



# Building Websites

By Erich - 7:10 AM 5/6/2015

Planning a new website involves many choices: What type of hosting to use, how to target both **mobile and desktop clients**, and what type of editing program you will use for the initial site development and later updates. Because of the time you will invest, these can be important points to consider up front.

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## Website Builder vs. Web Templates

Choosing to use either a web builder program or a self contained HTML web template.

Consideration	Site Builder	Web Template
<b>What is it?</b>	<p>A website builder is a proprietary on-line editing program that allows you to choose a design and enter your information through a web browser interface to build a website.</p> <p>Web builder programs are offered by sites like Wix, Weebly, Squarespace, web.com and Godaddy.</p>	<p>Web templates are stand alone or self contained downloaded websites that are edited on your computer hard drive.</p> <p>This is the type of websites we offer, however we will try to remain neutral in our viewpoint in this article.</p>
<b>Mobile compliance</b>	<p>Site builders have been updating their programs to be responsive and mobile friendly. Care should be taken when selecting the company you use. See links below for some helpful websites.</p>	<p>If you select either a responsive design, or a full site that includes a mobile version, your site will be fully compliant and pass the <a href="#">Google Mobile-Friendly Test</a>.</p> <p>You can better target mobile devices by using a full site that includes a dedicated <a href="#">mobile sub-site</a>.</p>
<b>SEO</b>	<p>Allows for search engine optimization, depending on the site builder you choose, however if you read some on-line articles many users have found it difficult to do in-depth SEO and many SEO firms will not work with this type of system.</p> <p>Down the road this can be problematic if you are trying to get good rankings in search engines, however site builder programs do regular updates and realize that this is a main concern of their clients.</p>	<p>Allows for full freedom of search engine optimization and you can hire any SEO firm to review and work on your website.</p>
<b>Ease of use</b>	<p>Because you do not have to deal with any HTML code this is generally an easier system to work with. Additionally, with the better programs you can change to an entirely new design at any time.</p> <p>Keep in mind that although this sounds like an easier system you still need to enter your website info and images, much like if you are using an HTML editing program.</p> <p>You do need to learn the proprietary editing program. If you switch companies you will then need to learn a new system.</p> <p><b>Advantage:</b> You can change to a totally new design easily. Little or no code editing required.</p>	<p>Webpages can be edited using any wysiwyg editing program. In essence HTML editing software works like a website builder. Once you learn your software you do not need to re-learn it if you switch hosts.</p> <p>Webpages need to be FTP uploaded or published. Depending on your editing software this may be an extra step you'll need to do when updating.</p> <p>If you plan any layout changes you'll need to learn how HTML and CSS code works. Major design changes may require redoing your website. Minor changes can be done by editing the global css style file.</p> <p><b>Advantage:</b> You can use the same editing program with any company. Font and color changes are global.</p>

<p><b>The inner workings</b></p>	<p>What most people do not consider is that this type of system still requires work. Most of the time spent in web development is writing your page copy, creating images and updating for SEO.</p> <p>As an example, if you want to add you own images to the webpages each image is selected and uploaded one at a time. If you want bold text, you still have to select it and make it bold.</p>	<p>You will need to learn some aspects of how css and html code work, particularly if you plan any layout changes.</p> <p>Webpages are updated off line and then uploaded in a group. Optionally you can use any web hosting control panel editor or CMS and update directly on the live website. Some HTML software also allows for this.</p>
<p><b>Setup time</b></p>	<p>In reality setup time is not a factor.</p> <p>It is a common myth that you can setup your website in minutes using this type of program. You still need to plan and write copy for your website, learn the website builder system, then enter your info, links, images and seo into your website though the site builder interface.</p>	<p>I believe using templates is just as fast, but may involve some extra learning. If you plan to setup a number of websites this route may be even faster.</p> <p>As an example I setup the homepage on <a href="http://mobi-hybrid.com">mobi-hybrid.com</a>, using one of our templates in under one hour. This is because it involved no extra time learning an interface or how to use the template. Not a totally fair real world test, but it gives you the idea of how fast self contained HTML templates can be.</p>
<p><b>Future considerations</b></p>	<p>This system updates your code for you keeping pace with changes in web development.</p> <p>Because it is proprietary, you'll need to redo your website if you, for example, change to another company because you are dissatisfied, or if they were to go out of business. You will lose all your work.</p>	<p>A website is dynamic. Although templates include global css style files for design layout, in some cases updating to new code as the web evolves may require using a new template and re-doing your website.</p> <p>Your entire website is backed up on your computer so you can move it to any web hosting service at any time.</p>
<p><b>Visitor experience</b></p>	<p>Website builder programs include a library of user applications and widgets you can easily add to the pages. Most do allow for Youtube video (and many others). In some cases adding 3rd party applications can be very difficult or may not be possible.</p>	<p>Your site can include any 3rd party user applications you choose. How easily they can be added depends on the script creator, their instructions and your html skills and editing software.</p> <p>As an example, adding a Youtube video to a template requires pasting one line of code into the webpage.</p>
<p><b>Images</b></p>	<p>Stock photos are included but it is usually a small library to choose from, or extra fees will be involved or you may need to search stock photo sites for them.</p>	<p>Stock photos are included with our templates and we allow free swapping with other templates, however you may still require other types of photos. Both free and paid stock photo websites are available.</p>
<p><b>Often overlooked</b></p>	<p>When you start a new website it will be small and simple, but in most cases, as the website evolves, webmasters usually want to make changes, add elements and more widgets and apps. The site begins to expand in size. Great care should be taken when choosing the site builder company you go with. This type of system is much more limiting as to what can be added to a website.</p> <p>Some of the more advanced site builders do allow you to add and edit the html code for more customization, however, if you go this route then you cannot easily change to a different design at a later date.</p> <p><b>Advantage:</b> Website builders error check and test your webpages automatically.</p>	<p>Using a web browser off-line on your computer allows you to quickly review all your webpages and files. It is much easier to understand and maintain large websites.</p> <p>It can be easy to mess up a webpage if you add the code incorrectly, or even miss one simple code closing tag. Testing and error checking should be done with every update.</p> <p>A content management system (CMS), through the web host control panel, can be used to edit a stand alone web template.</p> <p><b>Advantage:</b> Easier to review your files and website structure.</p>

<p><b>Best choice when...</b></p>	<p>You want all aspects of web development in one system and do not want to deal with many different software programs.</p> <p>You do not plan to do a lot of SEO.</p> <p>Do not require 3rd party applications.</p> <p>You want your site to update automatically when web standards change.</p> <p><b>Best For:</b> Small websites that will have few updates.</p>	<p>You want total creative freedom.</p> <p>Want to learn about web design.</p> <p>Need a very professional website you can totally control.</p> <p>Plan a lot of SEO and want full control over how your site is ranked in search engines.</p> <p><b>Best For:</b> Larger websites that will include a lot of content and regular updates.</p>
<p><b>Support</b></p>	<p>In most cases the support will be from people who are "staffed out" and trained to cover normal support issues. You will usually be directed to a video for help.</p> <p>If you do some searches for any website builder company you will most likely find customer reviews both positive and negative. Some users saying it is absolutely the best experience they've ever had and others saying the "worst customer service ever".</p>	<p>Highly trained, we cover all aspects of web template setup and you deal directly with the programmers who build our templates. We are a small company and do not staff out our support. We are experienced in providing plain English answers to technical questions.</p> <p>We offer one of the very <b>best support sites in the industry.</b></p>
<p><b>Backups</b></p>	<p>Your site is backed up in their system. This is a proprietary backup and only works through the host company.</p>	<p>Since this is a stand alone downloaded website, then is uploaded, you will always have a backup on your hard drive and can copy that to a thumb drive or another computer.</p>
<p><b>Limitations</b></p>	<p>Site builders are more limiting in the design. For example, if you want to add a small icon image in a specific spot it may not be possible.</p>	<p>Allows more creative freedom, however for example, if you want to add a small icon image in a specific spot you will have to learn how.</p>
<p><b>Goals</b></p>	<p>Consider what your business is and where it will be in 5-10 years. Are links from searches important or will most users visit your site from an ad or business card? Is it just a showcase for your company or a way to generate revenue and leads. High search ranking will not be as easy with this choice.</p>	<p>Do you plan a large elaborate website with all the bells and whistles? Do you go nuts if you cannot have this one plant in this exact spot? More difficult to work with, this choice allows much more creative freedom.</p> <p>Additionally, if you choose a full site with a separate mobile version to better target mobile, it will be even more work.</p>
<p><b>Choices</b></p>	<p>Investigate each company before you choose. Each one works differently and has different options available. Do some searches and read some reviews.</p> <p>With any site builder program it involves starting over if you decide you don't like the company you started with.</p>	<p>Just use our templates because they're the best anyway.</p>
<p><b>Price</b></p>	<p>Often available for free, however advertisements are usually included on the webpages. Basic plans are cheap but if you are building a serious website then you will need the business or VIP or ultimate or "whatever" plan. This will be around \$25.00 per month or \$288.00 per year.</p>	<p>By contrast, our templates range in price from \$20.00 to \$150.00. That works out to \$12.50 per month if you choose the top (or, uh.. ultimate) template we offer (will then be \$0 the second year). Factor in that now you do not need the web host template interface with the website builder program and this works out to about the same price.</p>

<p><b>Priorities</b></p>	<p>The real question here is <b>how important is my website?</b> Site builder programs do allow for an easier setup, but with anything in life easier is not always better.</p> <p>So you setup a quick website, but now do you understand how your website works? It may be worth your while to learn the nuts &amp; bolts and choosing this option skims over it. Learning a proprietary website builder interface may just be a waste of time since it does not delve into the deeper aspects of website development.</p>	<p>Is it worth my time to learn some HTML, CSS, SEO and generally how to promote my website?</p> <p>You can optionally hire a professional developer, but do they really care about your website in the end, or are they just trying to make a living?</p> <p>Stand alone web templates will help you learn exactly how a website works without the expense of hiring a custom web designer. Do you want to play with the big boys, or just have "some" website?</p>
<p><b>Our clever analogy</b></p>	<p>It's like buying a car and having all repairs done by the car sales service department. This is not necessarily a bad thing, and is a good choice for many people.</p>	<p>It's like building your own racecar. You'll want to win every race so a little extra work is going to help you get there.</p>
<p><b>Conclusion</b></p>	<p>There really is no "right or wrong" decision it depends very much on your website goals and what type of computer user you are.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Better for code updates.</li> <li>✓ Less likely that errors will slip through.</li> <li>✓ Can change to a new design more easily.</li> <li>✗ More limiting in the design and SEO.</li> </ul> <p>If you plan a small site and don't need to attend to every detail in the design, then this is the best choice. This also is a good choice if you do not want to learn at least a little about html and css code.</p>	<p>This choice allows for much more creative freedom on your website, but at a price. If you like everything exactly in this or that spot you will need to learn how the template code works.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ More creative freedom.</li> <li>✓ You can view the site plan better.</li> <li>✓ More comprehensive SEO.</li> <li>✗ More learning involved.</li> </ul> <p>Choose this if you want the best search engine rankings, if you do not mind learning new things and if you like to have your website on your computer hard drive.</p>

<p><b>Consideration</b></p>	<p><b>Site Builder</b></p>	<p><b>Web Template</b></p>
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