

Website

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A **website** (alternatively, **web site** or **Web site**) is a collection of Web pages, images, videos or other digital assets that is hosted on one or several Web server(s), usually accessible via the Internet, cell phone or a LAN.

A Web page is a document, typically written in HTML, that is almost always accessible via HTTP, a protocol that transfers information from the Web server to display in the user's Web browser.

All publicly accessible websites are seen collectively as constituting the "World Wide Web".

The pages of websites can usually be accessed from a common root URL called the homepage, and usually reside on the same physical server. The URLs of the pages organize them into a hierarchy, although the hyperlinks between them control how the reader perceives the overall structure and how the traffic flows between the different parts of the sites.

Some websites require a subscription to access some or all of their content. Examples of subscription sites include many business sites, parts of many news sites, academic journal sites, gaming sites, message boards, Web-based e-mail, services, social networking website, and sites providing real-time stock market data.

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History

The first on-line website appeared in 1991. On 30 April 1993, CERN announced that the World Wide Web would be free to anyone.^[1] A copy of the original first Web page, created by Tim Berners-Lee, is kept here (<http://www.w3.org/History/19921103-hypertext/hypertext/WWW/TheProject.html>) .

Overview

Organized by function a website may be

- a personal website
- a commercial website
- a government website
- a non-profit organization website

It could be the work of an individual, a business or other organization and is typically dedicated to some particular topic or purpose. Any website can contain a hyperlink to any other website, so the distinction between individual sites, as perceived by the user, may sometimes be blurred.

Websites are written in, or dynamically converted to, HTML (Hyper Text Markup Language) and are accessed using a software interface classified as an user agent. Web pages can be viewed or otherwise accessed from a range of computer-based and Internet-enabled devices of various sizes, including desktop computers, laptop computers, PDAs and cell phones.

A website is hosted on a computer system known as a web server, also called an HTTP server, and these terms can also refer to the software that runs on these system and that retrieves and delivers the Web pages in response to requests from the website users. Apache is the most commonly used Web server software (according to Netcraft statistics) and Microsoft's Internet Information Server (IIS) is also commonly used.

Website styles

A **static** website is one that has web pages stored on the server in the same form as the user will view them. They are edited using three broad categories of software:

- Text editors. such as Notepad or TextEdit, where the HTML is manipulated directly within the editor program
- WYSIWYG editors. such as Microsoft FrontPage and Macromedia Dreamweaver, where the site is edited using a GUI interface and the underlying HTML is generated automatically by the editor software
- Template-based editors, such as Rapidweaver and iWeb, which allow users to quickly create and upload websites to a web server without having to know anything about HTML, as they just pick a suitable template from a palette and add pictures and text to it in a DTP-like fashion without ever having to see any HTML code.

A **dynamic** website is one that has frequently changing information or collates information on the hop each time a page is requested. For example, it would call various bits of information from a database and put them together in a pre-defined format to present the reader with a coherent page. It interacts with users in a variety of ways including by reading cookies recognizing users' previous history, session variables, server side variables etc., or by using direct interaction (form elements, mouseovers, etc.). A site can display the current state of a dialogue between users, monitor a changing situation, or provide information in some way personalized to the requirements of the individual user.

Software systems

There is a wide range of software systems, such as Java Server Pages (JSP), the PHP and Perl programming languages, Active Server Pages (ASP) and ColdFusion (CFM) that are available to generate dynamic Web systems and dynamic sites. Sites may also include content that is retrieved from one or more databases or by using XML-based technologies such as RSS.

Static content may also be dynamically generated either periodically, or if certain conditions for regeneration occur (cached) in order to avoid the performance loss of initiating the dynamic engine on a per-user or per-connection basis.

Plugins are available to expand the features and abilities of Web browsers, which use them to show *active content*, such as Flash, Shockwave or applets written in Java. Dynamic HTML also provides for user interactivity and realtime element updating within Web pages (i.e., pages don't have to be loaded or reloaded to effect any changes), mainly using the DOM and JavaScript, support which is built-in to most modern Web browsers.

Websites as businesses

Turning a website into an income source is a common practice for web-developers and website owners. There are several methods for creating a website business which fall into two broad categories, as defined below.

1. Content based sites

Some websites derive revenue by selling advertising space on the site (see contextual ads). Typically such a site will not sell products or services to its users, but instead will provide information or other content, usually for free. This is a similar model to a free magazine or newspaper, which derives revenue from the advertisers who pay to appear alongside the useful content. However, with a website, the advertising revenue earned may be based on the number of times viewers click on the ad, or the number of times the page containing the ad is seen by a viewer. There is a wide range of monetizing used on such sites and the sites themselves are actively traded and bought and sold as going concerns.

2. Product or service based sites

Some websites derive revenue by offering products or services. In the case of e-commerce websites, the products or services may be purchased at the website itself, by entering credit card or other payment information into a payment form on the site. While most business websites serve as a shop window for existing brick and mortar businesses, it is increasingly the case that some websites are businesses in their own right; that is, the products they offer are only available for purchase on the web.

Guides have been published which explain how to create a variety of types of websites including those in both the above categories. See the links at the bottom of this page.

Websites occasionally derive income from a combination of these two practices. For example, a website such as an online auctions website may charge the users of its auction service to list an auction, but also display third-party advertisements on the site, from which it derives further income.

Spelling

As noted above, there are several different spellings for this term. Although "website" and "web site" are commonly used (the former especially in British English), the Associated Press Stylebook, Reuters, Microsoft,

academia, book publishing, *The Chicago Manual of Style*, and dictionaries such as Merriam-Webster use the two-word, initially capitalized spelling *Web site*. This is because "Web" is not a general term but a shortened form of *World Wide Web*. As with many newly created terms, it may take some time before a common spelling is finalized. (This controversy also applies to derivative terms such as "Web master"/"webmaster" and "Web cam"/"webcam").

The Canadian Oxford Dictionary and the Canadian Press Stylebook list "website" and "web page" as the preferred spellings. The Oxford English Dictionary began using "website" as its standardized form in 2004.^[2]

Bill Walsh, the copy chief of *The Washington Post's* national desk, and one of American English's foremost grammarians, argues for the two-word spelling with capital W in his books *Lapsing into a Comma* and *The Elephants of Style*, and on his site, the Slot.^[3]

Types of websites

There are many varieties of Web sites, each specializing in a particular type of content or use, and they may be arbitrarily classified in any number of ways. A few such classifications might include:

- **Affiliate**: enabled portal that renders not only its custom CMS but also syndicated content from other content providers for an agreed fee. There are usually three relationship tiers. Affiliate Agencies (e.g., Commission Junction), Advertisers (e.g., Ebay) and consumer (e.g., Yahoo).
- **Archive site**: used to preserve valuable electronic content threatened with extinction. Two examples are: Internet Archive, which since 1996 has preserved billions of old (and new) Web pages; and Google Groups, which in early 2005 was archiving over 845,000,000 messages posted to Usenet news/discussion groups.
- **Blog (or **web log**) site**: sites generally used to post online diaries which may include discussion forums (e.g., blogger, Xanga).
- **Content site**: sites whose business is the creation and distribution of original content (e.g., Slate, About.com).
- **Corporate website**: used to provide background information about a business, organization, or service.
- **Commerce site or eCommerce site**: for purchasing goods, such as Amazon.com.
- **Community site**: a site where persons with similar interests communicate with each other, usually by chat or message boards, such as MySpace.
- **Database site**: a site whose main use is the search and display of a specific database's content such as the Internet Movie Database or the Political Graveyard.
- **Development site**: a site whose purpose is to provide information and resources related to software development, Web design and the like.
- **Directory site**: a site that contains varied contents which are divided into categories and subcategories, such as Yahoo! directory, Google directory and Open Directory Project.
- **Download site**: strictly used for downloading electronic content, such as software, game demos or computer wallpaper.
- **Employment site**: allows employers to post job requirements for a position or positions and prospective employees to fill an application.
- **Erotica websites**: shows sexual videos and images.
- **Fan site**: A web site created and maintained by fans of and for a particular celebrity, as opposed to a web site created, maintained, and controlled by a celebrity through their own paid webmaster. May also be known as a Shrine in the case of certain subjects, such as anime, and manga characters.
- **Game site**: a site that is itself a game or "playground" where many people come to play, such as MSN Games ,Pogo.com and Newgrounds.com.

- Geodomain refers to domain names that are the same as those of geographic entities, such as cities and countries. For example, Richmond.com is the geodomain for Richmond, Virginia.
- Gripe site: a site devoted to the critique of a person, place, corporation, government, or institution.
- Humor site: satirizes, parodies or otherwise exists solely to amuse.
- Information site: contains content that is intended to inform visitors, but not necessarily for commercial purposes, such as: RateMyProfessors.com, Free Internet Lexicon and Encyclopedia. Most government, educational and non-profit institutions have an informational site.
- Java applet site: contains software to run over the Web as a Web application.
- Mirror (computing) site: A complete reproduction of a website.
- News site: similar to an information site, but dedicated to dispensing news and commentary.
- Personal homepage: run by an individual or a small group (such as a family) that contains information or any content that the individual wishes to include.
- Phish site: a website created to fraudulently acquire sensitive information, such as passwords and credit card details, by masquerading as a trustworthy person or business (such as Social Security Administration, PayPal) in an electronic communication. (see Phishing).
- Political site: A site on which people may voice political views.
- Pornography (porn) site: a site that shows pornographic images and videos.
- Rating site: A site on which people can praise or disparage what is featured.
- Review site: A site on which people can post reviews for products or services.
- Search engine site: a site that provides general information and is intended as a gateway or lookup for other sites. A pure example is Google, and the most widely known extended type is Yahoo!.
- Shock site: includes images or other material that is intended to be offensive to most viewers (e.g. rotten.com)
- Warez: a site filled with illegal downloads.
- Web portal: a site that provides a starting point or a gateway to other resources on the Internet or an intranet.
- Wiki site: a site which users collaboratively edit (such as Wikipedia).

Some websites may be included in one or more of these categories. For example, a business website may promote the business's products, but may also host informative documents, such as white papers. There are also numerous sub-categories to the ones listed above. For example, a porn site is a specific type of eCommerce site or business site (that is, it is trying to sell memberships for access to its site). A fan site may be a dedication from the owner to a particular celebrity.

Websites are constrained by architectural limits (e.g., the computing power dedicated to the website). Very large websites, such as Yahoo!, Microsoft, and Google employ many servers and load balancing equipment such as Cisco Content Services Switches to distribute visitor loads over multiple computers at multiple locations.

In January of 2007, Netcraft, an Internet monitoring company that has tracked Web growth since 1995, reported that there were 106,875,138 Web sites with domain names and content on them in 2007, compared to just 18,000 Web sites in August 1995.

Prizes

The Webby Awards are a set of awards presented to the world's "best" websites, a concept pioneered by Best of the Web in 1994.

See also

- Adobe Dreamweaver
- Cyberspace
- Downtime
- Dynamic web page
- Extranet website
- Intranet website
- List of content management systems
- Microsoft FrontPage
- Rational (WebSphere) Application Developer
- Rating sites
- Real user monitoring
- Semantic publishing
- Spyware
- Staging site
- Template engine
- Tim Berners-Lee, the inventor of the World Wide Web
- Uptime
- Web design
- Website Design Process Steps
- Web development
- Web analytics
- Web application
- Web content management
- Web hosting
- Website awards
- Website monitoring
- Website architecture
- Web Services Security
- Web service
- Web template
- Webmaster
- World Wide Web Consortium (Web standards)
- Shoutback

References

- ↑ Cailliau, Robert. A Little History of the World Wide Web (<http://www.w3.org/History.html>) . Retrieved on 2007-02-16.
- ↑ AskOxford: How should the term *website* be written in official documents and on the web? (<http://www.askoxford.com/asktheexperts/faq/usage/website?view=uk>) . *Oxford Dictionaries Online*. Retrieved on 2007-02-23.
- ↑ The Slot—Sharp Points: Here We Go Again—Eeee! (<http://www.theslot.com/email.html>) .

External links

- Internet Corporation For Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) (<http://www.icann.org/>)

- World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) (<http://www.w3.org/>)
- The Internet Society (ISOC) (<http://www.isoc.org/>)

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