



Website Development Toolkit

Design and layout advice

Anyone using your website should be able to find it easy to navigate, and any content on your website must be both easy to find and relevant to what the visitor is looking for - an overly complex website risks frustrating visitors and by extension losing the company traffic. Below are some helpful design tips:

- Embracing white space can give a clean image and improve a visitor's overall experience by helping make a webpage appear less cluttered and increasing the likelihood that visitors will engage with your content.
- Use free social media websites to create mood boards, which can be essential for brainstorming possible colour schemes and design ideas.
- Ensure that your pages load quickly as many companies continue to fall into the trap of having web pages that load slowly despite recent increases in speed of the internet, an affliction that risks causing visitors to look elsewhere for their content.
- Ensure that you have a logo that will distinguish your organisation from others that are around, as a recognisable and memorable logo is one of the best investments that a business can make as customers are more likely to remember a company for their logo above all else.



Website design and development

Customers today now have access to thousands of websites that promise to cater to their needs and organisations, aware of the options that are now available to consumers, will try to perfect their websites - including their design - in the interests of efficiency. Good design can improve the web experience of visitors while also communicating a positive first impression of an organisation. Below are some tips on what to do and what not to do when it comes to website design and development.

Tips on what to do

1. Phase out side bars, which can be used to help make the customer experience easier by allowing customers to locate the necessary information quicker but can also generate clutter and can make a website look daunting and hard to navigate.
2. Meet with your team to help bounce ideas off each other as this can give you more options in terms of the site's creative elements. This process can involve drawing up paper copies of potential ideas, brain storming using mood boards and deciding on themes, and can smoothen out the design process going forward.
3. Try to follow a colour scheme, especially one that follows that of your company logo as that will reinforce the values of the company and make the site experience more memorable.
4. Ensure that you have an 'About' section, as not every visitor will have knowledge about the company's goal. An 'About' section allows you to clearly outline this and can also provide an opportunity to outline the company's values.
5. Ensure that all information is concise and to the point and irrelevant content is kept to a minimum, for the benefit of both the organisation and the end user.
6. It's easy to get lost in complex designs and forget the experience of the final user, but it's paramount that you consider the usability of the website throughout its creation.

Tips on what not to do

1. Small fonts are not only hard to read but can also make your website appear busy and overloaded, to the detriment of the user experience. Depending on levels of content and imagery, try to keep it to font size 12-14. In the interests of a consistent user experience free from distractions, it's also important to consider a uniform font style as well as standard sizing.
2. Low contrast fonts - i.e. a website having a light background and a light font - can immediately make it harder for people to read. Bear this in mind during the design process, as what can appear a minor consideration can drastically alter a user's experience.
3. While it's easy to be tempted by the income streams on-site advertisements can bring, it's important to balance it with creating a pleasant visitor experience. Overloading and bombarding them will rapidly exhaust user goodwill and detract from your own content.



Where to go for development support

Many options exist for development support, the majority of which are accessible online, allowing you to access them wherever you are. Investing in good development support ensures your online presence conveys the best possible image of an organisation. Some examples of website design and development support can include:

	Free trial availability?	Low price? (basic package)	Do many reputable companies use this website?	Does the company offer much support using the software?	Do they have examples of the work they have done?	Do they tailor their packages to your needs?
Pragmatic	X	X	✓	✓	✓	✓
Redweb	X	X	✓	✓	✓	✓
Cyberduck	X	X	✓	✓	✓	✓
Moove Agency	X	X	X	✓	✓	✓
Brown Owl Creative	X	X	X	X	✓	✓
Human Made	X	X	✓	X	✓	✓
Audacia	X	X	✓	✓	✓	✓

*The majority of these companies do not list their packages because they want to tailor all requests.

Naturally, many more options exist, however these are some of the top rated website design and development agencies that we have found.

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Below is a breakdown of how much it will cost for web development:

	Basic	Middle range	Top range
Initial cost	£120.99	£123	£1810
Cost of first website	£400	£770	£770+
Cost of a small business website	£1,000	£3,500	£4,000+
Cost of a medium sized website	£1,800	£3,500	£6,700
Cost of a large business website	£2,500	£5,000	£11,000
Other website costs	£100	£300	£500+

Those wanting to avoid the expense of paying for a web designer can consider using a website builder - tools that allow users to quickly and efficiently create an attractive looking website - as an alternative. Below is a table of some recommended web builders, all of which provide their customers with free trials and will allow you to build a basic website.

Website builder	Best for	Cost	Star rating
Wix	All-round	Free version	5*
Squarespace	Excellent templates	£9.40 per month	5*
Weebly	Ease of use	Free version	4*
Shopify	Ecommerce	£23 per month	5*
Big Commerce	Ecommerce	£23 per month	4*
1&1	Choice of templates	£6.99 per month	4*
Stiebuilder.com	Keeping it simple	Free version	3*
Site123	Speedy set-up	Free version	3*

Meta description

A short paragraph that describes the HTML content to potential visitors, meta data gives an indication of what the whole website is about, and the more descriptive, attractive and relevant the description the more likely someone will click through. Below is a check list of information that should be included when writing good meta description:

- Make sure that the most important keywords for the webpage show up in the meta description, as users will typically read the meta description to compare the website's content against their own needs.
- Write legible, readable information, as while meta description is very important when trying to attract visitors overloading your meta description to a point where it is ineligible can be detrimental.
- Try to keep your meta description concise otherwise you risk Google cutting the ends off - the typical allowance is 160 characters. Having meta descriptions that are long and descriptive may not convey the information necessary to ensure potential visitors have a clear picture of the site's content
- Do not duplicate Meta descriptions as copying them from page to page can not only come across as informal but can also give the impression that the firm doesn't care about getting site traffic. Therefore, meta descriptions need to be written differently for every page.



SEO

Having appropriate search engine optimization (SEO) can help to maximise site visitors by attempting to improve search engine rankings, as a search engine unable to find your site means an organisation risks losing potential visitors and site traffic. Here are some tips to ensure you have effective SEO:

- Do not use hashtags (#) in your URL as not only does this make it difficult for Google to find your site, but visitors may find it difficult to remember your site address.
- Allow customers to instantly access your website, as loading multiple pages can give way to cross referencing and spot checking. Organisations wanting to increase mobile traffic can use tools such as Google AMP to allow visitors to instantly open your web page.
- Regularly test the speed of your webpage to ensure an optimised user experience, using software tools such as Google Page Insights, Pingdom, Metrix and WebPageTest.



Heatmaps

While traffic and website analytics can be very complex and difficult to interpret, many tools now exist to aid our understanding and make the job easier.

One of the ways to analyse traffic on your website is through heat mapping, a graphical representation of data which can be used to analyse where visitors look when they are on your website, where they click and also how far they scroll down your page. Like many other aspects of data analysis there are many different heatmaps that can be used such as:

Click maps:

- A click map is a visual representation of where people click. Red is typically associated with lots of clicks and green is typically equals fewer clicks.
- It displays clicks and non-clicks - the latter means that if there is an image or text that people think is a link and they click on it, then it will show up in the click map.

Attention maps:

- These show which areas of the page have been viewed the most by the user's browser. Attention maps can also take into account different screen sizes and resolutions and show which part of the page has been viewed the most.

Scroll maps:

- This type of heat map can show you how far people scroll down your webpage (scroll depth) - this can be useful irrespective of your level of content, and analysing scroll maps will also help you to prioritise your web materials.
- You are able to look at the scroll to see where the most drop - off points are

User session replays:

- Useful for observing how people navigate, video sessions allow you to see how they navigate your website . Session replay tools include:
 - Hotjar
 - Inspectlet
 - Sessioncam
 - Clicktale

Move maps:

- Move heatmaps show where visitors have moved their mouse on their screen, allowing you to see what the visitor is focusing on.



Examples of top heat map providers:

	Free trial availability?	Low price? (basic knowledge)	Do many reputable companies use this website?	Does the company offer much support using the software?	Do they provide examples of the work that they have done?	Do they tailor their package to your needs?	What heatmaps are provided?
CrazyEgg	✓	✓ £20.86	Dell, Etsy, Yahoo!	✓	✗	✗	Heatmap, Scroll map, Click map, Recordings
Heatmap Me	✓	✗ £71.95	Peugeot, Quicksilver, Netmums	✓	✓	✗	Click map
Mocking Fish	✓	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	Heatmap, Click map, Move map, Scroll map, Attention map
Lucky Orange	✓	✓	✗	✓	✗	✓	Click map, Move map, Scroll map
Map Business Online	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
Smart Look	✓	✓ £13.70	Hyundai, O2, Kiwi.com	✓	✗	✓	Click map, Move map, Scroll map

Website Security

Having a client base who have complete trust in your organisation and your products or services is vital to any business, and ensuring website security can play an important role in strengthening that relationship. Efficient website security can mean employing people with completely different skill sets and knowledge, however, and many people who claim to be IT security literate are often only referring to network security – something completely different

A web security auditor will need to keep up-to-date with new web technologies, including updates to HTML, PHP and .NET. New web technologies contribute to the constantly-improving web experience but also make it necessary to have people in an organisation able to manage both the current technologies and keep up-to-date with the latest developments. Below are some more tips on website security:

- Providing an on-site area for customer reviews can help convey trustworthiness, especially as this section will often be used as a point of reference for people who are considering a particular organisation to fulfil their needs – if this isn't feasible then providing some form of testimony can act as an alternative means to reassure site visitors.
- SSL (secure sockets layer) encryption is vital for any business who ask customers for sensitive information such as credit card details.
- Keep software up to date, as outdated software increases the chances of hackers being able to access data or spreading viruses. Up to date software will also increase both its performance and its reliability.
- Below are some free tools that will scan your website for security vulnerabilities, malware, Trojans, viruses and online threats:
 - Scan my server
 - SUCURI
 - Detectify
 - Web Inspector

