

Fresh Web Services

Web Design Checklist

The following guide provides basic information and helpful hints on the steps required to get your website up and running. It is based upon an imaginary company called Smith & Jones, a Leicester based vacuum repair company, specialising in Dyson vacuum cleaners.

Find an ISP

An ISP (Internet Service Provider) will provide you with an internet account. Usually your telephone provider will offer this as an additional service. There are many ISPs but choose a reliable one, with a good reputation. You will need an ISP to get emails from your website. Some also offer free web space to host a website – avoid this aspect since many search engines discount sites hosted this way.

Do keyword analysis

What are keywords or key phrases? These are the search terms that potential customers use to find your company (& competitors) on the search engines like Google. So, for our example company, search terms such as “vacuum cleaner repairs”, “dyson repairs”, “vacum cleaners” (for the less literate), etc. Create a list of the trade terms & terms that you think your customers would use when searching for the services that your company provides. Look at your competitors – what search terms do they rank well for? These keywords will be the building blocks for your website and for your online marketing campaign. They should be amongst the first things a web design agency ask you for.

Keyword analysis is crucial - Fresh Web Services can help you get it right.

Choose a domain name

Choosing your domain name (or website address) is an important first step in establishing your online presence or brand. Often people think that they should use their company name as their website address – smithandjones.co.uk, for example. This is fine if you're a well known brand, such as Ikea. Sometimes though, it's better to choose a domain name that describes what you offer – dyson-vacuum-repairs.co.uk might be a better choice for Smith & Jones, since Google looks at the domain name as being relevant when returning search results. Also, your web address instantly tells people

what you offer.

Once you've chosen your domain name(s), you'll need to check that they are available and then register them - avoid choosing domain names that are registered or well known brand names, such as Coca-Cola.

Fresh Web Services offer domain name registration services:

- co.uk £25 for two years.
- .com £40 for two years.

Choose a web designer

It is possible to design and build your own website yourself, but remember this will be the first and possibly only chance you will have to impress your potential customer. Also, there is a wealth of information that you will need to make your website a success, not least to get your website highly placed on the search engines. A professional web design agency, like Fresh Web Services, have the skills and experience necessary to make the web work for you. Using a web design agency will certainly prove cheaper in the long run.

For examples of some of our work, go to:

<http://www.freshwebsiteservices.com/clients/portfolio/client-list.html>

Hosting your website

Once your website is finished, it will need hosting – putting on a web server so that other people can find and use it. For the same reasons that you should avoid using your ISPs free web space, also look for a reliable web hosting company – many offer services that look too good to be true, which is usually the case. Also ensure that your website is hosted within the UK – Google may discount foreign hosted websites when returning UK search results.

- **Fresh Web Service offer UK based web hosting from £75 pa.**

Registering your website.

Your website now needs registering with the major search engines (Google, Yahoo, MSN, etc). Again, this is something that you can do yourself or hire professionals to do it for

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you. Be warned though, getting this part wrong can seriously affect your website's ranking in the search engines. Also, avoid automated submission services – some search engines take a dim view of automated submissions. Fresh Web Services provide search engine submission as part of their web design services.

Write great content for your website

Google rewards websites that offer something original and worthwhile for its users. It penalises websites that copy content from others and/or provides no real value to its readers. So, if you're running an online shop, for example, don't copy your competitors or just use the manufacturers product descriptions. Add something original and worthwhile. Wherever you can, add value to your visitor's experience. This might be by providing extra product information, user reviews or helpful tips. This extra information also needs to be optimised for your key search phrases - the information has to be tightly focused, targeted and useful.

Ultimately, this may mean you need a copywriter! Talk to us to see if we can help.

Inform others about your website

Put your web address on all your stationery and advertising material, including Yellow Pages. Inform your local newspaper when you launch your website, send a letter to existing clients announcing that it's now live – perhaps offer an incentive or special offer if it is an online shop. Continue using traditional marketing techniques, just make sure that your website now forms part of these campaigns.

Social media is increasingly important component in your marketing mix. Promote your website using Twitter, Google+, etc.

Track visits to your site

Keeping a track on the number of visits to your website and what search terms they used when finding your website is crucial to gauging its success and improving it. All our hosting clients get access to real time, online visitor statistics, including search terms and search engines used to find your website. We also recommend registering for a free Google Analytics account.

Keep your website current

People and the search engines prefer fresh, current information. No one likes outdated information. A content management system (CMS) is the easiest way to keep your website up to date. We offer an easy to use and cost effective CMS – just ask us for more

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About the author:

Eddie May has been working in computers and the internet since 1997, first as a teacher, then Java programmer and more recently as a Magento search engine marketing expert.