

Effective Web-Designing

There is no standard rule book which will guarantee success of any website. But a good web design and a better planning makes a lot of difference in success and failure of any website. Following information is useful while designing a website.

There are various important players in entire website design lifecycle.

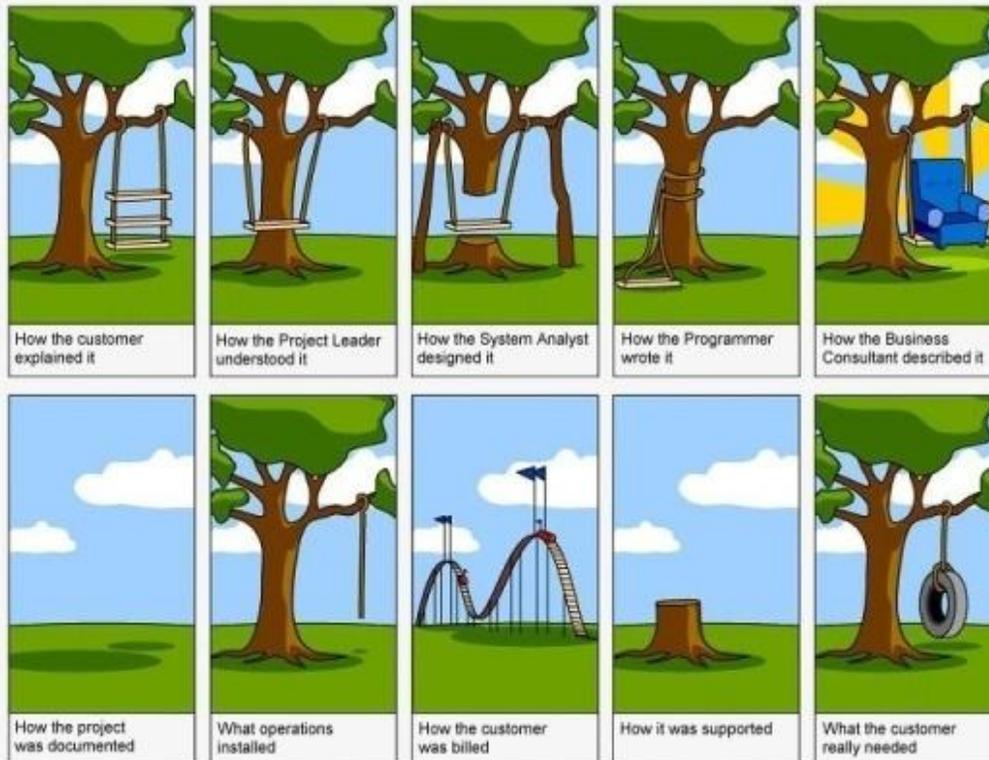
Players	Goals
Developers, Architects, Content, Writers, Webmasters etc.....	To follow Website design standards, to achieve business goals, to support and maintain easily, to be able to handle X users to XXX users, etc.....
Business Owners	To get more hits on website, to increase the revenue, to decrease manual efforts.....
Users	To get correct information easily

This article is broken down into various important stages of web designing.

- 1. Pre-Launch Activity**
- 2. Website Design and Site Standards**
- 3. Security/Risk**
- 4. Performance**
- 5. Testing**
- 6. Marketing**
- 7. Domain Hosting**
- 8. Go-Live**
- 9. Search Engine Submission and Optimization**
- 10. Post-Production Activity**

1. Pre-Launch Activity

Business goal should be very clear before starting any ground work of website. What do you want to achieve? Who are end users? Understand what users want. Does he really want, an app on mobile or a website or a desktop product? Below diagram taken from (www.softwaremaker.net/pictures/funnies/sdlc.jpg) explains why most of projects fail to achieve business goal/customer need.



- ☛ **Know your competitors** – It’s good to view other sites, which provides same services. End user always needs a good reason to come back to your site. Take an example of online shopping site. There are hundreds of sites available, but user will go to a particular site for shopping, may be because, better service is offered or sometimes just for a brand name and reliability. So consider all these points while designing your website.
- ☛ **Don’t divert from the main objective of site.** It is good to have lots of information made available to users but categorized them correctly and don’t publish the information which is not relevant to your user.
- ☛ **Create Mockups** – Always create mockups and diagrams which will help all key players to understand business goals.
- ☛ **Know your users** - Knowing your users is the key aspect of website. Take an example of Wal-Mart; they look at local weather to check which goods will be consumed more by shoppers. This will help them for better inventory management. So understanding your users and their demography really helps to design better application.

2. Website Design and Site Standards

- ☛ The main aspect of website designing is to “**Keep it simple**”. Take example of two websites www.google.com and www.msdevery.com (‘Ms. Dewey’ was a viral marketing campaign started by Microsoft in October 2006. This site is currently inactive). On Google site there is company logo, two buttons (“Google Search” and “I’m Feeling Lucky”) and couple of links for easier and faster search for your keywords. Main

objective of any search site is that, user should be able to find things more easily and quickly. Now let's take example of 'msdewey' - this site has one of the good UI designs. But there are various downsides- you will need flash player to view it, site is very interactive and very good on UI but search results are not accurate and it displays odd data. Also it is difficult to remember the name 'www.msdewey.com', compare to www.google.com which is easy to remember.

Keep name of the site short, simple and appropriate. Avoid adding '_' or '-' in name of the site. E.g. www.my-home-india-site.com is always difficult to remember, compare to www.myhomeindiasite.com. Still this is not good enough, since it is very long. User can keep website name as 'www.myindiahome.com'.

Naming your site is an important part, if you are a good thinker you can have it in minutes or you can work on it for weeks to get the correct name. Of course you have to be lucky as well, so that that particular domain is available for registration.

Before finalizing the domain name and extension, it is very important to understand the objective of the website.

Below chart gives examples of most popular domain extensions and their purpose.

Domain Name	Used By														
.com	Commercial websites														
.org	schools, open-source project, communities, and by non-profit entities														
.net	Original intent was to be used by organizations involved in network technologies. Now it's being used by Internet Service Providers and infrastructure companies.														
.biz	Businesses														
.edu	Institutes of higher education.														
.in	This is Internet Country code top level domain for India. Used by companies, individuals, and organizations in India. Below are examples of various sub level examples. <table border="1"> <tbody> <tr> <td>.co.in</td> <td>Used by Banks , registered companies and trademarks</td> </tr> <tr> <td>.firm.in</td> <td>Used by shops, partnerships, liaison offices, sole proprietorships</td> </tr> <tr> <td>.net.in</td> <td>For Internet service providers</td> </tr> <tr> <td>.org.in</td> <td>For Non-profit organizations</td> </tr> <tr> <td>.ind.in</td> <td>For Individuals</td> </tr> <tr> <td>.mil.in</td> <td>Indian military</td> </tr> <tr> <td>.gov.in</td> <td>Indian government</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	.co.in	Used by Banks , registered companies and trademarks	.firm.in	Used by shops, partnerships, liaison offices, sole proprietorships	.net.in	For Internet service providers	.org.in	For Non-profit organizations	.ind.in	For Individuals	.mil.in	Indian military	.gov.in	Indian government
.co.in	Used by Banks , registered companies and trademarks														
.firm.in	Used by shops, partnerships, liaison offices, sole proprietorships														
.net.in	For Internet service providers														
.org.in	For Non-profit organizations														
.ind.in	For Individuals														
.mil.in	Indian military														
.gov.in	Indian government														

Take an example of website www.wotsit.org. Does this website tell you about its business/product? No. It's an excellent site containing information about hundreds of different file types. Its design is neat, easy and very informative for programmers. But you will not be able to relate the site name with its business.

- ☞ Faster and stable website always gives you lots of hits. There are hundreds of technologies which are available for website design. But, depending upon your website i.e. Static or dynamic, **choose the correct technology** for your website, so that it will be faster & stable.
- ☞ Always **keep right people for UI design**. Preferably avoid developers or programmers to write contents or design a particular web page. No doubt they will develop it very nicely and with best programming tools etc. But they may not give a finishing touch which professional content writer or designer can give.
- ☞ **Website should be easy to read**. Keep the text simple and short, use right fonts and be consistent across the site. Color combination for foreground and background should be pleasant. And as said earlier let content writers and web designers write it.
- ☞ **A picture speaks thousand words**. There is so much data and information available for end user that they don't read each and every line mentioned on website. They just scan through pages, so it's very important to convey your point of view through pictures or bullets. Use appropriate images wherever possible.
- ☞ Avoid any grammatical mistakes in any of page. Ask content writers to review entire contents.
- ☞ **Contact details** -Have a simple page which let user know your contact number, email address and other information. You can add a form for user to submit his information, so that you can contact them.
- ☞ **Don't expect end user to change their settings for your site**. E.g. your site may require a flash player for advance graphics display but make sure it is also available for users who don't have flash player on their system.
- ☞ There should be a smooth navigation on all pages of the website. I.e. when a user is on the 3rd page and if he wishes to go back to 'Home' page, he should be allowed to do so easily.
- ☞ Take a look at website <http://www.webpagesthatsuck.com/> or <http://interfacehallofshame.eu/www.iarchitect.com/shame.htm> to understand common design mistakes made.

3. Security/Risk

- ☞ The most important thing is "**Do not support piracy**". Nothing comes free in this world and that applies to your site as well. Make sure you use logos or images or content for which you have the authority to publish it, without violating any laws and regulations.
- ☞ If your site will be involved in money transactions, then make sure to follow all norms for security, there are various books and information available which will help you to design better and secure web site. Hackers will always try to break your site in order to steal customer data; which is the most important information and shouldn't be compromised at any cost.

4. **Performance**

- ☞ Understand users / traffic that will be routed through your website. Your website should be able to handle that load without any delays/performance issues to users. Expected response time should be decided at start of project and tested during Regression testing.
- ☞ Various tools are available to help and improve website performance. Google Page speed is software meant to improve or analyze web performance.

5. **Testing**

- ☞ Spend enough time and budget on testing.
- ☞ **Have third party validate and test your site.** No matter how good you know and design your product, third person always gives a different view/perspective. So make sure you test this site with a third party tester or somebody who was not a part of initial design or development of the site. He may give you comments, but don't take them as negative feedback but use those points for further enhancements. If any of the comment is a show stopper, make sure you make those changes before the release.
- ☞ Functional as well as regression testing should be done of a complete website. Every link and image should be validated. Application should be tested on various supported web-browsers to resolve any compatibility issues.

6. **Marketing**

- ☞ Marketing is another important factor for the success of website. It can be achieved with advertisement/blogging/online videos/posting on local business directories.

Advertisement -

- ☞ **Choosing correct partners** – It is always important to know and to decide with whom you will be sharing your page. E.g. you can have paid advertisement or sponsors for your site, which will generate very good revenue for your site. But be very careful while choosing such partners. Most of the users do not like those pop ups or flashing advertisement on the site. It's always good to get the revenue from advertisement but make sure it will not affect your targeted audience.
- ☞ If you want to involve third party for paid advertisement of your website then you should check if it will really increase your traffic. Also timing of advertisement will be very critical factor for website hits (put advertisement just before your major application/product launch).
Various ways to advertise your application are print media or use online advertisement (examples search engine results pages, banner ads, blogs, social network advertising, e-mail marketing)

7. **Domain Hosting**

Important factor is hosting your website on share servers or cloud computing. There are various factors such as budget/technology/size of website/speed of access/Technical support, should be considered while hosting website.

8. Go-Live

- ☞ Detailed checklist should be prepared when you are planning to take site online. Make sure all involved players understand their roles and responsibilities at time of deployment.
- ☞ The most annoying display on any site is “404 page not found”. Before making your site available to end user, make sure you **validated all links** and there is no such error. In case such error occurs, you should redirect user to another page or at least display an apology message.

9. Search Engine Submission and Optimization

For more hits as well as quickly searched by search engines, look at tips and guidelines given by crawlers, for adding keywords into your site. In order to obtain good placement on search results on various engines, webmasters must optimize their web pages. This process is called search engine optimization.

10. Post-Production Activity

- ☞ Today there are various software’s available which will help you to keep a track of hits per page, most viewed pages etc. E.g. If you make a major UI change for a page, then keep a watch on tracker to see if that change increases/decreases hits on site.
- ☞ **Keep your site updated.** Important factor for any site is its content; user is always keen to visit the site to see if there is any change. So make sure your site is always updated. A newsletter will be a great idea to keep them updated.
- ☞ Again if you are planning for an upgrade, make sure that upgrade works without any issues for existing as well as for new users.

Checklist creation for each stage mentioned above and making sure they are followed definitely helps for successful creation of website.

Rachit Technology has created various detailed checklists; **please email us to get below mentioned paid checklists for your website.**

- ☞ Pre-Launch Checklist
- ☞ Client Questionnaire
- ☞ Developer Checklist
- ☞ Website Design Checklist
- ☞ Logo Design Checklist
- ☞ Web Master Checklist
- ☞ Project Management (Costing and Execution) Checklist
- ☞ Web site standards and Validation
 - * GUI Design Checklist
 - * UI Code Checklist (HTML/Jscript/PHP others)
 - * Images/Videos Checklist
 - * Backend/database code Checklist (MySQL and others)
 - * Middleware Checklist
 - * Navigation Checklist
 - * Acceptable response Time for page navigation

- ☞ Testing Checklist
 - * Unit Testing
 - * Functional Testing
 - * Integration Testing
 - * Regression/Performance Testing
 - * UAT Testing
 - * Web browser Testing
- ☞ Advertisement Checklist
- ☞ Search engine submission and optimization Checklist
- ☞ Security/Risk Checklist
- ☞ Performance Checklist
- ☞ Marketing Checklist
- ☞ Domain Hosting Checklist
- ☞ Go-live Checklist
- ☞ Post-production Support Checklist

**If you have any queries or suggestions, please write to us @-
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