

Website Development: White Paper

Websites are not only the interface, but the backbone for the digital world. Overhauls of search algorithms and rapid change in smart device technologies have rendered most websites obsolete. With every advance in technology, consumer's attention spans seem to shorten. In this paper we will provide an outline of basic website development considerations necessary to engage a new generation of consumer.

We will cover:

- Website Domain Names
- Responsive Website Technology
- Conversion Centered Design (CCD)
- Content Management
- SEO
- Web site Hosting Considerations

Website Domain Names

Choosing the right domain name for a website has become one of the most important decisions in the process. The domain name should be easy to remember, should reflect the business or product it represents, and obviously should represent the content of the website. The relationship of product, brand, and domain can hugely affect the process of being found. To simplify the concept we offer this example: A business that is named Boat Sales that actually sells boats, with the website domain BoatSales.com has it all. We call that the triple jackpot. Adversely, a business named Uncle Bob's Place that sells hamburgers, with haveityourway.com as a domain has a huge uphill battle to be found. Don't take the domain choice lightly, and please do not name your business after your cat unless...you're selling your cat.

Responsive Website Technology

In a few short years technology has advanced from mobile and desktop websites to desktop websites that can be manipulated on a mobile device to responsive technology. Responsive technology allows a website to be displayed uniquely on each device (desktop, smart phone, iPad, tablet) from which it is viewed without manipulation. This advancement in technology forces us to rethink website design. Because a responsive site displays content in a specific order, we focus more on message simplicity, organization, and message priority.

Conversion Centered Design (CCD)

CCD and responsive website technology work together to create the perfect combination of science and art. CCD forces us to create simplistic and attractive home and landing pages designed to engage visitors, and accomplish the conversion to the next (desired and designed) step. Websites are designed to accommodate engagement via smart device...period. The result creates a fresh new approach to the look and feel, organization, and navigation functions. Today's "super-surfers" will not spend time searching through cluttered and non-responsive home pages looking for a specific link.

Content Management

Websites are found on the search engines by the content they contain. Structure and organization of content is critical to being found. The website platform utilized must be suited for proper content management. Website self-management is a growing trend prompting web developers to utilize more user-friendly platforms that allow owners to add content at will.

SEO

We really do not like the term, but use it here because of its familiarity. An acronym for Search Engine Optimization, SEO, what it represents, and how it is performed has changed dramatically in recent years. Search algorithms are continually modified to reward websites that utilize relative and rich content to be found. Any gimmicks or tricks that may have previously worked to create misdirected and fake traffic will in the end create negative and sometimes irreversible results. Content structure with proper use of keywords and search terms will achieve results. Perhaps the most important part of good SEO is determining the right keywords and search terms for the desired results. This is a moving target. As keywords and terms become over used, the resulting competition for use can render them ineffective.

Just as important (for SEO) as the content and the keywords it contains is the website platform and how it creates the page and post permalinks. Permalinks are the URLs that point to a specific page. Websites that do not display unique and search friendly URLs for each page and post are not effective for SEO. We think WordPress is the best platform for this and a host of other reasons...not the least of which are the selection of plugins to assist in content management and SEO.

Website Hosting

Often overlooked as a key component, website hosting is extremely important. The hosting server must readily support the website platform being used along with the knowledge level of the user. Being able to have support personnel speak at a level one can understand is priceless. It's certainly possible to maintain a viable website without an in-depth knowledge of code with the right platform and web host. Another key consideration is storage and bandwidth to support the traffic and content for the site.

