

How to Develop a Simple Website for Your Project or Community Group

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Meet the Trainers (1)



Gary Parker

BA (Hons) Social Science

- Chair of Future Communities
- 20+ years of experience in business support and fundraising
- future-communities.org.uk

Meet the Trainers (2)

- Providing website design and development services to SMEs
- Worked with a range of small business from a variety of sectors



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Workshop Outline

1. Know your customer
2. Why you need a website
3. Website builders
4. Web design best practices
5. Driving traffic to your website
6. SEO (search engine optimisation)
7. Blogging
8. Google Business Profile / local directories
9. Optimising your website for conversions
10. Tracking the performance of your website

Know Your Customer

Do your research to find out your target audience's:

- Age group
- Gender
- Geographical location
- Education
- Occupation
- Family
- Income
- Interests
- Spending habits
- Pain points

Why You Need a Website

- Increases credibility and builds trust
- People are more likely to use an organisation that has a website
- You have complete control over how your website looks and functions, unlike social media platforms
- Manage your website from almost anywhere in the world
- Your website is accessible 24/7
- Reach an international audience
- Easier to track analytics and customer behaviour
- Small carbon footprint

Your Website is Core to Your Marketing



Getting Started

- Think about time available, your budget, your skills and the requirements of your project
- Plan the requirements of your site:
 - Pages required and content
 - Features (e.g. blog, photo gallery)
 - Functionality (e.g. newsletter signup form, e-commerce, contact form, chat bot)
- It is possible to build a website for free
- Using a website builder is the quickest way to get started
- We'll discuss a few popular website builders
- Don't forget to include legal information (privacy notice, terms & conditions)

- You can develop a website for free
- No need to get a hosting plan - Wix provides the hosting
- Apps are available from the Wix App Market if you need additional features
- The platform does not require maintenance
- Wix can be used to build an e-commerce store
- To access advanced features e.g. removing ads, connecting a custom domain or taking payments online, you must upgrade to a paid plan



WordPress.org

- A very powerful and customisable platform
- You have access to a vast range of themes and plugins to enhance the functionality of your site, many of which are free
- Use WooCommerce to convert your WordPress site into an e-commerce store
- WordPress itself is free, but you need to set up hosting and a register a domain before installing it
- The platform needs regular maintenance (keeping themes, plugins and WP core files updated), and backups



Shopify

- A very popular e-commerce platform, which powers millions of merchants worldwide
- You can sell an unlimited number of products on your Shopify store
- Themes are highly customisable without the need for editing code
- Apps are available from the Shopify App Store if you need more features
- The Basic Shopify plan costs ~~£25/month~~ **£1/month for the first 3 months!**
- Or, contact us about setting up an unlimited trial store for you
- 24/7 access to the Shopify Support team via chat, email and the community forums



Other Website Builders

- Squarespace
- Webflow
- Weebly
- etc.



webflow

weebly

User Experience (UX)

- UX is all about how your users feel when they are visiting your website
- Do they they feel happy when using your website, or do they have a negative experience?
- Keep the end user in mind at all times when designing and building your website

Web Design Best Practices

- Don't use too many colours or fonts
- Consistent design, which aligns with your brand
- The website should load quickly, especially on a mobile device
- Responsive across all types of device (desktop, laptop, smartphone and tablet)
- Easy to navigate
- Accessibility - consider users with disabilities or impairments
- No distracting pop ups or ads

Driving Traffic to Your Website

- Blogging
- SEO
- Social media
- Google Business Profile
- QR codes
- Directories
- Backlinks
- Word of mouth
- Flyers

Search Engine Optimisation (SEO)

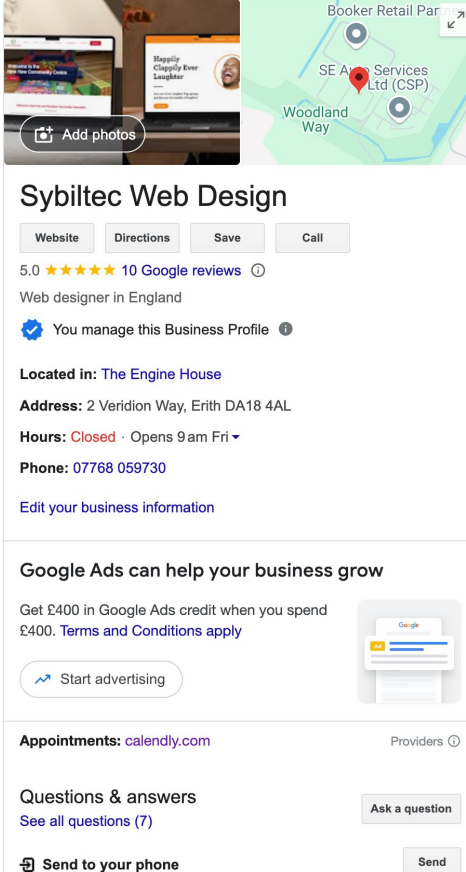
- Helps your website rank higher in search results
- Organic (does not use paid advertising)
- Your website **must** be mobile friendly
- Optimise page titles, meta descriptions and image alt tags - include relevant keywords
- Fix broken links
- Logical site structure, fast loading, good user experience
- Submit your site to Google Search Console
- Ensure that your site has an SSL certificate installed
- Add new content to your website on a regular basis
- Can use AI-generated content, but edit it before publishing
- Ask other website owners to link their website to yours (backlinking)

Blogging

- Demonstrates that you are an expert in your field
- Maintaining a blog keeps your audience informed and engaged
- Helps to improve the SEO of your website
- All of the website builders mentioned previously offer blogging tools
- It is a long term process
- Your content needs to be relevant
- Publish posts on a regular basis (e.g. every 2 weeks)

Google Business Profile

- Ask your clients to write reviews - send them a link that takes them directly to the form
- Respond to all reviews
- Enter as much information as you can (contact info, opening hours, booking link, FAQs ...)



The screenshot shows a Google Business Profile for 'Sybiltec Web Design'. At the top, there are two photos: one of a computer monitor displaying a website and another of a person. To the right is a map showing the location at 'SE Area Services Ltd (CSP)' on 'Woodland Way'. Below the photos is an 'Add photos' button. The business name 'Sybiltec Web Design' is prominently displayed, followed by buttons for 'Website', 'Directions', 'Save', and 'Call'. The profile has a 5.0 star rating from 10 Google reviews. It identifies the business as a 'Web designer in England' and notes that the user manages this profile. Key information includes the location 'The Engine House', address '2 Veridion Way, Erith DA18 4AL', and phone number '07768 059730'. There is a link to 'Edit your business information'. A promotional banner for Google Ads is present, offering £400 in credit for £400 spent. At the bottom, there are links for 'Appointments: calendly.com', 'Questions & answers' (with 7 questions), and a 'Send to your phone' option.

Local Directories

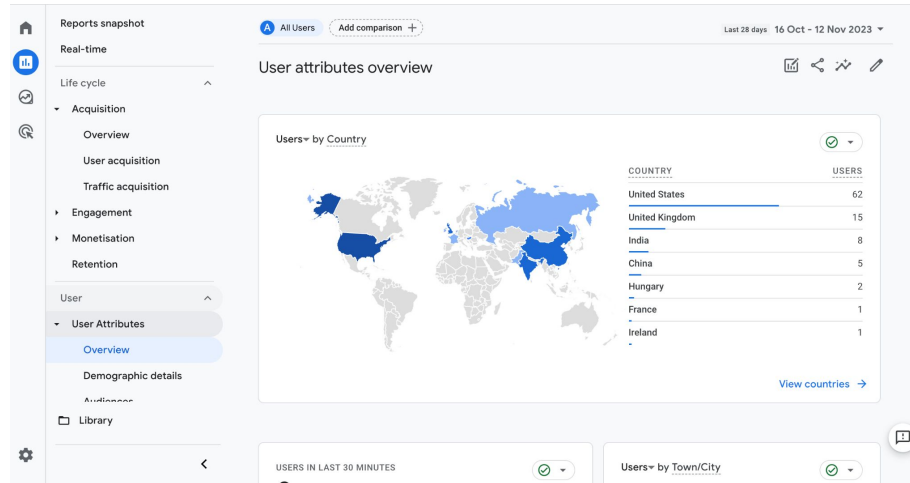
- A local directory includes a list of businesses and enables users to find companies within a specific geographic region
- Listing your business in a local online directory can help improve your website's SEO. This is because when you create a new local citation, you're also creating a new backlink to your website
- Examples:
 - Bark
 - Yelp
 - Yell.com

Optimising Your Website for Conversions

- Placing CTAs (calls-to-action) strategically throughout your website
- Make it easy for the visitor to take action (e.g. placing the booking form in a location which is easy to access)
- Using the appropriate language and tone of voice
- Good user experience

Track the Performance of Your Website

- Install Google Analytics 4 (free tool)
- Monitor metrics such as pageviews, acquisition, number of users, locations of users, devices and browsers used etc.



Contact Information

This resource was produced by Future Communities

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Useful Links

- Wix: www.wix.com
- WordPress: wordpress.org
- Shopify: www.shopify.com/uk
- SEO Starter Guide:
developers.google.com/search/docs/beginner/seo-starter-guide
- Google Ads: business.google.com/uk/google-ads
- Google Analytics: marketingplatform.google.com/intl/en_uk/about/analytics
- Google Business Profile: www.google.com/intl/en_uk/business/