

Internet Technology

MTNZ Conference 2010

Chris Zampese (czampese@powerfarming.co.nz)

Info Sheet

Why do you need a website?

A website is a great place to keep up to date info about your society

- for patrons and for members.

An excellent place to display your history, photos and contact details.

A website is also a good place to provide a good first impression about your society/advertising

With some surveys saying that over 80% of New Zealanders now have internet access the web is fast becoming the go-to place for people looking for information.

How do you go about it?

Get a professional to design/build your site. You can expect them to handle all of the details outlined below.

Purchase a pre-made site or template. This will require some work to get it set up to work correctly and requires some knowledge of how to put a website together.

Design and build the site yourself. Its assumed that if you take on this option you have a bit of knowledge already.

Some good terms to know

There are 3 basic parts to a website

- Design
 - o the way the site looks/images/pages/content. When you hire someone to build your site this is the bit that costs the most.
- Domain Name
 - o The actual name of your site ie www.theatre.co.nz this is booked and paid for separately to everything else. This is a fairly standard cost. You can go to www.domainz.co.nz to see if the name you want is available.
- Hosting
 - o The space on the internet that your site is built on. There are several options for hosting. If the company hosting your site has problems then it can jeopardise your site so look for one that seems well known. You also need to consider CMS systems when you choose a

hosting company. A lot of web design companies will host the site themselves, but some will also use a hosting service.

Costs

There are a huge range of costs for websites, and they are mainly based on what you want out of your site.

Basic site

A basic site is one that is very static. You may have 3-5 pages of content that do not change or cannot be changed easily. This should include unique design and they should at least be able to set up hosting/domain name registration for you.

Site with CMS

A more complex site that can be more easily updated by you. This is more difficult to design and implement, but gives you greater flexibility as time goes on. A good CMS system will add some cost to your site, and will also usually add the ability to display photo galleries etc.

Other services

SEO (Search Engine Optimisation) - This is one of the newer fads in web design. Most designers should offer some sort of SEO with their site, although this is a very specialised field and specialists can charge thousands for full SEO.

E-Newsletters/Sign ups – most CMS sites will offer some sort of sign up facility for your visitors. It is also worth finding out if you can do mass-mailouts to the people who have signed up.

Typically sites would range from \$500 - \$5000. If you are paying more than \$5000 then it would pay to consult with other web design companies or people in the know to ensure that you really need to spend that much.

The basic costs that you cant really avoid (although often with packages in the upper price ranges these costs are all included) are:

Domain Name Registration: This is currently around \$55-\$60 a year

Hosting: This will vary according to what space you require and if there is CMS included in the hosting package etc, but expect this to be between \$15-\$30 a month.

Essential Information a Society should have

Whats coming up – make sure you include dates

Contact details – these should be easy to find. Also a good idea to have your phone number/address somewhere on each page

Membership info if applicable

History of shows

Sponsors information – having their logo and a link to their site can be another draw-card for sponsors

Links to other sites – if you have links to other sites, and if you can get others to link to you then your rating in some search engines will be better (particularly applies to others linking to you).

Domain Names

A domain name is the 'real' name of your website IE www.theatresite.co.nz
You book/reserve your domain name for a set period of time (usually 2-5 years).
Your domain name can be reserved without re-directing it to a site.

Email Addresses

You should have a generic address for your society. If you purchase a domain name for your society then you will be able to create whatever email addresses you want. It is a good idea to have a generic address like info@domain.co.nz
Try and avoid complicating matters by having too many addresses. Also if you have a domain name then there is no reason to use an address like myname@gmail.com etc

CMS – Content Management Systems

A CMS is the 'backend' of your website. The CMS allows you to maintain the content of your site. This means you have more control, and also means that you do not have to pay someone every time you want a change made. Many

CMS will also offer additional features like photo galleries and contact forms that can be turned on and off easily.

For a lot of societies a CMS is essential. Check what CMS your hosting provider uses and see if you can get a demonstration of how it works. The CMS should contain an area for adding pages/features (photo galleries etc) and maintaining users. It should also offer a What You See is What You Get type of editor for your pages (similar to Microsoft Word).

Traffic Tracking and Analysis

There are several tools for tracking your websites performance. A lot of hosting providers will offer some sort of statistics about your site, but you can sign up to other analysis sites as well. One that I have favoured is Google Analytics. Once you have signed up for this you will be able to view all sorts of statistics about your website. Number of visitors, the pages they visited, where they came from (both physically and what page they were on before clicking through to yours). It will also give you details about the search terms people used in google that resulted in finding your site etc.

If you are doing your own SEO then this tracking can be invaluable as it can be a good indicator of how your changes/SEO is working.

Other things to note:

The more pages your site link is on, the better you will rank in many search engines, so make sure you sign up for any of the free event sites like eventfinder etc. Also if your local council have a website that lists events make sure you sign up to that as well.

If you create a facebook page ensure that all the events have a link to your website etc.