

# WEBMASTER FOR DUMMIES



# SO YOU WANT TO BE A WEBMASTER?

MANY PEOPLE HAVE THE AMBITION OF BECOMING A WEBMASTER (EITHER AS A PROFESSION, OR FOR THEIR OWN PERSONAL OR COMMERCIAL SITE). ITS BECOMING A POPULAR GOAL, AS MORE AND MORE PEOPLE LEARN ABOUT THE WEB, AND HOW EASY IT IS TO CREATE THEIR OWN WEB PAGES. AUTHORS, HOBBYISTS, JOURNALISTS, BUSINESS PEOPLE, AND EVEN INDIVIDUALS CAN ALL GAIN FROM BECOMING COMPETENT AT PUBLISHING INFORMATION ON THE WEB. IF YOU'RE NOT SURE, THEN SEE IF ANY OF THE FOLLOWING REASONS FIT YOU.

- SELF-PROMOTION (CAREER OR SOCIAL LIFE)
- STATUS SYMBOL (HEY - CHECK OUT MY WEB PAGE)
- SELLING A PRODUCT OR SERVICE
- SHARING INFORMATION ABOUT A HOBBY OR A SKILL WITH LIKE MINDED PEOPLE



- PROMOTION OF A NEW WAY OF THINKING, OR IDEOLOGY
- ADVANCING A CHARITY OR CAUSE
- CREATING AWARENESS IN THE COMMUNITY ABOUT A TOPIC
- LEARNING A PUBLISHING SKILLS AS A HOBBY, OR AS A PROFESSION

THIS LIST IS NOT EXHAUSTIVE; THERE ARE THOUSANDS OF GOOD REASONS WHY YOU SHOULD LEARN WEB PUBLISHING AND THOUSANDS OF WAYS IN WHICH YOU CAN BENEFIT FROM THE EXPERIENCE. SOME PEOPLE HAVE AN UNFULFILLED CREATIVE URGE TO DEVELOP CONTENT FOR OTHERS, AND SOME PEOPLE JUST WANT TO DEVELOP NEW SKILLS WHICH MAY HELP THEM IN THEIR CAREER.

TASK ONE - WRITE ON A NEW SHEET OF PAPER TWO OR THREE REASONS WHY YOU WOULD LIKE TO LEARN HOW TO CREATE WEB PAGES. FILE THIS SHEET OF PAPER AWAY, AND SEE IF YOU HAVE MEET THE OBJECTIVES BY THE END OF THESE LESSONS.

WHAT DOES A WEBMASTER DO?



# SO YOU WANT TO BE A WEBMASTER?

THE TITLE WEBMASTER IS CLAIMED BY SO MANY, THAT ITS DIFFICULT TO ACTUALLY QUANTIFY WHAT MAKES A WEBMASTER. SOME PEOPLE CREATE A HOMEPAGE, DESCRIBING THEIR HOBBIES AND INTERESTS - DOES THIS MAKE THEM A WEBMASTER? SOME PEOPLE CREATE MASSIVE SITES, WITH TENS OR EVEN HUNDREDS OF PAGES, SO SHOULD IT BE RESERVED FOR THE PROFESSIONALS?

MY DEFINITION OF A WEBMASTER IS SIMPLE - ONE WHO CREATES OR MAINTAINS A WEB SITE. A WEB SITE IS NOT A SINGLE PAGE, IT IS A COLLECTION OF PAGES THAT ARE LINKED TOGETHER IN MUCH THE SAME WAY A SPIDERWEB CONTAINS LINKS THAT FORM PART OF A LARGER WORK OF ART. IF YOU CREATE, OR MAINTAIN, A WEB SITE THAT DEALS WITH MULTIPLE PAGES, THEN YOU ARE A WEBMASTER! AS WITH ANY TITLE OR JOB, HOWEVER, THERE ARE GOOD WEBMASTERS AND BAD WEBMASTERS.



SO HOW CAN I BECOME A GOOD WEBMASTER?

WE'LL LEARN THE TECHNIQUES THAT A GOOD WEBMASTER NEEDS, AND THE TOOLS WHICH A GOOD WEBMASTER SHOULD USE.

HOWEVER, THERE IS ARE SOME IMPORTANT STEPS YOU CAN TAKE TO IMPROVE YOUR SKILLS - THE MOST IMPORTANT BEING PRACTICE. PUTTING THE SKILLS LEARNED HERE INTO USE IS IMPORTANT, AND MOST LESSONS WILL REQUIRE YOU TO PUT IN SOME TIME APPLYING THE TECHNIQUES TO ACTUAL WEB PAGES. FOR THE MOMENT, HOWEVER, WE'LL TAKE A LOOK AT SOME "GOOD" SITES, WHICH DEMONSTRATE GOOD WEBMASTERING SKILLS, AND A "BAD" SITE, WHICH DEMONSTRATES UNDESIRABLE TECHNIQUES.

THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE UGLY







## SO YOU WANT TO BE A WEBMASTER?

I'M SURE THAT YOU'VE COME ACROSS SITES BEFORE WHICH YOU THOUGHT WERE FANTASTIC, AND SOME THAT YOU'D NEVER WANT TO VISIT AGAIN. AS WITH ANYTHING CREATIVE, WHAT LOOKS "GOOD" TO ONE EYE MAY LOOK BAD TO ANOTHER. HOWEVER, ON THE WEB THIS PROBLEM IS MAGNIFIED. PEOPLE DON'T ALL HAVE THE SAME TYPE OF COMPUTER, AND THEY DON'T ALL USE THE LATEST BROWSER. THEY DON'T ALL HAVE THE LATEST PLUGINS INSTALLED, SO A GOOD SITE WILL LOOK GOOD NO MATTER WHAT TYPE OF COMPUTER OR BROWSER IS BEING USED.

FOR THIS LESSON, WE'RE GOING TO LOOK AT SITES WHICH HAVE BEEN RANKED HIGHLY BY HUMAN REVIEWERS. LYCOS MAINTAINS A HUMAN REVIEW SYSTEM, AND LISTS THE TOP 5% OF SITES. TAKE A LOOK AT SOME OF THE SITES THAT ITS REVIEWERS BELIEVE ARE THE BEST OF THE WEB. LYCOS GROUPS THEM INTO CATEGORIES, SO YOU SHOULD PICK SEVERAL DIFFERENT CATEGORIES.

TASK TWO - SELECT THREE (3) CATEGORIES FROM THE LYCOS TOP 5% OF THE WEB COLLECTION. TAKE A LOOK AT FOUR OR FIVE SITES FROM YOUR SELECTED CATEGORIES, AND TRY TO PICK SOME OF THE ATTRIBUTES THAT YOU BELIEVE MAKE A GOOD WEB SITE.

DON'T WORRY IF YOUR LIST ISN'T VERY SPECIFIC, OR IF YOU FIND IT HARD TO COME UP WITH A LIST OF GREAT ATTRIBUTES. REMEMBER THAT EACH WEB PAGE IS DIFFERENT - THERE ISN'T A RIGHT OR WRONG WAY TO PRESENT ALL TYPES OF INFORMATION. A CHILDREN'S SITE WILL BE PRESENTED DIFFERENTLY TO AN AUTOMOBILE WEBSITE. HOWEVER, THERE ARE SOME BASIC ELEMENTS THAT CAN BE APPLIED TO ALMOST ANY WEB SITE.



THE FOLLOWING IS A BRIEF LIST OF THINGS THAT SHOULD BE PRESENT ON ALMOST ALL SITES.

- TITLE
- NAVIGATION (BOTH GRAPHICAL AND TEXT)
- COLOR/STYLE
- EASY READABILITY
- COPYRIGHT STATEMENT OR AUTHORSHIP INFORMATION
- CLEAR LAYOUT, WITH PLENTY OF BLANK SPACE

IF YOUR DOCUMENT DOESN'T HAVE A TITLE, YOU MAY FIND THAT SEARCH ENGINES WON'T RANK YOUR SITE AS HIGHLY. YOU SHOULD CHOOSE A GOOD TITLE FOR EACH PAGE, BECAUSE IF A SEARCH QUERY CONTAINS WORDS IN YOUR TITLE, MANY SEARCH ENGINES WILL RANK YOUR PAGE HIGHER. ITS ALSO PROVIDES CLUES TO THE READER ABOUT THE FOCUS OF THE PAGE, AND SHOULD ALWAYS BE PRESENT.



# SO YOU WANT TO BE A WEBMASTER?

NAVIGATION IS IMPORTANT, BECAUSE PEOPLE NEED HYPERLINKS TO MOVE FROM ONE PAGE TO ANOTHER. CREATING A MENU ON YOUR MAIN PAGE IS A GOOD START! THIS MAKES IT EASIER FOR READERS TO FIND THE PAGES THAT MOST INTEREST THEM. USING GRAPHICS FOR YOUR MENU IS IMPRESSIVE, BUT REMEMBER TO LEAVE A TEXT MENU AS WELL FOR PEOPLE WHO ARE VISUALLY IMPAIRED, OR WHO USE NON-GRAPHICAL BROWSERS.

COLOR AND STYLE ARE KEY FEATURES OF ANY GOOD SITE. ADDING COLOR MAKES A SITE MORE APPEALING TO READERS - BUT IS IMPORTANT TO HAVE A UNIFORM STYLE. IF YOU JUMP FROM ONE BRIGHTLY COLORED BACKGROUND TO ANOTHER WITHOUT ANY RHYME OR REASON, PEOPLE MAY NOT RETURN. ALSO, TRY TO AVOID COLORED FONTS AND BACKGROUNDS THAT ARE HARD TO READ - THIS CAN BE DISTRACTING FROM YOUR MESSAGE. IF PEOPLE CAN'T READ THE TEXT WITHOUT SQUINTING, THEN THEY WON'T BE IMPRESSED, AND MAY LEAVE.

MAKE SURE THAT YOU PROVIDE SOME SORT OF AUTHORSHIP INFORMATION. SOME SITES LIKE TO COPYRIGHT THEIR WORK - THIS IS YOUR DECISION. HOWEVER, YOU SHOULD AT LEAST PROVIDE YOUR NAME AND PERHAPS SOME CONTACT DETAILS (SUCH AS AN EMAIL ADDRESS). THIS WAY, PEOPLE KNOW THAT ITS YOUR WORK.

ANOTHER TIP IS TO MAKE SURE THERE IS PLENTY OF WHITE SPACE (OR IF YOU USE A COLORED BACKGROUND, SOME BLANK SPACE). IF YOU TRY TO CLUTTER A PAGE UP, THEN IT BECOMES HARDER TO READ. TAKE A LOOK AT ANY MAGAZINE ARTICLE, AND YOU'LL NOTICE THAT A LARGE PART OF THE PAGE IS ACTUALLY BLANK. YOU DON'T NEED TO WORRY ABOUT WASTING PAPER, SO DON'T FORGET TO BREAK TEXT UP INTO PARAGRAPHS, AND TO INCLUDE HEADINGS OR PICTURES TO BREAK UP LONG BLOCKS OF TEXT.

TO ILLUSTRATE THIS LIST, I'VE TAKEN A SCREEN CAPTURE OF A SITE WHICH INCLUDES ALL OF ITS ELEMENTS. THE SITE USES A TITLE, GRAPHICAL AND NON-GRAPHICAL MENUS. IT HAS PLENTY OF WHITE SPACE, USES COLOR AND STILL HAS READABLE TEXT. IT ALSO HAS AUTHORSHIP INFORMATION AT THE BOTTOM OF THE PAGE.



NOT ALL SITES ON THE WEB COULD BE CATEGORIZED AS "GOOD" SITES, HOWEVER. MANY USE BRIGHT, GARISH COLOR SCHEMES WHICH MAKE READING TEXT DIFFICULT. MANY HAVE LARGE IMAGES THAT TAKE CONSIDERABLE TIME TO LOAD, AND CONTAIN LITTLE REAL CONTENT THAT IS OF INTEREST TO READERS. THE NEXT EXERCISE WILL ASK YOU TO TAKE A LOOK AT SOME OF THESE BADLY DESIGNED SITES.

TASK THREE - LOOK AT SOME OF THE EXAMPLES FROM THE SITE WWW.WEBPAGESTHATSUCK.COM. MANY OF THE EXAMPLES ON ITS TOUR ARE GOOD THINGS TO LOOK OUT FOR. OF COURSE, YOU SHOULDN'T BE DISCOURAGED IF YOU'VE USED SUCH TECHNIQUES BEFORE - BUT THEY SHOULD BE AVOIDED IN THE FUTURE :)

HERE WE'RE GOING TO EVALUATE A FEW HTML DEVELOPMENT TOOLS. WITH THE RIGHT TOOLS, A WEBMASTER CAN CREATE HIGHER QUALITY SITES, WITH LESS EFFORT. WITHOUT THE RIGHT TOOLS, CREATING WEB PAGES CAN BECOME BORING AND REPETITIVE - AND THIS ISN'T ENVIRONMENT THAT IS CONDUCTIVE TO CREATIVITY.

WHICH TOOL SHOULD I USE?

# SO YOU WANT TO BE A WEBMASTER?

THE CHOICE OF TOOL IS REALLY UP TO YOU. THERE'S NO RIGHT OR WRONG ANSWER HERE - CHOOSE ONE YOU'RE COMFORTABLE WITH, AND WHICH PROVIDES YOU WITH THE FEATURES YOU REQUIRE. HOWEVER, UNLESS YOU'RE AN EXPERIENCED WEBMASTER (IN WHICH CASE, YOU'LL HAVE ALREADY CHOSEN A TOOL), THE WIDE RANGE OF TOOLS CAN BE DAUNTING. SO, IN THIS LESSON, I'LL DISCUSS SOME OF THE FEATURES YOU SHOULD LOOK OUT FOR, PRESENT A FEW TOOLS TO HELP YOU GET STARTED, AND PROVIDE YOU WITH POINTERS TO MORE INFORMATION.

SO WHAT SHOULD I LOOK FOR?

THE FIRST THING YOU'LL WANT TO CHECK IS WHETHER AN EVALUATION OR SHAREWARE VERSION IS AVAILABLE. BEFORE YOU BUY ANY HTML TOOL, YOU MUST USE IT, AND MAKE SURE THAT YOU'LL BE COMFORTABLE WITH ITS USER-INTERFACE. MOST GOOD WEB TOOLS OFFER TRIAL VERSIONS FOR DOWNLOAD, AND THIS GIVES YOU THE OPPORTUNITY TO SEE IF THE TOOL WILL SUIT YOU. NEVER BUY A TOOL SIGHT UNSEEN - TOOLS THAT BOAST HUNDREDS OF "COOL" FEATURES AREN'T ALWAYS DESIGNED WITH NEW WEBMASTERS IN MIND. UNLESS YOU FEEL COMFORTABLE USING IT, YOU WON'T FIND THE PROCESS OF CREATING PAGES NATURAL, AND THAT CAN BE EXTREMELY FRUSTRATING. PLUS, IF YOU USE EVALUATION VERSIONS, BY THE TIME YOU'RE READY TO PURCHASE A TOOL, YOU'LL HAVE LEARNT MOST OF THE FEATURES AND BE READY TO START CREATING WEBPAGES.

NEXT, YOU'LL WANT TO SEE WHETHER THE TOOL GIVES YOU A WYSIWYG INTERFACE. WYSIWYG STANDS FOR WHAT YOU SEE IS WHAT YOU GET. IF YOU'VE EVER USED A MODERN WORD PROCESSOR, YOU'LL HAVE USED A WYSIWYG INTERFACE. THIS TYPE OF INTERFACE SHOWS YOU EXACTLY WHAT THE PRINTED PAGE (OR IN THIS CASE, WEB PAGE) WILL LOOK LIKE - AS YOU TYPE. IF YOU CHANGE THE FONT OF A PAGE, ITS UPDATED INSTANTLY. INSERT A NEW PICTURE, THE PAGE WILL DISPLAY A NEW PICTURE. TOOLS LIKE MICROSOFT FRONTPAGE OFFER THIS FEATURE, AND FOR NEW USERS, IT MAKES EDITING PAGES VERY EASY.

WYSIWYG





IN A WYSIWYG INTERFACE, WHEN YOU CHANGE THE FONT, YOU CAN VISUALLY SEE THE EFFECT

OF COURSE, NOT ALL USERS NEED (OR WANT) WYSIWYG INTERFACES. MANY WEBMASTERS FIND WORKING DIRECTLY WITH HTML CODE IS PREFERABLE FOR EDITING THEIR PAGES. FOR YEARS, I CREATED WHOLE SITES USING NOTHING BUT NOTEPAD (A TEXT EDITOR FOR WINDOWS), AND WORKING DIRECTLY WITH HTML GAVE ME A LOT MORE CONTROL THAN A WYSIWYG INTERFACE WOULD ALLOW. IF YOU'RE A CODE-WARRIOR, YOU MAY PREFER TO USE A SIMPLE TEXT EDITOR, OR AN ADVANCED TOOL LIKE HOTDOG FROM SAUSAGE SOFTWARE WHICH HELPS YOU WITH SOME OF THE TRICKY PARTS OF HTML.

SO WHERE CAN I FIND THESE TOOL WELL, IF YOU'RE HAPPY ENOUGH TO USE A TEXT EDITOR, RATHER THAN A WYSIWYG INTERFACE, YOU MAY ALREADY HAVE THEM! YOUR WORD-PROCESSOR, OR A TEXT EDITOR THAT COMES WITH YOUR SYSTEM (SUCH AS NOTEPAD) WILL BE ALL YOU NEED. EDIT YOUR PAGES USING HTML, AND THEN VIEW THEM WITH YOUR WEB BROWSER TO VERIFY THAT IT LOOKS O.K. IF YOU WANT SOMETHING A LITTLE MORE SOPHISTICATED, YOU COULD BUY A FANCY EDITOR, SUCH AS HOTDOG. HOTDOG HAS A RANGE OF FEATURES, AND IS QUITE A GOOD EDITOR. YOU CAN FIND MORE INFORMATION, AND A LINK TO DOWNLOAD AN EVALUATION VERSION, FROM [HTTP://WWW.SAUSAGE.COM](http://www.sausage.com)

IF YOU'D PREFER A WYSIWYG EDITOR, THEN YOUR BEST BET IS MICROSOFT FRONTPAGE 98. FRONTPAGE HAS ALL THE ADVANCED FEATURES YOU'LL EVER NEED, AND HAS THE SIMPLICITY OF MICROSOFT WORD. WHEN YOU TYPE YOUR PAGE, ITS JUST LIKE EDITING A WORD DOCUMENT. YOU CAN ADD PICTURES, ADD CLIPART. YOU CAN CREATE NEW PAGES USING TEMPLATES, AND CREATE NEW WEBSITES USING WIZARDS.

FRONTPAGE EVEN HAS A FEATURE CALLED "THEMES" WHICH ALLOWS YOU TO CHANGE THE LAYOUT AND COLOR OF YOUR PAGES SIMPLY BY CLICKING ON DIFFERENT THEME TYPES - IT EDITS YOUR PAGES AUTOMATICALLY FOR YOU. MORE INFORMATION IS AVAILABLE FROM [HTTP://WWW.MICROSOFT.COM/FRONTPAGE /](http://www.microsoft.com/frontpage/)

BEFORE YOU GO OUT AND BUY ANY TOOLS, HOWEVER, YOU'LL ALSO WANT TO TAKE A LOOK AT THE HTML FEATURES WITHIN MICROSOFT WORD (THAT IS, IF YOU ALREADY HAVE THIS PRODUCT). FOR EARLIER VERSIONS OF WORD, MICROSOFT OFFERS PATCHES THAT GIVE IT HTML SUPPORT, AND LATER VERSIONS OF THE PRODUCT (WORD 97 OR HIGHER) HAVE AUTOMATIC SUPPORT.

YOU CAN EDIT A DOCUMENT, AND THEN SAVE THE DOCUMENT AS A WEB PAGE. ALL YOUR PICTURES AND TEXT AND TABLES WILL BE CONVERTED INTO HTML FOR YOU! WHILE NOT A PROFESSIONAL EDITING TOOL, IT DOES ALLOW YOU TO QUICKLY CONVERT EXISTING DOCUMENTS, AND COULD SUFFICE AS YOUR EDITOR UNTIL YOU'RE READY TO USE SOMETHING MORE SUBSTANTIAL.

IF YOU'RE INTERESTED IN TRYING A WIDE-RANGE OF TOOLS, YOU MIGHT ALSO WANT TO LOOK AT SHAREWARE SITES, WHICH OFTEN HAVE GOOD RESOURCES. HOWEVER, BE CAREFUL BEFORE YOU BUY ANY SHAREWARE - MAKE SURE YOU'VE USED THE SOFTWARE THOROUGHLY, AND THAT IT WILL MEET YOUR NEEDS. FOR STARTERS, YOU MIGHT LIKE TO CHECK OUT [HTTP://WWW.SHAREWARE.COM/](http://www.shareware.com/) OR [HTTP://WWW.TUCOWS.COM/](http://www.tucows.com/)



THE NEXT STEP IS TO CREATE A SMALL WEB PAGE. YOU DON'T NEED TO CREATE ANYTHING MAJOR - INDEED IT DOESN'T EVEN NEED TO BE A SITE THAT YOU'LL EVER USE AGAIN. THE AIM IS TO BECOME FAMILIAR WITH THE TOOL, AND HOW IT WORKS, BEFORE YOU CREATE "REAL" SITES THAT OTHERS WILL SEE. BECAUSE YOU'RE ALL USING DIFFERENT TOOLS, I CAN'T OFFER SPECIFIC HELP ON THIS ONE. YOU'LL NEED TO WORK THROUGH THE DOCUMENTATION THAT COMES WITH YOUR TOOL, AND ANY TRAINING/TUTORIAL EXERCISES IT PROVIDES.

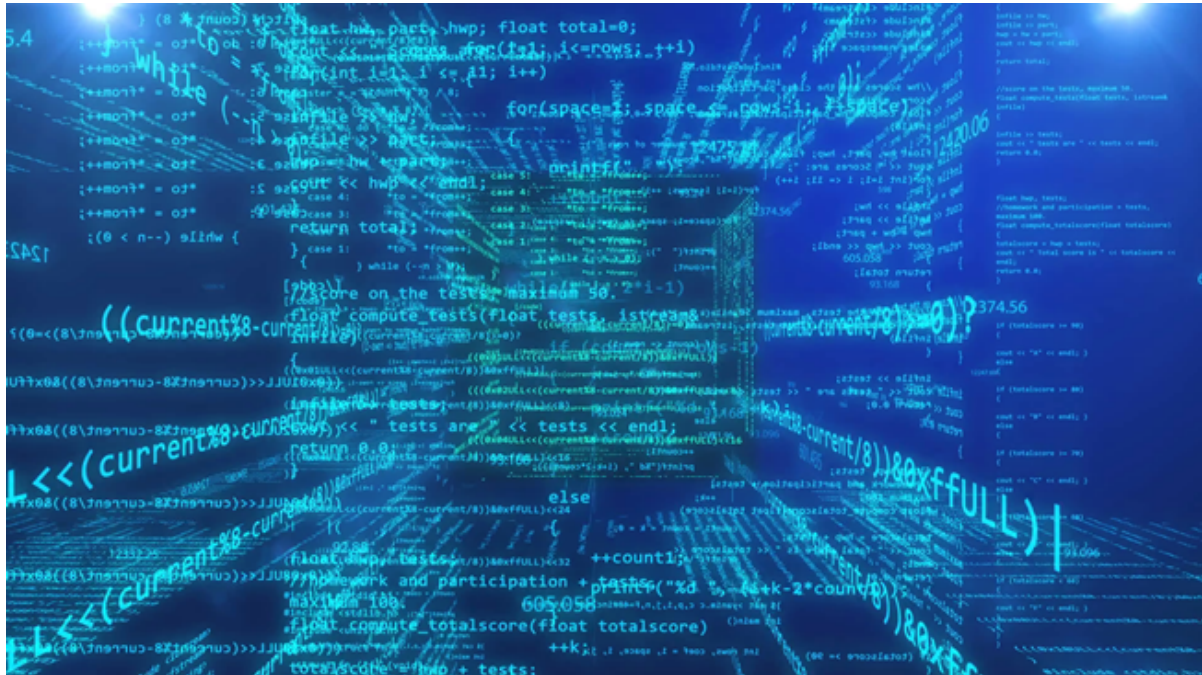
TASK FOUR - SELECT TWO OR THREE TOOLS THAT YOU THINK MIGHT SUIT YOU.



YOU CAN LOOK ON SHAREWARE SITES, DOWNLOAD EVALUATION VERSIONS, OR USE YOUR EXISTING SOFTWARE (TEXT-EDITOR, WORD, ETC). DON'T GO OUT AND BUY ANYTHING YET, UNLESS YOU'RE REALLY SURE!

CREATE A SINGLE WEB PAGE, IN EACH OF THE TOOLS THAT YOU SELECTED. THE CONTENT DOESN'T HAVE TO BE IMPORTANT, BUT TRY TO USE AS MANY FEATURES OF THE TOOL AS POSSIBLE. DOES IT ALLOW YOU TO CREATE TABLES? DOES IT ALLOW YOU TO CHANGE BACKGROUND AND FONT COLORS? DOES IT SUPPORT HEADINGS? MAKE SURE YOU'RE FAMILIAR WITH WHAT THESE TOOLS CAN AND CAN'T DO, BEFORE YOU SETTLE ON ANY ONE PRODUCT.





## I'VE PICKED A TOOL, WHAT NEXT?

NEXT, YOU NEED TO PRACTISE WITH YOUR TOOL. UNLESS YOU ARE ALREADY FAMILIAR WITH THE PRODUCT, IT WILL TAKE A WHILE BEFORE YOU FEEL COMFORTABLE USING IT. BETWEEN LESSONS, CREATE A FEW MORE PAGES, AND TRY TO USE SOME OF THE FEATURES OF YOUR TOOL THAT SOUND EXCITING, OR YOU ARE UNFAMILIAR WITH. IN THE NEXT TUTORIAL, WE'LL SHOW YOU HOW TO PLACE THE PAGES YOU CREATE ONTO A WEBSITE, AND HOW TO PROMOTE YOUR WEBSITE THROUGH SEARCH ENGINES.

NOW THAT YOU'RE FAMILIAR WITH CREATING SIMPLE WEB PAGES, AND HAVE SELECTED AN EDITING TOOL YOU FEEL COMFORTABLE WITH, THE NEXT STEP IS TO PUBLISH YOUR WORK TO THE INTERNET. DON'T WORRY IF YOU DON'T HAVE YOUR OWN WEB SERVER - THERE ARE PLENTY OF SITES OUT THERE THAT ARE WILLING TO HOST SITES FOR YOU. SOME ARE COMMERCIAL SERVICES, AIMED AT PROFESSIONAL WEBMASTERS, BUT THERE ARE PLENTY OF GOOD FREE SERVICES OUT THERE AS WELL.

## FINDING A SITE TO HOST YOUR WEBPAGES

THE GOOD NEWS IS THAT THERE IS NO SHORTAGE OF SITES THAT ARE EAGER TO HOST YOUR WEB PAGE. THE BAD NEWS IS THAT YOU GET WHAT YOU PAY FOR. IF YOU'RE LOOKING FOR ADVANCED FEATURES, SUCH AS CGI PROGRAMMING, YOUR OWN DOMAIN NAME, ADVERTISING FREE SITES WITH LARGE AMOUNTS OF SPACE, OR AN UNLIMITED AMOUNT OF VISITORS, THEN YOU'LL HAVE TO FIND A COMMERCIAL WEB HOSTING SERVICE. FOR A PROFESSIONAL WEBMASTER, COMMERCIAL SITE HOSTING PAGES ARE A GREAT INVESTMENT. ON THE OTHER HAND, IF YOU'RE JUST INTERESTED IN CREATING A SITE FOR YOUR HOBBY, OR A PERSONAL HOMEPAGE, YOU MAY NOT WANT TO HAVE TO PAY TO PUBLISH YOUR SITE ON THE INTERNET.


I'LL DISCUSS BOTH ALTERNATIVES AND POINT YOU IN THE DIRECTION OF MORE INFORMATION.

#### DOING IT ON THE CHEAP - FREE HOMEPAGES

FOR A FIRST TIME WEBMASTER, FREE HOMEPAGES ARE A GREAT CHOICE. MOST "FREE" SITES CAN AFFORD TO OFFER THIS TYPE OF SERVICE BY THE REVENUE THEY GENERATE THROUGH ADVERTISING. MOST SITES, SUCH AS GEOCITIES OR TRIPOD, PLACE ONLINE ADVERTISEMENTS (EITHER AUTOMATICALLY OR AS PART OF A VALUE-ADDED SERVICE) ON YOUR SITE, WHICH IS A SMALL PRICE TO PAY FOR FREE WEB HOSTING. OF COURSE, THERE ARE ALSO OTHER RESTRICTIONS, SUCH AS THE AMOUNT OF SPACE YOU CAN USE, AND RESTRICTIONS ON THE TYPES OF SITES YOU CAN HAVE. MOST FREE SERVICES PROHIBIT COMMERCIAL SITES, SO IF YOU'RE TRYING TO PROMOTE YOUR BUSINESS OR SELL PRODUCTS, YOU'LL HAVE TO LOOK ELSEWHERE.

HERE ARE SOME OF THE MOST POPULAR FREE HOMEPAGE SERVICES

- ANGELFIRE ([HTTP://WWW.ANGELFIRE.COM/](http://www.angelfire.com/))
- FREEYELLOW ([HTTP://WWW.FREEYELLOW.COM/](http://www.freeyellow.com/))
- FREEZONE ([HTTP://FREEZONE.EXMACHINA.NET/](http://freezone.exmachina.net/))
- GEOCITIES ([HTTP://WWW.GEOCITIES.COM/](http://www.geocities.com/))
- GLOBAL ONE NETWORKS - FREE WEB HOSTING (CONDITIONS APPLY)
- TRIPOD ([HTTP://WWW.TRIPOD.COM/](http://www.tripod.com/))
- XOOM ([HTTP://XOOM.COM/HOME/](http://xoom.com/home/))



MANY FREE HOMEPAGE PROVIDERS OFFER ADDITIONAL SERVICES AS WELL, INCLUDING EMAIL ADDRESSES AND SOMETIMES CHATROOMS/FORUMS. BEFORE DECIDING ON A HOMEPAGE PROVIDER, BE SURE TO READ THEIR TERMS AND CONDITIONS. VIOLATING THESE,

SUCH AS PROMOTING OR SELLING PRODUCTS, WILL USUALLY RESULT IN TERMINATION OF YOUR ACCOUNT, AND VISITORS WILL NO LONGER BE ABLE TO ACCESS YOUR PAGES.

TASK FIVE - TAKE A LOOK AT THREE DIFFERENT HOMEPAGE PROVIDERS, AND COMPARE THE SERVICES THEY OFFER. HOW MUCH SPACE WILL YOUR WEBSITE HAVE? DO THEY PLACE ADVERTISING BANNERS ON YOUR SITE, OR OPEN UP POP-UP ADVERTISEMENTS IN ANOTHER WINDOW? DO THEY INCLUDE A FREE POP EMAIL ACCOUNT? IS IT A "FREE" SERVICES, OR ARE THERE HIDDEN CHARGES OR COSTS FOR "EXTRAS" (SUCH AS GEOPLUS FROM GEOCITIES).



# SO YOU WANT TO BE A WEBMASTER?

IF YOU FIND A PROVIDER YOU LIKE, SIGN UP NOW AND SEE HOW EASY IT IS TO UPLOAD YOUR HOMEPAGE. MOST PROVIDERS USE FTP, BUT OTHERS MAY HAVE DIFFERENT WAYS. CREATE A NEW PAGE, OR USE ONE FROM A PREVIOUS EXERCISE, AND UPLOAD IT TO YOUR NEW SITE. ALMOST EVERY PROVIDER IS UNIQUE, SO YOU'LL NEED TO FOLLOW THEIR INSTRUCTIONS CAREFULLY. ONCE YOU'VE UPLOADED, POINT YOUR BROWSER TO YOUR NEW URL AND CHECK THAT THE PAGES AND IMAGES LOAD CORRECTLY. CONGRATULATIONS - YOU'RE NOW A WEBMASTER!

## COMMERCIAL WEB HOSTING SOLUTIONS

FREE HOMEPAGES ARE GREAT, BUT LACK THE PROFESSIONAL EDGE THAT WEB HOSTING CAN PROVIDE. YOU CAN CHOOSE TO BE ADVERTISING FREE, YOU AREN'T AS LIMITED ON THE SIZE OF YOUR WEBSITE, AND YOU CAN USE ADVANCED FEATURES SUCH AS CGI AND MAILING LISTS. HOWEVER, THE QUALITY AND PERFORMANCE OF THESE HOSTING SERVICES VARY - PRICE ISN'T ALWAYS THE BEST INDICATOR OF PERFORMANCE. AT A MINIMUM, YOU'LL WANT A SITE THAT PROVIDES GOOD SERVICE AND SUPPORT. SOME HOSTS EVEN OFFER A FREE TRIAL PERIOD, WHICH ALLOWS YOU TO SEE JUST HOW GOOD THEIR SERVICE IS.

SO WHAT MAKES A GOOD WEB HOST? HERE ARE A FEW THINGS TO LOOK FOR

- REASONABLE SPACE FOR YOUR WEBSITE
- EMAIL AND FTP ACCOUNT(S)
- GOOD ONLINE SUPPORT, AND POSSIBLY TELEPHONE SUPPORT
- LARGE BANDWIDTH (HOW FAST WILL YOUR PAGES LOAD!)
- MAILING LISTS AND CGI SUPPORT
- DATABASE SUPPORT
- FRONTPAGE SERVER EXTENSIONS
- UNLIMITED DOWNLOAD/HITS (OR AT LEAST A REASONABLE FIGURE FOR YOUR SITE)
- ALLOWS COMMERCIAL SITES
- FULL VIRTUAL HOSTING

# SO YOU WANT TO BE A WEBMASTER?

## •OWN DOMAIN NAME

THAT'S A LARGE LIST OF FEATURES, SO I'LL DISCUSS EACH POINT INDIVIDUALLY

## SPACE FOR YOUR WEBSITE

WHILE IT MAY NOT BE CRITICAL TO YOU AT THE MOMENT, ITS IMPORTANT TO GO WITH A SERVICE THAT ALLOWS YOU ENOUGH ROOM TO GROW IN THE FUTURE. AT A MINIMUM, I'D SAY 10-15 MEGABYTES. THAT MAY SOUND LIKE QUITE A BIT OF ROOM, BUT AS YOU ADD MORE AND MORE PAGES, YOU'LL BE SURPRISED AT HOW QUICKLY SITES CAN GROW. PARTICULARLY IF YOU PLAN TO DEVELOP SITES FOR CLIENTS, YOU'LL NEED A LARGE AMOUNT OF ROOM FOR THEIR GRAPHICS AND PAGES.

## EMAIL AND FTP ACCOUNTS

AS A MINIMUM, YOU'LL NEED ONE FTP ACCOUNT TO UPLOAD YOUR PAGES TO THE HOSTING SERVICE, BUT MORE COULD BE USEFUL IF YOU PLAN TO SHARE THE SITE WITH SOMEONE. YOUR HOSTING SERVICE SHOULD ALSO PROVIDE A POP EMAIL ACCOUNT. IF SOMEONE CAN EMAIL YOU AT WEBMASTER@YOUR\_SITE\_NAME.COM, IT LOOKS MUCH MORE PROFESSIONAL THAT USER34234@MYISP.NET.

## GOOD SUPPORT

GOOD SUPPORT IS VITAL, BECAUSE EACH SERVICE IS DIFFERENT AND YOU'LL NEED HELP INITIALLY TO SET YOUR SITE UP. MOST SERVICES WON'T HELP YOU WITH THINGS LIKE HTML OR CGI, BUT YOU'VE GOT TO BE ABLE TO GET HELP WITH ACCOUNT CONFIGURATION AND INSTALLATION PROBLEMS. RESPONSES SHOULD BE SWIFT, AND HELPFUL. IF YOUR HOSTING SERVICE ISN'T GOING TO RETURN YOUR REQUESTS FOR HELP, IT ISN'T A HOSTING SERVICE YOU WANT TO DEAL WITH. TOP QUALITY SERVICES WILL ALSO OFFER TELEPHONE SUPPORT - BUT FOR INTERNATIONAL WEBMASTERS, YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO DEAL WITH YOUR SERVICE VIA EMAIL.

## LARGE BANDWIDTH

MANY SERVICES WILL OFFER UNLIMITED DOWNLOADS FOR THEIR CUSTOMERS, WHILE SIGNING UP THOUSANDS OF USERS WHO WILL COMPETE FOR BANDWIDTH. IF HOSTED PAGES ARE TOO SLOW, THEN YOUR SITE WON'T BE DELIVERING A QUALITY SERVICE TO YOUR VISITORS. THE BEST BET IS TO TAKE A LOOK AT SOME OF THE HOSTED SITES OFFERED BY A SERVICE, AND SEE HOW LONG THEY TAKE TO LOAD.

## MAILING LISTS & CGI SCRIPTS

AS A NEW WEBMASTER, YOU MAY BE UNFAMILIAR WITH SOME OF THE ADVANCED SERVICES YOU CAN OFFER VISITORS TO YOUR SITE. WITH MAILING LISTS, YOU CAN SEND EMAIL OUT REGULARLY TO YOUR SITE VISITORS, LETTING THEM KNOW ABOUT NEW CONTENT AND ESTABLISHING A DIALOG WITH THEM. WITH CGI SCRIPTS, YOU CAN CREATE DYNAMIC PAGES AND FORMS FOR USERS TO FILL OUT. WITH ENOUGH PRACTISE YOU COULD EVEN SET UP ONLINE PRODUCT ENTRY FORMS, TO SELL PRODUCTS ON THE WEB. THESE ADVANCED FEATURES GO BEYOND THE SCOPE OF THIS LESSON, BUT ARE HANDY FEATURES YOU SHOULD LOOK OUT FOR WHEN SHOPPING FOR A WEB HOST.



## DATABASE SUPPORT

SOME WEB HOSTS OFFER DATABASE SUPPORT (SUCH AS MYSQL, OR MICROSOFT ACCESS). NOT ALL WEBMASTERS WILL HAVE A USE FOR THIS, BUT IF YOU'RE ALREADY FAMILIAR WITH DATABASES, YOU MAY BE ABLE TO PUT THEM TO GOOD USE ON YOUR SITE. BE WARY THOUGH - NOT ALL SITES OFFER TECHNICAL SUPPORT FOR DATABASES, AND SOME WILL CHARGE EXTRA TO CREATE YOUR INITIAL DATABASE ACCOUNT.





## FRONTPAGE SERVER EXTENSIONS

IF YOU USE FRONTPAGE TO CREATE YOUR WEBSITES, THIS REQUIREMENT IS AN ABSOLUTE MUST! FRONTPAGE SERVER EXTENSIONS ALLOW YOU TO PUBLISH YOUR WEBSITE TO A HOSTING SERVICE SIMPLY BY CLICKING THE PUBLISH BUTTON - THERE'S NO NEED TO MANUALLY UPLOAD FILES VIA FTP. WITH THE SERVER EXTENSIONS, ALL YOUR DYNAMIC FRONTPAGE COMPONENTS WILL WORK PROPERLY, SUCH AS THE COUNTER OR SEARCH FORM COMPONENTS. OF COURSE, IF YOU DON'T USE FRONTPAGE, YOU WON'T NOTICE ANY DIFFERENCE :)

## UNLIMITED DOWNLOAD/ACCESSES

MANY SITES HAVE HIDDEN CHARGES, FOR HIGH VOLUME WEB SITES. PERHAPS YOUR SITE WON'T BE TARGETING MANY USERS, BUT IF IT SUDDENLY GROWS IN SIZE, YOU DON'T WANT TO BE HIT WITH HIGH VOLUME CHARGES.

SOME SITES OFFER 1GB PER MONTH, WHICH SHOULD BE SUFFICIENT FOR ALMOST ANY SITE (UNLESS YOU DISTRIBUTE LARGE FILES, OR HAVE A MASS FOLLOWING).

ONE THING TO BE WARY OF IS GOING WITH PROVIDERS THAT DON'T CARE HOW MUCH VOLUME OF TRAFFIC YOU USE, AND HOST HUNDREDS AND HUNDREDS OF USERS ON THE SAME MACHINE/NETWORK CONNECTION. IF EVERYONE IS SENDING OUT TENS OF GIGABYTES A MONTH, YOUR SITE WILL BE SLOW. IT PAYS TO LOOK AT THE SPEED OF SOME OF THE SITES HOSTED BY A SERVICE BEFORE COMMITTING.



## ALLOWS COMMERCIAL SITES

YOU PROBABLY WON'T THINK OF YOUR HOMEPAGE AS A COMMERCIAL SITE YET, BUT ONCE YOU BEGIN TO ADD ADVERTISING BANNERS TO YOUR SITE YOU'VE ALREADY STEPPED OVER TO THE DARK SIDE! MOST COMMERCIAL SERVICES WILL, BUT IT ALWAYS PAYS TO CHECK.

## FULL VIRTUAL HOSTING

THIS GETS A LITTLE TECHNICAL, BUT THERE ARE THREE TYPES OF HOSTING ACCOUNTS.

NON-VIRTUAL HOSTING GIVES YOU A URL SUCH AS  
HTTP://WWW.GEOCITIES.COM/~YOURWEBSITE/


SEMI-VIRTUAL HOSTING GIVES YOU A URL SUCH AS HTTP://MYPAGE.HOSTING.COM/

FULL-VIRTUAL HOSTING GIVES YOU A URL SUCH AS HTTP://WWW.YOURWEBSITE.COM/

WHICH LOOKS BETTER? THE LAST IS MORE PROFESSIONAL, AND PEOPLE WON'T EVEN KNOW YOUR SITE IS BEING HOSTED.

## OWN DOMAIN NAME

IF YOU'RE NOT INTERESTED IN YOUR OWN DOMAIN NAME, YOU MAY WANT TO GO WITH A SEMI-VIRTUAL HOST.

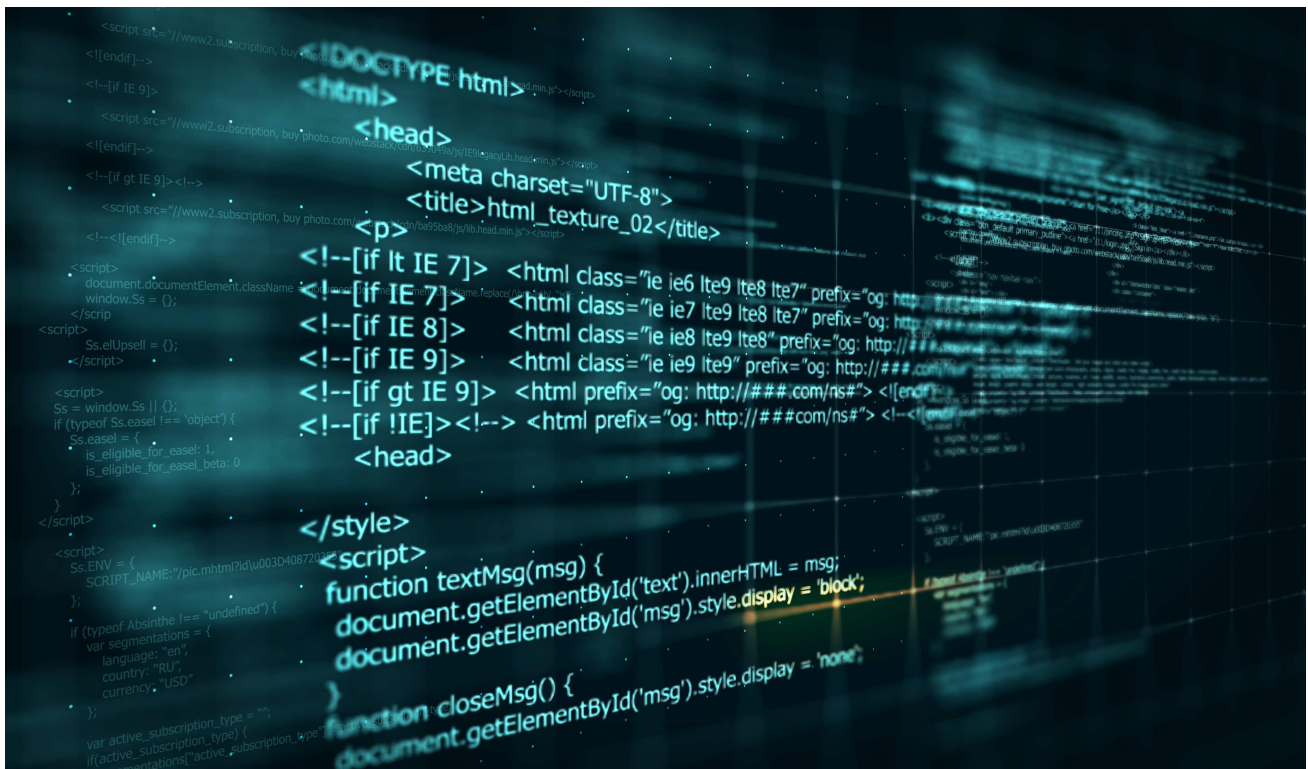


HOWEVER, YOUR OWN DOMAIN NAME MAKES YOUR SITE LOOK PROFESSIONAL, AND IS THE SAME STATUS SYMBOL THAT AN EMAIL ADDRESS WOULD HAVE BEEN THREE OR FOUR YEARS AGO. REMEMBER, HOWEVER, THAT DOMAIN NAME REGISTRATION ISN'T HANDLED BY YOUR HOSTING SERVICE - THERE IS AN ADDITIONAL FEE ASSOCIATED WITH THIS IMPOSED BY INTERNIC.

## POSSIBLE CHOICES

HERE ARE A FEW WEB HOSTING PROVIDERS THAT YOU MAY BE INTERESTED. EACH ONE COMES COMPLETE WITH THEIR ADVERTISING COPY, SO YOU'LL HAVE A BASIC IDEA OF WHAT THEY'RE ABOUT (WITH THE EXCEPTION OF IPERWEB, THESE ARE THEIR WORDS, NOT MINE).

- PRECISION WEB HOSTING AND DESIGN - WEB HOSTING FOR \$19.95 (IF PAID QUARTERLY) FREE SHOPPING CART, FREE ACCESS TO OUR SECURE SERVER,FULL CGI-BIN, WEB STATS, 20 E-MAIL ADDRESSES, 20 MEGABYTES SERVER SPACE, FRONT PAGE AND VIRTUAL HOSTING
- NETNATION COMMUNICATIONS - WEB HOSTING, DOMAIN NAME REGISTRATION - HIGH PERFORMANCE WEB HOSTING AND DOMAIN NAME REGISTRATION.



•ADGRAFIX VIRTUAL SERVER SYSTEMS - ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE - HOST YOUR WEBSITE WITH THE BEST HOSTING COMPANY AVAILABLE. ADGRAFIX VIRTUAL SERVER SYSTEMS OFFERS YOU HIGH QUALITY WEBSITE SERVERS, WITH EXCELLENT CUSTOMER SUPPORT AND QUALITY THAT IS UNMATCHED IN THE INDUSTRY.

•IPERWEB - GOOD SERVICE AT REASONABLE RATES (THIS IS THE WEB HOST THAT I USE)

TASK TWO - IF YOU'RE NOT SATISFIED WITH THE LIMITATIONS OF 'FREE' HOSTING, THEN EXAMINE SOME OF THE SERVICES OFFERED BY COMMERCIAL SERVICES. TAKE A LOOK AT TWO OR THREE COMMERCIAL SERVICES, AND COMPARE THE SERVICES AND PRICES THEY OFFER. WHAT FEATURES DO YOU REALLY REQUIRE? WHAT FEATURES ARE YOU WILLING TO SACRIFICE TO REDUCE COSTS? IF THE LIST ABOVE DOESN'T MEET WITH YOUR NEEDS, LOOK AT THE TOPHOST SITE TO FIND OUT MORE INFORMATION. REMEMBER - YOU SHOULDN'T RUSH IN AND HOST WITH JUST ANYONE.

## SUMMARY

FINDING A SUITABLE WEB HOSTING SERVICE PROVIDER, WHETHER FREE OR COMMERCIAL, ISN'T AN EASY TASK. THERE'S SO MUCH INFORMATION TO READ, AND SO MANY SERVICES TO CHOOSE FROM. WHILE I CAN'T OFFER AN 'IDEAL' SERVICE THAT FITS EVERYONE, HOPEFULLY YOU WILL NOW BE BETTER EQUIPPED TO CHOOSE A HOSTING SERVICE.



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