

# How to Make / Create Your Own Website: The Beginner's A-Z Guide

The essential step by step guide on how to set up a website

## How to Start / Create a Website: The Beginner's A-Z Guide

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This tutorial shows you how to make or create a website. It is intended for the beginner and layperson, taking you step by step through the whole process from the very beginning. It makes very few assumptions about what you know (other than the fact that you know how to surf the Internet, since you're already reading this article on the Internet). As some steps are more involved, this guide also links to selected relevant articles on [thesitewizard.com](http://thesitewizard.com) that you will need to click through to read for more information.

### The Essential Step-by-Step Guide to Making Your Own Website

#### 1. Get Your Domain Name

The first thing you need to do before anything else is to get yourself a domain name. This is the name you want to give to your website. For example, the domain name of the website you're reading is "thesitewizard.com". To get a domain name, you have to pay an annual fee to a registrar for the right to use that name. Getting a name does not get you a website or anything like that. It's just a name. It's sort of like registering a business name in the brick-and-mortar world; having that business name does not mean that you also have the shop premises to go with it.

- Detailed information on getting a good domain name can be found in the article [Tips on Choosing a Good Domain Name](#).
- After you read that, you will need to know the steps to registering a domain name and the things you need to look out for when registering. You can find a detailed guide in the article [How to Register a Domain Name](#).
- It may also be wise to take a look at some of the [Important Precautions to Take When Buying a Domain Name](#), just so that you don't commit the same mistakes that some newcomers make when buying a domain name.

#### 2. Choose a Web Host and Sign Up for an Account

A web host is basically a company that has many computers connected to the Internet. When you place your web pages on their computers, everyone in the world will be able to connect to it and view them. You will need to sign up for an account with a web host so that your website has a home. If getting a domain name is analogous to getting a business name in the brick-and-mortar world, getting a web hosting account is comparable to renting office or shop premises for your business.

- There are many issues involved in finding a good web host. Read up on the various things you need to look for in the article [How to Choose a Web Host](#).
- When you have an idea of what to look for, you can search for one from the [Budget Web Hosting](#) page. You can also find out which web host I'm currently using from the [Which Web Host Do You Recommend?](#) page.

After you sign up for a web hosting account, you will need to point your domain to that account on your web host. Information on how to do this can be found in the guide [How to Point a Domain Name to Your Website \(Or What to Do After Buying Your Domain Name\)](#).

### 3. Designing your Web Pages

Once you have settled your domain name and web host, the next step is to design the web site itself. In this article, I will assume that you will be doing this yourself. If you are hiring a web designer to do it for you, you can probably skip this step, since that person will handle it on your behalf.

- Although there are many considerations in web design, as a beginner, your first step is to actually get something out onto the web. The fine-tuning can come after you've figured out how to publish a basic web page. One way is to use a WYSIWYG ("What You See Is What You Get") web editor to do it. Such editors allow you to design your site visually, without having to muck around with the technical details. They work just like a normal wordprocessor.

There are many commercial and free web editors around. For those who don't mind spending money on a commercial program, Dreamweaver comes recommended by many webmasters. If you are planning to use this editor, thesitewizard.com has an online tutorial called [Dreamweaver Tutorial: How to Design a Website with Dreamweaver CS6](#). The guide takes you through all the steps of creating a fully-functional website with

multiple pages and a feedback form, and provides you with the theoretical and practical foundation that will help you create and maintain your site.

If you prefer to use free software, you can find a complete tutorial on using KompoZer, a free WYSIWYG web editor, in the article [How to Design and Publish Your Website with KompoZer](#). Like my Dreamweaver tutorial, this one also guides you through the process of creating a website from scratch. In addition, it shows you some of the main features of the KompoZer software so that you can go on improving and updating your site on your own.

There are many other web design software around. If you prefer not to use either of the above, you can find some others listed on thefreecountry.com's [Free HTML Editors and WYSIWYG Web Editors](#) page. I also have [tutorials for a few other WYSIWYG web editors](#) here.

- After you have followed my tutorial, and are on the way to designing your website, you might want to read the article [Appearance, Usability and Search Engine Visibility in Web Design](#) as well. It takes a brief look at some of the real world issues that every web designer must deal with.
- An integral part of web design is search engine readiness. Search engine promotion does not start after the web site is made. It starts at the web design stage. The article [6 Tips on How to Create a Search Engine Friendly Website](#) is a must-read. Moreover, [How to Improve Your Search Engine Ranking on Google](#) is also important for the simple reason that Google is the most popular search engine around, at least at the time this page was written.
- There are many other issues regarding the design of web pages. The above will get you started. However, if you have the time after you get something out onto the web, you may want to read my other articles on [Web Design](#) and [Website Promotion and Search Engine Ranking](#).

#### **4. Testing Your Website**

Although I list this step separately, this should be done throughout your web design cycle. I list it separately to give it a little more prominence, since too few new webmasters actually perform this step adequately.

You will need to test your web pages as you design them in the major browsers: the latest versions of Internet Explorer (version 11 at the time of this writing), [Firefox](#), [Opera](#), [Safari](#) and [Chrome](#). All these browsers can be obtained free of charge, so it should be no hardship to get them. Unfortunately, directly

testing your site in all these browsers is the only way you can really be sure that it works the way you want it to on your visitors' machines.

**Optional:** If you have the time, you may want to read my article on [how to test your website in multiple versions of Internet Explorer](#) and check your site under earlier versions of Internet Explorer ("IE"). This is not strictly necessary nowadays, since the main culprit causing website problems, IE 6, is [disappearing from the Internet](#), with IE 7 following in its heels. In fact, since Microsoft has stopped supporting Windows XP (the system that includes IE 6) on 8 April 2014, chances are that the number of people using IE 6 and 7 will only dwindle even further with time. [IE 8](#) and later are generally considered to be standards-compliant, although, like all browsers, earlier versions don't support the latest revisions of the web standards.

If you want to improve the chances that your website will work in future versions of all web browsers, consider [validating the code](#) for your web pages. In layman's language, this means that you should check that the underlying code of your web page, called ["HTML" and "CSS"](#), has no syntax errors. You don't actually need technical knowledge of HTML and CSS to validate the page, since you can use one of the [numerous free web page validators](#) around to do the hard work. On the other hand, if the validator tells you that your page has errors, it may sometimes be hard to figure out what's wrong (and whether the error is actually a serious one) if you don't have the requisite knowledge. Having said that, some validators actually give concrete suggestions on how to fix your code, and one of them, called "HTML Tidy", is even supposed to be able to fix errors for you.

## 5. Collecting Credit Card Information, Making Money

If you are selling products or services, you will need some way to collect credit card information. If so, take a look at [How to Accept Credit Cards on Your Website](#). I also have a step by step guide on [How to Add an Order Form or a "Buy Now" button using PayPal to a Website](#) for those using PayPal.

If you need advertisers for your website, you might want to read [How to Make Money From Your Website](#) and the follow-up article [How to Increase Your Website Revenue from Affiliate Programs](#). A list of advertisers and affiliate programs can be found on [Affiliate Programs: Free Sponsors and Advertisers](#). Those companies are on the constant lookout for new web publishers to display their advertisements.

## 6. Getting Your Site Noticed

When your site is ready, you can submit it to search engines like Google and Bing. Use the links below to do this.

- [Google's Link Submission Page](#)
- [Bing's Site Submission Page](#)

In general, if your site is already linked to by other websites, you may not even need to submit it to these search engines. They will probably find it themselves by following the links on those websites.

Apart from submitting your site to the search engine, you may also want to consider promoting it in other ways, such as the usual way people did things before the creation of the Internet: advertisements in the newspapers, word-of-mouth, etc. There are even companies on the Internet, like [PRWeb](#), that can help you create press releases, which may get your site noticed by news sites and blogs. As mentioned in my article on [More Tips on Google Search Engine Results Placement](#), you can also advertise in the various search engines.

Although I only mentioned Google in that article, since that was the topic of that discussion, you can also [advertise in other search engines like Bing and Yahoo!](#).

This has the potential of putting your advertisement near the top of the search engine results page, and possibly even on other websites.

There are also [less obvious ways of promoting your website](#), which you might want to look into.

## Conclusion

Naturally the above guide is not exhaustive. It is a distillation of some of the essential steps in getting started with your site. If you want more information, you should read the other articles on [thesitewizard.com](#). However, the above tutorial should be enough to help you put your website on the Internet.

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