

Developing a website: a simple 10-point checklist

Here is a summary version of our 10-point checklist for things to consider when developing a website:

1. Purpose and goals

What do you want your site to do?

Define what you are about, and how your site will help support that.

2. Audience

Who are you talking to?

What are they interested in?

Are there different kinds of audiences?

How are you offering something that is useful to them?

3. Features

Break down features the site will need, which can include:

- Number of pages

- Content tools, for example: online forms, blogs, photo galleries, slideshows, maps

- Integration with social media

- Video and/or audio players

- A shopping cart and payment function

- An email collection system

- A user 'login' system

- Keeping stored information secure

- Technical support

- Site optimisation for mobile or tablet platforms

- Ability for you to easily update content on the site.

4. Domain name

Do you already have one, or do you need to register a new one?

Decide on a suffix: .com / .org / .edu – or use a country-specific domain.

Make it unique and memorable.

5. Developing content

Create content that is high-quality and interesting to your audience.

Plan for ongoing development – people often won't come back if there's nothing new.

Think about how you spread content across social media platforms to extend audience reach.

6. Design

What kind of image do you want to project?

Consider: colour; styling; use of images; use of illustration or even animated elements.

Think about 'user interface' and the hierarchy of content.

How do you best design for your particular audience

7. Technical requirements

Consider site content management system (CMS), which allows you to edit site content yourself – there are many options available.

Site compatibility on desktop computers and also mobile and tablet devices: for: Windows, Mac, Android, iOS.

Webpage code compliance / web standards.

8. Website hosting

Consider requirements of hosting – specific platform or technology compatibility.

CMS requirements, media hosting (video, audio), customised database.

Consider service reliability is – ‘uptime’, security, backup features?

9. Promoting your site

Promote your web address everywhere – business cards, in online business directories, in advertising.

Importance of social media platforms and repurposing content.

Consider multiple media channels, experiment and track site metrics.

10. Management, servicing and updating

Continual site assessment and development to keep your audience engaged.

Use site metrics as feedback into site improvements.

Consider site structure and design, and update where needed.

Ensure site technologies – CMS, site components – are kept up to date.

Develop a weekly/monthly/yearly maintenance schedule to support this.