

Making Your Mark Online

Choosing Web Service Providers

Overview

- Learn about the range of options for putting a site together.
- Assess your strengths and where you want to put your time.
- Huge number of choices; focus on understanding the broad approaches.

Copy Writing

- Well-written copy is critical.
- If you don't want to write it yourself, consider subcontracting.

Two web site marketplaces for finding subcontractors:

<http://www.guru.com>

<http://www.elance.com>

Logo Design

If you want to look professional, you need professional looking graphics.

A few possibilities:

Katy Putnam (local) - <http://www.kapart.com>

Lightbox Graphic Design - <http://www.lightboxgraphicdesign.com/>

Stephen Asbury - <http://www.asburydesign.net>

Or - <http://www.guru.com>

Photography and Images

Stock Images:

<http://www.istockphoto.com>

DIY/Photography

<http://www.tabletopstudio.com>

Book: Taking Great Pictures for eBay Auctions and Online Selling - by Rod March

Video

<http://www.videomaker.com>

Option 1 - CMS/Package

Allows you or a non-technical person to update the site.

Can use various platforms

Drupal - <http://www.drupal.org>

Joomla - <http://www.joomla.org>

Drupal and Joomla hosting available at

<http://www.siteground.com>

Demo these and other CMS's at

<http://php.opensourcecms.com>

Option 1 Pros and Cons

Pros

Work well for large complicated web sites and for organizations where many people need to update the site.

Have many plug-ins that add functionality.

Include templates for design

You can hire a contractor (guru.com?) to customize and do the techie part, while you focus on the content.

Cons

For more advanced features, you will probably still need expert help.

Because they are open source, security can be a problem because hackers find vulnerabilities.

For design changes, you will need a fair amount of technical skill.

DIY - Option 2

Buy a copy of Dreamweaver (about \$350)

use a design included with Dreamweaver, or create your own - but are you a graphic designer?

Buy a web design template from <http://www.templatemonster.com> and modify it with Dreamweaver.

Use the tutorials and references at <http://www.w3schools.com/>

If you have a question, search for the answer!

Use a mass-market hosting company like <http://www.godaddy.com>

Option 2 Pros and Cons

Pros

Dreamweaver includes many designs and fancy widgets you can add to your site.

Dreamweaver is a WYSIWYG editor.

TemplateMonster has 1000's of custom designs you can edit with Dreamweaver for around \$50/each.

Cost is very low.

Cons

Learning to use Dreamweaver, understanding HTML & CSS, downloading and editing templates can take a fair amount of time.

Template Monster designs are low-cost, but the “exclusive” price is as much as our whole platform with a custom design.

Also, offer customization service (if you don't want to use Dreamweaver), but again, price is significant.

Often imply functionality, like “user accounts”, but functionality isn't built in to design.

DIY - Option 3

WordPress Blog - <http://www.wordpress.com>

**Hire a geek to add plug-ins and install a theme.
(<http://www.guru.com> or locally via
<http://eugene.craigslist.org>)**

Option 3 Pros and Cons

Pros

A blog lends itself to content updates, which is a big plus.

Very easy to use “out of the box”.

Very inexpensive.

No software to install, use your browser to edit the web site.

Cons

You’ll probably still need a geek for custom design or widgets.

A blog format is limiting, a blog can work well as just one section of a larger web site.

Option 4 - Hire a Web Developer

Search google for phrases like “eugene web design”, “eugene web developer”

Look at the portfolio of the provider

-Look at real live web sites

-Review the design, functionality, SEO

Contact clients of provider by email or phone and ask about the service.

How will updates happen?

Option 4 Pros and Cons

Pros

Leave it to an expert. Save time and focus on your message and running your business.

The designer may have access to more sophisticated tools for your web site.

Professional design skills.

Can offer advice and guidance on your online presence.

Cons

Can be expensive.

What happens if the designer quits?

Changes and updates will usually be billed at an hourly rate.

As with other contractors, a lot depends on whether you find a good one.

Option 5 - Themed Marketplace

<http://www.cafepress.com>

You can sell

- * Merchandise you design including t-shirts, posters, mugs, bumper stickers and much more.
- * Books printed on-demand. Learn more
- * Audio and Data CDs. Learn more

What CafePress.com does

1. Gives you a FREE online shop to promote your products
2. Produces each item when ordered using our unique print-on-demand technology
3. Handles all payment transactions including major credit cards
4. Ships your products worldwide
5. Manages all returns/exchanges
6. Offers customer service via toll-free phone and email

7. Sends you a monthly check for your earnings on sales!

<http://www.etsy.com>

A similar model for handcrafted goods.

Option 5 Pros and Cons

Pros

Access to lots of buyers

Easy to use

Free to set up

Cons

Cost to sell will be higher than on an independent site.

Limited to certain kinds of products

Competing with like vendors on the same web site

Not your own web site

Option 6 Industry Specific Packages

MightyMerchant - <http://www.mightymerchant.com>

Our solution, includes custom development and shopping cart platform, and hosting.

Volusion - <http://www.volusion.com>

Hosted solution, do-it-yourself with templates or use a developer to customize.

CPA Site Solutions - <http://www.cpasitesolutions.com/>

Hosted service geared towards accountants

IDX Broker - <http://www.idxbroker.com/>

Open source ecommerce (can get hosting at <http://www.siteground.com>).

Option 6 Pros and Cons

Pros

Features are tailored for the needs of online merchants.

Tighter integration with the rest of your business.

Design flexibility and branding.

End to end solution, a complete solution that goes beyond the web site and helps with order processing, marketing, analytics, etc.

Requires less technical knowledge.

Cons

May still need an expert for custom designs.

Can be difficult to use.

Monthly fees are usually higher.

Customer support may be lacking.

It's difficult to evaluate the pros and cons of each provider.

When using an “out of the box” solution, it can be difficult to differentiate your web site.

Accepting Payments Online

Merchant Account

An account with a financial institution that allows you to accept credit cards.

<http://www.camcommerce.com>

Payment Gateway

An internet web site that processes credit card transactions

<http://www.authorize.net>

<http://www.paypal.com>

<http://www.google.com/checkout>

Web Site Integration

You must connect your web site to the Payment Gateway to process transactions.

Other Specialty Providers

- Search Marketing - <http://www.heroweb.com>
- Email Marketing – <http://www.constantcontact.com>
- Affiliate Marketing – [Commission Junction](http://www.commissionjunction.com)
- Accounting/Billing - <http://www.atandra.com>
- Backup - <http://www.site-vault.com>
- Security - <http://www.verisign.com>

Security & Privacy

Keep security practices in mind

- ◆ Have system for storing confidential information
- ◆ Forms for submitting private/credit card info should be secure
 - Look for 'https:' at the beginning of the URL

Post Privacy Policy on site

- ◆ What are you doing with customers info?

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