

Why have a website!

- 24/7 availability for your art business. Accessibility for potential customers or clients at any time, from anywhere with an internet connection.
- Fosters trust and legitimacy, demonstrating that you are a serious artist.
- Provides a platform to display your skills, experience, qualifications, achievements, and testimonials, establishing you as an expert in your field.

How to make a website from scratch

Define what type of website you want to make.

1. Choose your website builder.
2. Pick and register a domain name.
3. Choose a web hosting plan
4. Pick your template.
5. Customize your template to your brand
6. Build your site structure and architecture.
7. Add useful pages

1. Define what type of website do you want to make. Do you want to:

- Display your art
- Sell you art
- Advertise shows
- List your achievements
- Provide teaching information
- Provide a way for people to contact you
- Additional reasons?

2. Choose your website builder.

A website builder is a tool or platform that simplifies the process of creating a website without requiring coding or design experience.

A typical website builder has the following features:

- Drag-and-drop editor: This allows you to visually arrange elements like text boxes, images, and buttons on your webpage by simply clicking, dragging, and dropping them into place.
- Ready-made templates: A wide selection of professionally designed templates that serve as a starting point for your website's overall visual tone and structure. You can choose a template and then customize it to match your branding.
- Built-in hosting: Include web hosting services, which means they store your website's files and make them accessible online. This eliminates the need to find and pay for a separate hosting provider.
- Domain connection or registration: You can typically connect an existing domain name to your website or register a new one directly through the website builder platform.

- Mobile-friendly design tools: Include tools or features that automatically optimize your website's appearance and functionality for different devices like smartphones and tablets.
- E-commerce features: If you plan to sell products or services online, many website builders offer features to set up an online store, including product listings, shopping carts, and secure payment processing. This feature may cost extra.
- SEO (Search Engine Optimization) tools: These tools help optimize your website to rank higher in search engine results, making it easier for potential customers to find your website.
- Integrations: Website builders often integrate with various apps and services for email marketing, payments, bookings, and more. These features may cost per app.
- Free sites: Are available and often display ads over which you have little control. Layout and design are usually very limited.

3. Pick and register a domain name.

- Choose a reliable domain registrar. Find an ICANN-accredited registrar: ICANN (Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers) is the organization that manages domain names globally. Choosing an accredited registrar ensures authenticity and security. Use the registrar's search tool: Enter your desired domain name into the search bar to check its availability.
- Consider alternatives: If your first choice is taken, registrars will often suggest alternatives or different domain extensions (like .net, .org, or specific TLDs like .ai or .app).
- Try a domain name generator: Some registrars offer AI-powered tools that can suggest creative domain names based on your ideas.
- Compare registrars: Consider factors like available domain extensions (e.g., .com, .org, .net), customer support, initial and renewal pricing, and domain privacy offerings (which can protect your personal information).
- Think about combining services: Some registrars also offer web hosting and other services which can simplify the process of getting your website online.
- Once you find an available domain name you like, add it to your cart.
- Choose the registration period: You can usually register a domain name for 1 to 10 years. Longer registration periods may offer discounts.
- Consider additional services: You might be offered services like website builders or email hosting at checkout.
- Complete the registration process: Provide your contact and billing information to finalize the purchase and registration.
- Verify domain ownership: Most registrars will send a verification email that you need to confirm within a set timeframe (often 15 days).

Domain name rules: Domain names must use English letters and numbers, hyphens are allowed but not at the beginning or end, and spaces are not allowed.

Domain names are leased, not owned: You pay an annual fee to use the domain and must renew it before the lease expires. Setting up auto-renewal is recommended to avoid accidentally losing your domain.

4. Choose a web hosting plan

A hosting plan for a website is essentially renting space on a server owned and maintained by a web hosting company. This space is where all your website's files, including code, images, videos, and databases, are stored. Why you need a hosting service:

- **Make your website accessible online:** Without hosting, your website files would be confined to your personal computer and wouldn't be available for others to see on the internet.
- **Ensures website uptime:** Hosting providers are responsible for keeping the server operational and ensuring your website is consistently available to visitors.
- **Provides resources:** Hosting plans allocate resources like disk space, bandwidth, CPU (Central Processing Unit) , and RAM (Random Access Memory) to your website, determining its performance and capacity to handle traffic.
- **Offers security and maintenance:** Reputable hosting providers implement security measures like firewalls, malware scanning, and automatic backups to protect your website data from threats. They also manage server maintenance, software updates, and troubleshooting.

Types of Web Hosting Plans:

- **Shared Hosting:** Multiple websites share resources on a single server, making it the most affordable option. It's suitable for small websites, personal blogs, or businesses with low traffic. However, performance can be affected by other websites on the same server.
- **VPS Hosting (Virtual Private Server):** A physical server is divided into multiple virtual servers, each with dedicated resources. This offers more control and better performance than shared hosting, suitable for growing websites or medium-sized businesses.
- **Dedicated Hosting:** Provides exclusive access to an entire physical server, offering the most control, customization, and resources. It's ideal for large enterprises or websites with very high traffic and specific technical requirements.
- **Cloud Hosting:** Utilizes a network of virtual servers, allowing resources to be scaled up or down as needed. This offers excellent reliability, flexibility, and scalability, making it suitable for websites with fluctuating traffic or those expecting rapid growth. [Most will use this type of hosting.](#)
- **Managed Hosting:** The hosting provider handles server management tasks like security updates, backups, and maintenance. This is ideal for users with limited technical knowledge or those who prefer to focus on their website's content and business aspects.

- WordPress Hosting: Optimized specifically for WordPress websites, offering features like one-click installation, automatic updates, and enhanced security.
- Reseller Hosting: Allows individuals or businesses to purchase hosting resources and resell them to their own clients.

A hosting plan is the foundation of your website's online presence, providing the server space, resources, security, and support necessary for it to function effectively. Careful consideration of your website's needs and the different hosting options available will help you choose the plan that best supports your online success.

5. Pick your template

Selecting the right website template is a crucial step in building your online presence. It impacts your site's functionality, aesthetics, and how it resonates with your audience. Here are the key factors to consider when making your choice:

1. Defining your purpose and target audience

- What is your website's primary goal? Are you creating an online store, a blog, a portfolio, a business site, or something else entirely? Each type of website has specific requirements that will narrow down your template options.
- Who is your target audience? Their demographics and preferences should influence your design choices. A template with a professional, minimalist design might suit a corporate audience, while a more vibrant and image-rich template might be better for a creative audience.

2. Functionality and features

- What features do you need? If you're building an e-commerce site, you'll need shopping cart and payment gateway functionalities. Bloggers need an easy way to post articles and manage comments.
- Consider specific tools and integrations like contact forms, galleries, or booking systems. Make sure the template supports the plugins or extensions you might need.

3. Technical considerations

- Mobile responsiveness: With the majority of web traffic originating from mobile devices, your website *must* adapt gracefully to different screen sizes. A responsive design means the layout and content adjust automatically for optimal viewing on desktops, tablets, and phones. Search engines also prioritize mobile-friendly websites.
- Ease of updates and maintenance: Choose a template that is regularly updated by a reputable provider to ensure security and compatibility.

Ultimately, the best template is one that aligns with your specific needs, goals, and budget, while also providing a positive user experience and supporting your long-term online presence goals. Most web builder software provides templates with all your needs.

6. Customize your template to your brand

A website brand refers to the overall look, feel, and message a website conveys to its visitors, reflecting the unique identity of the business, product, or individual it represents. It's about crafting an online experience that builds an emotional connection with the target audience and fosters their perception of the brand.

1. Visual identity

- **Logo:** The cornerstone of the visual brand, a logo should be distinctive, memorable, and adaptable across various platforms.
- **Color Palette:** A cohesive color scheme that aligns with the brand's identity and evokes desired emotions, with sufficient contrast for readability.
- **Typography:** The font choices used to reflect the brand's voice and personality while ensuring readability across devices.
- **Visual Assets:** High-quality images, illustrations, and videos that resonate with the target audience and convey brand messaging effectively.

2. Messaging and content

- **Brand Voice:** The consistent tone and style of communication used throughout the website content, reflecting the brand's personality.
- **Copywriting:** Clear, concise, and persuasive text that guides visitors, explains the brand's offerings, and reinforces brand messaging.

3. User experience (UX)

- **Ease of Use:** A website that is user-friendly, responsive across different devices, and optimized for speed, contributing to positive user experience and reinforcing the brand's reputation.
- **Call-to-Actions (CTAs):** Strategic placement of clear and compelling calls to action that guide users towards desired actions (e.g., purchasing, signing up).

4. Consistency

- **Maintaining a unified brand identity** across all platforms, including the website, social media, and other marketing materials, fosters recognition and trust.

In essence, a website brand is about intentionally shaping every aspect of the online presence to reflect the brand's unique identity, connecting with the target audience, and ultimately drive business success.

7. Build your site structure and architecture.

The best structure depends on your website's purpose and content. Here are some common options:

- **Hierarchical (or Tree) structure:** The most popular model, especially for content-heavy sites. It starts with a homepage that branches into categories and subcategories. Ideal for e-commerce sites or online portfolios.
- **Sequential (or Linear) structure:** Guides users through a predefined path, like a step-by-step tutorial or a checkout process. Best for smaller sites with limited content.

Implement essential navigation elements

- **Header Navigation:** Display your most important categories or pages at the top of every page.
- **Footer Navigation:** Include links to legal pages (privacy policy, terms of service), contact information, and secondary navigation elements.
- **Internal Linking:** Connect related pages within your site using relevant anchor text (the clickable words in a link). This helps users discover content and spreads link equity throughout your site.
- **Categories and Tags:** Group related blog posts or products to improve navigation and search engine understanding of your content.

Other important considerations

- **Security:** Implement SSL (Secure Sockets Layer) certificates and security measures to protect user data and ensure secure communication.
- **Regular Audits:** Conduct regular SEO audits to identify and fix issues like broken links, duplicate content, and poorly structured internal links.

By focusing on these aspects, you can build a strong and intuitive site structure that enhances user experience, boosts SEO, and supports your website's long-term success.

8. Add useful pages.

The number and types of pages you need on your website depend heavily on your industry, goals, and target audience. However, here's a breakdown of common and useful pages to consider:

Essential pages

- **Homepage:** The entrance to your website, providing an overview of your offerings, links to key pages, calls to action (CTAs), and potentially social proof like testimonials.
- **About Us:** Builds trust and credibility by introducing your brand, company history, values, and team members.
- **Products/Services:** Dedicated pages to showcase and describe your products and/or services in detail. Consider using individual pages for specific products or services, and an overview page to categorize and link to those.
- **Contact Us:** Facilitates communication with visitors by providing contact forms, phone numbers, email addresses, physical address (if applicable), and social media links.
- **Terms of Service:** Outlines the rules and conditions users must agree to when using your website.
- **Blog:** A space to share industry insights, company news, and valuable content, which can attract traffic, improve SEO, and establish thought leadership.

Potentially necessary pages

- **Portfolio/Photo Gallery:** Showcases your work, projects, or creative pieces, potentially with descriptions and details about the process or skills involved.
- **Testimonials/Reviews:** Builds social proof and trust by featuring customer reviews and testimonials.

- Events Calendar: If you host events, lists event names, dates, descriptions, agendas, locations, and registration information.
- Press Page: Provides information for media outlets, including press releases, articles, and brand assets.
- Audio/Video Media: If you have podcasts or videos, a page that introduces and provides access to this content can be beneficial.

Also useful pages

- Email Signup Landing Page: A dedicated page to encourage users to subscribe to your email list, outlining the benefits of doing so.

Remember to prioritize quality content over the sheer number of pages, as this is crucial for a positive user experience and effective SEO.

There are so many website builders on the market that offer great services. I haven't begun to list them all. Google website builders and do your own research. This list is filled with popular website builder services but there are many, many more.

Duda – <https://www.duda.co> - Duda is a powerful website builder founded in 2009, designed for budding web professionals, agencies, and freelancers. Duda's core strength lies in its focus on client management tools. With this, agencies can easily create new websites from Duda's pre-saved templates, set permissions for clients, and even offer a streamlined feedback and revision process. Duda offers a larger range of pricing options than most. Does not allow switching of templates. Chat and phone support only available on higher plans. Cannot export your website on Basic and Team plans.

FASO (FineArtStudioOnline) – <https://www.faso.com> – FASO is an online platform for visual artists to market and sell their work. FASO provides artists with professional websites, marketing tools, and promotional opportunities. They also offer print and frame on demand services, allowing buyers to order custom prints of artwork directly from the artist's website.

GoDaddy Inc. – <http://www.godaddy.com> - GoDaddy is an American publicly traded Internet domain registry, domain registrar and web hosting company headquartered in Tempe, Arizona, and incorporated in Delaware. More technical than most.

Google Sites – <https://workspace.google.com> - Google offers several tools and services that can help individuals and businesses create an online presence, ranging from simple websites to integrated business management platform. TPS purchases Google workspace for posting calendars and interactive features to our website.

Hostinger – <https://www.hostgator.com> - Established in 2004, the company is headquartered in Lithuania and employs about 900 employees. Hostinger's web hosting services are divided into five categories: shared hosting, cloud hosting, VPS hosting, managed WordPress hosting, and email hosting. Hostinger provides an in-house control panel called hPanel for users to manage their hosting.

Hostinger has ten data centers in eight countries: Brazil (São Paulo), Indonesia (Jakarta), India (Mumbai), Lithuania (Vilnius), the Netherlands (Amsterdam), Singapore (Singapore), the United Kingdom (London), and the United States (Dallas).^[21]

Web.com – <https://www.web.com> – Web.com is an American dot-com company that provides a website builder, along with website hosting, domain name registration, web development, and various digital marketing services. The company was founded in 1999 by Darin Brannan in Jacksonville, Florida as Website Pros Inc..

Webflow, Inc. – <https://webflow.com> - Webflow, Inc. is a software company based in San Francisco, California, known for its visual web development platform that allows users to design, build, and launch websites without writing code. It's often categorized as a "no-code" or "visual development" platform. Webflow provides a visual interface for building websites, automatically generating the underlying HTML, CSS, and JavaScript

Weebly - Weebly is owned by Block, Inc., (formerly known as Square, Inc.) which acquired the company in 2018. Weebly is a website and e-commerce service that has been around since 2007. It is known for its user-friendly drag-and-drop website builder, which makes it easy for individuals and small businesses to create professional-looking websites without needing coding knowledge. Weebly is now part of Square's commerce offering, meaning it integrates with Square's mobile payment systems and other business tools.

Wix.com ltd - <https://www.wix.com> - Wix is an Israeli software company, publicly listed in the US, that provides cloud-based web development services. It offers tools for creating HTML5 websites for desktop and mobile platforms using online drag-and-drop editing.^[3] Wix is used by 2.5% of websites as of September 2023.^[8]

WordPress.org – <https://wordpress.org> - WordPress is a free and open-source content management system (CMS) that allows users to easily build and manage websites without needing extensive coding knowledge. It was initially created as a blogging platform but has since evolved to support various website types, including business websites, online stores, portfolios, membership sites, and more. A WordPress is Owned by Automattic.