

# Setting up a Website

A website can be a great way to raise the profile of your organisation. These days' people expect to be able to find information easily and quickly – which often means via the internet. If it fits with your organisation's needs and goals, developing a website can be a great step forward.

*Please note – this sheet is intended as a basic introduction to developing a website. You may need to research some areas mentioned below in more detail via other channels.*

## BENEFITS OF HAVING A WEBSITE

- It raises your profile – makes your information and contact details readily available to the public.
- It can be a great way to easily increase your membership - the site can have a facility where people can register online to go onto your database, receive newsletters etc.
- It is great for promoting past and upcoming projects, events, & achievements – you can put up images and videos to promote your project.
- You can use it as a fundraising tool by having a facility where donations can be made to your organisation online, or a link to a specialist donation site that can process the donations for you.
- For events – people can enter or register on your website or can download an entry form.
- It is a useful tool for finding volunteers and staff members.
- You can upload important documents that people can read or download - which will save you time as they won't need to contact you and request that they be sent out manually. This also applies for your contact details, opening hours etc.

## TYPES OF WEBSITES

**Brochure Site** A few pages of static information – who you are, what you do, & contact details etc.

**Interactive Site** The possibilities for an interactive site are endless really – it will depend on what you want your website to do for you, but you could include interactive tools such as discussion forums, live chat, & video conferences.

**Blog** A blog is essentially an online diary or journal where you share news and opinion about a certain topic(s). It can be a great way to build a sense of community where members read your blog and can leave comments.

## BEFORE YOU START

Before you go ahead and start developing a website, you need to be able to answer the following questions:

- What will the purpose of your site be? What do you want it to achieve? Who is your target audience?
- Will developing a site gain your organisation more than it costs in time, money & energy/resources?
- Do you have the resources available within your organisation to maintain it?
- Do you have enough funds to set it up and to pay for ongoing costs?

Before you start it can also be a good idea to have a look at other websites and decide which ones you like and why to help you with your own design.

## WEBSITE DESIGN BRIEF

Once you are clear on the above questions, you can then go to a website designer and give them a 'brief' of how to put your site together.

### Tip

If you are going to start small (which can be a good idea) but have goals of the site developing further in the future – make sure you include these future goals and developments in the brief so the web builder can factor this into the design.

### The brief should include:

- the intended audience
- the purpose of the site
- expected outcomes, such as visitors signing up for an email newsletter
- the date when you want to launch the site
- a list of the content that you want to include
- the budget available
- any specific requirements (such as wanting to be able to track statistics such as how many visitors the site has etc)
- whether you want to be able to edit small items on the site yourself, or leave that to your web team or web master once the site has been launched (see paragraph below on Content Management Systems)
- whether you want to be able to add new sections, or make other more major changes after the site has been launched
- who will own copyright in the design and content

The brief is usually a working document – some items in the brief may be totally fixed (e.g. budget) and others may be negotiable (e.g. the launch date). Decide which items are non-negotiable and try to be flexible with the others.

## Tip

Think about designing the site from a user's point of view – what information do they want and how can you make it easy for them to navigate and find the information that they need?

## SITE CONTENT

While the designer will be putting together the 'look and feel' of the site and will help decide where everything should go, your organisation will need to provide all the content. You will need to be prepared with this material and you will need to provide it electronically to the designer.

The following is a list of the sort of things you could include in your site content:

- your logo
- information about your organisation and what you do
- success stories
- news items
- case studies
- addresses for any other relevant accounts you have such as Facebook
- contact information (you could also include a Google Maps address link)
- photos of workers, volunteers, board members
- photos from events
- photos of your location or those locations important to your work
- profiles of your work and the workers
- conference reports
- newsletters
- videos from events etc
- mission statement
- a charter or trust document

Your web designer can let you know what the best format will be for these files for them to work with (e.g. jpeg files for the images).

## CONTENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS (CMS)

A content management system or CMS is a computer programme (software) that allows the website owner (you) to manage and update the website content (change text and images, & create new pages etc). This is a good feature to include in the design of your website and it can save you lots of money in the long run, as the alternative is that the web designer will have to make any changes that you require and you will be charged accordingly for this. Anyone with a computer and internet access can quickly learn how to use a CMS.

There are a few different types of CMS (Open Source, Freeware, and Vendor) – generally an open source CMS will be the best option but your web developer will be able to give you more information about this.

## COST

This will of course depend on the level of complexity of your site and how long it will take to build. A small brochure website may cost approximately \$1000 - \$2000 to set up, if the site is more complex it will cost more.

There are also ongoing fixed costs to consider:

- domain name – likely to be around \$50 per year per name;
- hosting – approximately \$100 per year but possibly more than this;
- remember that your website is a live communication tool that will need regular updates and also upgrades from time to time – this will need to be budgeted for accordingly.

## PURCHASING A DOMAIN NAME

A website domain name or website address is the "www..." address that people will use to visit your website. You can purchase a domain name through a registered domain registrar (e.g. Domainz, Free Parking, & Discount Domains). You can find more information about domain names and a list of registrars at [www.dnc.org.nz](http://www.dnc.org.nz).

### Some tips for choosing a domain name:

- choose an appropriate top level domain or TLD (e.g. .nz, .com, .org). The .org domain is widely perceived as non-profit;
- make it relevant – i.e. the same as your organisation name etc;
- keep it short so it is easy to remember;
- be aware of trademarks and copyrights belonging to other entities – there may be legal implications if you choose a domain name that is too similar to an existing business.

## SOME TIPS FOR AN EFFECTIVE WEBSITE

- Good content is the most important thing for an effective website and will assist with being found in search engines like Google. Include “rich content” such as imagery, & video etc. Good content means information about your organisation that is complete and relevant, and extends the amount of time visitors spend on your site, which in turn gives you better search engine results. **Poor content = short visits = low ranking in search results = hard for people to find your website.**
- Have a professional looking design that is consistent with your other branding. If it looks cheap and unprofessional people may not take your organisation seriously.
- Make sure your images are not too big so pages don't take too long to load – if your pages take a long time to load visitors will get frustrated and will just exit the site.
- Include pictures and profiles of your team – which will show visitors the human face of your organisation.
- Include all your contact details – some people will make contact via email, others may prefer to pick up the phone.
- Have a place where people can sign up for newsletters/updates – the more contacts you have on your database the better.
- Remember – a website needs ongoing commitment to be effective!

## UTILISING AN EXISTING WEBSITE

For some organisations it may actually be more efficient & effective to use an existing website to display information about your organisation or your event. There are several free event calendars available (e.g. [www.southlandnz.com](http://www.southlandnz.com) or [www.sportsouthland.co.nz](http://www.sportsouthland.co.nz)) to list your events that have wide exposure, and some regions also have websites that are looking for content where you could post information about your organisation. Even if there is a small fee to do this it may outweigh the cost and time for you to set up your own website.

*(Information on this sheet adapted from Community Net How to Guide: Getting your community online.)*

Information prepared by



### LINKS / WHERE TO GO FOR MORE INFORMATION:

[www.exult.co.nz](http://www.exult.co.nz)

[www.community.net.nz/how-toguides/](http://www.community.net.nz/how-toguides/)

[www.dnc.org.nz](http://www.dnc.org.nz)

For more information or help you can also contact your local Community Development Planner at Venture Southland:  
143 Spey Street, Invercargill  
Ph: 03 211 1400  
[enquiry@venturesouthland.co.nz](mailto:enquiry@venturesouthland.co.nz)  
[www.southlandnz.com](http://www.southlandnz.com)