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WEBSITE TERMINOLOGY

30 Must-know words for small business owners getting started with their website.

Taking the time to understand a *little* jargon can make a big difference. By learning the foundational terms and concepts, you will be better equipped to make informed decisions and communicate with your team.

Below are a few keywords to remember and refer back to.

WEBSITE TERMINOLOGY

404 Error Page	Landing page
Accessibility	Meta Descriptions
Alt Text	Mobile Optimization
Analytics	Navigation Menu
Automation	Plugin (CMS)
Blog	Policies
Call to Action (CTA)	SEO
CMS	Social Media Integration
CSS	SSL
E-commerce	Theme
Footer	URL
Front-end and Back-end	User Experience (UX)
Homepage	Web Host
HTML	Website Browser
JavaScript	Website Builder

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4O4 Error Page

This is a message you see when the webpage you were looking for couldn't be found. It might happen if a specific page on a website has been moved or doesn't exist anymore. Here is an example scenario: An online shop (thecutecupstore.com) starts selling a mug that is only available for a limited time (let's call it the "Limited Edition Mug"). A blog loves the mug and writes about it in their blog and includes a link to the mug's product page (thecutecupstore.com/products/limited-edition-mug). A year later, you are reading the blog and love the mug too, so you click on the link...it takes you to a 4O4 Error Page. Why? Likely, the online shop is no longer selling it, so the product is not on their website anymore; that specific URL is not valid. But don't worry; it's a common thing, and you can usually return to the website's main page or use the search bar to find what you're looking for. It's just the Internet's way of saying, "Oops, that page is missing!" Most website builders have a default 4O4 Error Page design, but we always recommend customizing yours to reflect your brand.

Accessibility

Website accessibility is all about making sure that everyone, regardless of their abilities or disabilities, can access and use your website effectively. It's a way of creating an inclusive digital space where no one is left behind. Accessibility involves things like adding descriptive alternative text to images, proper heading structure, color contrast, and so much more.

Alt Text

Alt text (alternative text) is an invisible description added to things like images that can be read aloud through a screen reader device. This lets users understand what's happening in your content – without being able to see it.

Analytics

It's a tool that helps you understand how your website is doing, almost like looking at a report card for your online business. With Website Analytics, you can see data for things like how many people visit your website, which pages they like the most, and even where they come from, like different cities or countries. It shows you what's working and what might need some improvements. This information can help you make your website better and give your visitors a great experience. There is usually a section on the back end of your site where you can see all this data. We keep track of our analytics in a spreadsheet and update it at the beginning of each month.

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Automation

Automation is all about letting technology handle repetitive tasks that have to be done on your website daily. Some things we automate on our website and client websites are emails. You can set email automation on the back-end of your website by setting up triggers and an action for each. For example, someone goes to your website and subscribes to your newsletter. Your trigger is a new subscriber, and the action would be sending them a Welcome email automatically!

Blog

A blog on a website is like a digital journal where the website's owner shares stories, ideas, and information with visitors via posts that are published on the website. Blogs are a fantastic way to connect with an audience and build a community around your business topic and a great way to improve your SEO.

Call to Action

A Call to Action (CTA) is a prompt on a website that tells the user to take some specified action. It's typically a button, link, or message that encourages you to take a specific action, like "Sign Up Now," "Learn More," or "Buy Today." CTAs help you navigate and interact with the site by leading you to the next step, whether it's subscribing to a newsletter, making a purchase, or accessing more information.

CMS

A CMS (Content Management System) is a software application used to create, manage, and publish digital content on a website. It allows users to easily create and edit content without needing to know HTML or other coding languages. A CMS usually provides a back-end interface for managing content, including user management, content creation, and publishing features.

It's how most of us small business owners manage our website without having to know how to code. Think of it as a virtual filing cabinet where you can easily organize and update your website's content without needing to hire a web developer. The most popular CMSs you may have heard of are WordPress, Wix, Squarespace, and Shopify.

CSS

(Cascading Style Sheets): A stylesheet language used to define the presentation and layout of a website. Like HTML code is the structure of a website, CSS is the code responsible for the style and visual appearance. HTML and CSS are both types of code used in web development.

Think of it like this: HTML is like the blueprint of a house. It determines the structure of the house, where the walls, doors, and windows go. CSS is like the paint and decorations of the house. It determines the colors, textures, and styles that make the house look beautiful and appealing. The architect and interior designer (your web developer) gave their plans (the codes) to the builder (browsers like Google and Chrome) to build your home (your website).

E-commerce

If you plan on selling any products or services on your website, you'll have an E-commerce website. An E-commerce is like having a shop in the bustling marketplace of the Internet. It's where you can sell your products or services to people online. Just as a physical store has shelves with items to buy, an e-commerce website has webpages where customers can view, choose, and purchase what you offer. It's a bit like a cashier, too—when customers are ready to buy, they add items to their virtual shopping cart and proceed to checkout. The whole process, from browsing to buying, happens right on your website, making it convenient for both you and your customers. It's like having a store that's open 24/7, allowing people to shop from the comfort of their own homes.

E-commerce websites are designed for selling products or services, while informative websites primarily aim to provide information or content on various topics. However, it's worth noting that some websites can combine both elements, featuring informative content alongside e-commerce capabilities, like a blog with a shop section. The specific purpose of a website depends on the goals of the business or individual behind it.

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Footer

A website footer is the section of a webpage that appears at the bottom of the page. It typically contains information and links that are common across multiple pages on a website. The footer is an important element of web design because it provides users with access to important information, enhances navigation, and helps establish the credibility and professionalism of a website. Common elements found in a website footer include Contact Information, Copyright Notice, Privacy Policy and Terms of Service, Social Media Icons, Newsletter Signup, and Additional navigation links that provide easy access to important sections of the website, such as About Us, FAQs, Blog, or Services.

The specific content and layout of a website footer can vary depending on the website's purpose, design, and the information it needs to convey to its users. A well-organized and informative footer can improve the user experience and make it easier for visitors to find the information they need.

Front-end and Back-end

Front-end: This is like the part of a website that you see and interact with when you visit it. It includes everything you can see on the web page, like text, images, buttons, and forms. Designers and developers work on the front-end to make the site look nice and work well for users.

Back-end: Think of the back-end as the behind-the-scenes part of a website. It's where the data is stored, and it's responsible for making things happen when you click a button on the front-end. Back-end developers work on the server, databases, and application logic that power the website.
In a way, the front-end is like the storefront of a shop that customers see, while the back-end is like the stockroom where everything is stored and processed to make the store run smoothly. Both are crucial for a website to work effectively.

Homepage

Your website's homepage is the first page someone sees when they type in your domain and is like a front door to your online space. It's the first impression visitors have of your site and contains crucial details about your business. Think of it as the center of your website, designed to help visitors easily navigate and locate what they're searching for. It's like the cover of a book, enticing visitors and providing an insight into what's inside.

HTML
(Hypertext Markup Language): The standard language used to create websites and web pages.
Think of a web page like a page in a book. HTML is the code that tells the computer how to display the content on the page, such as text, images, and videos. It helps define how the content should be structured, organized, and presented. If you are as old as I am, you may remember Myspace and learning to code to get the perfect glitter background on your profile. Website builders and CMSs often use a visual editor that allows you to create web pages without knowing how to write code.

JavaScript
A programming language used to create interactive and dynamic effects on web pages. It is what makes the website come alive by adding features such as animations, pop-up boxes, and interactive menus.
Just like how a chef follows a recipe to make a delicious meal, a web browser follows JavaScript code to make a website more engaging and responsive.
JavaScript is often used in combination with HTML and CSS to create a fully functional website. While HTML provides the structure and content of a website, and CSS provides the visual styling, JavaScript brings it all together to create a seamless and engaging user experience.

Landing Page
A landing page is a single web page designed for a specific marketing or advertising campaign with a particular goal or call to action (CTA). Unlike a full website, which typically contains multiple pages and serves a broader range of purposes, a landing page is created to capture the attention of a specific target audience and encourage them to take a specific action, such as signing up for a newsletter, downloading an ebook, making a purchase, or filling out a contact form. The primary purpose of a landing page is to convert visitors into leads or customers.

Meta Descriptions
Meta descriptions are short and informative descriptions that help people understand what a webpage is about when they see it in search results. They are like a teaser that tells you what you can expect on that webpage. Meta descriptions are most commonly displayed under the title of a web page in search engine results pages like Google, Bing, or Yahoo. They provide users with a brief summary of the web page's content to help them decide if the result is relevant to their search.

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Mobile Optimization

In simple terms, it is like tailoring a website to fit perfectly on your smartphone or tablet. It's about ensuring that when you visit a website on your phone, everything looks just right—text is easy to read, images fit the screen, and you can tap buttons without any trouble. Whether you're shopping, reading articles, or exploring a website, mobile optimization ensures that everything works seamlessly and looks great, no matter the size of your screen.
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Navigation Menu

A website's navigation menu is like a map, guiding visitors to important pages. It's found at the top or side of the page and has clickable links to other sections of the site. This tool ensures visitors can explore the website easily and avoid getting lost in the digital landscape.
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Plugin

A plugin, also known as an extension or add-on, is a piece of software that can be added to a CMS to enhance or extend its functionality. Think of it as a toolbox full of specialized tools that you can easily attach to your site to make it do more cool things. Just like adding a new app to your smartphone, plugins enhance the functionality of your website. The availability and diversity of plugins vary depending on the CMS. Users can search for and install plugins that suit their specific needs, making CMSs highly adaptable and versatile platforms for building websites. Some plugins are free, while others may come at varying costs..

Policies

here are several important policies and terms that you should consider including on your website to inform visitors about your practices, protect your interests, and comply with legal requirements. The specific policies and terms you need may vary based on the nature of your website, your location, and the services or products you offer. Some key policies and terms that are commonly found on websites are Privacy Policy, Terms of Service, Cookies Policy, Copyright Notice, Refund and Return Policy, Shipping and Delivery Policy, Payment Terms (if selling products or services), Age Restriction Policy (if applicable) and more.
Links to each policy usually live in the Footer of your website.

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SEO

Search Engine Optimization, often abbreviated as SEO, is like the secret recipe for making your website stand out on the Internet. The goal of SEO is to increase the quantity and quality of organic (unpaid) by making your site more attractive to search engines like Google so that when someone searches for something related to your website, they can easily find it. It helps your website appear closer to the top of search results, making it more likely for people to discover and visit your site. SEO involves things like using the right keywords, title tags, meta descriptions, creating high-quality content, and making your website super-fast and user-friendly. There is a lot to it, but the more you do, the better results you'll see. .

Social Media Integration

Social media integration on a website refers to incorporating social media elements, features, and tools that connect the website with various social media platforms. The goal of social media integration is to encourage interaction, engagement, and sharing between the website's content and its visitors on social media channels. This integration can enhance the user experience, increase the website's reach, and drive traffic to and from social media platforms.

SSL

(Secure Sockets Layer): A security certificate that ensures the data sent between your website and visitors' browsers is encrypted and secure. Your SSL is like a digital security system that keeps your visitor's information safe and you safe when visiting other websites if you know what to look out for. An SSL encrypts the information that is sent between a website and the visitor, ensuring that any sensitive information like login credentials or payment details are protected. Additionally, it provides visible cues to users that the website is secure, such as a padlock icon in the browser's address bar, and the website's URL will start with "https://" instead of "http://. You generally purchase it with your domain, and you definitely need it!

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Theme

A website theme, often referred to as a website template or design template, is a pre-designed and pre-coded set of visual and layout elements that determine the overall look and style of a website. Themes are used to create the design and structure of a website quickly and efficiently, saving time and effort in the web development process.
Themes include design elements such as colors, fonts, typography, and graphical assets (e.g., logos, icons, background images) that give the website its visual identity. Other key characteristics of website themes include layout, customization options, and more.

Website themes are available from various sources, including theme marketplaces from your website host, individual developers, and more. Themes can be free or paid, depending on your website host.
Using a website theme is a cost-effective way to establish a visually appealing and functional website quickly.

URL

While a domain is the address of a website, a URL (Uniform Resource Locator - but no one ever calls it that!) is the complete web address for a specific page on a website. In simpler terms, a domain is like the street address of a building, while a URL is like the specific apartment number within that building. For example, www.yourwebsite.com is a domain, while www.yourwebsite.com/shop/product-name/ is a URL.

User Experience (UX)

User Experience, also known as UX on a website, refers to the overall experience that visitors have when interacting with a website. It encompasses the entire user journey, from the moment a user lands on the website to their navigation, interaction with content, and any transactions or actions they take. Key aspects of UX on a website include things like navigation (how easy it is for users to find their way around your site), content organization, visual design page loading speed, readability and accessibility, interactive elements (forms, buttons, and other interactive elements and a lot more. The goal is to create a website that not only looks appealing but also functions smoothly, meeting the needs and expectations of its target audience. A positive UX on a website can lead to increased user engagement, longer visits, and improved conversion rates. If you are like me and have multiple apps like Hulu, Netflix, and Apple TV, you may notice how some of these apps are easier to use than others. Maybe it's hard to tell what show is highlighted when searching for a show? Or perhaps you can "skip the intro" of a show on one app and not the other? These are things a UX expert would pay attention to.

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Web Host

The company that provides storage space and access to your website on the Internet. They store your website files on servers and make them available for people to view online. Imagine that a website is a house, and just like a home needs land to sit on, a website needs a place to stay, too. Web hosting is like renting a plot of land for a website, where the website can live and be seen by anyone who wants to visit it. The most popular web hosts among small business owners nowadays may also be a website builders (we discuss these a little later) like Wix or Squarespace.

Website Browser

A web browser is like the window to the Internet on your computer or phone. It's the program you use to visit websites. When you type in a website address or click a link, the browser goes to the Internet, fetches the web page, and then shows it to you. You can use it to read news, watch videos, shop online, and do all sorts of things on the web. It also keeps you safe by ensuring the websites you visit are secure. Think of it as your portal to the online world! Examples of web browsers are Google Chrome, Mozilla Firefox, and Apple Safari.

Website Builder

A website builder is a software or platform that allows users to create and design a website without having to write any code or have advanced technical skills. Website builders usually provide pre-made templates and drag-and-drop tools to make it easy for users to customize the design and layout of their websites. Users can typically choose from various themes, add text and images, and include features such as contact forms, social media integration, and e-commerce functionality. Website builders are often used by individuals, small businesses, and organizations who want to create a website quickly and easily without hiring a web developer. While some website builders may include CMS-like features, they are typically more limited in terms of content management capabilities compared to a dedicated CMS platform, which is why so many business owners love platforms like Wix and Squarespace because they are both!