

"25 Most Frequently asked questions on being a web master"

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1. Why do I need a web site?

As the Internet grows on a rather grand scale- more web sites pop up on the web each day. Internet users are jumping on board at a phenomenal rate. If you are running any type of business- that is the type of exposure you do not want to miss out on.

The number of Internet users is growing steadily. There are a zillion users online now with a zillion more jumping on each day. :-) What that says to you is that there is an unlimited income potential for you on the Internet. There is no way you could ever sell to every Internet user. Potentially- if you work consistently- you will never run out of leads. There will always be a new customer to attract.

The Internet is the only medium that will allow you to literally name your

ad budget. There are solutions for all sorts of budgets- no matter if you have a \$10,000 per month or a \$0 per month budget! Since advertising is a very important element to your business success- doesn't that sound like an enormous opportunity for you?

2. What will I put on my site?

The answer to that question is entirely up to you. There are as many different types of sites as there are different types of people in the world. The web content out there ranges in categories as broad as ice cream to exotic birds to researching your family's history.

There are fun sites, business sites, personal sites, information sites, on and on. What you decide your web sites theme will be is entirely up to you.

But remember, this is your baby. Do not begin your new web project with any topic that you do not absolutely love! This is really the best way to learn to love working on your site. If you pick a topic you are only moderately interested in - I promise you will not last long. But if you pick a topic you love with everything you have in you- you will be here to stay!

3. How long will it take to build my site?

This will depend on your decided topic and how much content you intend to include on that topic. Some web sites are hundreds of pages long while others only a few. If you have all of your content, images, and links gathered you can get a web site that is under ten pages up in a days time. But it will take longer if you need to first create/find graphics, organize content and such. Of course if the site is larger it will take longer.

That is a vague answer, huh? Sorry- the truth is it all depends on a number of deciding factors. I can't honestly tell you how long it will take you to build your site.

4. What is the best software program to build my site.

My personal preference is Adobe Pagemill or Macromedia Dreamweaver. But honestly, both programs are kind of pricey. Really any editor that you are comfortable with will do. Your browser comes with a really nice editor that is perfectly acceptable and quite easy to use. Internet Explorer comes with Front Page Express and Netscape Navigator comes with Netscape Composer. Either are fine.

5. What are the best color choices for my site?

Did you know you can control the mood of your visitors by using certain color choices? This is a simple concept that is very often ignored. Why?

Human emotions are very often triggered by color. You need to know which colors trigger which emotions.

Color can make the difference between buying and selling. If used correctly. You need to choose the right color combinations for your site.

Color is the first thing we notice and the last thing we forget. If used properly it can be a powerful design tool. It is the doorway to our deepest thoughts and feelings, and desires. This is an issue worth discussing.

Which colors should you use?

Well, it is always best to keep your main content on a white background. This is easier on the eyes and will provide a sense of professionalism. The color white triggers emotions such as: purity, peace, and perfection.

While white is an important color, you will probably want to compliment your site with other colors as well. After all, there is creativity in each and every one of us. There is huge color spectrum for us to choose from. Which colors are best?

Here are a few ideas to help you.

Red colors can stimulate warmth, hunger, and excitement. Cooler colors such as green and blues, enhance calm and content feelings. Dark colors make objects seem heavier, while light colors make them seem lighter.

Yellow may reflect a lack of worry, while black a troubled state. Of course not all colors mean the same things to all people. Yellow may sometimes mean cheap, Green may mean money or greed, black may mean elegance or death.

Color has become a science and it is a much needed weapon as part of your marketing arsenal. You will need to take great thought in choosing color as it will identify you, because once a color is "owned" it is associated with you and your company. I am sure you have noticed this with examples such as Coca Cola red, Tide orange, and John Deer Green. It is just as important to your identity as your logo. If a shape provides a symbol, be aware that color does the same.

Think carefully when choosing colors! Applying a certain color to your product or site is just site logic.

For example: In stores colors identify, flavors, brands, and products: Green in a cleaner says pine- in a mouthwash says mint, blue very often means strong mint- icy cool. Clear means additive free. Red found in strawberries, cherries, and apples is very appealing. You would never choose gray for laundry detergent because you don't want gray clothes, you want brightly colored clothes. Blue ,very unappetizing on a dinner plate, is much more successful as a dinner plate.

Because it strongly affects mood. Grays and browns seem somber and often depressing. But they can take on a more cheerful attitude with compliments of red. No matter how you use them they suggest weight, or something heavy. This would provide your visitors with a feeling of stableness and strength. Emotions like this will help your visitors to associate your site with stableness and confidence. Other colors such as burgundy, oyster, beige, blues will also provide a feeling of solidity.

What is the right color? Sometimes there is no right answer you just have to take yourbest shot. But the number one choice of Corporate America is still blue.

6. What kinds of graphic files can I use on my sites?

Web Sites are limited in capabilities where graphics are concerned. Sure it is possible to include sophisticated flash presentations- and you may wish to. But you are faced with a whole new set of issues that do not appear in print design/illustration.

There are issues such as file size and deciding on images that are appropriate to your content. Inappropriate images can throw off the focus of your ebook. Since readers understanding and reading your ebook is one of the main purposes of having an ebook, this is a very important issue.

When creating an image for a web site it is important to know which format to use. Usually that depends. Both GIFs and JPEGS have their purposes. It doesn't hurt to experiment. Try saving your files in both formats and seeing which file format has the best quality and smallest file size.

Here are some of the characteristics of a JPEG: The JPEG was created by The Joint Photographic Experts Group. Designed specifically for compressing photographic- type images. The JPEG will tend to lose quality during compression and decompression, with distortion in flat colors and fuzziness around edges. Because of this it is a good idea to work with a tiff file and save it as a JPEG as the last step. JPEGS can display over 16 million colors, although most computers display only 256 colors. Jpegs are good for graphs and things of that nature.

The GIF or Graphic interchange Format, was developed by Compuserve for moving indexed color, gray scale or bitmap images between computer platforms. The GIF will only support 256 color displays. This is not much loss when it comes to viewing an ebook as most viewers will view in 256 colors. So it seems that GIF will generally be a good choice. That solves that problem. I however prefer JPEG.

It is important to make sure all of your pages are loading quickly. If your page takes too long- most visitors will not waste their time waiting around for it to finish. 30 secs is acceptable- under is better. This is not too difficult as web pages are not terribly large in size, but you might want to use various graphics, logos, banners, or cover art. These types of files can get large quick.

This need not be a problem. A good rule of thumb is to follow the 30k rule. This is simple really. Files around 30k will load in about 30 secs. All you need to do is add the total size of all of your files on that page including the HTML page and make sure the total is under 30k.

For instance: If your HTML page is 5k and you have several graphics that are perhaps 14k and 5k- then $5+14+5=24$ You are within the range you need to be in for a quick loading page.

Computer generated graphics do not take long before the file size becomes very large. It is always important to shoot for a small file sizes.

The fact that detail is not as important in web illustrations helps with solving the size problem. Actually the size problem is the reason that detail is not terribly important.

When working with a JPEG try compressing the image to 75%, 50%, and 25%, and viewing the results in your browser. Do not compress an already compressed image. Remember that perfection is not important. We are mainly looking for a balance between a good quality image and a small file size. JPEG will always be larger than GIF regardless of file size because it must go through a decompression process.

When decreasing a GIF file try using less color. There are some programs such as PaintShop Pro that allow you to decrease the color depth below 256 colors.

7. What kind of graphics are appropriate?

When is an image appropriate?

Well, images that represent you or your product are appropriate. Such as logos or product images. Or perhaps screenshots that help to explain a process.

It is perfectly acceptable to use images as design elements such as bars, bullets, and navigational arrows. But use these with a lot of self-control and only if they compliment your web site.

Viewing other web sites is a good way to find out what not to do. There are ebooks of all levels. Good ones and bad ones. To decide which is the best way, shop around, be a viewer yourself, and decide as a viewer before you become a designer.

The most important tip is to remember to use images only as they are appropriate. Never for just the sake of using them. They will only promote confusion with in your ebook. Those dancing babies are neat, but probably don't belong on your web site. Also drop the annoying flashing gif animations that are hard on the eyes and will be distracting to your readers.

If you wish to use banners on your web sites, be careful in your selection and place them at the bottom or top of your site away from your main content.

8. How can I create my own graphics for my site?

If you are wanting to create your own web graphics (I suggest this as only you know what you have in mind) all you really need is a good program, a little creativity, and a lot of patience.

My personal favorites are Adobe Image Styler (which is no longer made) and Compact Draw which can be found at:
<http://www.compactdraw.com/compactdraw/index.htm> it is also quite affordable

Both programs are the most user friendly and allow you the most options with out needing a four year bachelors degree in graphic design to operate.

Of course any program you are comfortable with is the best choice. There are also a variety of free software programs you can try by going to:
<http://freewarehome.com>

9. How do I make hyperlinks to other sites?

This really quite simple. Most editors will make this quite simple as well. The most important thing to remember is that to create another link to an outside site- you must include the `http://` prefix or the browser will look for the site in your directory and will of course not find it.

Just use this code in your HTML (most WYSIWYG editors will let you edit the HTML also):

```
<A HREF="http://www.outsidelink.com/">outside link</A>
```

Where the letters in red are the text to click on and the URL is that of the desired site.

10. How can I make files downloadable from my site?

This is done exactly as above. But instead of using the web address you use the address that points directly to your file name.

For instance: If your file that you wish to have downloaded is named smiles and it is an executable file (.exe) Then you would use this code:

```
<A HREF="http://www.yoursite.com/smiles.exe">link text</A>
```

Of course you must also upload the file to your web server for this to become download able. (discussed below)

11. How do I upload my site?

This harder to explain than it is to do. First you will need an ftp program. You can find one at <http://freewarehome.com> Once you have the program installed it is simply a matter of inputting the ftp, login and pass that you were given by your web host.

Most likely the files you see on the left of the software are the ones located on your hard drive and the ones on the right are the files located on your web server. Then you simply choose which file from your hard drive you wish to move to your web server. Find great tutorials on this at: <http://www.w3schools.com/toc/default.asp>

12. Do I need my own domain?

There are many places for you to host your first web site for free. You may even want to start off with a free service such as <http://geocities.com> or <http://angelfire.com> But if you intend to stick around for long you must register your own domain name. Or www.companyname.com

There are a few good reasons that you should do this:

- It is easier to remember
- It looks better on offline advertising- business cards/flyers
- Your customers will find it easier to remember you
- It is definitely more professional
- It is not nearly as long as what you will be provided with by the free hosts. Which looks better?: <http://www.yourcompnay.com> or <http://www.Ihavebeengivenoneincrediblylongurlthatistolongtoevenfitononline.com/texas/673/index.html>? I exaggerate- but not much. the URL you will be provided with by a free host will be terribly long.

13. Where should I register my domain?

You could always register your domain at <http://networksolutions.com> like many of us unlucky souls did. In the beginning they were the only place to have your domain registered.

The service is terrible. If you ever need to make a change to your contact information it will take you days sometimes weeks to get it done. If you call you will be on hold for hours. On top of that the fee is \$35 per year.

The best deal I have found with the least amount of hassle is:
<http://www.joker.com> you can register any domain for only \$12 per year.

14. Is web hosting expensive?

When you have built your site and registered a domain name, you are going to need a web host to host it for you. Basically a web host is an outside computer that runs constantly so that your pages will be viewable every

minute of every day.

This type of computer will host or hold your pages and whatever files and graphics are included with your pages. These computers are dedicated which means they can always be reached by all Internet surfers.

This web host does not have to be on your computer or even in the same town you live in. If you did host your site on your computer no one else would ever be able to see it.

Web hosting is very affordable. There are a variety of services in all price ranges. You might pay as high as \$500 monthly to only \$5 monthly depending on the amount of features and space you are looking for.

As you go about searching for a web host it is easiest to search the search engines for a service that fits all of your needs for your site with a price you can afford. It is not needed to spend more than \$20 monthly for everything you might ever need.

Here are a few things to look for when comparing features:

- How much space is included with your account?
- Do you have a cgi-bin?
- Will you have ftp access?
- Will you have Real Player file capabilities?
- How many pop email accounts will you receive?
- How many email forward accounts will you receive?
- Will you have an autoresponder account?
- How many mailing list accounts will you have?
- Will you be able to password protect directories?
- Is there a sufficient amount of data transfer allotted for each day?
- Can you create subdomains?

The service I use is <http://hostandsave.com> This service allows me:

- 200mb of server space
- password protected directories
- unlimited email forwards
- unlimited auto responders
- unlimited mailing lists
- cgibin access
- real player file capabilities
- ftp access
- unlimited data transfer
- 20 pop3 email accounts

for only \$17 monthly.

15. Do I need to learn sophisticated programming skills?

In the beginning of your web master adventures- no you do not need to learn sophisticated programming skills.

There are many WYSIWYG HTML editors that you can use to create all of your pages. These are simply programs that will allow you to create pages by adding text and graphics and allowing you to edit in an environment that will allow you to see what the page will look like as it is placed on the web. Or these programs will write the HTML for you behind the scenes of what you see.

You can find very good editors at any free ware site. Such as: <http://freewarehome.com> or you can use the editors that are already included with your browser software. Netscape comes equipped with Netscape Composer and Internet Explorer with Frontpage Express. These programs are perfectly acceptable and capable of creating your pages for you.

But eventually you may want to move on to other web mastering programming languages such as CGI or Java Script or both.

16. What are CGI and Java Script?

In the beginning of the World Wide Web simple HTML pages were enough.

But eventually people realized that these HTML pages were stagnant. That is to say that they did nothing but read from left to right with an occasional pretty picture.

Web masters began to wish for the pages to be able to interact with the viewers more than before.

Enter cgi and java script. These two programs are both stand alone but very often work together to create a possibility for each viewer to be able to respond to the web master, play games on pages, and they were now able to perform and automate complicated tasks such as submitting to many search

engines from just on site and one form.

These two languages make it possible for web pages to do many things not possible before.

17. Should I learn CGI and Java Script?

As I said before, in the beginning it is not needed to learn these programs. It is completely possible to perform all of your web master duties without either of these two languages

But you will find that eventually you will want to include these types of scripts on your site. They will make it easier to mail more than one person at a time or make it easier for you to receive feedback from your viewers.

In the end- especially if your site is for business- these scripts will be very needed.

But this still does not mean that you will need to learn these scripting languages. Because while writing these scripts can become complicated- installing them on your pages is really quite simple and you will find that if you do it once it will become easier.

If you wish to use these types of scripts but do not wish to write them- you can find a number of scripts that are free to use that come with complete instructions for installing. If you take the time to look you will find any type of script to perform any sort of task you may need.

My personal favorite sites are: <http://a1javascript.com> and <http://cgi-resources.com>

18. What are some of the best ways to send traffic to my site?

1. Free ezine ads. There are a number of ezines that give away free ads to new subscribers of their ezines. Since these ezines have been requested by

their subscribers this is a great place to start.

You can find a large list of ezines that offer free ads for subscribing at:
"EzyAds" Over 45 ezines that offer free ads.
<http://www.freezineweb.com/ezyads.html>

2. Article distribution. Writing articles for distribution in other ezines is an outstanding free method for sending traffic to your site. This form of free publicity gives you the opportunity to present your self as an expert and will allow you free advertising in your resource box. Ezine editors are constantly looking for great content for their ezines so getting published will be easy for a great article. Here are a few article distribution lists that will get your articles seen for sure:

mailto:article_depot-subscribe@topica.com
<mailto:PublishInYours-subscribe@yahoogroups.com>
<mailto:FreeEzineContent-subscribe@topica.com>
<mailto:FreeContent-subscribe@yahoogroups.com>

3. Participate in marketing discussion boards. Marketing discussion boards are the number one spots for building relationships and making new contacts. Participate in these by joining the discussion, giving advice, and asking for advice. Never advertise. If you participate appropriately and use your sig file with each post- the traffic will come. There are a number of these types of message boards out there. If you want you can spend hours

looking for them or you can take advantage of this incredible list located here:

<http://www.marketers-edge.com/discussion-forums-strategy.htm>

4. Press releases. Getting your web site featured in an article is a great way to drive tons of traffic to your site. It is much more effective than advertising since the article will add professionalism and credibility to your site. You can pay a few hundred dollars to have this done for you or you can use the 1800 free press release contacts provided by The Idea Site For Business. This list is always kept current and is of course completely free!

<http://www.ideasiteforbusiness.com/direct.htm>

There are 7 things you must have to have a successful web site.

A in demand product that every one needs.

A direct sell web site. Buy, bookmark, or leave.

Affiliate program with affiliates promoting for you. If you do not have an affiliate program-get one for your product in that section.

A mailing list. To keep in contact with all customers.

Regular involvement with other web master building relationships. Such as Joint Ventures and participating in discussion groups.

An automated process. Make the sale, take the order, and deliver the order, all within minutes.

A viral marketing campaign that keeps multiplying.

Once you have the beginnings of your 7 needed things for success, it is time to make them work for you.

Write your articles on a regular basis, concentrate on promotions in your resource box at the end.

Take advantage of the free ezine ads.

Participate in discussion, leave your sig file.

Submit your program to all of the affiliate directories.

Submit your ezine to all of the directories for ezines.

Take advantage of the software and free sites for your free ebooks and ezines. Don't forget the ebook directories.

Always sign guestbooks leaving your sig file and never miss out on an opportunity to promote your self. Spam free of course.

19. How do I submit to search engines?

The Actual act of submitting your site to search engines is not difficult. At the main page of each engine- usually towards the bottom- you will find a link that says add link or add URL. These links willt ake you to a page that will provide you with a form to include all of your sites information for indexing by the search engine spiders.

That is the actual submission process. However, there is much more to it than that. Before you begin the submission process each page of your site should be "optimized" for the best search engine placement. This subject is way to broad to be covered here.

Please refer to <http://searchenginewatch.com> for additional information as this subject will need to be studied extensively if you wish to achieve a high placement in the search engines.

The quickest advice I can give you here is this:

- Only submit your domain to each search engine every 30 days.
- Create individual titles and key words for each of your sites pages. The search engine spiders will find these pages.
- Don't be fooled with the idea of submitting your page to thousands of search engines. Only about ten matter!

20. Should I use banner exchanges?

There are many banner exchanges on the web that you can join. These are programs that will give you a code to place on your website. In exchange for you placing this code on your site, your banner will be displayed on other sites in the network. Generally for every time you display the exchange code on your site twice, you will receive 1 credit. That is your banner displayed once. That is a 2:1 banner exchange, which is the most common.

This sounds like a good deal until you realize that things are not that simple. You see, banner exchanges are one of the earlier forms of advertising on the internet. Well, surfers have trained themselves to ignore banner ads. Banners on the internet are a given, a surfer expects to see banners everywhere. Since they are so used to seeing them, they have sort of just become part of the background. Because of this, banner click through rates have dropped to a frightening low.

Lets get back to the 2:1 ratio offered to you by banner exchanges. Banner click through rates are around 1% right now. That is pretty low. For every 100 people who see your banner, one person will click on it. These are just averages, but they tend to hold true most often.

With the exchange programs offering you a 2:1 ratio, if you have 200 visitors, your banner will be displayed 100 times on other sites. Not bad.

With the banner click through rates as low as they are, that begins to sound less appealing. Remember, the banner click through rates are about 1% right now. Again, 1 out of 100 people will click on your banner. Now remember you had to have 200 visitors to your site in order to have that banner displayed 100 times. Do the math.....

Hmmm... In theory, that changes your agreement to display the banner code two times for your banner to be displayed once. Your agreement has become- For every 200 visitors you can get to your web site, the banner exchange program will send one extra visitor your way. You would have to have over 1000 visitors to your site before one of these programs gave you an extra 5 visitors!

Why bother?

22. How do I get other sites to link to me?

Swapping links with other web masters can send you a lot of traffic if you swap enough links.

The process is simple really. You simply seek out other web sites that target the same topic as yours. Spend some time on their site and get to know them a little. Once you feel comfortable place a link to their site on your page and email the web master explaining that you ahve line to him you would love it if he would include a link back to your site as well.

If you wish for other web masters to link to you you only need to ask.

23. How much time will it take to promote my site?

That depends on a how much time you have to devote to this. In the beginning you may spend long hours promoting your site.

In time you will get the hang of what needs to be done and will be able to complete all of your promotional taks in a few hours a day.

Most importantly, put your self on a consistent schedule. Make a list of the

tasks you need to complete- all of them. Decide how much time you will have and when you will be able to perform these tasks. Stick to that schedule and chip away daily.

The best advice is to keep all of your tasks on a consistent daily schedule. It is better to spend 2 hours daily to site promotion that to spend 14 hours in one day only once a week.

24. How much time should I devote to maintenance?

Again, this depends on what type of site you have. Only you can decide how much time you should devote to maintenance.

If you have a content related site than you should update your pages regularly so as to keep your viewers coming back.

If your site is not the type that needs to be updated often- if your information will remain the same- I suggest that you update from time to time anyway. Change the design and lay out to keep your site interesting.

25. Is this really something I want to get into?

Having your own web site can be very rewarding. Once you begin to run your own site- you will find that you really do enjoy it. Just remember that you will get out of it exactly what you put into it. This is really the only place that you are in a position to compete with fortune500 companies with million dollar ad budgets for your piece of the American dream.

26. Any other advice?

Above and beyond that, your only recipe for success is:

Desire- You have to want for something better. You have to want to find a solution.

Creativity- You need to have the ideas to set yourself apart from everyone and have the ability to always create new ways to get yourself noticed.

Discipline- Once you have the first two covered, you have to have the discipline to put your ideas into action and work your plan. Remember, you have to do this- no one is going to do it for you.

Consistency- Keep taking steps until that mountain has been moved. Work on your business daily and before long you will begin to see a steady path towards success. You must first learn to walk before learning to fly.

Persistence- Keep trying.