

# How to Design a Web Site That People Will Actually Use

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## What's On Tap?

- How to design a website people will actually use
  - Good Initial Planning
  - Good design principals
  - Good layout techniques
  - Actual content
- How to get content on your website easily
  - Just how easy it is to make a .pdf?
  - Online Forms
  - Online Search Engines
  - Macromedia Contribute

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## Last Slide 2nd

- If you design a website that is easy to understand, provides the end user with updates and important information as well as provide the people updating your site a easy mechanism of updating, you will have a successful site, guaranteed.
  - Ok, how do we get there?

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## Step One, Part One: Planning

- You will be amazed at the different ideas people will have about what should be on a website.
  - If possible, form a team that represents each type of website user. Teacher? Administrator? Parent? Student?
    - On No! Another team? Another meeting? \*THUD\*
  - Boy Scout Oath no bickering while keeping an open mind
  - Pay em' with food
    - Pizza nights work great for me.

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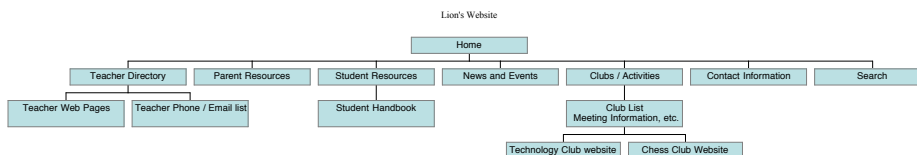
## Step One, Part Two: Brainstorm

- Get some markers and some big paper and some napkins for the pizza
- Talk about what successful school sites they have seen on the web.
- Write on the paper what areas you think your website should have
  - Put paper on wall, rinse, repeat
- Important: mark what should be part of phase one, phase two and phase three
  - Do not bite off more than you can chew
  - Nothing worse than “This information soon” on half of your website
    - Yawn

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## Step One, Part 3, Org Chart

- Decide what should be the key areas of your website and make an organizational chart.

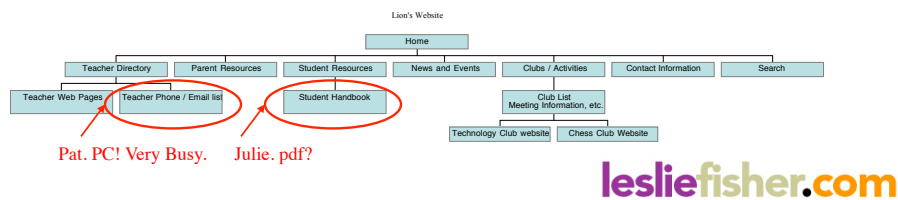


- Do you already have a site? Try to place it in an organizational chart.
  - If it does not make sense on the chart, it does not make sense to the end user!

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## Step One, Part 4: Identify Content

- Look at the organizational chart and identify where the content will be gathered from
  - My rule: Once a month, webmaster updates it, more than once a month, I teach them how to update it or make an online solution for them
  - You may have problem children who do not want to give you the information, if you know about it now, mark it on the chart also.



## Popular Items for Phase One

- Teacher Directory
  - Main list with phone numbers, email, etc.
    - Possible links to teachers with web pages
- Parent Information
  - Student handbook, homework hotline, internet resources, after school opportunities, FAQ's, online forms, school lunch menus, school newsletters/newspapers, basic PTA information, school event calendar
- Student Information
  - Handbook, newsletter/newspapers, lunch menus, event calendar, club information

## Org Chart Warnings

- Watch for someone who wants to put their way cool website as a main navigation link.
  - If they do indeed have a resourceful/great site, make a what's new / cool area on the first page and include their link there as well as where it would normally be
    - Teacher website
- Remember, the site needs to make sense to someone who has never been to it before and may also be new at surfing the internet. Keep the interface consistent.

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## Step Two, Gather Content

- This will probably be your biggest issue
- Content is usually not developed, not on disk or with someone who is too busy or not interested in helping you place their information online
- Start the content gathering process before you start your site design
  - It will take forever to get some content!

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## Step Two, Gather Content What Helps?

- Approach the principal. Show your initial work, goals and organizational chart.
- Mention the key areas where you need content and who is the keeper of the content.
  - If you would like other people to place content on the site, show the process of how it will be done and how easy it is
- Ask principal to send a letter out outlining the new site and what the principal expects for participation from the rest of the school.
  - Ammo!

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## Step Three: Design Your Site

- One simple rule
  - Too many cooks spoil the broth
- Create a small 3 page template and show it to a few people. Maybe a techie, a newbie, etc. Make sure it makes sense to navigate and of course, it looks good
- Use school colors, logos, etc. Keep the site look consistent throughout the main navigation of the site.
- Samples

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## Step Three, Design, Student Help?

- Careful!
- If this is a student learning web design, they need to learn by doing. Most new web designers:
  - Use different background colors on each page
  - Use piles of animation
  - Make more boo boos
- Student designers are great for the clubs / activities areas, but keep the key content of the site in important hands
- Some high schools have web classes who care for the site
  - Wonderful! They are watched over by a teacher who should make sure there is a consistent look, interface, etc.

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## Make Sure....

- You use school colors, logo or mascot on site
- Use light background with dark text
- Do not use a small dark image as your background image
- Keep a consistent look and feel throughout the site

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## Step Four, Putting Content on your site

- In your org chart, you should have marked who will be providing what content
- You should also have marked if they will be updating the content themselves or you the web developer will be taking care of it
  - Either way, you want to make sure adding information to your site is fast and easy
    - Content is king!

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## Almost Anything Can be Made .html

- Microsoft Word is your friend
  - Save as .html command gets better and better with every version of word
- Person providing content not using word?
  - Get Mac Link Plus or PC Link Plus from Dataviz ([www.dataviz.com](http://www.dataviz.com))
- Perfect for press releases, agendas, bulletins, etc.

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## Is the item too complex for .html?

- It is amazingly easy to make an item a .pdf
  - Adobe Acrobat
  - Portable document format
  - Software costs from free - \$100.00
    - More expensive software lets you manipulate forms
- Software to read .pdf's free and is considered the standard for complex documents available on the web.
- Perfect for newsletters, newspapers, school lunch menus, etc.

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Getting Content into your site  
and keeping it updated without  
being a geek

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## Down and Dirty Website updating. Templates!

- Allows the web to be updated when I am not even around
- Make a password protected folder on the web server. Give the content provider access to it
- Teach content provider how to save document for the web, name it and upload it using ftp
  - If the name is the same as the other document on the web server, the document replaces the old one and your site is updated.
    - Superintendent example
    - Lunch Menu example
- You (the web developer) can make a template, upload it to the folder and teach the person how to modify the template.
  - Type click and drag. That is all you are asking for.

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## A Microsoft Word like experience to updating web pages. Adobe Contribute

- Allows a web developer to create their web pages with practically no change in the way they develop pages
- The Web Developer then runs contribute and configures how users can:
  - Edit specific pages
  - What type of changes they can make to those pages
  - If users can publish automatically or if the page will sit in a hold state until someone you designate reviews it
- Users are notified via email that they have been given access to a site, page or folder or series of folders via email encryption key
- User then boots up a copy of contribute and uses a simple point and click interface to add links, text, images, pdfs, tables and even Microsoft Office Documents
- Users can update and change the entire web page, partial web page or work within a template region you set up for them
- The most intuitive and easiest solution for the "Can you design my website but can I update it myself without knowing .html?"
- [www.adobe.com/contribute](http://www.adobe.com/contribute) \$89.00 per copy

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## An Entire System Designed with Ease of Use and Expansion in Mind? Content Management Systems

- A Content Management system is usually a web shell created by a company, web developer, etc
- The end user is then given a web page environment to add and edit their pages
- Allows for the user to have a customizable, expandable web environment
- Many out there with different prices points, etc
  - Moodle. [www.moodle.org](http://www.moodle.org)
  - Blackboard
  - Expression Engine

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## Adding Additional Capabilities to your site

- Online Databases (without the database)
- Online Calendars
- Online Forms
- Surveys
- Language Translation
- Site Statistics
- Search Engines

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## The closest thing to a web database without the database

- Adobe Acrobat Professional 9
- Acrobat always have had forms, but now, users can use reader 9 to save forms and send them over email
- Form Distributor will create a dataset for any form. As people fill them out and email them, the data will be placed into the dataset.
- You can then export the data in any database, spreadsheet, etc.

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## Online Calendars

- Many options at many price points
  - Money to burn? Web Event [www.webevent.com](http://www.webevent.com)
    - Clean looking full feature web calendar
    - Starting price \$3500
  - On a budget? Web Calendar <http://www.ksn.us/webcalendar.php>
    - Almost all the features of Web Event in a free php based calendar
    - Will probably spend \$500 tops having it installed
    - Interface not as nice as Web Event
  - How about Free? Google Calendar
    - Allows for multiple categories, hidden events, event notification, etc.
    - Can embed additional calendars into your main Google Calendar

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## Online Forms

- Response-o-Matic
  - [www.response-o-matic.com](http://www.response-o-matic.com)
  - Will ask you questions and build your form for you!
  - Free (with ads) \$100 – up per year depending on features
- PC Server? Check out the Absolute Form Processor.
  - <http://www.xigla.com/absolutefp/>
  - A whopping 70 dollars
  - Stores all results on server or emails to one or multiple people.
- Google Web Forms
  - Free and part of Google Docs
  - Very easy to set up
  - Information can be exported to excel, etc
  - Google houses the form. No need for a server

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## Step 6, Adding Cool Stuff Easy. Surveys

- Most Popular: Zoomerang
  - [www.zoomerang.com](http://www.zoomerang.com)
  - Easy to use web interface allows you to create forms easily
  - Can notify people to fill out surveys via email or web link
  - Offers free basic surveys with limited viewing time or unlimited surveys for \$350.00 per year
- My Favorite: SurveyMonkey!
  - [www.surveymonkey.com](http://www.surveymonkey.com)
  - Better free options
  - Professional is only 19.95 a month with a .05 charge for every submission past 1000 per month

 zoomerang



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## Step 6, Adding Cool Stuff Easy. Language Translation

- Websites in multiple languages is becoming a requirement in some states.
  - WorldLingo [www.worldlingo.com](http://www.worldlingo.com)
    - Offers on the fly translation services as well as on site translation services (you send them a document, they translate it)
  - Google Language Translator
    - [http://www.google.ca/language\\_tools](http://www.google.ca/language_tools)
    - Can provide a link to google which will translate the web page in a variety of languages

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## Step 6, Adding Cool Stuff Easy. Site Statistics

- Curious how many are visiting your site, who they are and what the heck they are viewing?
- Summary <http://www.summary.net/>
  - Server based and runs on Macintosh OSX and Windows
  - Easy to install. Nice online documentation
  - A whopping \$59 !
  - Sample : <http://summary.net:7000/~demo/menu/>
- Google Analytics: <http://www.google.com/analytics/>
  - Free!
  - Provides all the same things that Summary does, but, Google stores your information

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## Search Engines

- Search Engine
  - Allows people to do a search on any word or .pdf within your site
  - Great for those really confused people or somewhat confused sites or a combination of the two.
- Free Find
  - [www.freefind.com](http://www.freefind.com)
  - Simply give them your email address and site URL. They will search it for you then email you the .html code to add to your site
  - Will perform weekly search updates, no need to change your .html
  - Can purchase a subscription for additional features
- Phantom
  - <http://www.phantomsearch.com/>
  - Server based search engine
  - Configured via your web browser
  - Can create searches for your entire website as well as individual areas.
  - Can also create search alerts which will email you
  - Mac OSX and Windows \$450.00

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## Phew! Is it nap time?

- I hope you got what you wanted from this class!
  - A path, some ideas and some products to help you implement a successful school website
- I am here for your questions!
- Shameless Plug: Available for hire! (Remember to whap me on the way out)
- [www.lesliefisher.com](http://www.lesliefisher.com)
  - [geek@lesliefisher.com](mailto:geek@lesliefisher.com)
- Hey, Thanks!! Go be geeky!

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