Website Design 1

Introduction

It's the 21st Century and you need a website and this is often the first experience a potential customer or employer will have with you and/or your company, so the website should exude class and style. In many respects it is an extension of your CV (curriculum vitae) and needs to make a good first impression. The spelling and grammar should be correct and ideally the written content should have a style. But even if you do not have a good writing style you can at least write in English and have a website that looks good and is easy to use.

But how is a website created and what exactly is a website? This series of papers will take you through the process and finish by explaining how the site can be made accessible to all via the Internet.

What is a website?

The answer would seem to be a place on the Internet that contains information. In reality, a website is a collection of files (text, pictures, documents) stored on a fileserver and organised in such a way that they can be accessed via a browser such as Microsoft Internet Explorer or Firefox.

The website and its files will normally be stored on the Internet (or more correctly the World Wide Web) or could be equally be stored on an Intranet or even a single PC. The Internet is the worldwide computer network that interconnects other computer networks. These computer networks store end-user services such as the World Wide Web and other data archives. Intranets use the same technology platform but have restricted access ie it is an internal network hence the term Intranet (inside or within network). A website can also exist on a single PC but clearly can only be accessed by people using the individual PC. So generally to enable wider access the computer storing the files will be connected to the Internet or to an Intranet.

What is a website address?

The full website address (on the Internet) is made from a number of different elements that are combined to produce a unique code or address.

The website elements are

1. **http://** hypertext transport protocol, or
2. **https://** hypertext transport protocol secure
3. **www** world wide web
4. **sitename** normally the company or organisation
5. **site extension** designates the type of site, com is commercial, fr is France etc.

So a typical website address would be **http://www.microsoft.com** the dots are used to separate the various elements , nb no dot is needed between the **http://** and **www**.

Also in most cases it is not necessary to type http:// but just to enter www.microsoft.com if the site is on the World Wide Web.

Other services can be accessed directly eg the World Wide Web consortium validation service is http://validator.w3.org, there is no www but generally website addresses are

as per the Microsoft website www.microsoft.com. The underline is a standard convention for indicating the text is a link, in this case a link to a website.

The website address or domain name can be a valuable commodity especially certain extensions such as tv. This will be discussed in a later section when looking at uploading the finished website to a server so that anyone with Internet access to view the site. To do this you will need your own website or domain address.

Web pages

Each website will contain a number of web pages. In most cases when a site is accessed using a browser it starts with the **home** page. The name home page is a slight misnomer as the first thing a browser does is find the site eg www.microsoft.com and then needs to open a page, but which page? All sites need a page called **index**; this is the page the browser looks for and opens (not the page named home). The page will more correctly be called index.ext where ext is an extension that denotes the type of file. Typically this file will be **index.htm** or **index.html**. The extension htm or html stands for hypertext mark-up language.

Html is one of the languages used to build web pages, others include php and asp.

How does a browser work?

When you use different browsers to view a web page, they will act in more or less the same way. They will display the text in the same font and same colours. The browser is translating the information contained in, for example, the index.htm file and displaying it. Eg If the html defines the text "Page Title" as having: font = Ariel and size = 14 and text colour = green and the text background colour = red, then the display will show Page Title .

Html is a 'tag' based language that uses words enclosed in **<>** to tell the browser what to do so **** will set the text font to Ariel and **** tells the browser to switch off the Ariel font, the / meaning stop and revert back to the default.

To see sample html, display a web page, any web page, using a browser and then select **View** > **Source** and you will see html tags such as <head>, <body>, <class …>,   etc.

Summary

You should understand the basic construction of a website address and know that websites can exist on a PC, an Intranet, the World Wide Web as well as the Internet. Browsers are used to translate html code known as tags (or html words) and display them on a screen. The source code can be seen (and needs to be seen by the browser) as the browser reads each tag (or html word) in turn, translates them and displays the contents as it reads the web page html from top to bottom.

About the author

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