



Web Sites for Artists: DIY or Outsource

How do I get started?

by Dan Pouliot

UPDATED NOV. 14, 2008

WEB
www.danpouliot.com

THINK ABOUT THE OVERALL TONE YOU WANT TO SET

Tone can be set visually, and can also be set by the types of content on the site (i.e. Reflections on Kit's site)

- <http://www.kitcornellpottery.com/>
- <http://www.classicbuildinganddesign.com/>
- <http://www.douglasprince.com/ddp20.html>
- <http://www.johnlanasterworld.com/>
- <http://www.rebeccazelis.com/>

SITES WITH BLOGS

- <http://capturefotography.com/>
- <http://www.jamesjean.com/>

CREATE YOUR SITE'S ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

- <http://nhpottersguild.com/>

DON'T OVERWHELM THE USER VISUALLY

- <http://www.glenhartart.com/id13.html> busy
- <http://art.mcn.org/Jane-Reichhold/default.html> one page web site, well used.

WHAT THINGS DO I NEED ON MY SITE?

Answer the questions: who am I/what do I do? (Dan Pouliot: web designer, photographer, painter)

- Bio/resume/cv
- Gallery
- How to contact me (phone/directions)
- Upcoming events/dates of interest
- Cross links (good for increasing your Google ranking)
- Testimonials

Should my site be in Flash?

WHAT IS FLASH?

PROS

- Dramatic movement, Sound synched to movement
<http://www.johnlanasterworld.com/>

CONS

- Search engines can't spider easily
- Pages can't be bookmarked easily
- Extra cost/training for Flash. Don't try this yourself.
- Requires flash plugin
<http://www.danpouliot.com/pictures/maxwell/upgrade.html>
- Can cause printing issues



Books for Beginners

HTML, XHTML, and CSS, Sixth Edition
(Visual Quickstart Guide)
ELIZABETH CASTRO

Helpful Sites

[HTTP://DYNAMICDRIVE.COM/](http://dynamicdrive.com/)
Cut and paste javascripts
Thwart spammers with Email Ridder
Password protect pages with .htaccess Password

[HTTP://WWW.ABSOLUTELY-FREE-HOSTING.COM/](http://www.absolutely-free-hosting.com/)
Extensive list of sites that offer free hosting.

[HTTP://WWW.GODADDY.COM/](http://www.godaddy.com/)
[HTTP://WWW.IAND1.COM/](http://www.iand1.com/)
Inexpensive Hosting

Web Fonts

<http://www.ampsoft.net/webdesign-1/WindowsMacFonts.html>

Arial

Arial Black

Comic Sans MS

Courier New

Georgia

Impact

Times

Trebuchet

Verdana

WebTech 101: some technical terms

- Domain whatever.com
 - Domain Locking
- Hosting (I prefer GoDaddy.com)
- FTP: File Transfer Protocol. This is how you get your pages from your computer to your web site.
- Splash pages
<http://www.kitcornellpottery.com/>
- Title tags
 - Useful in one's browser history, or in a Google search result.
<http://www.gferrand.com/>
- META tags
 - META Description is used by google. if not present, will use title tag instead <http://www.gferrand.com/>
- Graphics vs. text <http://www.gferrand.com/>
 - Graphics can look prettier, but aren't indexable by web sites
- Navigation/sub navigation
 - <http://www.aptonphoto.com/> Inconsistent navigation. sometimes links at top, sometimes not. sometimes title.
- Breadcrumb trails
<http://www.enterasys.com/products/visibility-control/>
- Flash (see next section)
- JavaScript (not the same as Java)
<http://www.kitcornellpottery.com/gallery/>
- The importance of browser compatibility
 - <http://www.newartistsshowcase.com/> yuck!
 - <http://www.brandonartistsguild.org/members.php?x=18> funky characters on the page
 - <http://www.artistmiles.com/> If you do not see the menu below, please click HERE.
- Frames <http://www.artistmiles.com/>
 - Hard to bookmark
 - Search engines may take users directly into a frame rather than the "parent" frame
 - Messes up your browser history (click back in your history and navigation disappears)
 - For above reasons, considered passé
- Low bandwidth friendly pages
 - <http://www.glenhartart.com/id5.html> images weren't resized properly, bandwidth hog.
- Freshness <http://tilegardens.com/news.shtml> coming soon, copyright 2005
- Fixed-width vs. breathable pages
- SEO: Search Engine Optimization
- Printer-friendly pages
 - A site that prints nicely can double as a printed brochure.



DIY or Outsource?

PROS/CONS OF DOING IT YOURSELF

- Inexpensive. Total creative control! Time consuming. Big learning curve. Computers, UGH!
- Being an artist does not prepare one for being a designer. Design considerations are often different than art considerations.

MY SISTER-IN-LAW'S COUSIN'S CHILD'S BEST FRIEND SAYS THEY KNOW HTML AND WILL DO IT FOR FREE/CHEAP/BARTER. SHOULD THEY DO MY SITE FOR ME?

- <http://www.lodging-econometrics.com/> this person knew html
- <http://208.109.13.146/> same company, by a professional (me)
- <http://www.intres.com/garybecker/> most likely done by himself. functional, inexpensive.

FREE TOOLS

- Make your own site
 - Google Sites
<http://sites.google.com/>
 - Blogger
<http://www.blogger.com/>
 - WordPress
<http://wordpress.org/>
(Example: <http://www.willowdaleestate.com/>),
- Image Management
 - Flickr (a Yahoo site)
<http://www.flickr.com/>
 - Picasa, image management (PC, iPhoto for Mac users)
<http://picasa.google.com/>
 - SimpleViewer, photo galleries
<http://www.airtightinteractive.com/simpleviewer/>
- Image Editing
 - Photoshop Express (good correction tools, no layers/text)
<http://www.photoshop.com/express/>
 - Splashup online image editing (layers/text. lost edits, doesn't show flickr pix)
<http://www.splashup.com/>
 - Aviary Phoenix (limited fonts, no crop tool)
<http://aviary.com/>
 - Picnik online image editing (free correction tools, \$25/year for type)
<http://www.picnik.com/>
 - Pixel (Mac/PC, \$38) I recommend Photoshop Elements if you want to pay \$\$
<http://www.kanzelsberger.com/pixel/>
 - GIMP
- Web Development Software
 - SeaMonkey (Mac/PC)
<http://www.seamonkey-project.org/>
 - NVU (Mac/PC)
<http://www.nvu.com/>
<http://www.thesitewizard.com/gettingstarted/nvu1.shtml>
 - Amaya (Mac/PC)
<http://www.w3.org/Amaya/>
 - Filezilla, FTP client (Mac/PC)
<http://filezilla.sourceforge.net/>

“Myth:
web-development is
simple, and anybody
can do it.”

“You can build websites without having any
knowledge of code. You can, but you'll run
into trouble quickly and when you don't
know what's causing it you won't be able to
fix it.”

VEERLE PIETERS

Smashing Magazine, Sept. '07

50 Designers x 6 Questions

“In anything at all, perfection is finally
attained not when there is no longer
anything to add, but when there is no
longer anything to take away.”

SAINT-EXUPÉRY



How do I prevent people from printing my pictures?

- In short, you don't. Keep images low rez, so printing is poor.
- JavaScripts can disable right-clicking, but people can still print-screen

What about selling online?

EBAY, YAHOO BUSINESS STORES, GODADDY STOREFRONTS, PAYPAL SHOPPING CART

- <http://www.gretchenbutler.com/JansGarden.html> PayPal
- <http://www.kimforney.com/gallery/> PayPal
- Pros: inexpensive to start up, leverage eBay's high traffic, leverage PayPal's trust
- Cons: difficult to control your brand image

INSTALL AN ECOMMERCE PACKAGE (I.E. ZEN CART) ON YOUR SITE [HTTP://208.109.13.146/LE-STORE/](http://208.109.13.146/LE-STORE/)

- Pros: tight control over brand appearance
- Cons: expensive (up front cost (\$1-2K+), need merchant account to tie transactions to your bank (\$30/month))

CONSIDER SIMPLE "CONTACT ME" LINKS

- Pros: least expensive of all choices. can play well into your brand image: people like to have a personal relationship with the artist
- Cons: lacks the instant gratification of the web

Now that I have a site, how do I market it?

- Submit to search engines. Don't pay for this service. Submit to Google and Yahoo for free, that covers 99% of web searches.
 - Google>About>Submit
 - Yahoo>Suggest a Site
- Google ranking is based on popularity- how many people link to your site.
- Cross-site linking
- Search Engine Optimization (SEO), a.k.a. How to get my site to show up first.
 - cross linking, cross linking, cross linking
- Proper use of text/titles/domains/SEO friendly URL strings/META tags
- Google Advertising (on your site, or on google's site)

“Myth: I can help you get to the top of Google.”

“Don't get me wrong, I am always learning about SEO and reading those blogs, but my focus is primarily on coding an SEO-friendly site. Past that, it's simply not what web developers do. I personally consider them to be two very different worlds. Most people that say they do development and SEO are probably not that great at either, simply because you can only be an expert at so many things. We work with an outside company that is fabulous to handle SEO for our clients, and I am thrilled to not have to worry about it.”

NICK FRANCIS

Smashing Magazine, Sept. '07
50 Designers x 6 Questions