

Website Basics — Questions to Consider

Here is a list of questions to help you organize your thoughts before starting to create a website. Some questions are springboards for more complex discussion—however being aware of potential, upcoming, challenges is half the battle.

1. What are your chief goals for the website? Just getting a presence on the web? Cultivating future clients? Selling products directly from the site? Positioning yourself for a certain sector of the market? Facilitating information exchange with other craftspeople? Quick and easy access to your portfolio?
2. Who are the principal people involved in the site and what are their roles. Who makes the final decision about what the website will entail?
3. What is the content you want to have on the site? Images of the work? Descriptions of the work? Resumé? Photo of Craftsperson? Artist's Statement? Reviews and media coverage? Pricing information? Contact information? Interests that augment your craft? Essays? Explorations of new ideas? Bulletin board or format for exchange? A 'buy now' button? The absolutely 'can't forgets' are – easily located contact buttons, contact information, for example phone numbers, addresses if applicable, street directions if you are retailing.
4. Do you know how you would like the content categorized or linked together in the site?
5. How will you help people consistently navigate around the site?
6. Do you have to build into the site design possibilities for expansion?
7. Do you have an internet service provider? What are their specifications for hosting your site - size, bandwidth and email POP's? (See Website Design Modules – Hosting Your Website & How to Obtain a Domain Name)
8. What is your internet access, high speed DSL? 56k modem? What type of computer are you using?
9. What are the technical specs for the site? Who do you think will be viewing the site? What kind of access would they have? Typical monitor size? Which browser/platform (netscape/explorer, mac/pc) is more prevalent amongst your users? Does it matter?
10. What other sites do you like / dislike? Do you have a look in mind?
11. Do you already have a visual identity? Logo? Colours? Are they specifications from the designer about how that material can be used?
12. What are your fellow craftspeople/competitors doing?
13. How much cutting edge technology do you want to use? Javascript? Flash animations? Active server pages? Video? Audio?
14. How do you intend to draw people to the site? Links from other sites? Search engines? Word of mouth? Print advertising?
15. Who will generate keywords and descriptions for the site that help search engines list your site?
16. Do you intend to actively promote the site?
17. How can you draw viewers after the initial visit? Freebies? Changing information they might want?

18. How will you keep the site fresh? Random URLs? Scheduled announced changes? And do you have the content, time and inclination to make changes on a regular basis?
19. Who will maintain the site and with what software? Even the most minimal of sites sometimes needs maintenance, for example updating your resumé.
20. Any need for legal disclosures? Kidproofing?
21. What are the copyright considerations? Are you concerned about the easy access people have to your visual materials?
22. What is your budget?
23. What is your time line?