone shows signs of losing interest in something you are offering them.

Look at your own promotional material.

Gather as much material from your competitors as you can. Review it from the point of view of a potential customer, not a salesperson.

Look at their web sites, if they have them.
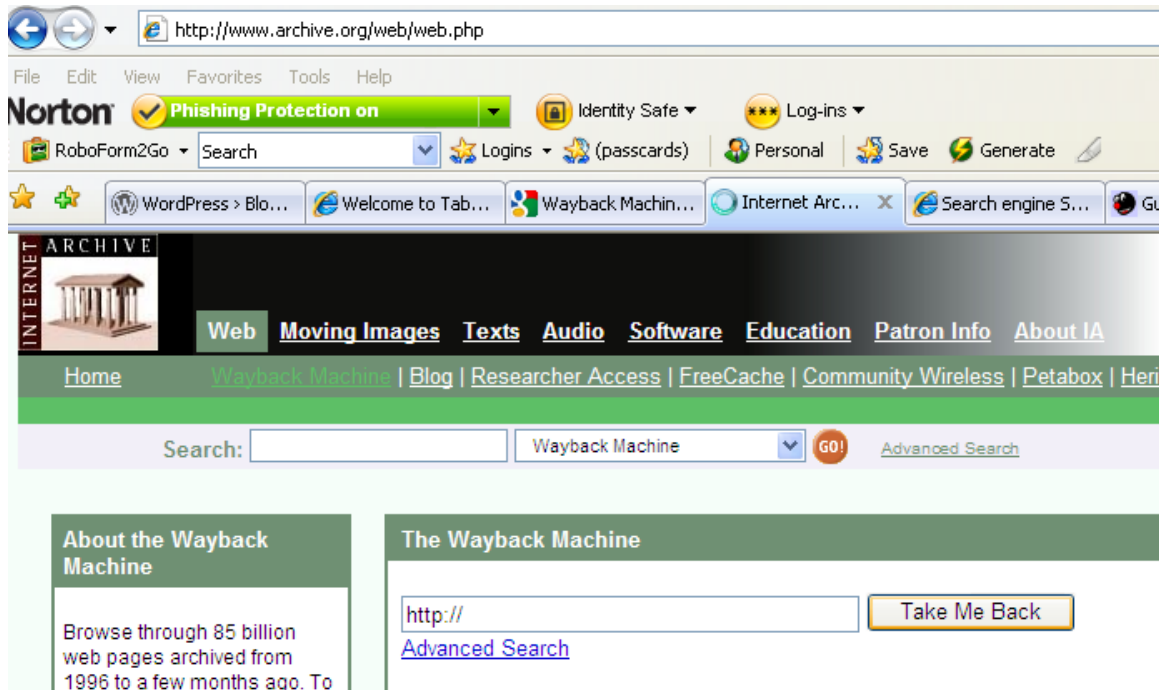
If they have been on the Internet for some time, you will probably find older versions of their websites on the Wayback Machine at

http://www.archive.org/web/web.php

This is not underhanded. You can be sure that your competitors are researching you in the same way!

The Words on Your Web Site

You probably don't need to pay for a professional to write the promotional text on your web site at the beginning.

You may think that you cannot write material which will hold your visitor's attention and persuade them to take action by buying your product or signing up to get your newsletter or free report.

But, most people can do this if they take the time to organize their information and their goals before they start writing.

After all, you probably know quite a bit about the customer's concerns from doing the exercise earlier where you tried to define the ideal visitor to your web site.

Don't try to write like a salesman, write like a friend.

You want to imagine that you are just telling a friend how your product or service will solve their most pressing problem in that area.

Review the questions you get from your previous customers and those you found in the forums you visited.

Keywords

Keywords are so important, you should research them before you select and register your domain name.

Then, you can try to find an available domain name which includes an important keyword for your niche (area of activity).

To find some relevant keywords, go to the Google free Keywords tool at **https://adwords.google.com/select/KeywordToolExternal**

If you have a Windows-based computer, you may also find the GoodKeywords program useful. Download it for free from **http://www.goodkeywords.com/**

Your web address (URL) such as **http://www.example.com**, your headline and sub-heads, meta-tags (tags within the page's source which you add keywords to for the visually impaired and search engine bots) and the Alt

tags, which describe your images to the visually impaired and search engine bots, are all good places to put keywords.

Words near the beginning of a piece of text are thought to be seen as more significant by the bots.

So, a paragraph that starts "**Great range of Golf clubs**" will probably rate lower than one which starts "**Golf clubs to suit all types of golfers**" if someone enters a simple search for **golf clubs** because both the words in the search are nearer to the beginning. Another point is that the second phrase contains three words related to golf and the first one has only two.

Also, the first two keywords are closer together which is thought to be another factor in Search Engine Optimization.

I use a few words like 'may be' and 'thought to be' because I read reports where these statements are backed by apparently good data, but the target of high relevance in the search engines is a moving one.

Google and the other search engines are constantly tweaking their programs to refine the results and also deal with constant attempts by people to skew the results in their favor.

Keeping the number of insignificant words in an area of text low in relation to the number of keywords in it is also recommended by some experts.

But, you need to be aware that the search engines may react negatively if you exceed the density of keywords in an area which they believe is reasonable.

What's that level? They don't tell us and it changes from time to time as they tweak their programs.

Writing Content

Top copywriters get handsome fees and, often, a percentage of the gross sales which their writing produces.

I can only give you some general tips which I've learned from studying them, studying their advertisements and other copywriting.

Some important considerations when you are writing anything for your web site include:

Write lots of headlines: Just writing one and then focusing on the rest of the text for your page is not sufficient because your main headline is the first chance you get to pull the reader closer and start them on the way to your Order Button.

If that single line doesn't appeal, many potential customers will click away and the work you put in to your whole site is wasted.

An hour spent working on finding the best headlines might pay cash dividends for years.

A good headline may arouse fear, curiosity or desire.

The other factor you need to get is action.

Focus like a Laser on their Most Important Needs and Desires

Work out from your earlier brainstorming about your ideal or typical client what their main needs and desires (relevant to your products or services) are.

Focus like a laser on them.

Tell Them to Take Action

Many sales people don't lose orders, they just don't ask for them!

Tell your visitor how your product will solve their most pressing problem, emphasize your guarantee and service, then ask for the order.

Use a Consistent Style and Tone

If you are selling other people's products as an affiliate and use the sales pages provided by different providers, you may be diluting their effect because the people that wrote the different pages have different styles.

Don't write like the last salesman you met talked to you; write like you are telling a friend how your product can help him or her.

Avoid Technical or other Specialist Words

Unless your customers are all specialists themselves, avoid technical terms and jargon.

If you are trying to sell to specialists, then use just enough of the terminology to show you know what they need.

Don't make any mistakes with any special terms you do use.

More Tips

Use different, strong keywords in your sub-headings.

Put your keywords near the beginning of sentences.

Start paragraphs with a strong hook and end with another.

Don't use more filler words than absolutely necessary.

You want action now because there are too many distractions and competing offers to let your visitor think about it too much. So, put calls to action through your copy.

Make only one offer on a page.

You may have several related quality products, but putting more than one on a sales page means you want the visitor to think and then act.

They'll worry they might choose the wrong thing and decide to go somewhere that they just have to click the "Buy" button.

Most of the time, many people won't buy on their first visit. Give them an offer of a free report or a series of email containing useful tips (money, time or energy saving ones are all good).

Your time is not wasted because you get more chances to make the sale and also be seen as someone that gives to get.

You focus on your customers' needs and desires, so you could try using "you" instead of "I" through the text.

Story telling is a great selling technique. Use stories which will reflect the visitors' values and needs.

Never use a story which reflects badly on anyone or involves personal information about anyone.

Avoid talking about your competitors but, speak well of them when you have to say anything at all. Saying anything negative reflects against you and the industry which you and your competitor are both involved in.

Also, you don't know what relationship there may be with someone you are talking to and the competitor. It might be their lawyer!

Blog Power

Adding a blog to your web site can make it more appealing to your customers and visitors.

A blog is just a different kind of web site, where the site owner adds new information on a regular basis and invites feedback from visitors to the site.

The content on most blogs is presented in a less formal way than with other business web sites.

One thing which can encourage visitors to add their comments about the material you put on the site is to let them include a link to their own web site with their comment.

This gives all the visitors a good reason to visit your blog more often so they can be part of the conversation with you and other visitors, see what comments other people have submitted and keep up with your new material.

Most blogs let the visitors sign up to an RSS feed. This is a method of sending highlights from new entries on your blog to other blogs and direct to the subscribers' computers.

Yes, people are eager to sign up to get your messages if you provide good content!

Free Software and Free Hosting

Most blogging programs are free.

You can even get free hosting for your blog!

The suppliers of Blogger and Wordpress blog software offer free hosting for your blog if you use their free blogging software.

Blogger, which is owned by Google, offers free hosting for your Blogger blog at **blogger.com**. They also provide a number of professional quality templates which you can use for your Blogger-based blog.

Wordpress offer free hosting for your Wordpress blog at **http://www.wordpress.com/** if you use their free blogging software.

Using their hosting is okay for a blog about your hobby or other personal interests but it is probably better to set up your business-related blog on your own web site because you will own the web address of your blog.

When your blog is hosted on someone else's site, they are likely to get more benefit from your promotional efforts than you.

If the company that provides the hosting changes their business model and stops hosting your site, you will have to set up your blog at another address and try to get your regular visitors to start going there.

You will almost certainly lose some of your visitors and all links to the old address of your blog will stop working.

Fortunately, you can host your Blogger or Wordpress blog on your own domain. It's a little more work, but I think it's a much better option.

People that know and like your blog content will tell their friends and associates to visit your web site to read and comment on your blog (and maybe buy your products).

Many people are changing their whole web site into a blog with WordPress, which is currently the most popular stand-alone blogging software program.

But, start by just setting up your blog with the free Wordpress software in a folder on your web site. Give yourself a little time to get used to running it for a while before making any major changes to the site your customers and suppliers are used to visiting.

You might just announce the blog as a new feature of your web site.

Or, you could register another domain name, set it up as an add-on domain in the same hosting account as your current web site.

Then, the regular web site and the blog will look to visitors like they are in separate locations, but you will be able to operate them from one master

control panel on your main web site and only have to pay for one lot of hosting.

The Wordpress software is very easy to install. Wordpress claim that it can be installed in 5 minutes.

I think you should allow about half an hour to:

- Read the simple instructions.

- Download the software

- Extract the files from the archive

- Edit a couple of files.

- Then, transfer the files to your web site.

- Run the install program (that's the point where the Wordpress people probably start their stop-watches to time the "5 minute install").

If you have a slow connection to the Internet, you might want to compress the files, including those you added your information to, into a new archive before you transfer them to your web site. Then, you can extract them when you have the archive on your web site.

This will reduce the preparation time. Now, you will be ready to install the Wordpress software on your web site.

The Wordpress software is free to use on both commercial and personal web sites.

You can get support for any problems through the Forum. Don't expect immediate answers – they will come from more experienced users who have their own lives and blogs to attend to.

The user base for Wordpress is huge and still growing. It includes many enthusiastic and talented people that produce enhancements for Wordpress which they either sell or offer for free.

The two main types of enhancements are templates (page designs) and plugins (pieces of program code which give your blog new or improved functions and features).

Templates

If the two templates provided with the install package don't appeal to you, you can also get a wide range of free and commercial templates to use with your WordPress blog, which you can check out and download from the Wordpress web site.

This is probably the best source if you are just starting, because Wordpress.org will specify if the template has proved to be compatible with the current version of the WordPress blogging software.

Many designers also offer their templates for download direct from their own web sites.

The designers of free templates often put some conditions on the use and distribution of their templates which is their right.

You are not usually allowed to give or sell the template to anyone else.

Most ask that you leave a link to their website in the bottom part (footer) of the template. Sometimes, they will allow you to remove the link if you pay a small fee.

If you don't like the designer's terms, just choose another design.

It is usually very easy to change the template which you are using on your blog from the Dashboard (control panel) of your blog.

Third Party Links on Templates

Some templates from certain designers contain links to advertising by other companies who pay the designer (not you) to put their links on the template.

If you're happy with that, fine.

But, you want to think carefully before agreeing to use templates which have third-party advertising (promoting offers other than your products or the designer's own services), because you have no connection or control over what products or services are advertised.

Those products and offers may be changed at any time the advertiser chooses. Even if you don't mind the offers which show when you start using

the template, they may be changed to something you or your visitors may not like at any time without your knowledge.

Your business and reputation might be harmed by such a change if an advertiser gave unfair treatment to someone that went to the advertiser's web site through one of those links on your site.

There are plenty of great templates without third-party advertising links.

Start searching for your ideal template (called a theme) at:

http://wordpress.org/extend/themes/

Plugins

Plugins are another reason for the popularity of Wordpress. They add extra capabilities to your blog and increase the blog's appeal to your visitors.

Almost anyone, even those with no programming knowledge, can add them to their blog.

Look around the collection of plugins at:

http://wordpress.org/extend/plugins/ and your first question may be, "Is all this really free?"

Yes, it is!

Then, you want to start checking out some of the most popular plugins.

But, just start with one or two which give you features you want in your blog that are not yet in the standard installation.

With your first blog, like your first web site, there's a learning curve to overcome. It's <u>not</u> difficult. But, please proceed slowly at first; get used to the basic operations before you start adding too many bells and whistles.

As Wordpress develops, some features which were originally only available as plugins, have been added to the standard installation package.

When selecting plugins to try on your blog, check that they are compatible with the version of Wordpress which you are using to avoid unnecessary problems. Each listing of a plugin in the directory at

http://wordpress.org/extend/plugins/ shows that information, among other things, in a panel on the page related to the plugin.

Visit the developer's own plugin page: Always visit the plugin page on the developer's own site because there will probably be more useful information there, including comments and questions from people that are already using the plugin on their blogs.

Donate if you get Value: Template designers and plugin developers who give you free use of what they produce often ask for donations to help them with the cost of developing and improving their products.

It's not required, but you should consider giving a donation where you believe you get great value if you can do so.

Promoting Yourself and Your Business

This section is not about any kind of promotion by paid advertising or public relations. The web offers you some great opportunities for promotion where the only cost is in time.

The results can be as effective as using more traditional, paid methods of promotion.

Promoting Yourself with a Blog

I've recently learned of a new blog site which seems to have much potential for promoting yourself and your expertise.

The Site is **http://posterous.com/**
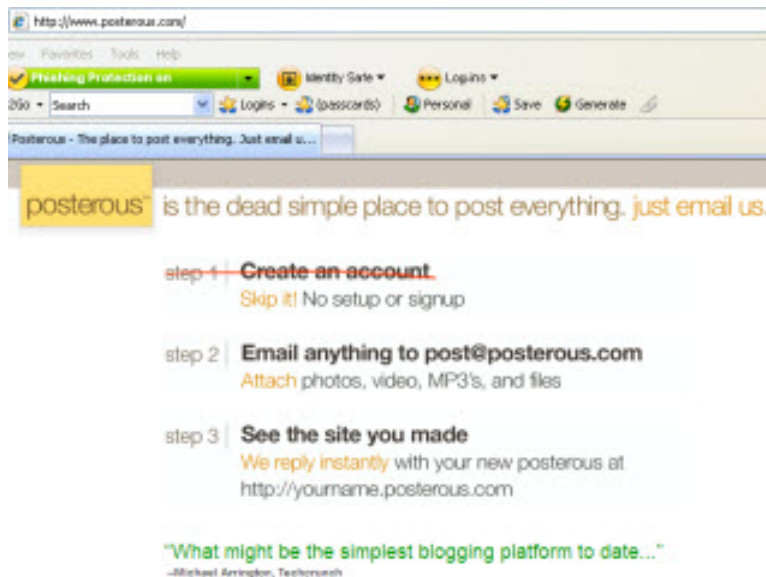
You cannot use this site to sell anything but I think it is another avenue, like Twitter and some other Web 2.0 sites, that could help you to build a reputation as a helpful and knowledgeable person.

That could attract people who are interested in the niche which your product or service are intended for.

You could set up your Posterous blog with a focus on your niche and put a non-clickable link to your main web site near the top of the page.

A coach, whether personal or sport, could focus on helpful and interesting information about people and news related to their area.

A restaurant operator could show recipes, cooking tips and news of famous chefs along with his or her opinions of relevant topics.

Fill your pages with pictures, news and information about the topic. Make sure that some of the material demonstrates your knowledge and experience without being completely self-serving.

You can only put up pictures which you have the right to broadcast, of course.

The advantage which posterous.com has over some other sites is that they will let you post videos and lots of pictures – no charge.

The service is still being developed. Recent additions and possible updates look very promising.

You can now have a private page which people need a password from you to access. You might restrict this to members of your family from around the world, members of your sporting or community group or even your work colleagues, (that's fine because you're not trying to sell to anyone on the site).

Posterous, quite reasonably, have access to all of those pages so they can check for any breach of their Terms of Use.

Those terms seem very reasonable.

It may allow for commercial entries later in the site's evolution but, even now, it's worth checking out.

One thing I like is that they make no claim on any material which you post beyond the right to have it on the Posterous web site.

You should always check a site's Terms of Use before signing up. Some sites require you to give them unlimited rights to use any material you post in any form on their site in any way they want anywhere for an unlimited time.

You won't know about that if you don't read the Terms of Use but you would still be bound by the agreement if you signed up without reading it.

Credibility

You should do everything that you reasonably can to show that you operate according to the highest possible standards of service and reliability.

The media tend to focus on the negative in many areas and they frequently give prominence to reports about dishonest and dangerous activities which people have suffered from on the Net.

That just reinforces many people's distrust of the still unfamiliar world of Internet marketing.

Ways to Brand Yourself and Your Business as Credible

Have an easy way for people to contact you through your web site. This is a legal requirement in many countries and it's reasonable, especially if you are asking people to buy anything from you.

Spam bots will grab your address if it sits on your page.

You might make a picture of your email address and use that instead but they will still be able to collect your actual email address if you put your email address link behind the graphic. Some can also decode addresses which have been put through a simple encryption process.

Consider using a contact form rather than just posting your email address on the site where it will probably be collected by **spam bots**, (programs that use similar methods to legitimate search engines but are focused on collecting email addresses for use by the spammers who control them).

You can sign up (free) to make your email form at services like **http://www.emailmeform.com/** (I have not used this service).

You might use the free email creator at

http://www.w3schools.com/htmL/tryit.asp?filename=tryhtml_form _mail

http://www.w3schools.com/ are highly reputable with many free online courses.

Answer all your email promptly

Answering casual questions about your products and services from people you don't know takes time and energy which you might prefer to put into other parts of your business which seem to have a higher possible return.

But, these questions have some potential benefits which you may not realize.

Some are from people that are just about ready to buy but need a little more reassurance that there is a reliable person behind that attractive web page.

They can become customers if they are satisfied by a prompt and professional reply which accurately addresses their question and is not an obvious form reply.

Include a Clear and Simple Guarantee

Your customers need to be confident about your offers.

You need to have a guarantee which is easy to read and understand. Avoid fine print and lawyer-type language but get your lawyer to review it before you use it on your web site.

Have a Prominent Privacy Policy

This is also a legal requirement in the United States of America and many other jurisdictions.

Your Privacy Policy needs to explain:

- Whether you collect data about visitors to your website

- How they can find out about that data

- How you protect that data and

- Whether you share it with other people.

This privacy policy must be carefully designed and should be reviewed by a lawyer who is competent about Internet legal issues.

There are many places on the Internet where you can get a privacy policy made for you just by entering your information into an online form.

You cannot expect these sites to produce a policy for you which fully covers your particular circumstances and requirements.

But, here are two sites which will produce documents which you can have tweaked by your legal advisor.

The Direct Marketing Association

http://www.the-dma.org/privacy/privacypolicygenerator.shtml gives
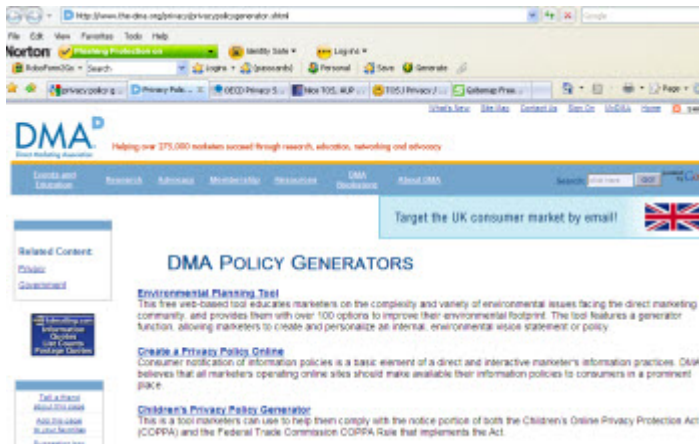
you a simple way to create your own Privacy Policy on their web site. You can copy it from the screen and a copy will also be emailed to you.

The DMA also lets you produce a **Children's**

Privacy Policy for free which should be considered for any web site that deals, intentionally or otherwise, with people that may be under-age.
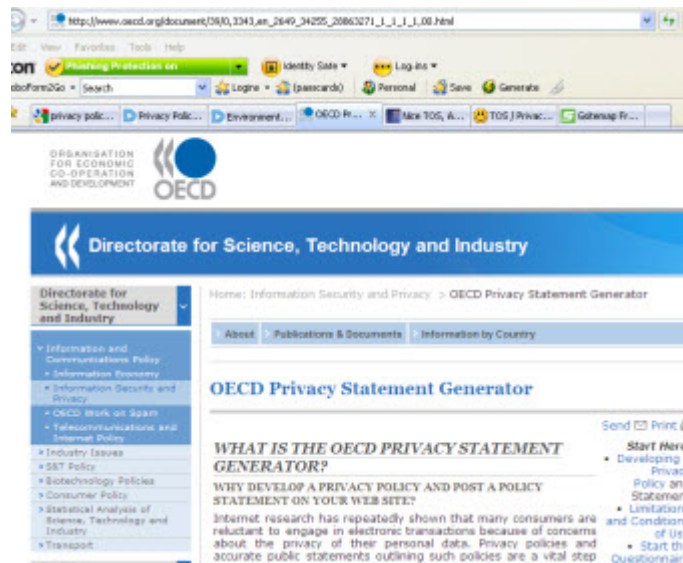
The **OECD (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development)** offers a similar service at **www.oecd.org/sti/privacygenerator** which

produces a Privacy Statement for you free.

Both organizations also have other useful and relevant material on their web sites.

Be Careful

These organizations have credibility and acknowledged expertise.

But, many other people and organizations offer a similar service on their own web sites. Although most are probably legitimate, there may sometimes be serious risks in using material supplied by people you don't know.

You need to be sure if they are genuine. They may be sincere but just not have the knowledge to produce valid documentation.

Some may produce material that actually could put you in breach of some regulations, or be faulty in other ways.

Some may have copied all or part of the text they use from other web sites. That is, of course, against the original author's copyright.

If you use that material, even if you are not aware of the infringement, you may also be liable - just like you would be if you had copied the text from the original web site yourself!

Legal penalties can be enforced even if you are in a different country. But, just having a claim brought against you could damage your business and general reputation.

Your policy needs to be reviewed from time to time to ensure that it is in line with current legislation.

Google, the highly successful search engine, has recently introduced the requirement for people using their Adwords$^®$ targeted advertising program to have a Privacy Policy displayed which conforms to Google's new terms. Those who do not comply by June 2009 may be denied further access to the program.

So, a number of people and organizations are offering to generate Privacy Policies for you.

This is one of many sites making such an offer:

http://www.serprank.com/privacy-policy-generator/index.php

But, you need to check the service which you want to use yourself before
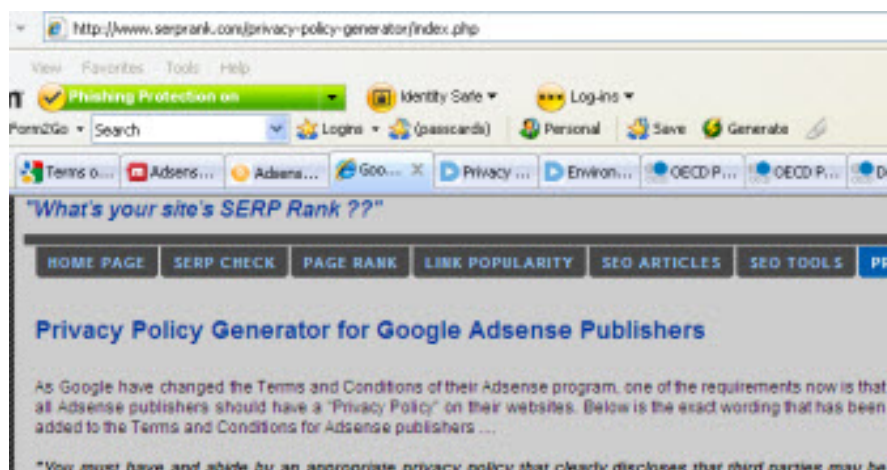
using the policy they generate for you.

Show a Disclaimer

This applies to your web site if you make any claims about people being able to make money or get other benefits from using the products or services you offer.

It also applies if you offer other suppliers' products and the advertising which you show for those products or services make that type of claim.

Your disclaimer needs to be accurate as well as easy to access and read.

 The Federal Trade Commission at **http://www.ftc.gov/** has a lot of relevant information on its web site. You could find this useful even if you do not operate in the USA.

Check Everything

It may be time-consuming to check each detail of changes or additions that you make to your site. But, the potential cost in lost business may be much greater than the value of the time you use to find errors before they affect your visitors and customers.

Is Your Content Easy to Understand?

Regularly check whether some particular points about the offer you make, or other items on your web site, are producing repeated requests for clarification.

Requests, and even complaints, from visitors can help you to improve your web site by highlighting things which can be improved. These are often simple to fix.

They may be hard for you to notice because of your constant exposure to your own web pages and knowledge of the subject.

Screen Resolution

Computer users may set the screens on their monitors to various dimensions. This can affect how good your web pages look to them.

There are too many possibilities for us to be able to check out pages in them all. I suggest that you just test each page that you prepare or edit on your own monitor for both the 800x600 and 1024x768 screen sizes which are currently the most popular.

With a Windows computer that has the XP operating system, right-click on a clear area of your Desktop and then left-click on Properties in the Menu that appears.

Then, just click on the Settings tab.

Make a note of the value shown under the slider in the Screen resolution area at the lower left of the box so that you can change back to the setting you usually use after you do your tests.

Then, put your cursor on the slider and move it to select either 800x600 or 1024x768.

Then, click on the Apply button. The screen will darken and then show your Desktop in the resolution which you selected.

Windows**®** will pop up a message asking whether you want to keep the new setting. If you do not click either the Yes or No button within a few seconds, your monitor will change back to the previous setting.

Also, some monitors will pop up a message suggesting the settings which you should use.

Could Your Page Annoy the Search Engines?

Many people use various tactics which they believe will help to get them higher positions in the listings which the Search Engines produce when people type in queries related to the subject of that particular web site.

Many tactics have marginal value and some might actually cause the web page to get a worse ranking or even be banned from the listings on a particular search engine.

An Italian programmer, Enrico Altavilla, provides a simple tool at: (**http://www.tool.motoricerca.info/spam-detector/**) for checking whether your pages might be frowned on because they have characteristics which resemble some of the simpler tricks that "black-hat" webmasters use.

You must accept full responsibility for your use of it.

Enrico says that the tool is still at an early stage and can only detect some basic tricks.

Just use it as a general guide.

Anyway, his explanations of the tactics the program is designed to detect may be helpful when you make more web pages.

Anyone that uses a questionable tactic that is not detected by Enrico's program should not feel too safe; Google and the other search engine companies are constantly updating the checks which they make. They have very experienced programmers and even use real humans to supplement the checks performed by their search robots.

Resource Section
Computer Programs

This is a brief coverage of the programs you need to make a web site and also to do many of the suggestions in this ebook.

Even if you made your own web pages and have some good programs,

I suggest that you still read this section to see if you think any of my suggestions for programs might be worth checking out. Some of them may be better or easier to use than what you already have.

If you have not made or edited your own web pages before, these suggestions will help you get started.

You might also ask the eBookwholesaler Member that supplied this book to you about my "Make Your own Web Site" which focuses on creating your own web site and will also help you to make changes to your site or better understand what the person you hire to do that work is suggesting and promising.

I have focused on free and low-cost programs because there are many which offer all the features which many people, especially beginners, need.

I suggest that you try some of these to begin with and then you can decide whether to invest your money in commercial programs which often have more frequent updates and better support for users.

Another source of commercial programs are the CDs and DVDs which come with some computer-related magazines. You may sometimes find older versions of commercial programs which the software companies provide to the magazines so that readers can try their programs without paying full price for the current versions.

Archiving program

You will be transferring many files to and from your web site. These transfers eat into the amount of bandwidth (allowance for transfer of emails, files and other data to and from your hosting account) each month.

So, you may want to compress some files into an archive before you send them to your web site.

Also, many programs and other files, including some ebooks, which you download from the Internet are supplied in archive files.

So, you need an archiving program which extracts files from those archives. You can also use it to create archives of your files which you send to other people on the Internet to save bandwidth, and also storage space when you make back-up copies onto CDs or other media so that you have less risk of losing them.

I've been told that Macintosh® users have an archiving program supplied with their computer operating system.

I use a commercial program called **WinRar** from **http://www.rarlab.com/** which I got a few years ago. It is a popular program that I recommend.

But, there are many good free programs, including **7-zip** from **http://www.7-zip.org/**.

Link Checker

Xenu's Link Sleuth from

http://home.snafu.de/~tilman/xenulink.html is a small but powerful program for checking all the links on your web site.

Picture Editor

You probably have a program which you use to edit pictures from your digital camera or other pictures on your computer. That program may have all that you need to adjust the size and color of the pictures you use on your web site.

If not, you will need one.

Photoscape is one worth considering. You can get it from **http://www.photoscape.org/ps/main/index.php**

Another, smaller but still powerful, program is **Photobie** from
http://www.photobie.com/

There are two versions of Photobie.

The advanced version, called Photobie DS is the one which Windows Vista® users need. When I went to the site, you had to join the Photobie Users (free) Forum and post at least two meaningful messages before you could download and use that version of Photobie.

This does not take very long and helps to encourage new users to use the Forum which is a great source of valuable tips and inspiration.

Text Editor

This is what you use to write and read plain text files.

Your text editor is also very handy for making notes as you work on your web site.

A simple one like Notepad, which is supplied with all Windows-based computers, is fine.

There are many alternative programs out there and I use a free program called **NoteTab Light** from
http://www.notetab.com/ because it has extra features which can be very handy.

The supplier offers this for free to promote their commercial program, NoteTab, which has even more features. When you install NoteTab Light, they let you trial the extra features for a while. Then, you can either pay to continue to use the advanced NoteTab or just use the still powerful and user-friendly free version, NoteTab light.

Be careful that you get this from **http://www.notetab.com/** (Fookes Software of Switzerland) or a reputable site like **snapfiles.com** because

there are many programs with titles that are close to NoteTab Light and NoteTab Pro. I suspect that few would have comparable functionality.

Web Page Editor

You can use your text editor to make and edit your web pages but it is much easier for most people to use a program which has been specially designed for this sort of editing.

The easiest type of Web Page Editor to start with is a "What You See Is What You Get" program because you can see how your web page should look on the web site while you are still editing it.

I have used several different web page editors. One that I use and can recommend is Trellian Web Page, a free program from

http://www.trellian.com/. The suppliers actively support this program with at least one update each year. The latest version shows an advertisement from Trellian each time you start the program. But, you can close this with one click and then have full use of a reasonably powerful web page editor for free.

There are many alternatives.

For Mac Users, there is NVU from **http://www.nvu.com/** and Kompozer from **http://www.kompozer.net/features.php**, which is derived from NVU. Many people use these programs on both Windows and Macintosh computer systems but I think Windows' users should consider some alternatives which I mention in the Resources Chapter.

NVU has not been updated for some years and updates to Kompozer are limited to those provided by a dedicated group of volunteers. NVU may be easier to use than Kompozer for people with limited experience.

Software Companies with Free Programs

Coffeecup Software at **http://www.coffeecup.com/** is a company that produces a wide variety of programs. Their flagship product is The Coffecup HTML Editor. All their paid programs come with free updates for life – I've been downloading my updates each year for a while.

They also offer a range of free programs, including a cut-down version of their HTML Editor at **http://www.coffeecup.com/freestuff/**. These free programs are reliable. They may contain some form of advertising.

Serif offer free older versions of their current software programs from

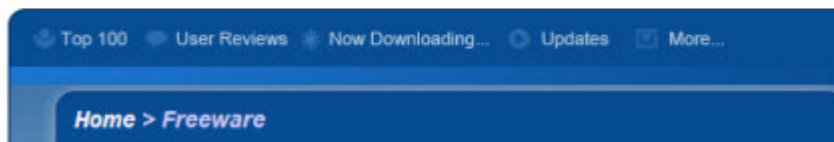**http://www.freeserifsoftware.com/**.

The programs include a web page editor, graphics editor and several others. Each program is a fairly big download but you can get the ones you want on CD for a fee.

Sites with Multiple Downloads

You probably have heard and even tried some websites that offer a range of programs you can download. Some programs are supplied as Shareware, where you can download and use the programs for free during a specified trial period. Then must pay the retail price if you want to continue to use it.

Other programs are completely free (Freeware) where you pay nothing. Some programmers ask for a voluntary donation if you find their program one that you will continue to use.

The programs offered and the sites themselves vary in quality but I have used Snapfiles at **http://www.snapfiles.com/freeware** for years. The quality of the programs and the reliability of the reviews from people that have downloaded and used the programs are, in my opinion, often better than many other similar web sites.

Templates

There are many web sites on the Internet which offer free or commercial templates to make your web site from.
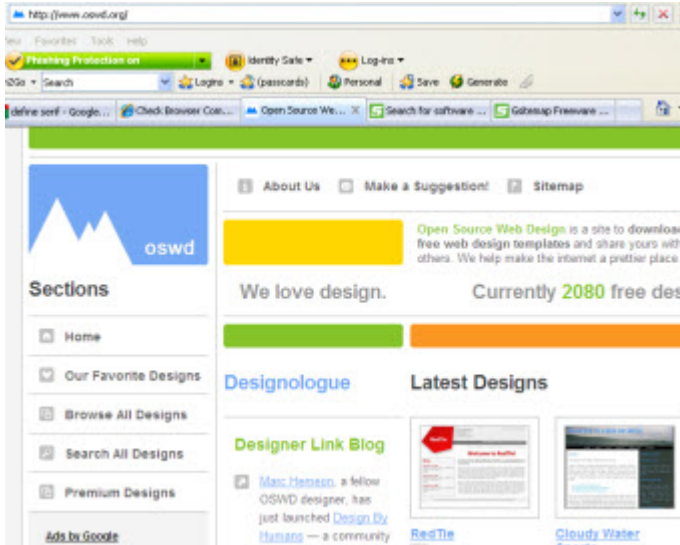
Oswd.org at **http://www.oswd.org** is one of the best known. This site has recently started offering "premium" templates which you have to pay for. But, buying the right to use one of their premium templates provides some money to support the operation and possible expansion of the web site and its services.

Follow the Terms of Use

Whether you pay a license fee to use a template which is produced by somebody else or they let you use it without charge, you need to be aware of and follow any terms that the producer places on your use of the template.

You may find that you can only use some templates on one web site that is registered to you while other templates may be used on as many of your own web sites as you like.

The designers of free templates often put some conditions on the use and distribution of their templates which is their right.

You are not usually allowed to give or sell the template to anyone else.

Most ask that you leave a link to their web site in the bottom part (footer) of the template. Sometimes, they will allow you to remove the link if you pay a small fee.

If you don't like the designer's terms, just choose another design.

Some free templates can only be used if you do not remove links to other web sites which the producer earns money from. I suggest that you do not use templates with links to sites which are not under your control except for a link to the designer's own site.

Check Your Pages in Most Popular Web Browsers

Browser Shots
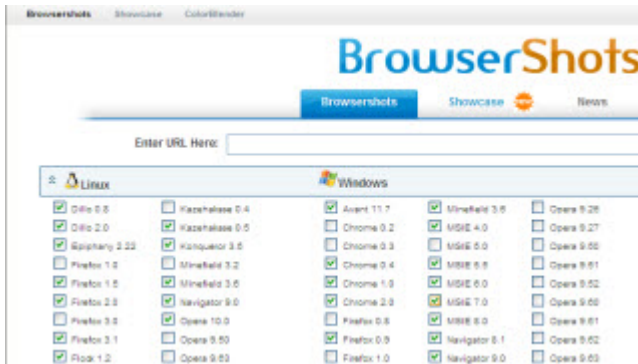
http://www.browsershots.org/ is a free service you can use to see how your web pages look in different web browsers.

The Best Advice

The best advice is simple.

Don't worry about trying for perfection.

Get your site loaded on to the Internet

Check that all the links work (especially the ones where people go to pay you money!)

Check that all the graphics show up. This is a very common problem. Make sure that the web pages and the pictures are all in place on your web site. Then, check that the address of the pictures in the Source of your web pages is pointing to the location of the pictures on your website:

```
<IMG alt="" src="header.jpg">
```

and not the folder on your computer that you transferred copies of the pictures from:

```
<IMG alt="" src="C:\images\header.jpg">
```

Don't forget to fill in the Alt text and width and height of all pictures.

Launch you product or affiliate campaign.

Action is the missing ingredient in many people's search for success.

Good Luck and Great Success,

John Williams.

Another eBookWholesaler Publication