Website Basics

A few basic things to think about before you get started on your website

- Why do you want a website?
- What do you want the website to do?
- Who is your audience?
- How will they find you?
- What is the Expected Outcome/Goal of the website?
- Who is going to create the content?

Beware of free or cheap website builders. You could create a big mess for yourself.

- Usually not responsive design
- Not search engine friendly
- Read the fine print – many of these free services claim ownership of all your content and your domain name. This can be a costly mistake and potentially could lead to legal trouble.
- Usually hosted on cheap, shared hosting platform that cannot handle very much traffic or grow as your site increases in visibility.
- Usually do not have any quality tools for backup, security, or updates.

Do not use copyrighted material on your website.

- Common copyrighted items are pictures, music, logos, video and content.
- Using copyrighted material without permission is stealing. It is illegal.
- Using copyrighted materials can lead to legal trouble and fines, especially with pictures and music.
- If you did not take the picture yourself, then it is probably copyrighted.
- You can get pictures from sites like iStock that sell you the rights to use the pictures.

Content Management Systems (CMS)

- CMS - Website software that makes it easier to create, manage and use your content
- Helps you to have a consistent look and feel across your site
- Additional modules can be added to increase functionality
- The Top 2 Content Management Systems are Drupal & Wordpress

Why do I need a website…Can't I just use Facebook?

- Facebook can be a good part of your web strategy
- You do not own the platform - Facebook changes the rules constantly and they can shut you down
- Most places do not setup Facebook correctly
- Need to use a Facebook Page or Group depending on your goal
- Unless people are specifically following your page or you are using advertising, very few people will see your posts. Someone that "Likes" your page is not the same as "following" your page.
- Limited functionality

Website Costs

Basic costs
- Web Design – Upfront cost to design and create the site
- Domain Name – Yearly cost
- Hosting – Monthly or Yearly cost

Other Costs
- Backup
- Updates
- Upgrades
- Content
- Spam Filtering
- Security

Terminology

There is a lot of confusing terminology around websites. These are a few basic terms that will be helpful to know.

- # Web Design –Creating the look and feel of the website. This includes elements like size, colors, responsiveness, image sizes and where to put your content. This phase also usually includes getting your initial basic content loaded to see how it will look.

- # Domain Name – The name that people type in to locate your website.

- # Hosting – Where your website lives. Think of it like renting an apartment for your website.

- # Responsive Design – Do the pages and images display correctly on all types and sizes of devices.

- # SEO – Search Engine Optimization, are the things that you do to get your website to show up in search results on Google, Bing and other search engines. SEO includes keywords, organization of your site, tagging of elements on your site, links from other sites, conforming to web standards.

- # CAPTCHA - A program that protects websites against bots (automated processes that try to gain access your website) using tests that humans can pass but computers cannot. Often used when submitting forms to cut down on spam and possible virus infections on your website.

- # Accessibility - Relates to web design/coding standards and refers to how easy it is for everyone to use your website, including people who are visually impaired or in any way physically handicapped, or limited by older or less common computers and software. With the smaller screen sized tablets and smart-phones, accessibility for use on all devises is important; especially with the growing number of people using smaller screen devices to go online.

If you need help with starting your website project or have questions about websites, feel free to call. We would be glad to help answer your questions.