

Web Site Types

As a web developer I am approached every day with the question “How much does a web site cost?”

Until we sit down and discover what your needs and expectations are that is a difficult question to answer. Many times I find that an interview will help define the type of web site to be quoted. Here I will define a few different types of web sites to consider.

The One Page Wonder

Many business owners just need a quick presence on the web with their contact information available. Sometimes referred to as a “Business Card Web Site” these little dandies can serve as a preliminary page prior to building out a larger web site. These are much better than having a “Website Under Construction” page for months or even years.

Informational Web Sites

These sites are the most common and reflect the same information that you might have printed in your company brochure. They may range from 5-10 pages and include pages like Our Services, Our Products, About Us, Testimonials, and a Contact Us Page. These sites will require that you have content to fill the pages. Most any web designer can help you build an informational web site but be prepared to have text and photos ready or you will incur more development expenses.



A Blog

These days blogs can also serve as a web site. They have the added benefit of an administrative back office that will give you the ability to add blog entries as well as add pages and upload photos. For the web hobbyist blogs like [WordPress](#) can be fun to tinker with because you can change out templates and add widgets that have been developed by programmers especially for this platform. There are many different types of blogs to look at as well within the categories of free, proprietary and hosted solutions.

Blogs Software

- [Blogger.com](#)
- [QuickBlogCast](#)
- [bBlog](#)
- [Blojsom](#)
- [WordPress](#)
- [MovableType](#)
- [b2Evolution](#)
- [Expression Engine](#)
- [Serendipity](#)
- [TextPattern](#)
- [Nucleus](#)
- [Pivot](#)

CMS Web Sites

If you have been paying attention you may have noticed that what is being illustrated in blogging software is the idea of a Content Management System (CMS). Web sites like these can be installed with an already made back office administration area where you can add pages, change text and upload photos.

Once installed you pick a template (or install a template) and away you go! These systems come with lots of options including forms, calendars, photo galleries, surveys and more.

CMS is an economical way to go for not only a web site but one with fun widgets that you can have control over. Remember, you will still need to provide your own content but you can do it yourself any time you want.

There are many CMS software to choose from and some are more advanced than others. You will need help installing and modifying these systems.

CMS is not without their own set of headaches. Keep in mind that these are pre-made systems and they are rigid and complex. They are also in a continuous state of evolution. You will want to upgrade from time to time to keep up with the Jones.

While there are some savings in going with pre-made systems, if you are looking for special features you may want to consider hiring a programmer to build you a custom CMS system. This way you have more flexibility as well as your own control over content.

CMS

- [WebSiteTonight 4.0](#)
- [Drupal](#)
- [Xoops](#)
- [Joomla](#)
- [Bitweaver](#)
- [e107](#)
- [CMS Made Simple](#)
- [Mambo](#)
- [Jupiter Portal](#)
- [Exponent](#)
- [Etomite](#)
- [Dragonfly](#)

Community or Member Sites

These are the types of web sites that include a login area for members only. This is not an inexpensive proposition. While there does exist CMS out-of-the-box types of sites you will most likely go the custom programming route here. Every community or member site will have different requirements so it will be difficult and time consuming to find an off the shelf solution.

Another aspect of membership sites is that you will most likely want payment for entry which leads us in the direction of ecommerce. You will need to make a lot of decisions:

- How your members signup?
- What do they get?
- How much do they pay?
- How do you make online transactions?.
- Will you use Paypal or a Merchant Account/ Gateway?

A successful community or membership sites will require work. Do you have time to answer member questions? Recruiting new members?

I don't want to dissuade you on your decision to build a business model around membership but you are not looking at building an ordinary web site. Believe it or not I have to explain this all the time.

Shopping Cart Sites

Sometimes you can add a shop to an existing web site and depending on the solution you decide on the web site **IS** the shopping cart. Many off the shelf or hosted solutions are all encompassing. Which means that through the administration area you can control not only aspects of your online shop but also add content to additional pages like the Home Page, Contact Us and Terms of Use page.



There are many shopping cart systems to choose from and they all have their pros and cons.

If you are adding an online shop to an existing web site or you just want more control over the look of your shop consider a system that is the “Cart Utility”.

We call these “**Button Only**” cart systems because all we need to do is add the “Buy” button and the “View Cart” button to any page of your web site and this will link your product pages to a secure hosted cart system that will finish out the order. This method is the most flexible and least expensive route for eCommerce.

Online Application Web Site

Is there yet another type of web site? Yes, the kind of web site that automatically does something for you. This could be anything. The service is automated and you get results immediately.

This type of site is pure programming and is limitless in terms of possibilities. Your only limitation would be your wallet in terms of development.

To be clear I don’t consider directory sites or calculators as online application even though they would fit that definition. I am talking about interactive sites like games, online education or print ordering sites that you interact with and the system shows a result. Also know as on-demand software applications

Interactive On Demand Application Sites

- [CustomInk](#)
- [LogoYes](#)
- [WebEx](#)
- [Constant Contact](#)
- [UGO Player](#)
- [SendThisFile](#)
- [TurboTax](#)
- [SalesForce](#)
- [KeySurvey](#)

This side of the web is really starting to evolve. Soon you won't have to install software on your computer, you would just login online and use web-based tools.

Conclusion

So you can see that there are many ways to describe a web site. I hope that some of these definitions will help you define your own web site needs and goals.

Ask yourself:

- Do I Want more Control?
- Do I want to option my Time or my Money?
- Am I ready to Communicate my Business Offerings?
- Do I simply need more Help?

Just like any other part of your business, your web presence can be complicated or simple.

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