

A Guide to Crafting Your Personal Website

The first step in accomplishing a challenging goal is to clearly define it. So before jumping into Dreamweaver or FrontPage, use the following ideas to help tease out what and how you want your website to portray you.

Personal Website Worksheet

Content

- ❖ Will the nature of your website be personal, professional or a mix of the two?
- ❖ What content will you be including in your personal website?
- ❖ What do you know or do that you could share with others?
- ❖ If you do not already have one, create an outline or sitemap of your site.
- ❖ Do you plan to use visual content such as images, video, audio, or other media? How much of these media types do you see using on the site?
- ❖ What content do you already have written in the form of Word Documents, PowerPoints, etc.?

Audience/Desired Action

- ❖ Describe a typical user who will be coming to your site. How often is the user online, and what does s/he generally use the web for? How old is the user and what does s/he do for a living? (Use as much detail as possible in profiling your target user. Profile more than one type if appropriate.)
- ❖ What is the primary "action" the user should take when coming to your site (search for information, get news, view media, make a purchase, subscribe to a newsletter)?

Perception

- ❖ How are you currently perceived offline? Do you want to carry the same kind of message through your website?
- ❖ Using the list on the back of this sheet, identify a few adjectives that describe how users should perceive you via your new site.

Style / Design

- ❖ Find *at least* five websites that you feel represent the quality of design, style, and/or substance that you want your design to achieve. You may find it helpful to print them out (preferably in color) and pin them to your wall or bulletin board as inspiration as you develop your own site.
- ❖ Work your way through the list of words on the back of this sheet. Circle the words that stand out as something you would like to incorporate into your design. Make notes by any that get you thinking.

Maintenance

- ❖ How often do you see your site being updated (never, from time to time, frequently)? Would you benefit from using some sort of software or other design solution that enables you to update your site quickly and efficiently? What kind of content would be involved in an update? Would the entire site need updates or just a front page (like a "news" portion of the site)?
- ❖ Will you have the time to make these planned updates?
- ❖ If your site will have audio or video, do you have the necessary software to process that media?

Website Design Inspiration

The following is a list of words that relate to components of a page's design. Work your way through the list and circle/make notes by any that get you thinking (e.g. Photo: "I may want a top banner with a photo of me in my workspace"). This list is merely a starting point--if you think of any words that aren't on the list, add them!

Perception

Artistic	Cutting edge	Fun	Prestigious	Traditional
Boisterous	Dumber than Sled	Innovative	Professional	Trustworthy
Caring	Tracks	Jovial	Scholarly	Youthful
Casual	Formal	Meticulous	Serious	Whimsical
Charismatic	Forward Thinking	Modern	Thorough	
Corporate	Friendly	Playful	Thoughtful	

Layout

All Image	Bleed	Fixed Width	Line art	Staggered
All Type	Centered	Free-Form	Pattern	Star
Asymmetry	Circle	Graphic	Photo	Triangle
Background	Color	Grid	Rectangle	Weird Shape
Border	Crop	Image	Symmetry	
Centered	Emblem	Illustration	Square	

Style

Art Deco	Damage	Huge/Tiny	Pixelated	Stamp
Bitmap	Dark/Light	Intricate	Realism	Swirl
Big/Small	Deform	Linocut	Regal	Symbol
Blueprint	Doodle	Loud	Repetition	Thick
Blur	Drop Shadow	Minimalism	Reverse	Thin
Busy/Plain	Elegant	Multimedia	Retro	Tilt
Cartoon	Emboss	Negative	Scientific	Translucent
Childlike	Frame	Odd	Sequence	Tuxedo
Collage	Gel	Ornamental	Silhouette	Wavy
Comedic	Ghost	Overlap	Sketch	
Contrast	Glow	Paint	Spiral	
Crude	Graffiti	Perspective	Splatter	

Color

Compliment	Cool	Monochrome	Psychedelic	Unity
Contrast	Dissonance	Primary	Old-fashioned	Warm

Type

Alignment	Decorative	Heading	Old-Style	Serif
Billboard	Dense	Italic	Open	Small
Bold	Dark/Light	Initials	Outline	Spacing
Calligraphy	Egyptian	Label	Overlap	Typewriter
Color	European	Large	Overlay	Thin
Condense	Expand	Letter Spacing	Punctuate	Weight
Cursive	Geometric	Line Height	Sans Serif	White Space
Custom Font	Hand-letter	Monogram	Script	Worn out