

3-0 Essential steps to getting your own website started

<http://www.websuburb.com.au/HelpDesk/GettingStarted/tabid/750/Default.aspx>

3-0.1 Where do I start?

The terminology and available options can be very confusing to begin with. There are usually many ways of doing something or achieving the end result. Each choice generally has it's own set of advantages and disadvantages. Our experience in the beginning is, unfortunately, that without knowledge it is difficult to evaluate the options.

Sound familiar?

There is no best solution. What works for me may not work well for you.

Try to understand the options. Most things can be undone to enable you to try a different approach. Take small steps, evaluate, test and measure.

3-0.2 What is a website?

"A website is a collection of pages that can be accessed via the internet."

This is a basic definition to make sure you are familiar with the terms.

So what does this mean?

- 'internet' - is a series of millions of interconnected computer networks with public accessibility. You need to connect to the internet in order to read and create your website pages. Most people use an **internet service provider (isp)** to connect to the internet. There are many organisations providing these services, many of the larger ones are telecommunications companies. Find one that suits your budget.
- 'collection of pages' - the pages need to be stored or saved or 'hosted' on a computer. Hence the term **web hosting**. Web hosting service providers simply have one of the many millions of computers connected to the internet and are prepared to 'rent' out this space. There are millions of web hosting providers all around the globe. Choose one that suits your budget and needs.
- WebSuburb provides web hosting services in order to provide a 'one stop shop' service.
- 'browser' - this is the software on your computer that is used to view web pages. I guess the analogy is a little like window shopping, you use the software to browse web pages. The most common browsers are "Internet Explorer" from Microsoft, "Firefox", Apple "Safari".

- 'domain name' - once you have your web pages hosted you will need an address where users can locate these pages. This unique address is called a **domain name** or a url (unique resource location). Domain names are leased from registrars. WebSuburb is a reseller of domain names simply in order for us to provide an easy 'one stop shop' service to our clients. Find out more about [choosing a domain name](#) and read our page of helpful tips for [choosing a great domain name](#).

3-0.3 Building the website

A website page consists of 2 important components. Content and code.

- content - the text, images, audio files, video files that users experience. For the business owner, organisation administrators and promoters this is the most important aspect of the website.
 - code - this is the html and scripting that enables the content to 'hang together'
- I guess another perspective from a business owner is "I don't care about the code and other technical stuff, this just needs to work. I am really most interested in the content and what this communicates to my customers"

So the challenge for the business owner or administrator is how to easily and quickly publish the content without having to be concerned about the code.

Two alternatives

- The traditional approach
 - Merged content and code
Content (text) and code (html) are merged in a single file. Web developers learn all the html tags and use web editing tools such as Microsoft FrontPage, Macromedia Dreamweaver or countless others to create and edit the files. The result is sometimes referred to as 'spaghetti code' due to the mixture of content, html and script. E.g. if you are using Internet Explorer select the 'View Source' option from the page menu. Here is the code for the first few lines of this page

```
"<!DOCTYPE HTML PUBLIC "-//W3C//DTD HTML 4.0  
Transitional//EN">  
<html><head id="Head"><meta id="MetaDescription"  
name="DESCRIPTION" content="A simple high level explanation of the  
DotNetNuke content management system and framework.">"
```
- Separate responsibility for content and code
The owner or administrator specifies and/or creates the content. I.e. what to say, which images to use, language etc. etc.
The web developer takes this content, blends it with html code and publishes this to a web server.

So how to choose the best one for your purposes?

Clearly, testing and examining every available option is not feasible. So this is how we chose DotNetNuke as our preferred solution.

Creating a website requires a significant investment of resources in content creation. The CMS selected should be evolving in response to changes in the internet, especially security and new capabilities such as increased bandwidth and higher download speeds.

We recognised that development of a CMS software package requires a significant investment, way beyond the resources of the vast majority of individual software developers.

This means that we looked to a CMS developed by a large company or a popular open source community.

Microsoft vs. other technology

- The concept of a Content Management System requires a number of different components. Microsoft provides a full range of products required to support a CMS I.e. operating system (Windows), internet server (IIS), database (SQL Server), development environment (ASP.Net) and takes considerable effort to ensure that these products work together.

Alternative solutions e.g. Linux (operating system), Apache (internet server), MySql (database), PHP (active environment) , the so called 'LAMP' solutions, provide a solid high performance solution but are supplied by multiple vendors and so rely on the efforts of the individual development teams to ensure that the products work together. I don't want my developers consulting between vendors blaming each other when something doesn't work, and especially not on my time!

- The largest developer community supports Microsoft technology. The developers are well supported by Microsoft in terms of access to cost effective education and training. This translates to a greater availability of skills to undertake custom development and more cost effective support for the CMS.

Deciding on the criteria of a CMS based on Microsoft technology and developed by a large company or open source community substantially reduced the list of products to consider.

- SharePoint - the CMS solution developed and marketed by Microsoft. Initial licencing cost and relative scarcity of support developers translating to higher costs for support disqualified this as an option for our target market.

How to create your own website in 24 hours

- Other commercial products - we didn't find a CMS that matched up to our requirements of a substantial developer support base, wide usage and cost effective licence fees.
- Open source solutions - A number of open source solutions based on Microsoft technology exist. DotNetNuke is the most popular of these with in excess of 400,000 registered members. We find the following benefits important:
 - A large 'core team' of developers. In excess of 30.
 - Hundreds of 3rd party developers that offer add-on modules and skin templates.
 - Recognition and support from Microsoft
 - A number of published books on DotNetNuke development and use. Even a 'Dummies guide'
 - A liberal public use licence means that it is legal to use the software in your business or club.
 - A commitment from the core team to maintain the product as a freely available open source product.

Next - Find out more about how the DotNetNuke CMS works
[\[http://www.websuburb.com.au/Default.aspx?tabid=1221\]](http://www.websuburb.com.au/Default.aspx?tabid=1221)