www.**e**kit.co.uk

Reduce your costs
of website purchase, ownership & management

Generate enquiries & sales
with search engine optimised (SEO) web pages

Engage customers
& website visitors with fresh, updated web pages

Give the right impression
With professional graphic design & web services

inbox@eKit.co.uk

0800 0432 832

Get your business on the web

ekit

This booklet will give you an introduction to understanding and planning your businesses website. With simple explanations into Website management systems, online marketing, e-commerce and more, this booklet will help you to get your business online, **the right way**.

WEB

www.eKit.co.uk

eKit has produced this booklet not only to help explain our services, but also to help businesses to gain a better understanding of some of the topics and technologies that they will come across when planning, commissioning and managing a business website.

For those wanting to read more on the subjects covered in these pages, then please use this link to download more in-depth documents online..... for free! www.eKit.co.uk/business-website-guides

We have tried to explain our jargon, abbreviations and acronyms in this document, but if you find yourself feeling puzzled by any terms, then see this web-page for a general glossary of web-related terms to help you clarify meanings and concepts: www.eKit.co.uk/web-jargon

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Version: 1.5

Date: spring 2010

Illustrations: Matt Shephard

Updates: www.eKit.co.uk/getting-your-business-online

Contents

An introduction to business websites and how to plan for one

Why does the business need a website?

Websites have a part to play in nearly all today's businesses models. Some businesses may just require a straight forward site with basic contact information. For others, their website is at the very heart of everything the business does.

It is our role to produce websites tailored to specific business requirements. A fitting website solution can bring many benefits:

- Save you time and improve business procedures

- Provide an online service to your customers and new visitors

- Help market your business online

- Reduce costs of general admin, marketing and sales

- Increase sales to new customers and existing customers

- Improve communication to customers, suppliers and within the business

- Provide information and feedback to help make management decisions

To see a list of different business types that benefitted from a tailored, manageable website, then please see a list of success stories online:

www.eKit.co.uk/business-website-owners

Defining the business needs

Regardless of your budget, setting your business goals and objectives for the website are important tasks to help give a focus to your website project. After all, what is the point of spending money on a business website if it doesn't save you time, improve performance or give you a profitable return?

Try to be specific when defining your goals for the website. Examples:

- By April 2011, generate 5 new enquiries from the website per week

- Sell £5000 worth of a specific product on the website per quarter in 2012

- Increase subscription to our mailing list by 50% in the next 6 months.

From these goals, you can start to plan out the various functions and sections of your website. Perhaps start with a good old fashioned pencil and paper:

- Look at a range of existing business websites and try to determine what the successful ones are doing right, and what the poor ones are doing wrong.

- Learn about the extensive capabilities of websites to broaden horizons

- Sit with colleagues, friends and consultants to generate ideas and develop the scope of the website.

- Identify the different sections and pages of the website

- Identify facilities you need to provide for your website visitors

- Identify facilities you need to provide for web admin staff internally•

- Once you have a good idea of the requirements of your business website, you need to write these up more formally with a view to presenting your requirements to potential suppliers, like eKit!

Scope, structure and content of your website

Planning the structure of your website in a visual 'site map' format is a useful exercise to help you and others get a good overview of the scope of your proposed website. An example of a generic site map is shown on the next page.

Once this is done, you then need to take each page and start to write the page text, gather the media content and define the facilities that you wish to include on the page. When writing your content for your pages, try to let the content influence your decision to add and remove pages as you see fit. If you find you have a large volume of content for any one page, don't be afraid to change your site map by splitting a page up into separate pages, or even creating a new section of pages.

For each page on your website, try to:

- Write a short, concise title

- Write content for the VISITOR to that page

- Outline any appropriate images, illustrations and video content

- Make a note of 'key phrases' for that page (more on this later)

- Write a one sentence description of the page for search engines

Most websites can not be defined by simple pages of content alone. Web applications and database applications are often a key part of business websites. Examples include shopping baskets for e-commerce, public discussion forums, booking systems and online surveys. Things that all these applications have in common are:

- Facilities for the collection of information that visitors submit on your website.

- Storage of information in databases for easy access and retrieval

- Deliver/Present information back to users and/or managers

We give a few specific examples of web applications and database examples in this booklet, but try to define the requirements of your website first, then look to existing web applications to meet the needs. In some instances it is necessary get a company to customise a web application for your specific needs, or even build a new one.
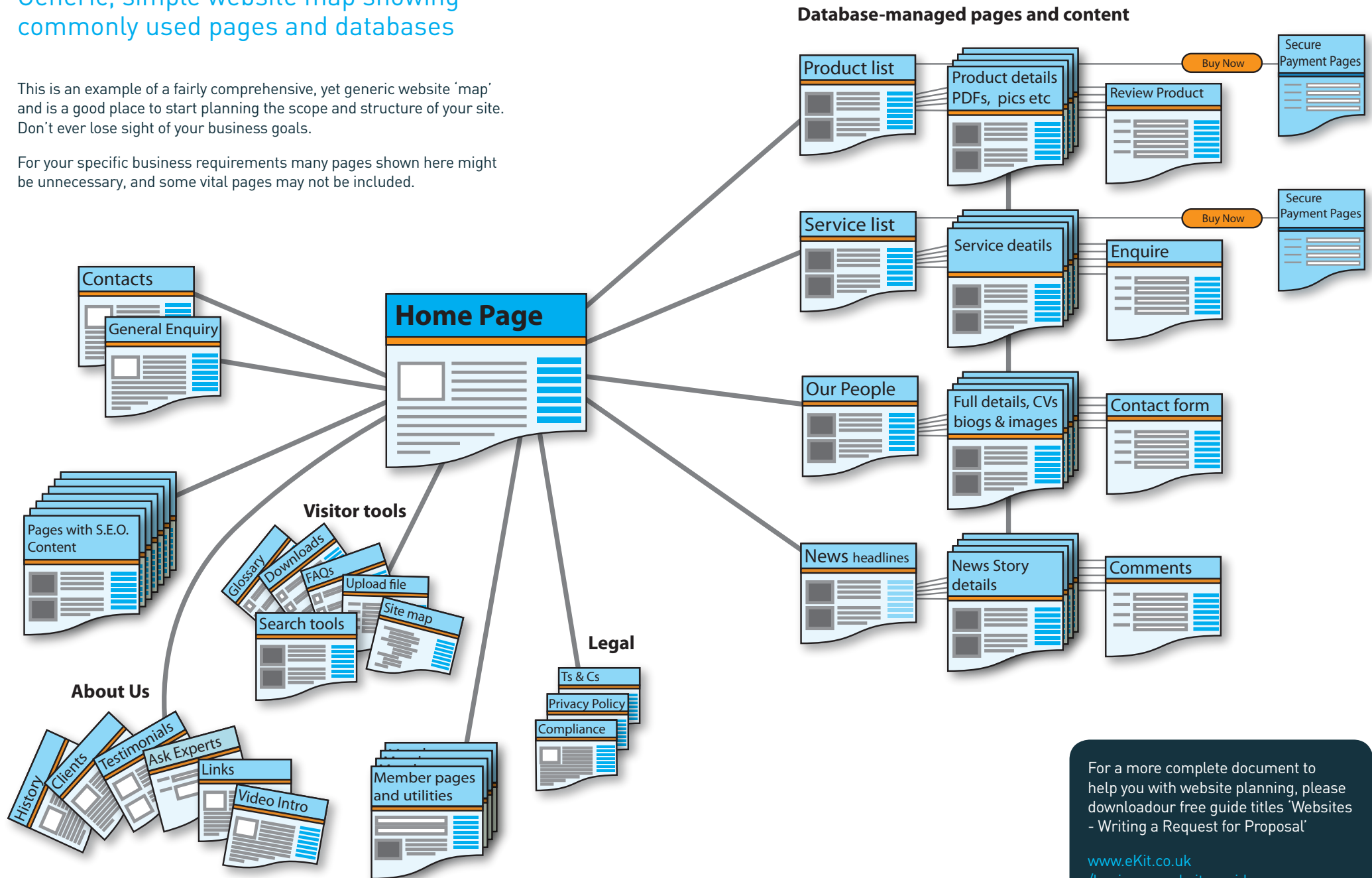
Be Informed – Learn about the relevant web topics

Regardless of whether you are a startup looking to set up a small website for £500 or are a large business with a budget of £150,000, the same topics, concepts and issues apply. The remaining sections of this booklet look briefly at these and also give links to more in-depth documents available online.

Generic, simple website map showing commonly used pages and databases

This is an example of a fairly comprehensive, yet generic website 'map' and is a good place to start planning the scope and structure of your site. Don't ever lose sight of your business goals.

For your specific business requirements many pages shown here might be unnecessary, and some vital pages may not be included.

Database-managed pages and content

Product list

Product details PDFs, pics etc

Review Product

Buy Now

Secure Payment Pages

Service list

Service deatils

Enquire

Buy Now

Secure Payment Pages

Our People

Full details, CVs biogs & images

Contact form

News headlines

News Story details

Comments

Contacts

General Enquiry

Home Page

Pages with S.E.O. Content

Visitor tools

Glossary

Downloads

FAQs

Upload file

Site map

Search tools

Legal

Ts & Cs

Privacy Policy

Compliance

About Us

History

Clients

Testimonials

Ask Experts

Links

Video Intro

Member pages and utilities

For a more complete document to help you with website planning, please download our free guide titles 'Websites - Writing a Request for Proposal'

www.eKit.co.uk /business-website-guides

Website Content Management Systems

A website Content Management System (CMS) lies at the heart of a modern business website. It enables technical and non-technical individuals to easily manage, edit and maintain a professional business website.

Since 2003 eKit has been developing a comprehensive website CMS called WebManager. It has now evolved into a seasoned, tried and tested website management system used by businesses, county and local councils, charities and other organisations. There are also versions of WebManager specifically for smaller website projects.

Simple to edit, manage and publish content

One way of editing content on a web page is by using the WebManager Editor screen. This behaves in a similar way to any common word processor, like 'Microsoft Word' for example. This Method of Content editing is commonly known as 'What You See Is What You Get' editing or 'WYSIWYG' (Pronounced 'Whizzy-Wig').

The WebManager Editor enables you to:

- Use the proper structures for your text - Headings and lists etc (HTML*)
- Allow cut and paste of text content from other applications on your computer
- Check the spelling in your text, suggest and make corrections
- Upload images and documents to your website library and build links to them on your web pages
- Upload and include multimedia files like flash and video.
- Easily create text content in your website's default style and format
- Allow for easy creation of internal links and external links to other websites
- Allow editing in WYSIWYG mode, and for more technical users, HTML*code
- Allow simple previewing of the content as it will be seen on the web page

Menu Management
Building the structure and navigation for your website

The Menus (or navigation) of a website are the areas on all web pages that show links to other pages and sections of the website. There must be consistency within your website with the navigation method.

A good CMS system will help maintain a professional and consistent look and feel to your website and its navigation. A CMS will allow you to easily add, remove and order the page-links on the main menu, and any other menus you create.

Different menus for navigation can then be set to be displayed on any of the site's web pages. This will enable you to structure your website in a logical way for the visitors to your website.

Visitors may also like the option to jump to different sections while reading text on a page. Hyperlinks to different pages within web text are also a good way of helping your visitors navigate.

*HTML : HypertText Markup Language is the basic building blocks of a website and all of its content. For a complete jaron buster online, please go to

www.eKit.co.uk/
jargon-buster

Laying the foundations for Search Engine Optimisation

As you use it, WebManager CMS will automatically construct your website and all its pages with a foundation of Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) built in. This should be an essential feature of your CMS if you wish to use your website as a marketing tool.

WebManager automatically builds optimised pages by using the titles of the pages you have specified. These page titles should be the keyphrases that you have chosen, hopefully through the proper research methods (More on this later.)

In addition to this foundation of Search Engine Optimisation, WebManager automatically creates and maintains two important types of site map:

The Visitor Site Map: Exists for the visitors to your website should they want to get a quick overview of a website and jump to pages.

The Google Site Map: Specifically for Google to efficiently index and read all the pages on your website.

WebManager includes 'Google Analytics" which is a statistics tool to record and analyse data about visitorst to your website.

This is a must for anybody serious about online marketing, as it helps you understand how your visitors are using your website, and what sections are popular and working efficiently. It also helps you determine how visitors are arriving at your website.

Flexibility with graphic design

A professional website design will help portray the nature of a business and deliver its visual identity, whilst maintaining consistency and usability within the website.

Design for customised business websites

WebManager CMS has no restrictions on the type of website design that it can manage. It can accommodate a completely new visual website design for a company, either provided by our experienced professional designers, or by your own designer or design company.

Building a new page template from scratch, or Creating an original and interesting design with commissioned photos, videos and illustrations can make a huge difference to the look and feel of a website.

Solutions for smaller budgets

WebManager also offers a good selection of ready-to-use and editable web design templates. These will be used by those businesses without the budget to cater for new, bespoke designs and graphics to be produced by professional designers.

Common website visitor utilities

WebManager includes the option to integrate many common utilities that your website visitors may need to use. . . With just a few clicks of the mouse!

A Contacts Form: Visitors can send basic messages to the website's main administrator email address

File Upload: Enables visitors to upload images, documents and other file types to the website for the business to use or publish.

Website Search: A very important standard tool for any site. Many users start by searching

Password Protected Content: Simply add a basic level of security to any content, with visitors requiring a password in order to access content on a page. A password can be added to most types of page section.

Shopping Basket: Visitors wishing to purchase items on your site will use a basket system (also called a shopping cart system) to review and modify their selection for purchase. The section on ecommerce looks at this in more detail.

Form Data Submission: Forms on your website can enable visitors to submit data via your website. Examples might be a subscription to a newsletter, an application for a course or a review of a product.

To read testimonials of businesses that benefit from WebManager Content Management Systems, then please see our website:

www.eKit.co.uk/ business-website-owners

Database tools

When you have lots of similar items to publish on a web page, for example, a list of events, products, people, images or documents, then using a WYSIWYG system (outlined earlier) can be problematic.

It can take a long time to manually create all the lists and the pages with the full details on and present this data. It is also hugely difficult to manage and update this information using the WYSIWYG method. This is where the use of a database system to manage information comes into its own.

What are the benefits of managing content with a database system?

If we utilise a database system to create, store, manage and publish this information, then we have a powerful way to automate the presentation of this data on a page. WebManager Database management systems can:

- Maintain consistency and a professional look when publishing data and information

- Save time with creating, updating and managing the information

- Enable data to be properly validated before it is saved into the system

- Enable individuals and I.T. systems to access and update the data anytime.

- Help automate business processes. e.g. Stock control, data collection etc.

- Provide valuable management information e.g. Reports and forecasting

Examples of database types

Here are some common examples of types of information, found on websites, that benefit from being managed with WebManager Database tools: Products, News items, Events, Customers, Employees, Members, Photo collections, Artwork, Videos, Services....

Examples of more specific customised database types used by many websites:

- Vacancies - For a recruitment company

- Properties - For an estate agents

- Vehicles - For a car dealership

- Birds species - For the RSPB

- Holes - For a premier Golf course

- Retail outlets - For any retail company

- Latest industry news - Video, audio or text format with RSS feeds (a common standard used with sharing web content).

Visitor Forms

A CMS database system can be expanded to allow forms to be automatically created on your website for any purpose. A form may be adapted for visitor booking, questionnaires, feedback, tests, membership registration and any situation where a visitor needs to submit information.

The data submitted can be compiled into an email, a document or added to a Database for moderation and publishing on your website at a later date.

An example of a news listings page (below) and full story details page (right).

Both of these pages are automatically generated by WebManager CMS from the data in the Database.

Visitors click on the title or the images to read more and see all the photos.
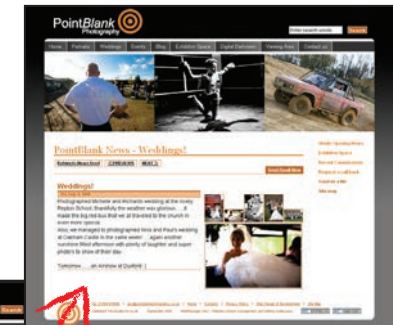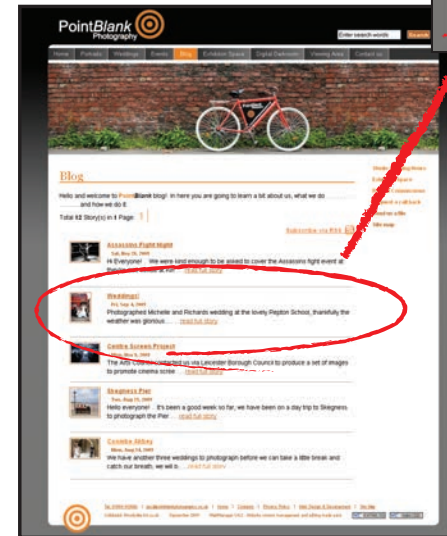
Below is an example of the update screen for the story shown on the website above. This screen, only accessible to administrators of the website, is where the database entry is created and edited.
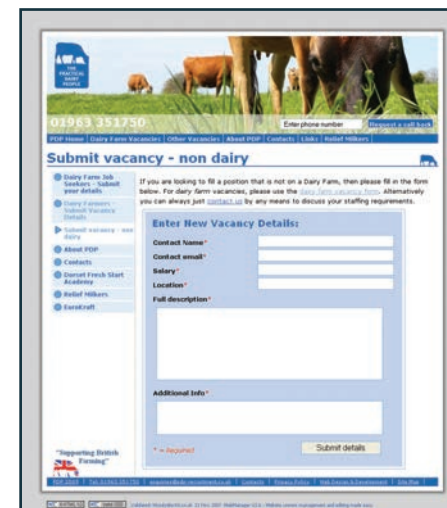
This is an example of a website page with a visitor form for registering a job vacancy.

Visitors fill in the data, attach any documents or images and submit the information to the website. This data can then be managed, edited and published in any format by the CMS.

Other uses for web forms include visitor reviews, registrations, feedback forms and online orders.

Online Marketing

Online marketing overlaps with many disciplines and topics of traditional marketing, though this section will focus on the areas of marketing that have evolved with the Internet and the way in which people use it.

Search Engines

What is a Search Engine?

A Search Engine is a system that records, or 'Indexes' web pages on the Internet, and provides people like you and me with the ability to search the Internet quickly.

A 'search phrase' (or 'search term') is an exact sequence of letters, numbers and spaces that is used in a search, and the Search Engine then displays the results in a 'Search Engine Results Page' (SERP), shown below.

We are using the most popular search engine in our examples, Google. The other main search engines used are Microsoft's 'Bing' and Yahoo's search engine.

A Search Engine Results Page has 2 main types of results for any given searched phrase.

1) The 'Organic' (or Natural) links

These are the links that the search engine calculates are most relevant for that specific search phrase. On the example 'SERP' screenshot below, the organic results start from the horizontal red line, and run down the page.

2) The 'Sponsored' links

These are the links that advertisers pay for in order to be listed for a specific search phrase. On the Google Results Page screenshot, then these are on the right side of the page, and there are also 3 sponsored links above the horizontal red line. For search phrases that are not so common, then it may be that there are fewer sponsored links on the results page.

Search Engine Optimisation

In Simple terms, Search Engine Optimisation concerns getting your website links as near to the top as possible on Search Engine results pages' Organic search results for specific key phrases.

People type in specific Search phrases into Search Engines, for example, 'roman coin collection'.

Google and other Search Engines have a complex set of rules that calculate where any specific web page appears on any specific search terms' results page. Getting high placements in the organic search results for any specific keyphrase involves a number of different 'on-page' and 'off page' contributing factors:

On-page factors

Are all about the preparation and optimisation of your web pages for search engines. Greatly simplified, this involves the task of building a website with pages that are both accessible to search engines, and include target keywords in all the right places - e.g. 'Roman Coin Collection' included in text content, file names, page title and headings etc.

The techniques and details for the optimisation of web pages and methods for building back links are covered in more detail in our guide to search engine optimisation, available for download:

www.eKit.co.uk/
business-website-guides

Off page factors

These Include everything else that you do not have direct control over and are primarily concerned with links TO your website FROM other websites, called 'Backlinks'.

These backlinks are regarded Google as a sort of credit or vote for your website. the credit is weighted depending on the quality, popularity and relevance of the page that is linking to yours.

a basic hyperlink uses specific text for the visible link on the page. In our example, the best link to your web page would be with the visible part of the link to contain the phrase 'Roman Coin Collection'.

Efforts with both on-page and off-page factors are needed to successfully get your page ranked for a specific key phrase.

Researching your Key Phrases

You key phrases must be properly researched using a tool to "dig" into databases of actual search terms that people use. If you don't know what phrases your customers are typing to search with, you won't be able to optimise properly for search engines.

There are a few market leaders that concern themselves with key phrase research. Wordtracker and Trellian are two of the biggest. Search for them on Google!

Other Methods of Online Marketing

Email marketing is low-cost, customisable and entirely measurable and, when used in the right way, can be a most cost effective way of eMarketing.

Blogging and publishing news online is a great way to keep fresh, up-to-date content on your website. A typical blog may be someone's personal account of things that interest them, an expert's opinions on a subject or news from a business.

Social Networking sites boomed from 2005 with the likes of MySpace. They are still evolving in 2010 with sites like FaceBook and Twitter, and will still be around in an exciting new form in 2020.

Advertising online has been going on since the early days of the Internet. As with traditional methods, online advertising is there to increase sales and awareness about that company, product or service. Search engines are a very popular channel for online advertising.

Online marketing is a large subject, so please download the full guide available from our eKit website.

Selling and trading online

Now that both Individuals and businesses are increasingly turning to the Internet first to make purchases, it only makes sense that business look to sell online.

The different methods of online selling and trading

The Internet is a great place to trade, regardless of how developed your business is. The internet can be a cost-effective way to reach a wider audience to sell products and services, even for the smallest businesses. In many ways the Internet makes it possible for smaller businesses to compete on an equal stage with larger companies.

The complexity of the e-commerce solution you require depends largely on your business size, model and the volume, number and nature of the products and services you want to offer for sale online.

At the most basic level, you may have a company that only sells one specific product. In this instance, a simple e-commerce system can be adopted. On the other hand, a large company selling thousands of different products globally needs a somewhat more complex system.

This would need to be scalable and compatible for users across the world and integrated to the point that it can help manage the business sales, stock, supply and finances etc. It is most likely that you fit somewhere in between these two examples!

Selling on eBay

Online Marketplaces account for a significant percentage of online trade for the business-to-consumer (and consumer to consumer) trade. eBay is the largest of these. It deals predominantly with physical goods and gives simple, low startup costs for selling online. It is often a great way for small businesses and startups to trade or to just test the water.

Your own Website shop

Setting up your own e-commerce website is an initial commitment of both time and money, but can grow into a huge asset for a company over time. Here are a few topics that need careful thought:

Online Marketing must be considered when setting up an ecommerce system. There is no point spending money on a system if nobody visits it and buys from it!

The Trust Factor. Visitors to your site will need to trust your site . This can be achieved by building a professional business site with full, clear security measures, contact details and well presented products and services. Customer testimonials and other good marketing practices integrated into the site will also help assure visitors.

Your shop-front software needs to be responsive, clear and follow the usual process of buying online. Offering a good range of payment methods and search options will help convert visitors to customers.

Administration and Management of your online shop needs to be clear and hassle-free. And include a few key utilities:

- Product Management tools - product details, documents and images

- Payment processing admin

- Shipping and postage options

- Stock monitoring and Supply chain Management (For larger businesses)

Payment Gateways

Although you can take orders online and then take payment offline, people now expect to be able to pay online with their card. If you want to make sales using your website, then you will lose customers if you do not offer them online payment by card.

In order to take payments online, you need to use the services of a 'Payment Gateway', also called a 'Payment Service Provider'.

A payment gateway can manage the secure transfer of customer and card details across the internet, and also the transaction of monies from their account into yours.

There are 2 main types of payment gateway. Those that require a separate 'Internet Merchant Account', and those that do not.

Some payment gateways in effect, provide you with an integrated online merchant account where payments can be automated, and deposits and withdrawals can be made.

These are used more commonly by smaller businesses, as they tend to be quicker and more simple to setup and offer a good range of e-commerce tools and services that come as part of the complete package. PayPal is an example of a payment service provider of this type.

Other payment service providers will require you to have a separate internet merchant bank account. This gives you an ID to use exclusively for all your online transactions.

This type of solution is usually adopted for larger ecommerce projects, as it can be a slower and more complex process for small businesses and start-ups to both obtain and setup an online merchant account.

The benefits of these online payment solutions are that they can be more scalable, customisable and can incur lower total fees with larger online revenue figures.

> More information and examples of specific Payment Gateways and Internet Merchant accounts can be found here:
>
> www.eKit.co.uk/
> business-website-guides

Legal Issues

As with most areas of business, there are legal issues to consider when planning a website or use of the internet of any kind.

Legal issues of website ownership fall into many categories. A separate guide covers this topic in more detail (see link on opposite page). These are the topics to be found in the guide:

- Legal ownership of domains and website

- Distance selling regulations

- The Data Protection Act

- Website terms and conditions

- Intellectual property

- Email and legal issues

- The Disability Discrimination Act

Web Standards, Usability and Accessibility

Web standards are here to make life easier for all users of the Internet and aid compatability across the internet. Any business that considers accessibility and usability issues when building their website will be doing themselves, their visitors and the world a good service!

What are the basic standards?

The W3C is the largest and best-known global organisation dealing with web standards. They develop technical specifications and guidelines for the basic building blocks of web sites: (X)HTML and CSS.

All Websites built and updated using WebManager comply with these standards.

Web Accessibility

Good accessibility is much more than adhering to the basic standards. The W3C also produce guidelines for the production of accessible websites, Called the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG).

These guidelines explain how to make web content more accessible to people with disabilities. This is not the only reason to adhere to these guide lines, as any website following them will also be more easy to use and help everybody find what they want quickly.