

UNDERSTANDING WEB FUNDAMENTALS

Created for for anyone looking to get online for the
first time





Website fundamentals

Welcome to our simple guide on how websites work. Whether you're a small business owner, a contractor, or part of a larger organization, this guide is designed to provide you with a basic understanding of what makes a website not just good, but great.

We have designed this practical guide for anyone looking to establish or improve their online presence. It covers the essentials of setting up a website, from choosing a domain name and web hosting to understanding web design principles that make a site user-friendly and appealing. You'll learn about different types of webpages, how to optimize your site for search engines (SEO), and the importance of securing your site with SSL to build trust with visitors.

Additionally, this guide discusses how to effectively integrate your website with social media to enhance your marketing efforts and connect with your audience on multiple platforms.

Whether you're creating a new website or refining an existing one, this document provides straightforward advice and strategies to help you navigate the online landscape successfully.

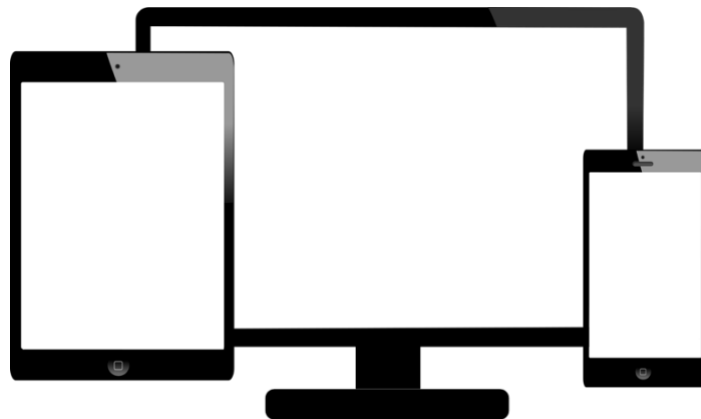




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A little about us . . .

Yoga Bloke Web Design specialises in providing simple and effective websites from NZ\$199.

We get the importance of a strong online presence for businesses of all sizes. Whether you're a not-for-profit, a small business, or an individual looking to establish your online identity, we can help. Affordably.

Web design doesn't have to be expensive. Our prices are transparent and budget-friendly, with no hidden fees. We are New Zealand based, understand how small businesses work and experienced in designing simple, good looking websites that work.

Your website should reflect who you are and what you want to say. That's why we offer tailor made designs to ensure that your brand stands out from the crowd.

And In today's mobile-centric world, having a responsive website is crucial. All of our designs are optimized for seamless viewing across desktops, tablets, and smartphones.

Find us anytime at www.yogablokewebdesign.co.nz





The Power of Websites: Why Small Businesses Need a Strong Online Presence

Today, almost 5 billion people use the internet, making a website important for businesses to reach and connect with a wide audience globally. About 81% of shoppers look online before buying something, so a good website helps sway their decision and shows that a business is trustworthy. In fact, 84% of people think businesses with websites are more credible than those with just social media pages.

- Over **4.9 billion** people worldwide use the internet. A website provides a global platform, enabling businesses to reach and engage with a vast audience beyond geographical boundaries.
- Consumer Behaviour: **81% of shoppers** conduct online research before making a purchase. Having an online presence allows businesses to influence potential customers during their decision-making process.
- Customer Expectations: **84% of consumers** believe that having a website makes a business more credible than just a social media page. A website is an integral component of meeting customer expectations and establishing a professional online presence.
- Credibility and Trust: **75% of consumers** admit to making judgments on a company's credibility based on its website design. A professionally designed website enhances trust and credibility, crucial factors in converting visitors into customers.
- Mobile Traffic: Mobile devices account for over **50% of global internet traffic**. A mobile-responsive website ensures businesses don't miss out on a significant portion of potential customers who use smartphones and tablets.
- E-commerce Growth: E-commerce sales are expected to reach **\$6.38 trillion** by 2024. A website with e-commerce capabilities positions businesses to capitalize on the growing trend of online shopping.

In today's digital age, where technology evolves at breakneck speed and consumer behaviour undergoes constant change, the significance of a robust online presence is important. For small businesses, in particular, having a website is not just an option but almost a necessity for survival and growth in a competitive marketplace.



A business's online presence, regardless of industry, can have a major impact on its success. We now know that a majority of customers will visit a website before making a purchase – it wasn't like that twenty years ago!

Having a strong online presence, particularly a website, can be make or break for generating interest, leads and of course sales. Yes, the quality of your website impacts results, but the purpose of this explanation is to stress the importance of making sure you have a website.

Credibility: One key reason you should have a website is to increase your credibility as a business. Chances are there are several providers offering a similar service to yours. One way you can stand out is by having a website that looks good and clearly communicates quality information to your consumers. Having a website is an opportunity to make a great first impression and give people comfort that you're a real business.

Showcasing your brand: By clearly establishing who you are, what you represent and what you stand for, you increase the chances of your customers buying from you. This is also something that can set you apart from your competitors. Without a website, it can be challenging to do this because people can't easily find quality and reliable information on your business.

Making your business 24/7: Many businesses get calls from prospects or existing customers asking simple questions about location and hours of operation. If you miss a call, the customer is left unhappy. Calls can also distract your staff from focusing on the most important parts of your business. A website can reduce these calls and increase internal productivity. At the same time, it helps customers find useful information without needing to call, which ultimately provides an all-around better user experience.

More effective marketing: If you plan on leveraging digital marketing (e.g. Facebook or Instagram ads) to grow your business, you'll likely want to drive traffic to a website or landing page. This is something that can't be set up retroactively, so it is best to get your website running early even if you're not planning on running ads at the moment.

In summary

The statistics at the beginning of this section underline the important role a website plays in modern business strategies, impacting visibility, credibility, and overall success. I kind of like this quote from the author Amit Kalantri:

“For customers, a website is an ‘always open’ workplace of your business”.



Crafting Excellence: What Makes a Great Website

In today's digital world, having a website is becoming increasingly important for any business. But what exactly makes a website stand out from the rest? Let's break it down in simple terms.

1. **Easy for Visitors:** A great website is easy for people to use. That means it's simple to find what they're looking for, like where to click for more info or how to get in touch with you. Imagine it like a well-organised store where everything is easy to find.
2. **Looks Awesome:** First impressions count. A great website has smart pictures, videos, or graphics that catch your eye. It's like making your website look really nice and inviting, just like decorating a room in your house.
3. **Tells a Clear Story:** Your website should tell people what you're all about in a clear and simple way. Think of it like telling a story about your business—what you do, what you stand for and why they should choose you over others.
4. **Works Smoothly:** A great website doesn't have any glitches or problems. It loads fast, the buttons work, and it's easy to scroll through. It's like having a smooth ride in a car without any bumps in the road.
5. **Works on Phones:** Most people use their phones to browse the internet, so your website needs to work well on phones too. It should look good and be easy to use, no matter if someone's using a computer, tablet, or phone.
6. **Gets Found Online:** You want people to find your website when they search online. That's where SEO comes in. It's like making your website easy for Google to understand so it shows up when people search for stuff related to your business.
7. **Always Getting Better:** A great website is always improving. You can track how people use your website and make changes to make it even better. It's like constantly upgrading your phone to get new features and make it run faster.

In the end, having a great website isn't just about having an online presence—it's about creating a positive experience for your visitors and making it easy for them to learn about your business and what you offer.



The Importance of Web Design: Building Your Online Presence

Web design is the process of creating and structuring the elements of a website, from layout to images and colours. It's vital because it shapes how users perceive your site and affects their experience. A well-designed website builds trust and credibility with visitors, while a poorly designed one can turn them away.

When web design is neglected, it can harm your brand's reputation and online performance. Users judge credibility based on website design, and a cluttered or confusing layout frustrates them. Mobile optimization is crucial too, as more people access the internet through their phones. A poorly designed website may also deter customers from engaging with your business.

In essence, web design isn't just about aesthetics; it's about creating a positive user experience that drives engagement and conversions.

The Power of Simplicity in Web Design

In the world of web design, simplicity is key. It's about stripping away unnecessary clutter and focusing on what matters most to users. A simple design guides users smoothly through their online journey, making it easy for them to find what they need and boosting engagement.

Simplicity also enhances accessibility and usability for all users, regardless of their skills or abilities. Clear layouts, easy navigation, and minimalist designs ensure everyone can access and understand the content.

Simple designs also lead to faster load times and better performance. By minimising unnecessary elements, websites load quickly and function smoothly, improving user satisfaction. Google loves this.

In today's mobile-driven world, simplicity is even more crucial. Mobile-friendly designs ensure seamless experiences across different devices, accommodating users' on-the-go lifestyles.

In essence, simplicity in web design is about creating user-friendly, trustworthy, and efficient websites that rank higher in search results.



Understanding the Different Types of Webpages Found in Websites

A webpage is like a single page within a book. It's a specific part of a website where you find content like text, pictures, or videos. Just like turning pages in a book, you navigate between webpages by clicking on links or buttons. Each webpage has its own address, called a URL, which helps you find it on the internet.

Here are some typical pages you might find in websites:

1. Home Page: The main page that visitors typically see first. It usually provides an overview of the website's content and navigation options.
2. About Us: This page provides information about the website, its purpose, mission, and the people or organisation behind it.
3. Products/Services: If the website represents a business, there may be pages dedicated to showcasing products or services offered, along with details, pricing, and purchasing options.
4. Contact Us: A page where visitors can find contact information such as email addresses, phone numbers, or contact forms to reach out to the website owner or administrator.
5. Blog/News: Pages where articles, news updates, or blog posts are published regularly to provide information, insights, or entertainment to visitors.
6. Portfolio/Gallery: Pages showcasing examples of work, projects, or creative endeavours, often accompanied by images, videos, or descriptions.
7. Testimonials: Pages featuring reviews or testimonials from satisfied customers, clients, or users of the website's products or services.
8. FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions): A page addressing common questions and providing answers to help visitors understand more about the website, its products, or services.
9. Terms of Service/Privacy Policy: Pages outlining the legal terms and conditions, privacy policies, and user agreements governing the use of the website.

Determining the Optimal Number of Pages:

The ideal number of pages for a website varies based on factors like its purpose, content type, and audience needs. Some websites may effectively convey their message with only a few pages, while others, like e-commerce platforms or news portals, require numerous pages to accommodate extensive content and functionality.

Rather than fixating on a specific page count, focus on ensuring your website offers sufficient pages to deliver value to visitors and fulfil its intended objectives. Each page should serve a clear and relevant purpose, whether providing information, showcasing products, or



engaging users. Prioritize creating high-quality content and implementing a user-friendly navigation system to enhance the overall browsing experience.

The simpler the better. For SEO purposes, having fewer pages with comprehensive content tends to be more favourable than having numerous pages with minimal content. Search engines prioritize high-quality, informative content that enriches users' experiences



Explaining Domain Names and Web Hosting

Creating a website involves two main things: a domain name and web hosting. Let's take a simple look at what each of these mean and how they work together to make your website visible on the internet.

Domain Name:

Think of a domain name like your website's address. It's what people type into their web browser to visit your site. For example, "google.com" is a domain name. It's made up of two parts: the name of the site ("google") and its extension (".com").

Every domain name has an IP address, which is a unique set of numbers that identifies where your website is located on the internet. But instead of remembering these numbers, we use domain names because they're easier for us to remember.

Web Hosting:

Web hosting is like renting space on the internet to store all the files and data that make up your website. Just like you need a physical space to store your belongings, you need web hosting to store your website's information.

When someone types in your domain name, their computer sends a request to the server where your website is hosted. This server then sends all the necessary files and data back to the user's computer, allowing them to see your website on their screen.

Interconnection between the two:

Domain names and web hosting work together to make your website accessible. Without a domain name, people wouldn't know how to find your site. And without web hosting, there would be nowhere for your website's files to live.

In simple terms, you can think of a domain name as your website's address, like a street address for a house. And web hosting is like the house itself, where all your website's stuff is stored.

It's often easier to get both your domain name and web hosting from the same company. This way, everything is managed in one place, making it simpler for you to set up and manage your website.



Demystifying Search Engine Optimization (SEO)

In today's online world, getting noticed amidst the sea of websites is crucial. That's where Search Engine Optimization (SEO) comes in. SEO is all about making your website more visible on search engines like Google.

What SEO Involves

SEO is about tweaking your website to make it more attractive to search engines. This includes improving the website's code, using the right keywords in your content, and getting other reputable websites to link to yours. At a basic level it's about:

- **Keywords:** Finding relevant keywords that potential visitors might use to search for your content.
- **Content Quality:** Creating engaging, informative, and original content.
- **On-Page Optimization:** Using keywords in your titles, descriptions, and throughout your content. And structuring your content with clear headings.
- **Mobile-Friendly Design:** Making sure your website works well on mobile devices.
- **Website Speed:** Ensuring your website loads quickly.
- **Internal Linking:** Linking your pages together wisely to keep visitors on your site longer.
- **Backlinks:** Trying to get other reputable websites to link to your site.
- **Social Media:** Sharing your content on social media platforms to increase exposure.
- **Monitor and Improve:** Using tools like Google Analytics to track how well your site performs and find areas to improve.

Understanding Search Engines

To do SEO well, you need to understand how search engines work. Search engines are like super-smart librarians. They scour the internet, gathering information about websites and storing it in their massive catalogues. When you search for something, they quickly sift through all that information to find the most relevant websites to show you.

Here's a simple breakdown of how they work:

1. **Crawling:** Search engines use programs called "crawlers" or "spiders" to discover new and updated content on the web, such as web pages, images, and videos. These crawlers follow links from one page to another, gathering information.



2. **Indexing:** After crawling content, the search engine organizes and stores this information in an index, a huge database of all the content they've found and deem good enough to serve up to users.
3. **Ranking:** When you type a query into a search engine, it sorts through its index to find the most relevant and useful results. It uses algorithms, which are sets of rules and signals, to assess the relevance of pages in its index based on factors like keywords, site usability, and content quality.
4. **Displaying Results:** The search engine then displays the results in an ordered list, typically referred to as search engine results pages (SERPs). The most relevant results appear at the top, making it easier for you to find what you need.

The Importance of Google

Google dominates the search engine market, holding a significant majority of the global search engine market share. This means that the majority of your potential website visitors are likely using Google to find your site.

Because of its popularity and influence, Google sets the standards for what makes a website good or bad in the eyes of search engines. Google's algorithms prioritize sites that provide a good user experience, are mobile-friendly, load quickly, and have high-quality, relevant content.

In summary

SEO is a vital tool for standing out online. By mastering its basics and adapting to changes, you can ensure your website gets the attention it deserves in the crowded digital landscape, especially on Google, the king of search engines. And remember, understanding how search engines work is the first step toward mastering SEO and getting your website noticed.



What is SSL?

SSL, or Secure Sockets Layer, is like a lock that keeps your online information safe when you visit certain websites. When you see a URL starting with <https://>, it means the connection is secure.

When a website is protected by SSL (Secure Sockets Layer), it offers a layer of security that's important in the digital age, acting as a safeguard for the sensitive information exchanged online. This encryption protocol turns personal and financial data into unreadable text until it reaches its intended destination, making it nearly impossible for hackers to decipher.

For customers, the presence of SSL—indicated by the padlock icon in the browser's address bar and the "https" in the website's URL—signals that the site they are visiting takes their privacy and security seriously.

This assurance fosters a sense of safety and trust, encouraging them to engage with the site more freely, whether it's to make a purchase, sign up for a service, or share personal information.

Not only that, Google has confirmed that it uses HTTPS as a ranking signal. Websites with SSL certificates may experience an improvement in their search engine ranking positions (SERPs).

It has been reported that users are more likely to stay on a website that appears secure. A recent study has revealed that 82% of respondents would leave a website if they noticed it wasn't secure. SSL-certified websites can therefore expect lower bounce rates as visitors feel safer browsing and are less likely to leave immediately due to security concerns.



Making your website work in an integrated way with social media

Which is most important – social media or your website? Where should you prioritise resources to market your business?

If you're not already, you should be using social media platforms and your website *together* to get the most out of both. The two go hand in hand.

Social media is an excellent marketing channel to grow an audience within your niche. Increase search traffic, facilitate deeper engagement, and boost leads and sales via your website.

Let's break down how each of these online assets plays an integral role in your online presence.

Your website's role

Your website is your home base on the web. It's where you have complete control of your online brand, so your business looks professional to prospects and partners. It's where you can outline all of the key features and benefits of your products and services; your audience can spend more time diving into what you do. Producing content and resources will help grow search traffic to your brand. With tools like Google Analytics, your website makes tracking and optimizing your online marketing and advertising possible.

A professional website also gives your business some insurance against unpredictable algorithms. You're at the mercy of Facebook, Tiktok, Twitter, Pinterest, or LinkedIn's priorities when it comes to social media. They can change their algorithm, and you're no longer reaching your audience without notice. Therefore, it's important to build traffic to your website and grow an email list so you can always connect with your audience.

Social media's role

Social media plays an important role in building trust with potential customers and establishing credibility within your industry or niche. By leveraging social channels like Facebook, TikTok, Twitter, Pinterest, or LinkedIn, you can reach a wide audience where they already spend a significant amount of time. Social media provides an opportunity to position your brand as a valuable resource by sharing informative content, engaging with your audience, and fostering meaningful interactions. It allows you to deepen engagement and cultivate relationships that can ultimately convert individuals into leads or customers.



Additionally, social media offers the advantage of virality, as users can easily share your content with their networks, potentially expanding your brand's reach exponentially. By utilizing social media strategically, you can amplify your online presence and complement your website's efforts in driving traffic, generating leads, and connecting with your target audience.

Integrating your website and social media presence

Rather than operating in isolation, businesses are increasingly integrating their website and social media strategies to maximise reach and engagement with the target audience.

The "Hub and Spoke" model is a useful metaphor for understanding how a business's website and social media channels can work together. The website acts as the "hub," the central point of authority and content depth. In contrast, the social media channels serve as the "spokes," extending the reach of the website's content and driving traffic back to the hub. This model emphasizes the importance of using social media to expand the audience while relying on the website to provide a deeper engagement with the brand.

- Consistency in branding across the website and social media platforms is crucial. This includes the use of logos, colour schemes, and messaging tone. Seamless branding ensures that the audience receives a uniform experience, which helps in building brand recognition and trust. It's important for businesses to ensure that when a user transitions from a social media profile to the website, the experience feels continuous and cohesive.
- Content serves as the bridge between a business's website and its social media presence. By creating valuable and relevant content for the target audience, businesses can engage users on social media and entice them to visit the website for more in-depth information. This could include blog posts, whitepapers, or case studies hosted on the website, promoted through social media channels. The key is to tailor the content for each platform while maintaining a clear link back to the website.
- Social media platforms are invaluable for gathering customer feedback and engaging in two-way communication. By monitoring social media interactions, businesses can gain insights into customer preferences, concerns, and questions. This feedback can inform website updates, content creation, and overall strategy, ensuring that the business remains responsive to its audience's needs.

Running integrated marketing campaigns across both the website and social media platforms can amplify their impact. For example, a new product launch can be teased on social media, driving users to sign up for more information on the website. Such campaigns should be designed to leverage the strengths of each platform, using social media for broad reach and engagement, and the website for detailed information and conversions.



2024's Top Social Media Platforms

- Facebook** Facebook remains one of the most widely used social networking platforms globally. It allows users to connect with friends and family, share updates, photos, and videos, join groups, and follow pages of interest. Estimated Subscribers: Over 2.8 billion monthly active users.
- Instagram** Instagram is a photo and video-sharing platform known for its visually appealing content. Users can post photos and short videos, apply filters and effects, and engage with content through likes, comments, and direct messages. Estimated Subscribers: Over 1.5 billion monthly active users.
- TikTok** TikTok has taken the social media world by storm with its short-form video content. Users can create and share videos set to music, explore trending challenges and hashtags, and engage with a diverse range of content creators. Estimated Subscribers: Over 1.3 billion monthly active users.
- X** X, commonly referred to by its former name Twitter, is a prominent social media website headquartered in the United States. It is one of the world's largest social networks, with more than 500 million users, making it the fifth-most visited website globally. The platform allows users to share text messages, images, and videos, known as "tweets."
- LinkedIn** LinkedIn is a professional networking platform designed for career development, networking, and business connections. Users can create professional profiles, connect with colleagues and industry professionals, join groups, and access job listings and industry news. Estimated Subscribers: Over 400 million monthly active users.
- YouTube** YouTube is the largest video-sharing platform globally, allowing users to upload, view, and share videos on a wide range of topics. It serves as a hub for entertainment, education, tutorials, product reviews, and more. Estimated Subscribers: Over 2 billion logged-in monthly users.



In Conclusion . . .

We hope you enjoyed our simple guide.

We covered the basics of defining why having a website is important for small business and what separates a good website from a bad one. We talked about domain names, web hosting, web design, Search Engine Optimisation (SEO), SSL security and the importance of optimising your website with social media.

Whether or not you are interested in building or designing your own website, having a reasonable understanding of how they work is a good thing. It may help you communicate with those who are assisting you with the build, you can trouble-shoot minor issues and it may make you make better informed when it comes to spending money on digital marketing.

We have deliberately pitched the level of detail to those who are likely to be new to websites, and so our apologies if your experience means you find this too light! The web is a glorious depository of information, and so you can always delve deeper, whenever you want.

We would love to help you get your new website off the ground. Smartly and affordably. You can find us anytime at <https://www.yogablokewebdesign.co.nz/>

