

NOW YOU HAVE A WEBSITE. WHAT'S NEXT?

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UPDATE YOUR SITE

It's great to have a website, but it's important to keep it current. Websites with fresh content are more interesting, and more liable to get users to visit repeatedly. What can you change?

- Upload new pictures
- Periodically revise the text
- Add a News page with updates

Here are the steps:

1. Download the files
2. Edit the content
3. Upload the files
4. Double-check the results

1. DOWNLOAD THE FILES

A website is composed of different files. You need to copy them from the web server to your local computer so you can edit them. This is generally done with FTP (File Transfer Protocol) software.

Filezilla – <http://filezilla-project.org/> is free and easy to use.

2. EDIT THE CONTENT

EDITING TEXT

While you can use Notepad, it's helpful to use a more advanced text editor. Crimson Editor (www.crimsoneditor.com) has some nice features, including color-coding to help as you edit the text.

HTML stands for **H**yper**T**ext **M**arkup **L**anguage – which is the way most web pages are structured. HTML uses “tags” to specify the characteristics of the website content. Tags are enclosed in angle brackets <...>, and most have a start and end tag, e.g. **This text is bold.**.

Sample website structure:

```
<html>
  <head>
    <metatag... />
    <link rel="stylesheet" type="text/css" href="screen.css" />
  </head>
  <body>
    Webpage content here
  </body>
</html>
```

Here are some HTML tags that may be helpful:

Sample code	Resulting text on web page
<pre><p>This is one paragraph.</p> <p>Additional paragraphs are typically separated by a blank line.</p></pre>	<p>This is one paragraph.</p> <p>Additional paragraphs are typically separated by a blank line.</p>
<pre><p>Use a line break
to start a new line without an extra space.</p> <p>Notice that the break tag
is self-closing.</p></pre>	<p>Use a line break to start a new line without an extra space.</p> <p>Notice that the break tag is self-closing.</p>
<p>This text will be bold.</p>	<p>This text will be bold.</p>
<p>This text will be in italics.</p>	<p>This text will be <i>in italics</i>.</p>
<p>This text will be bold and italicized</p>	<p>This text will be <i>bold and italicized</i>.</p>
<p>This text will be a hyperlink to the Channeling Biker Bob home page.</p>	<p>This text will be a hyperlink to the Channeling Biker Bob home page.</p>
<p>This hyperlink will be bold.</p>	<p>This hyperlink will be bold.</p>

EDITING IMAGES

Even if you don't want to do extensive editing, it's helpful to re-size your images so they look good, but are not too large to download. And images for websites need to be saved in a specific format.

Here are some links to free editing software for PC's:

- <http://www.makeuseof.com/tag/10-free-image-editing-programs-for-your-pc/>
- http://download.cnet.com/PC-Image-Editor/3000-2192_4-10532704.html
- <http://www.gimp.org/>

Saving Images for the Website: It's important to use Photoshop's "Save for Web" feature. This minimizes the file size so that images will load quicker. And, it ensures that the image format is compatible with web browsers.

- First, re-size the image
- Click File, then Save for Web
- When a transparent background isn't necessary, JPG's are best (e.g. for the background gradients):
 - o Quality: 40-80% - Don't rely too much on the preview window. Images with strong contrast or sharp edges require higher quality.
 - o Do not use "Progressive" - this is where images initially load blurry, and gradually clear up. It creates larger files.
 - o Optimize - check this box
 - o Output settings - leave as default

- The GIF file format is necessary for images with a transparent background
 - o Choose GIF file format and make sure the “Transparency” box is checked
 - o Great tips here: <http://www.wise-women.org/tutorials/ps1/>

3. UPLOAD THE FILES

Once you’ve edited the files on your local computer, copy them back to the server.

NOTE: Be careful! If you replace a file on the website, the old version is gone and it may be difficult or impossible to get back to the original.

4. DOUBLE-CHECK THE RESULTS

Even if you’ve just made a simple change, it’s always a good idea to make sure the revised page looks the way you want.

VIEW THE NEW/EDITED PAGE(S) IN YOUR BROWSER

Go to the new/edited page on the website and refresh the page by pressing the F5 key.

CHECK FOR VALID CODE

Having valid code helps to ensure the web pages work on all platforms (different browsers, cell phones, PDA’s, etc.). It also improves placement in search engines:

- <http://validator.w3.org/> – checks for valid code
- <http://www.widexl.com/remote/search-engines/metatag-analyzer.html> – analyzes the metatags (keywords, etc.)
- <http://jigsaw.w3.org/css-validator/> – checks the Cascading Style Sheets (CSS) – e.g. <http://www.yourwebsite.com/screen.css>
- <http://validator.w3.org/checklink> – checks for broken hyperlinks

CHECK ACCESSIBILITY FOR DIFFERENT USERS

People may access your website lots of different ways, and you want to make sure the site looks good and works well for as many people as possible.

BROWSERS

Here are some good browsers to check on PC’s:

- Internet Explorer (<http://www.microsoft.com/windows/internet-explorer/default.aspx>)
- Firefox (<http://www.mozilla.com>)
- Safari for Windows (<http://www.apple.com/safari/>)
- Opera for Windows (<http://www.opera.com/download/>)

You can get a sense of the most popular browsers here:

http://www.w3schools.com/browsers/browsers_stats.asp. Note, these statistics are for users of the w3schools.com website, and probably represent more technically-minded people.

SCREEN RESOLUTIONS

You can get a sense of the most popular screen resolutions here:

http://www.w3schools.com/browsers/browsers_display.asp. Again, note that these statistics are for users of the w3schools.com website, and probably represent more technically-minded people. Consider mobile platforms (cell phones) too.

PLATFORMS (OPERATING SYSTEMS)

If possible, also check the site on an Apple/Macintosh computer. If you don't have access, ask a friend with a Mac to look at your website.

http://www.w3schools.com/browsers/browsers_os.asp

SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION (SEO)

Search engines (Google, Yahoo, Bing, etc.) try to help users find the information they want. They use a complex formula to sort through millions of websites to return the best results. You want users looking for your product to find your website.

SEO stands for Search Engine Optimization, the process of giving your website the highest ranking possible.

Here are some things to Do:

- Good content – first and foremost if you want people to visit your site, have content that is interesting and/or helpful to them.
- Clear navigation – once someone gets to your site, it should be easy for them to find what they're looking for
- Valid HTML and CSS code
- Good metatags
 - o Title
 - o Description
 - o Keywords – once thought of as very important, Google does not use this information:
<http://googlewebmastercentral.blogspot.com/2009/09/google-does-not-use-keywords-meta-tag.html>
- Image Alt tags – search engines can't "read" an image. The Alt tag is the text that's displayed in case the image is not available. It is also used by software to "read" websites to people with visual disabilities.
- Title tags – Can be used on any HTML element (headings, paragraphs, hyperlinks, etc.) – don't overdo it; pop-up tags can be annoying.
- Links from other websites
- Add a sitemap file
- More tips: <http://seochecklist.mobi/>

Here are some things to avoid:

- Exchanging or paying for links from other sites
- Keyword stuffing
- Duplicate content – don't say the same thing twice, then repeat it again.

How to check your SEO standings:

- <http://www.widexl.com/remote/search-engines/metatag-analyzer.html> – analyzes the metatags (keywords, etc.)
- <http://www.websitegrader.com> - Website grader
- <http://whois.domaintools.com/> - gives an overview, and offers suggestions for improvements
- Page rank checker – http://www.prchecker.info/check_page_rank.php

TRACK YOUR TRAFFIC

It's helpful to know how many people are accessing your website, how they got there, what pages they're viewing, and how long they're on the site.

Google is more than a search engine

- Sign up for a free account: <https://www.google.com/accounts/NewAccount>
- Google Analytics – <http://www.google.com/analytics> - great resource for website statistics
- Google Webmaster tools – <http://www.google.com/webmasters/tools>