Build Your Own WebSite!

The World Wide Web or the Internet as it has become commonly known is perhaps the greatest communication medium that most of us will experience in our lifetime. Who would of thought just five years ago that individuals sitting in their 'front rooms' would have the technology at their disposal to reach an audience of literally millions of people all over the world. This used to be the domain of large corporations with huge advertising budgets, but now thanks to the innovation that has taken place in technology we have all been provided with that opportunity. Walt Disney once said "If you dream it, you can do it" and we firmly believe that the world wide web makes those dreams that little bit easier to achieve! Whether you are a business large or small, an individual with a message or idea, the world wide web is your opportunity. Why not grasp it and use it to your advantage - raise a laugh, sell a product, make some money, provide a service, warn or advise, you may even find you have a talent that you can promote!

So how do you start?

Well you could start by learning some 'Hyper Text Markup Language' (HTML) and we would certainly recommend that you learn the basic's, but thankfully there are now a host of 'What You See Is What You Get' (WYSIWYG) editors available that have simplified the process considerably. Many of you will have these already installed on your PC, programs like Frontpage express, Netscape composer etc and if not there are many freely available along with a host of other resources and tools in our directory. If you want to move fast and get your site published very quickly - you could do worse then check out some of the free webspace providers below that provide you with online publication tools.

Determine your Purpose!

You not only need to determine the type of audience you want to reach but also the type of website you wish to publish. Believe it or not everyone is an expert at something and we each have our own outlook on life, so make sure you use the skills you already have to the full! Research as many other web sites as you can - that may sound a little complex but all it simply means is that you should look at as many other sites as possible, try to figure out what draws you to them, determine what keeps you there and what makes you go back to them? Decide what you want to accomplish and then you can start laying the foundations for your own site! Research, research, research and then research some more - it's the key - and one thing's for sure when it comes to websites, you never stop learning!

Design and Creation.

One of the first things to appreciate is that you can't be all things to all men, some people will like your site others won't - the important thing is to ensure your intended audience does! There are many sites offering website creation and design tutorials, our directory has links to some of the best free tutorial sites on the world wide web,

be sure to take a look as there's something for everybody from the beginner to the expert!

Tools:-Counters/Guestbooks etc.

The quantity and types of tool available to you are increasing all the time, the inclusion of counters, a guestbook, links pages etc are common place and although we suggest you consider the use of these sparingly they can certainly help to spruce up your site and make it appear that little more professional. It is difficult to select a favoured free web tool provider as there are many and most offer a very similar service, but if we had to come of the fence it would probably be BraveNet. It provides all the tools webmasters need to help build/improve and promote their website.

How can you get your site on the Web!

That's the easy part - initially check your own ISP, almost everyone I've heard of offers some form of webspace and it may just be sufficient for your needs. But if it's not - there are literally dozens of free providers available many of which will not only provide you the space but also the tools you need to get yourself started, you will find many of them listed in the webmaster section of the directory, all offering a range of free services. These are great for beginners as they allow you to practice your skills and 'get your feet wet' gaining some very useful experience perfecting both your site and your skills. But long term, particularly if your site is successful and the budget allows it - you will want to purchase your own domain name and get away from free hosting. You will get to a point where it will start to work against you and as your traffic and web presence builds, you will need a provider with a superior service such as ClaraNet or Active ISP.

Funding Your Site.

As time progresses you will probably want to consider how you could benefit financially from your site - or at least cover your costs if you have made the jump to a 'paid for' host. Just a word of warning here though - there is no get rich quick scheme, making money out of your site takes as much effort as it's production in the first place, particularly in the early stages. But as your site takes off so will your finances and some people who are willing to put in the time and effort in actually do earn a very good living from it! There are a range of programs you can choose from but we would recommend (especially in the early years of your site) that you select some with a good reputation and that focus on your particular area of expertise. The following have been around for a while and have a good reputation for payment; Commission Junction (Worldwide), TradeDoubler (Europe). These should get you started and may probably be the only programs you'll ever need, but as always if they're not for you - have a look at the growing selection in our directory.

Getting Traffic To Your Site

Ultimately this is what it is all about - attracting visitors to your site. The more visitors you attract the more successful you will be and that's true whether you decide to try to earn some money from your site or not. This is one of the hardest thing to

achieve - to get people to your site in the first place - and with out doubt the best way way to get traffic, is to manually enter your sites details into as many search engines as possible. However this is extremely time consuming and could result in you spending all day, everyday, sitting at your PC submitting to search engines when you really should be concentrating on the sites development. Thankfully there are now several tools available that have automated this process and we thoroughly recommend you use them. Once again you will find a wide range of promotional tools available in our directory - Don't expect to get listed into the likes of Yahoo in this manner though - Yahoo are very choosy these days as there are so many websites to select from. Just keep plugging away at them manually once every six weeks or so because if you make it into their index your traffic really will take off!!