

How to build a good website

1. Plan your site

Define your strategy

Work out your site objectives, visitor needs, schedule and budget. Knowing both what you want the site to accomplish for you and what you want the site to accomplish for your visitors helps inform all the decisions you have to make about every aspect of the website design.

Work out your technical requirements

Next translate these visitor needs and site objectives into specific requirements for what content and functionality the website will offer. For example: Flash, video, audio, blog, content management system etc.

Establish the structure of your site

Now it's time to choose the menu structure (or site map) and the navigation style (how people will get from A to B).

Choose what goes on each page

To fully flesh out your plan you should now mock up a simple diagram of what goes on each page (these are called wire-frames). You don't need a fancy graphics program for this – a pencil and paper will do.

Decide what the site should look like

Finally, choose your identity, colours and fonts only AFTER you have fully planned out your site!

2. Build your site

Stick to the W3C Web Standards

These are recommendations set down by the W3C or World Wide Web Consortium for what is valid website code. Valid code is more consistent across browsers (like Internet Explorer and Firefox), gets you a better ranking in Google and is easier to update.

See: <http://www.w3.org/standards>

Follow the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines

The WCAG are tips on how to make your site more accessible to people with disabilities. For example, always providing alternatives for visual content will help visually impaired people who “view” web pages with screen-readers.

For a full list of ways to make your site accessible, see:
<http://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG>

Optimise your site for search engines

Make your site search engine friendly by always including alternative text for images, creating unique and descriptive page titles, and sticking to web standards.

For more information about search engine optimisation visit
<http://thegreenpea.org/guides>

3. Organise your hosting and domain names

For a website to be viewable on the Internet, it has to be hosted on a server or computer that is constantly connected to the Internet and that can accept incoming connections from other computers. When a domain name is typed into a browser the domain name points to this server or “host”.

The Green Pea offers a full hosting and domain name registration service from just £7 a month.

4. Get people to visit your site

Once your site is live you need to get people to visit. Some quick ideas on how to do this include:

- Write interesting content people will want to read
- Promote your posts on social media like Twitter and Facebook
- Give something away
- Get others to link to your website
- Buy traffic via Google Adwords

Download our FREE guide to attracting visitors to your site at:
<http://thegreenpea.org/guides>

FREE stuff

Here are some of the great free resources you can make use of when building your site:

- Free graphic editor GIMP: <http://gimp.org>
- Great design inspiration at Smashing Magazine: <http://www.smashingmagazine.com/tag/showcases>
- Free CSS (cascading style sheets) tutorials: <http://www.cssbasics.com>
- Free stock photos: <http://www.sxc.hu>
- Free fonts: <http://www.smashingmagazine.com/2007/11/08/40-excellent-freefonts-for-professional-design/>
- Free website templates: <http://www.freecsstemplates.org>

For a more comprehensive guide to free web resources see:
<http://thegreenpea.org/guides>

Further reading

The Big Red Fez: How to Make Any Web Site Better

Seth Godin

Killer Web Content: Make the Sale, Deliver the Service, Build the Brand

Gerry McGovern

And remember to check out <http://thegreenpea.org/guides> for more great guides like this!