Costing a Website

How much is a website? To answer that, we need to know the full details of what exactly is required by the business. The requirements of the system will ultimately dictate what features the final solution will have, and what services you require from your supplier, and these can be costed separately to give you a fairly accurate cost breakdown for your website project.

In a business world, It is common for a business to produce a 'request for proposal' document to send to potential suppliers. This document needs to be complete and comprehensive in order for suppliers to respond with appropriate proposals with accurate costing.

eKit can assist you in what you might want to include in your request document, to help you determine what tasks you can undertake yourself, and what you need your website designer/ developer to provide.

This document illustrates a few examples of websites and the costs.

Sometimes on the following pages costs are outlined in hours. Typically professionals' costs today will be in the region of £40 to £60. This is the same for Designers, Plumbers, Web Developers, Video editors and mechanics... you tend to get what you pay for.

If a designer offers you services at £15 per hour or a completed website for £200 - ask to speak to some of their previous clients!

Remember that these tasks listed below, may be taken on by your supplier or possibly yourselves. There is always the decision to make:

Can I do this task myself and save some money?
Do I possess the skills to take this task on properly?
Is this important enough to get it done professionally?

Planning and investigation into the business requirements

This should be completed by yourselves or if your budget permits, get a company or professional in to do some business analysis and website planning.

Domain registration and server / Hosting setup

Domain names themselves only cost a small amount - typically between £4 and £40 per year, depending on them being a .UK .COM .TV .IT etc. Some suppliers will give some basic services free with a domain.

Email systems hosting and setup

Basic email systems can be free with a domain, but more advanced systems that enable synchroniation with iphones and blackberries etc can cost more - easily up to £100 per year for a more advanced system with advanced features and backup etc.

Website management System Install and Setup

The setup and install of a Website and a website management system (Also called a Content Management System - CMS) can be done by a company or web developer. If you have a few technical skills, then this can be done yourself, but it is reccommended that you use a professional to assist you in the production of a professional website. Typically this will take between 4 and 10 hours or £150 to £500 to get your basic website management system setup. Depending on the system and the complexity of your solution, then this can rise.

Graphic design - Business logo, graphics, colours

The graphic design for your business can of course be completed before any thought of a website. A new logo and design for your business may cost £250 on a budget, but can easily cost over a thousand if you go for a professional re-design with many logo options, revisions and finish with a completed style guide document for the business.

Graphics - Illustrations, Photography, Video prodction

Illustrations and Photographs can make a huge difference to how professional your documents and website look. Professional photographers and illustrators can produce new unique images for your business for around £300 per day, but total costs can rise for creating numerous or more involved images or illustrations. There is also the option to source images from existing stock databases. Rights to use images range from around £2 up to £50 per image. (These costs are not for exclusive rights over an image, so there may also be others that use the same images).

Video content can give a modern feel to your website, and help give your message across in a clear way. You can obviously shoot your own video, but again, getting a professional to produce one for you will obviously give more professional results. Videography filming, editing and publishing starts from £300 to £500 per day. It may take over a days' of work to even get a short video produced.

Graphics - Website draft design, layout, text, image and data presentation

Most businesses looking to commission a website will like to see a draft layout of a few of the webpages before the website template is built in proper website format. This is usually done by a graphic/web designer and presented to you in a normal image format. This work costing indicated here does not include the production of new logos and business style.

Typical costs for producing a brand new, original graphic template design for a website might start at £500. If you have many different types of page layouts and types of content that also need designing, then this cost could easily go up to the thousands.

If you opt to use an existing website template that your web designer has got already, and just have them make a few changes to make it fit your own business look and feel, then this can reduce costs considerably - perhaps to only £150 - £250. Your CMS should also give you the tools to update the basic appearence of your template and change logos etc.

Website Design - building the template in HTML/CSS

Producing the HTML and CSS template from a new graphic template design for a website might start at £500. If you opted to use an existing website template that your designer has got already, then this may cost nothing. if you wanted just a few basic changes to an existing template at the draft design stage, then this may only take a web designer an hour or two to update your template's HTML and CSS.

Writing and sourcing the texts for the website - copywriting

Writing content for the web is not something that comes naturally. Having a professional help out with texts for your site is advised. it may typically take a couple of hours per page to address each of the 3 disciplines below.

- Writing for web readability and users who scan-read
- Writing for encouraging sales and 'actions' by the visitor
- Writing for Search Engine Optimisation.

Customising the CMS - Setup to manage information efficiently by using the Database method.

At this point, you should know a little about how repetitive information for your webstie can be far more easily managed by using the database method. Assuming that the type of information that you are needing to manage is commonly used by others (for example News / Blog Product Catalogue, Product Catalogue with e-Commerce, Event / Diary system, people list etc etc) then it is likely that a database management solution exists for this type of data.

So to setup a blog, or list of people, or list of events, clubs, products or services might typically take around 6 hours each. this would include a small amount of customisation for your specific purpose, and also the data management system to enable you to update this information easily.

If you wanted to have the look and feel of and design of the data or presentation of the data modified significantly, then time taken to implement the database solutions will increace.

If you wanted to manage something a little less common, Perhaps a product with lots of different options, have visitors 'submit' new events suggestions or display data results on a graphical map, then more work is needed for the management system to make it fit your requirements. this might take at least another 10 hours work for example.

e-Commerce
If you wanted e-commerce integrated into your website, then this is an additional cost. Depending on the type of e-commerce solution you go for, then costs can start at around £400 and can rise steeply for more complex, integrated systems.

Building general content for Pages in WYSIWYG Mode

Once you have the template designed and built, and the CMS system ready to use, there is then the task of building the pages for the website. Creating a new page is a simple task: click the 'New page' button! But then the text needs to be entered, and images uploded to that page.

Depending on the volume and complexity of content for a page, and assuming that all the text has been written and images are all ready, It can take less than an hour to create a single page and populate it with the text and upload the images and lay it all out properly. This can be done in the CMS by yourself if you wish to build and style page content yourself.

It is common for businesses pay for a web designer to build all the initial content and then the owner takes responsibility for updates and createing subsequent pages of content.

Building content for the pages by inputting Data in to the forms.

This is basic data entry and consists of entering the information into forms (and optionally uploading images, documents and video). This data will then be displayed on your pages in the way that has been specified in the design stages. This work is charged by the hour, but can easily be done by non technical people by using the content management system.

Search Engine optimisation - Initial Keyword research

If you are serious about using your website as a marketing tool, then you will need to do some research into keywords to use on your website. Some businesses spend many thousands of pounds on all their search engine optimisation in total. An initial effort in search engine keyphrases can be very useful and might be a half or whole days work. So £200 - £400 roughly.

Search Engine optimisation - Optimising pages for keywords

Once you have your keyword lists, there will be obvious pages that exist in your planned website to use some of the keywords on. Other sets of keywords may need pages creating specifically for them. A foundation of Search Engines Optimisation for any specific page (and main keyphrase) should be built into a good CMS, like our own 'WebManager', but efforts to optimise page content takes time, either by a professional or by yourself if you learn some of the basic techniques. At least an hour per page is a fair esitmate of time.

Search Engine optimisation - Link building:
Establishing links to your website from 3rd parties

After creating a website full of well-optimised pages, you then have the task of generating links to those pages from other websites. It really does take time and effort to generate quality links - Quality links being those from 3rd party pages that are ranked highly themselves and that are also relevant to your page.

Many businesses offer this service, but be very wary, as companies will often just give you a load of irrelevant links from webpages that exist only to give links, and will also use 'link spamming' methods to give you links. These unethical link building strategies will only harm your long term success. Any company providing a link building service should involve you in every aspect of what they are doing and give you a specific method to monitor links and develop new ones. Costs typically start from £300 and rise steeply, or by the hour with some online marketing consultants.

Search Engine Marketing - Pay-Per-Click advertising

Most online marketing companies offer services for setup and running of a pay-per-click campaign. Most will start by using google Adwords. Costs for a very simple 'Adwords' setup might be 1 days work plus the cost of advertising (which will vary depending on your budget). Linking your advertising to a analysis package to monitor the effectiveness of your advertising is essential. See below.

Online Marketing - advertising, Social Media & email marketing

There are so many different channels for marketing online now through social media, any supplier of this sort of marketing service needs to know and understand your business properly in order to assist. A simple email marketing campaign might take a day to setup and have annual costs associated of around £200. If you are serious about marketing online, then efforts tend to be on-going across the year. Expect to put in, or pay for at least a good few hours each month for on-going efforts.

Online Marketing - Competitor analysis.

Sometimes useful for smaller businesses, this can help you determine other online competitors, how they are doing online and how they are optimising their website. Worth doing a little research yourself, and/or paying a professional to do a few hours, especially if you are looking to develop an e-commerce website.

Statistical Analysis of visitors to your website - e.g. Google Analytics

This tool is useful for all websites, but if you are investing any time or money on any form of online marketing then it is essential. You may have to pay a web professional an hour or two to install Google Analytics or other analysis tool, but these often come free with a Good CMS, Like Web Manager. You will also need to create a Google account, which is free.

Standards compliance and accessibility

Web Standards Compliance should be ahered to with all modern CMS systems. This should not be an extra costs for a website. Sometimes larger businesses may request that their website complies with additional standards and accessibility guidelines (e.g. from the W3C), and this may take extra work and hence cost. A flash website will not be an accessible website!

Training for the Website management system and its use

Training for your website management system will usually be charged by the hour, but sometimes a number of hours training and assistance may be offered to any new customer who get a comprehensive service and solution from one supplier. Always expect a comprehensive user-guide or online help system regardless.

Annual costs for the Server, Hosting, Domain and CMS system.

Typical costs for a basic hosting and email services might be less than £100 per year. If you have a comprehensive website management system with good phone support, data backups, additional facilities and help/advice along the way, then this could easily be more like £300. Costs may reflect a better level of support and assistance with your website from the people that know what they are talking about. i.e. not a call centre.

If your website hosts a very large volume of data, or gets a high volume of visitors, then annual costs may go up for hosting. This is usually the case for larger businesses with more comprehensive online systems. Most small business with common website features should not have the need to pay extra for more powerful server systems.

Example Costing 1

A small carpentry business has no existing website, just a basic logo that they are happy with. They have a very limited budget for the site just need to a small number of pages introducing their business and services. They are not hugely fussy about the design, but want it to have their logo on. They are not wanting any sort of blog or news, but want to be able to update / add / remove pages every few months. They also want to have the first 5 or 6 pages built by the web designer, but understand that they will need to write all the words and source the images that they want on the site.

Cost estimates are as follows:

Website and Management system Setup = £195
Website and Management system annual costs = £195
6 very simple pages built by the web designer = £180

Initial costs plus first year annual costs = £570
Subsequent years' annual costs = £195

Example Costing 2

An artist needs a website to manage galleries of his own work. He would like a simple logo designed with his name in a nice typeface. He requires the ability to create new pages with galleries of images - probably up to 5 different gallery pages. He needs to be able to easily upload images to the gallery and have the gallery sytem automatically resize, create thumbnails and layout the images in a gallery. He would like a nice design for his website, based on an existing template to keep the costs down.

He would like to run a small news blog about his work and exhibitions, and is happy to write all the text and take all the pictures for the website himself. He would like to upload and build all the webstie content himself using the CMS.

Costs estimates for a web developer to setup the website are as follows:

Website and Management system Setup = £195
Website and Management system annual costs = £195
Simple logo design by = £150
Website template customisation = £150
Basic Gallery Database System = £150
Basic News Blog system = £150

Initial costs plus first year annual costs = £990
Subsequent years annual costs = £195

Example Costing 3

An environmental organisation wishes to have a website that shows what they do and gives their latest news. They also want the site to list their committee and members. The organisation already has their own logo, but want a new deisgn for their website, built from an existing website template. They want new members to be able to submit their details online.

Cost estimates are as follows:

Website and Management system Setup = £295
Website and Management system annual costs = £295
News / Blog system = £250
Website design previews = £300
Website template build - HTML & CSS= £300
Members / committee gallery = £250
Members registration form = £200

Initial costs plus first year annual costs = £1890
Subsequent years' annual costs = £295

Example Costing 4

The same environmental organisation as above, but in this scenario, they want an original, unique graphic design for the website - Something with a little more impact. They also would like members to be able to pay for their annual subscription online.

they also would like to launch the site fairly quickly and have the initial 12 pages of the website built and styled by a professional. They want extended support during the year.

Costs estimates for a web developer to setup this website are as follows:

Website and Management system Setup = £395
Website and Management system annual costs = £395
News / Blog system = £250
Website design previews = £600
Website template build - HTML & CSS= £600
Members / committee gallery = £250
Members registration form with basic online payment system = £590
Initial 12 pages of content built by a web design proffesional = £500

Initial costs plus first year annual costs = £3580
Subsequent years' annual costs = £395