

# Planning A Web Site

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## **2 Scenarios**

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### **Creating A Site From Scratch**

Either you are hired to create a new web site or, as part of your job, it's your responsibility to create a new web site.

### **Redesigning An Existing Site**

As part of your job, it's your responsibility to redesign or repurpose a web site done by your predecessor.

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# Common Task For All Sites

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- Identify your audience and target them
  - Create a site outline
  - Identify technology needs
  - Build a site team
  - Get a URL or domain
  - Plan for all contingencies, good and bad
  - Plan for growth
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# Redesigning An Existing Site

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## History and Evolution

- Keep the old site outline or build a new one?
- Keep graphic elements or design all new ones?

## Adding Features

- Want to sell things (take credit cards)
- Allowing more interactive feedback from your audience (comments, reviews)

## Keeping Your Old Audience

- Old URLs must be mapped to new URLs
  - Plan a time of least resistance for change
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# Recipe for Success

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Write a two or three-paragraph mission statement that briefly states the site's goals and who its audience is.

Establish realistic goals of the site:

- Make Money?
- Solicit Donations?
- Influence People?
- Provide A Service?

Get management to buy into the reasons and goals for having the site, the resources it will consume, and then offer timely measurements for how goals are being met.

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# Analyze Your Audience

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Analytics

Produce an audience definition:

- Who is your Audience?
  - What is it that they want when they come to your site?
  - What type of computer and connection speed does your typical visitor have?
  - Where are they coming from?
  - How can you attract them and entice them to return for repeat visits?
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# Create a Site Outline

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Apple

This outline should start at the Home Page and offer a logical path toward the information you have to offer.

- ~ Home Page
    - ~ About
      - ~ Mission Statement
      - ~ Contact Information
    - ~ News
      - ~ Current Press Releases
      - ~ Older Press Releases
  - ~ Main Purpose of the Site
    - ~ Product Information
    - ~ Sales
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# Identify Site Technology Needs

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Three Basic Types of web sites:

**Basic** — Simple, Static Content

- Publishing — e.g. newspapers
- Single Topic — How to do something

**Dynamic** — Usually Database Driven

- Publishing — newspapers, etc.
- Blogs — Diary of activities
- Portal — Aggregate content from other sites

**Transactional** — where you keep track of visitors

- E-commerce — catalog, online shopping
  - Product support
  - Intranet/Extranet — usually for employees
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# Building a Web Team

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Number of People Needed:

**Basic** — 1 Person performs all duties

- Writing, designing, etc.
- Tech support and hosting usually provided by a third party

**Dynamic** — Usually 2-3 People

- Writer/Editor/Content Creator
- Graphic Designer
- Software Developer

**Transactional** — 3 or more people

- Writer/Editor/Content Creators
  - Graphic Designer
  - Software Developer
  - In-house Tech Support or third party software solution
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# Stay Informed

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- Create a Roadmap to the finished product
  - Develop priorities and meet deadlines
  - Come up with a system for tracking bugs and assigning tasks (TRAC)
  - Regular meetings help your team track progress and come up with new ideas
  - If you don't understand something, ask questions
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# Find a web address

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Wimgo

- Choose a simple url that can be used in spoken and printed materials.
  - Registering a domain provides a unique address to place your content
  - Domain Names should be short, informative and as unique as possible
  - Domains cost between \$5 and \$35 each per year for most common names. You get a price break for 10 year registrations.
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# Plan for All Contingencies

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Make sure your host site has a fast enough server and enough internet bandwidth to handle all the traffic you hope to generate and then some.

The Slashdot Effect — Your site is mentioned on CNN and immediately millions type in the address only to find it can't be reached because they're all trying to get there at the same time.

Register misspelled domain name variations so that if someone mistypes the name, they'll still get to your site.

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# Your plan should grow with your site

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A quiet site serves less than 50,000 pages per month

An intermediate site serves between 50,000 and a million pages per month

A busy site serves more than a million pages per month

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# Suggestions for Success

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As your site grows, figure out ways to turn your increased traffic into money

Bring on additional team members as needed

Don't be afraid to bring in outside technical help, but remember they have a different agenda than you or your organization.

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# Summary

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Effective planning requires realistic expectations of what you can accomplish and identifying goals for when those expectations have been met.

Analyze your audience and try to create an audience profile so you can figure out what they want and how to deliver it.

Focus your site on the user's needs, and continue to meet those needs by adapting the site based on user feedback.

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# Summary

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Murphy's Law says, "Anything that can go wrong will go wrong," and no where is that more true than on a web site. Plan for anything and everything that can go wrong. And then, plan some more!

As your traffic grows, figure out ways for your site to earn its keep and bring on additional people as warranted and needed.

A successful site is more commonly the result of a team effort. Leverage different skill sets and experience to build a winning Web team.

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# Macintosh 101

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- a. Enabling the Right Mouse Button
  - b. Accessibility features
  - c. RSS feeds in Safari and Firefox
  - d. Using the Dock
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# Some Applications We'll Use...

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- a. Firefox (Web Developer plug-in)
  - b. Safari
  - c. TextWrangler
  - d. Adobe Photoshop
  - e. Macromedia Flash
  - f. iMovie
  - g. iPhoto
  - h. iTunes
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