

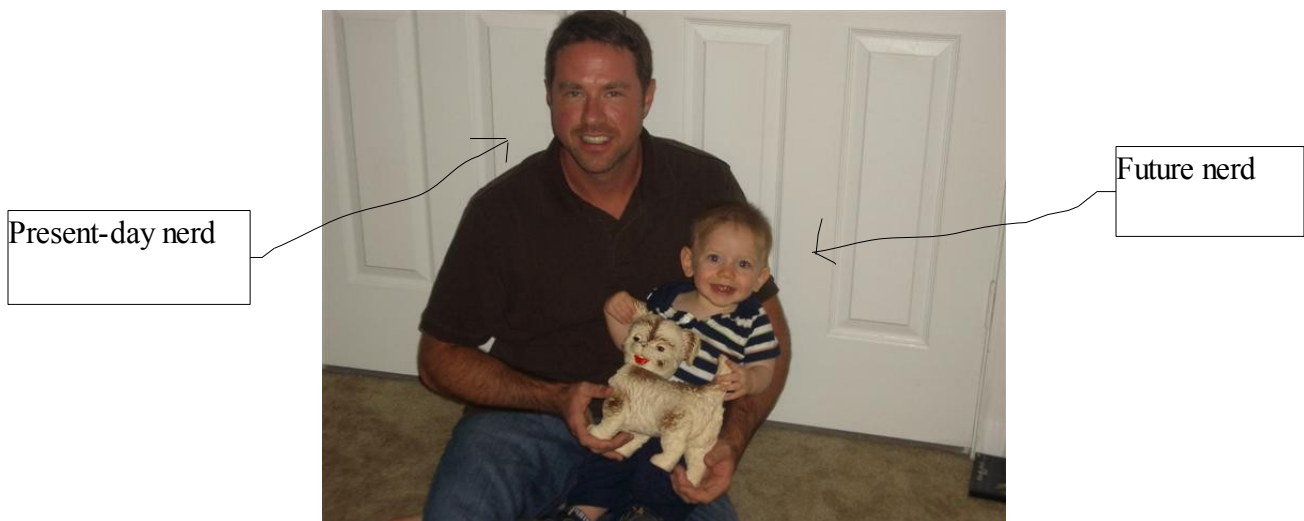
# How to Build a Website for Fun, Profit, or Both

version 1.1.2

## Introduction

Hello,

Allow me to introduce myself: I'm Greg the "computer guy". The picture below is of me and my son Henry, taken recently.



I'm a successful IT consultant specializing in **marketing, websites, and business development**. First I want to say 'thank you!' for taking the time to acquire and read this ebook; my promise to you is that it will be short and sweet...and that if you follow all my steps, you will not only succeed, you will *shine*. This book is a quick summary of my experience and knowledge on how to create a website for your business or personal use, including the creation of a storefront, blog, photo gallery, genealogy site...or anything else you can dream up. Only the important, relevant stuff is in here in the spirit of keeping it on topic and easy to read.

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My purpose for writing this book is two-fold: to demystify the process of setting up a website (by far my most commonly asked question) and to give back a little to the industry that gave me so much.

Along the way you will learn how to use your website to generate income without directly selling anything, or even lifting a finger (except to type on your keyboard and move your mouse). Of course, if you don't want to use it to make money, you certainly don't have to.

A website offers lots of potential for this.



Another possibility is to build your website up until it is popular, then sell off to a buyer. Again, that is entirely up to you.

One of the many great advantages to having your own site is that you can setup email through it (the method I will show you is completely free by the way). Say for example if you own the site *www.yourawesomewebsite.com*, you will be able to send and receive email from *you@yourawesomewebsite.com*. Not only is this a convenient thing to be able to do, it appears very professional and also is a great way to avoid SPAM (unwanted emails).



Spam is bad, mmkay?

Whatever you decide to do with your site (or sites) is completely up to you. My goal is to guide you along, to simplify, and to provide the big picture (because it really can be easy) and to make sure you avoid the pitfalls along the way. If you still don't want to do this yourself, but need a website or marketing, let me know. (my contact email: [service@logicwire.net](mailto:service@logicwire.net)) I will take good care of you. Please note that I can't answer technical questions over email unless you are an existing client; I receive many emails a day requesting help(that's why I'm writing this book!). However, I occasionally come back and update this manual based on feedback...so your questions are great. Thanks!

Now, let's get started.

Big Picture Ahead!



- **Chapter 1: The Big Picture**

All websites consist of three parts: 1.) the domain name 2.) web hosting 3.) the site itself.

1.) **The domain name** is just like the address of your home or business; without it people won't be able to find you. It can be more than just an address though...it can also be your name, or business name or trademark. Domains are an investment! As .com names become more rare, your domain's value will continue to climb. (Note: I highly recommend a .com name for a business or any sort of professional site)

Example domain names you have probably heard of are *cnn.com*, *amazon.com*, and *google.com*. Names are bought and sold just like any other commodity...milk, cars, flowers, domain names. If you are the first person to think of the name, then you can get it inexpensively (usually \$3 -\$15 a year). If the name has built in value...like *google.com* or *amazon.com*....the name could be worth billions of dollars, or even be \*literally\* priceless. I doubt Google Corp would sell their domain name for any amount of money.

The founders of Google have their own private luxury 747 to fly around.



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You may have noticed that websites end in different letters. .com, .net, .org, .gov and so on. These endings are called 'TLD's...which stands for Top Level Domain. Certain ones are controlled; for instance you can't go buy a .gov TLD for your site because these are for use only by the US government. Most other TLDs are open for anyone to purchase.

**2.) Web hosting** is analogous to rent for your apartment, or property taxes for your home. Hosting can be paid monthly or yearly, and for small sites it is only a few dollars a month. The really large, popular sites like *google.com* and *amazon.com* host themselves to save money...but they still pay millions of dollars a month for the electricity, manpower, etc. Generally, the more traffic you have, the more hosting costs. Hosting packages can always be 'bumped up' as your traffic goes up, so it makes sense to start out cheap. When you pay for a web host, you are actually just renting part (or a whole) computer running web server software. ("Web servers" serve websites; they are also commonly called just plain "servers").

**3.) Finally, the site itself.** This is equivalent to your home or office building. Let's say you have the first two components (domain name and web hosting) but without the website, people would only see a blank page...or full of adverts courtesy of your registrar. Godaddy, I'm looking at you.

You can design the site yourself if want to learn how, or you can find a free template and modify it to your liking. You could also hire a web designer, or purchase a premium template. You could spend many thousands and have a great website, or you could spend absolutely no money and still have a great one. It is up to you how unique or complicated you want the site to be...and how much you are willing to do yourself.



Congratulations...it's official...you now have the big picture on how *all* websites work. Knowledge is power, so let's continue the empowerment! Moving on....

- **Chapter 2: Let's get a domain name (or two)!**

Domain names are bought and sold from 'registrars'...companies that have been given permission from ICANN to deal. Don't be put off by the names and acronyms; there are lots of registrars and you could become one if you so desired. ICANN is the governing body, and was formed to control the domain names. This is a good thing, because they make sure that two people don't buy the same name, and to decide what TLDs (.com, .gov, etc) to be used and when. When you 'buy' a domain name, you are actually registering it with ICANN.

Before buying your domains:

- .com TLDs are best for business or professional sites. They also work for just about everything else. If you have any doubt, get a .com. (I know I'm not practicing what I preach as I own the domain *Logicwire.net*, but not *Logicwire.com*...however, I bought this domain long before I thought it would be a business. Learn from my mistake! :)
- You can also buy other TLDs....for instance, if you want to buy *blahblahblah.com*, you could also get *blahblahblah.net* and .org.
- If you have to choose between a long domain name and a short one, get the shorter of the two. Easier to remember and type in.
- Not all the good names are taken, and you may still find exactly what you want. There are premium names available too (currently 'owned', but for sale). My business sells premium names; contact me for a current list.
- When you have found the domain name you want, **buy it immediately**. Don't wait overnight or even a few hours. Someone may grab it before you do. (it has happened to me more than once)
- While the name itself is important, it **is not vital**. That is to say if you don't get the name you really really wanted, that's ok...the name is much less important than the site itself. Take Google, for example. 'Google' is a made up word (based on a real word, but intentionally spelled and pronounced wrong). Yet it is now a household name. Having said that, understand that in some cases it is important for your name to have certain keywords in it. If you are selling ping pong balls, you will be ranked higher and faster in search engines with 'pingpong' in the name.

- Some companies will try to sell you lots of extras to go with your domain. The only one that you might consider at the time of purchase is 'private registration'. This means that people can't look up your personal info (address, phone, name, email) based on your domain. I use this service occasionally. It usually costs about \$10/yr per name.

So, now that you know what to look for, here are three of the top companies (registrars) to get your domain names from (these are my personal favorites):

1.) **Godaddy.** The world's #1 domain name registrar. The Walmart of registrars. You have likely seen a few of their commercials on TV. They are inexpensive, but push their other products a bit too strong, and their site could be simpler. Customer support line is not an 800 number so long distance charges may apply. I've never been on hold more than a minute though. Use the banner link below to get .com domain names for \$7.49, which is a pretty good deal. Most of my domains have been purchased through Godaddy.



2.) **Network Solutions.** One of the first registrars, and still one of the best. Good customer support (an 800 number), and site navigation is easy. Many of my business clients prefer Network Solutions, but they are great for personal use too. Using the banner link below to purchase a domain will give you a free instant web page (great for a business wanting to get online immediately)



3.) **Bluehost.** The underdog; the up-and-comer. These folks are relatively new to the game, but have been voted Best New Hosting Company and Best Customer Support by the some of the leading hosting review companies. The banner below will give you a free domain if you purchase hosting.



**Important Note!** If you are offered a deal on hosting during the purchase of your domain name, go ahead and take it. You will need hosting anyway. It's more convenient to have one company handle both your domain name and hosting vs. separate accounts, and you may as well get it all taken care of at one time.

- **Chapter 3: Hosting (if you didn't already get it in the previous step)**

Hosting is obviously a vital component of your web site plan, but don't fret over it too much. My recommendation? Just pick the cheapest plan and go with it. You may end up finding out that your plan doesn't offer what you need, or is deficient in some way. However, there isn't a good way to determine that beforehand, and you can always just upgrade or change hosting companies. You are never stuck. Having said that, you will most likely be just **fine** with the most inexpensive deal.

Here are my favorite web hosts:

- 1.) **Godaddy.** Here's Godaddy again. The world's #1 domain name registrar is also one of the most popular web hosts. Use the banner link below to get hosting for \$1.99/mo which is about as cheap as you will find anywhere.



- 2.) **iPage.** This is my new favorite. These folks are 'green' hosting...all of their servers are 100% powered by wind turbines. The service has been great and the price is right.



- 3.) **Bluehost.** Again, these guys are known for the customer service and quality. You get a lot of features (and free domain) when you host through them. If you already purchased a domain, this would be a good idea: I recommend obtaining a domain for your family, or your own full name. In other words, if your name is Jane Doe, get *doe.org* or *janedoe.com*. You don't have to use it for a website now, just keep it for the future.



- **Chapter 4: The Web Site (cue the sound of angels singing!)**

Congratulations, by this point you have hopefully acquired your domain name(s) and setup hosting for your site...or at least discovered how to do it. (I know many people will want to read this book all the way through first, then go back and follow up)

But, what about the web site? Well, my friend...now things get a tiny bit more complicated. Don't be put off or intimidated...we will get through this just fine. As in the domain name chapter, I'm going to lay out some notes about web sites to make this simpler. Big picture stuff here:

- Your website is **for your guests, not for you**. Never forget that. Unless you intend to be the only person to look at it (in which case you want a diary, not a website :)
- No matter what the purpose, your site is about the content, not the way it looks.
- Lean, clean layout is always better. Also, always try to have black text on white(ish) background for the majority of the text. Pretty colors are fine, but not behind text! (white text on black background works too)
- Don't have unnecessary, automatically loading components on your site such as sound, large images, Flash animations, videos, scrolling text, etc. If I'm on a site and it starts making noise without my permission, I leave immediately.
- Never make your website entirely of Flash or Silverlight (if you aren't sure what Flash is, read [here](#)) There are a **few** exceptions to this rule, but very few. I won't go into the million and one reasons why Flash is bad. Note that it is fine for video / some media.
- Don't 'fall in love' with your site design. You will get hung up on the way it looks, instead of working on content.

Are you starting to see a trend here? You may think I'm forcing opinion on you, but I'm not. Here are the facts: visitors **will** leave your site if they can't quickly find what they are looking for, or if they are annoyed in any way. Your visitors have many other options out there in Internetland; don't give them a reason to leave.

( I'm done ranting now . )

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More big picture technical stuff:

- A 'static' website is one that generally stays the same. A business website is a good example. If you are a lawyer, you probably want to give visitors your contact information, some description of your services, maybe a pic of you and associates, etc. Nothing changes on a daily basis, so you have no reason to make it more complicated than it needs to be. Note that in some cases, having content that changes or is added to frequently can help bring in more traffic...which is why static websites are being outmoded by:
- Dynamic websites are things like blogs, genealogy sites, and sales sites (eg *amazon.com*). The content changes based on the visitor's preferences or desires; or in the case of the blog, it updates whenever the blog author writes more content.
- Templates and themes are designs for websites that you can use to quickly get a site up and running. They can be free or premium (cost \$). I will give sources later in this chapter.
- You may hear terms/acronyms such as HTML, CSS, PHP, etc. These are methods...languages....code...for writing websites. You can find unlimited amounts of help online to learn to write or modify code; I won't delve into that here.
- Dynamic sites are usually built on a CMS, or 'Content Management System.' Wordpress is a very common one; it is used to power millions of blogs because it is easy to use and powerful. A CMS lets you update content easily...whether it be images, videos, writing, etc. The site will have a 'backend' that an administrator can log into (other site guests can't get there) and make changes. With a CMS, you can change the entire look and layout of your site instantly using themes. There are many advantages to using a CMS, but there is also a learning curve involved.

Confused yet??

I know this is a lot of information at once, and you probably have more questions now than when you started. What kind of site should I have...static, dynamic? What CMS should I use? Should I hire a webdesigner? Can I learn to do this stuff myself?

Here is all I can really say for sure: even if you work on the site for a month then realize you should have done it differently, **that's ok**. You will have learned a lot, and you can recycle written text and images for the next version of your site. The most important thing is to just get to work on it. Getting a site up and running is far more important than waiting and planning a perfect version!

And if you work for a month then get dejected and decide to hire someone...guess what: by then you will know **exactly** what you want, and your relationship with the designer will be much better because you will appreciate him or her more, and you will have a clear vision for your site.

Here are the website resources I promised:

- Templates for static sites(note: these are all 'open source'; free to use and modify)
  1. [OSWD.org \(Open Source Web Design\)](http://OSWD.org)
  2. [Opensourcetemplates.org](http://Opensourcetemplates.org)
  3. [Opendesigns.org](http://Opendesigns.org)
  4. [Freecsstemplates.org](http://Freecsstemplates.org)
  5. [Openwebdesign.org](http://Openwebdesign.org)
  
- [Wordpress CMS](#). Great for blogs, photo galleries, some businesses. Open source.
  1. [Wordpress themes](#).
  2. [OSSkins Wordpress themes](#).
  
- [Joomla CMS](#). This is a VERY powerful management system. Expect to have a steep learning curve, but the possibilities are endless. Perfect for many uses. Open source.
  1. [OSSkins Joomla themes](#)
  
- [PhpGedView](#) Genealogy CMS. Open source, really cool and powerful. I setup my family's genealogy site using this system.
  
- [Coppermine Photo Gallery CMS](#). Superb free photo gallery software. This also integrates into Wordpress and Joomla.

Note: most web hosts have built in methods to install Wordpress and Joomla (among other CMS). It is usually as simple as clicking a few links then installing. You will have to create a 'database' first, as CMS use databases to access stored data. It is a one-time deal though...don't be scared. :)

- **Chapter 5: Email for your site (completely free)**

Don't worry, this will be a quick and easy chapter. Far and away the best method to get email setup for your domain name is to use Google Apps. Essentially, you be using a custom version of Gmail, but it will be with your domain name instead of “@gmail.com”.

For example, my site *Logicwire.net* has several email accounts associated with it, including [service@logicwire.net](mailto:service@logicwire.net). These are all provided courtesy of Google Apps. It is a FANTASTIC system; you can access your accounts on any computer, or use your favorite email client such as Thunderbird or Outlook to check it. (or use both methods like I do!)



Once you get your domain hosted and have access to your account, go [here and sign up for Google Apps](#). Note that this is the free version, and it will suffice for most people.

To upgrade to more features such as guaranteed uptime, more storage, customer support, etc go [here for Apps for Business](#).

The signup process is easy, but you will have to prove you are the owner of the domain. You can do this using various methods provided by Google. The method I always use is the copy a provided HTML file to your website. Google then verifies it, proving you are the owner. You will then have to change something called the “MX records” for your domain. This tells it how email is handled (MX stands for mail exchange). I know this is a bit confusing, but don't worry...you will do it once and forget about it. Your web host will provide help with this process.

Create your accounts and done!

Keep going...the hardest part is done!  
(it's about to get really interesting)...



- **Chapter 6: Monetizing your website**

Now on to the really interesting stuff....making money with your website. Even if your intention is to maintain the site for personal reasons, you could still do a little light advertising. PPV adverts pay you when your page is viewed, so that might be an option. Read on for a quick breakdown of the most popular monetizing methods.



This can all be yours! Muahahaha.....

1. We will start with the most obvious method: a **storefront**. If you have something to sell...a service or product... a storefront is a great way to let people view and purchase your products. A shopping cart is a very common and effective tool. Visitors can place multiple items in their cart, and even if they leave the site and come back later it will be waiting for them. Shopping carts and checkout systems along with Paypal/merchant services can be integrated by your web host company. Ask them for help setting it up!
2. **Displaying advertisements on your site**. Once your site is up and running (and has some content) go [here to sign up for AdSense](#). AdSense is operated by Google (they have their hands in everything, don't they?). In a nutshell, you display their adverts on your site; you get paid based on views and clicks. It varies wildly how much you get paid per ad view or click; but it is possible to make hundreds or thousands of dollars a day using this method. The more popular your blog is, the more money you make.
3. **Become an affiliate**. Advertisement networks make it easy to become the middleman

between a product and the actual sales site. If a person buys a product using your link, you earn a commission. Sounds simple, right? It is! The links I used in this ebook for hosting and domain name purchases are affiliate links. It allows me to find the best deal for you, and earn a bit of money if you use the service. Literally everyone wins. The two most popular affiliate networks are:

- [Commission Junction](#)
- [Clickbank](#)

So you may be asking how it is possible to get traffic to you site. How to become popular...to get lots of hits so that people see your ads or use you affiliate links? Well, it is usually a combination of efforts to achieve this:

- **SEO** stands for Search Engine Optimization. In a nutshell, this means increasing your rank on a search engine. Your site shows up higher in the results. For example, as of this writing if you Google search the phrase “search engine”, the search company 'AltaVista' is ranked at the top. Therefore based on that search term, AltaVista wins the SEO prize (on Google, anyway). SEO is a huge industry, with lots of tips and tricks...some are good, some of them quite shady. Below are a couple quality SEO training guides of the non-shady variety. Even if you are not planning to monetize your site, it is good to read these guides. Search engines are such an important part of everyone's Internet experience, and having some insight into how they work can be very enlightening.
  - ✓ [Beginner's Guide to SEO](#)
  - ✓ [How to SEO your Website](#)
  - ✓ [Google's Guide](#)
- **Links** to, and from, your site. If you and your friend share links to each other's sites, this is a good way to 'legitimize' your sites. If you are a business and you link to competitor's sites, it can serve to help yours...even if the competitor doesn't link back.
- **Content.** Content, content, content. If you run a blog, (or any other site, for that matter) the more content you write and the more often you update, the better. It needs to be actual writing though; cheating won't work (copy and pasting or nonsense words). Search engine companies use smart algorithms and even employ real people to look at results. If you cheat, your ranking will be penalized. There are even people who will do the writing for you if you are having writer's block: Elance is a hugely popular outsource/contract firm. Click the link below to hire some talent to write your blog, or work on your website.



(as you can see, my graphics skills are top notch)

- **Chapter 7: Summary and Conclusion**

I believe that everyone should have a website. If you can afford the \$2 a month for hosting...and I think that is within most everyone's budget....the sky is the limit on what can be done. The domain name you choose is an investment within itself; the website can be a creative outlet, a source of income, a place to display your business, a personal mission, or all of the above. When combined with Google Apps email, it becomes a powerful communications method.

It is difficult to know what the future holds in store for the Internet, but one thing is certain: websites aren't going away anytime soon, and every day more of the world gets online. Now is clearly the time to jump in and realize the full potential of the Internet!

To sign up for updates to this ebook, [please go here](#). My promise to you: your email address (or any other personal information) stays with me; I don't sell out to anyone. If you ask to remove yourself from future emails, I will do so immediately.

- **About me:**

We are all on this Earth together, and we may as well make the most of it.

I have been an IT consultant and Internet marketer for over 12 years.

Thanks for reading this guide; good luck in all of your efforts.

-gregory

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