

Basic Website Specification

Please complete this document to the best of your ability. If you can answer all of these questions then you will have the basis of a website specification for your organisation. The more preparation you undertake before undertaking a web development, the better end result you can expect. It is sometimes useful to have developed a document like this before you speak to a web developer, or, alternatively, this can form the basis of a conversation with your web developer.

General

1.1. Overview

Explain what your organisation is and what it does.

1.2. Background

Explain why you are wanting a website developed at this stage e.g. if it is for a particular project or a particular audience, or if its an upgrade of an existing website. Describe how the destination website fits with the rest of your wider web presence – eg. your facebook page, twitter stream, artistic director's blog, the marketing director's column in Arts Professional, etc. What is the website doing that these site currently are not focussed on? Will these other web presences feed into the website?

1.3. Current Situation

Give details of what you currently have got, including the website name, if this is appropriate.

Tender

2.1. Overview

Give details of what the tender covers.

2.2. Timescales

Give details of tender process and timescales

Specification

3.1. Overview

Explain what the website is for and try and summarise it. In the sections that follow you should list what it is you want and explain that tender applicants will be judged on how they interpret the brief, their proven ability (e.g. design, technology);

3.2. Stakeholders

The website has a number of different stakeholders -: (amend as appropriate)

- existing clients
- new/potential clients
- funders and statutory bodies
- project team

The main audience is.... Workers and volunteers in Social Enterprises across Greater Manchester (amend accordingly)

3.3. Design

Here list any design issues – relates very much to the audience/stakeholders. i.e. “corporate look” “friendly look” – whether or not it should incorporate any existing design elements, colours or logos. You could also talk about the ideal feel and tone of voice the website should have – does your organisation’s brand have a “personality” that should be reflected?

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3.4. Navigation

You may not have a clear idea of navigation at this point – but if there are any particular issues or principles then include them here (for example, certain sections may need to be in two languages – a designer needs to know this at the outset, as (for example) the Welsh translation of “the cat sat on the mat” may well contain 50+ characters, and if that has not been considered initially, it will be hard to squeeze in the Welsh version of the text. You may also want to include some features in at this point (e.g. search/site map) but it might be better to work in general principles and see what solutions will be provided by the developers.

3.5. Accessibility

Websites should comply with the Disability Discrimination Act.

A generic statement along the lines of “the website should be designed so that it incorporates relevant accessibility features” can put the onus on the developer to show they understand accessibility.

3.6. Content

Give an indication of type of content that will be included on the site - the site may include text, photographs, audio, video, PDFs etc.

If the site is to include user generated content, say so here, and ask the website designer to provide you with example terms and conditions and privacy policies appropriate for websites including UGC. (The AmbITion website has example Terms and Conditions and Privacy Policies for websites with and without user generated content.)

What do you want users of the website to do with your content? If you want them to share it, then let your website developers know that content should be shareable and embeddable (eg. Post to Facebook/delicious/digg this, etc.).

Will you be inputting the content into the new website is that a requirement of the web developers?

3.7. Integration

Increasingly websites need to integrate with back office systems (e.g. ticketing system, financial systems, customer relationship management systems), so be clear where this is the case. E.g. Registrants on the site need to have their details checked against the existing CRM.

3.8. Third Party Plug-ins

Web 2.0 functionality involves integrating with 3rd party applications. E.g. YouTube, Flickr, iTunes, RSS feeds. Even if this is not the case, it’s likely that developers will look to using 3rd party applications to deliver particular functionality (e.g. an online gallery, a shopping cart).

3.9. Administration

The site will be administered by one/or a number of users and should be able to be administered from any internet connection.

If you have specific levels of “permission” that you require then these should be indicated.

If you require an open source CMS (Content Management System) then say so – otherwise, list the features that an ideal content management system should have (e.g. You want to be able to give different update permissions for a number of users; you want to be able to easily upload pictures, audio and text and documents; you want to be able to restructure the site and add different layers of information).

You will want to get web statistics – clarify the sorts of analysis you would like to be able to do.

3.10. Additional Functionality

If there are any particular functions that you need. E.g. An online poll; a forum or registration system then go into as much detail as possible. I would suggest that you make a distinction between “Must have” and things that you want to see what the price might be.

3.11. Security

Any levels of security that you require. E.g. a secure members area; an ecommerce or payments system.

3.12. Hosting

Ask for hosting (and domain name registration) costs as a separate item. Give a level of service that you require or don't require. (i.e. eBay needs 99.99999% uptime – you probably don't). If you expect a large amount of visitors and downloads to the site this can be more expensive as well. Insist that any solution is scalable and can be ongoing beyond the initial period.

3.13 Ownership

State that you want ownership of the website and the IP of the design, which will mean the website design agency handing over their rights to the templates they develop for you. <http://www.own-it.org> have a variety of example contracts that you can look at.

Additionally, be clear about the ownership rights your organisation has over the digital assets you are providing for the website (eg. the organisation provides all the photos/videos/blogs from staff, so no specific requirement for creator name to be next to asset; or all photos provided by and agency who must have their name and a copyright message displayed, etc.)