

TOPTIPS

SETTING UP A WEBSITE

TT04

You might be thinking, 'I want a website, but I have no idea how!'. Well this Top Tips will hopefully help you understand what is involved, and also help you realise that it might not be as complicated as you may think!

DOMAIN NAMES

One of the first steps of getting a website is to register a domain name. This means the website address that people will type in, to access your website. So for instance, www.baptist.org.uk is BUGB's website domain name. You can get your domain name from a variety of providers, and the only thing that will stop you having the one you want, is if someone else already has it! When you know what name you want, you can easily check to see if it's available.

There is a cost for registering your domain name, and this is usually yearly or every 2 years. You can expect to pay around £7-£15 for this, depending on what extension you have (.co.uk, .com .org.uk etc.).

Some useful websites for registering domain names and checking if yours is available:

www.nameroute.co.uk

www.123-reg.co.uk

WEBSITE HOSTING

Along with your domain name, you will also need to have your website hosted by someone. This basically requires you to have what is called 'Web space' from a provider. The Internet carries the same principle as your own computer – you need space on your hard drive to save your files on. In the same way, you need to have space on the Internet to save your website on.

In some cases you can get your domain name and web hosting from the same company, and in some senses this makes it easier. Again, there is a cost involved and it is anything from about £15 + per year.

Companies that offer good web hosting and domain names:

www.web-mania.co.uk

www.1and1.co.uk

DESIGNING YOUR WEBSITE

When it comes to actually designing your website, you have 3 choices.

1. *Design it yourself.*

If you are capable, and have the software (Photoshop, Fireworks etc) you can design the site yourself. To actually code it and make it work you can do it either using an application like Notepad (for the hardcore coders among you!) or you can use a program such as Macromedia Dreamweaver which lets you build the site either using code, or a design based view.

Continued overleaf...

2. Use an external designer.

If you don't fancy building it yourself, you can always go to an external web design agency. This can be costly, but you will more than likely get good results. You will also be able to have exactly what you want, without worrying how to get it to work.

3. Use a company that provides readymade templates.

There are some companies around that can provide you with a readymade template. All you need to do is drop your content into the spaces and there you go! The disadvantage of this is that you could end up with a website that has a very similar look to someone else, who happened to buy the same template!

MAINTAINING YOUR WEBSITE

Once you've got your website registered and designed, you will need to keep on top of the content. If you have opted for either option 2 or 3 (above) you may incorporate a content management system. This is a control panel that lets you easily update and manage the content of your website. There are distinct advantages with this, as it means you can have a website that is regularly updated, without having to have much knowledge on web design. This can be an important factor to consider, as not every church will have someone with the capabilities to do everything themselves.

If you do have someone who is capable, then you can always maintain your website through editing the code directly. This takes a certain degree of knowledge of HTML and any other programming language that your website uses.

SOME USEFUL LINKS

www.mrsite.co.uk

www.church123.com

www.godsweb.co.uk