

Presenting Your Work Online

Professional Photographic Practice

Websites

Why do you need a website?

What isn't a website?

What are the options?

What qualities should your site have?

Why?

Your website should be the centre-piece of your web presence. Anyone trying to make a living from photography can be discovered through their website (with the aid of good SEO – Search Engine Optimization), and this is the place you direct clients to via email link, verbally, on your business card, CV, letterhead etc. It is not always easy to show your portfolio to clients and certainly not with every update, but you can keep them interested and informed with a link to new content via email or social media.

Websites have never been cheaper or easier to set-up and maintain.

What isn't a website?

Social Media: Facebook, Twitter etc.

Photo sharing sites: Flickr, Instagram etc.

Blogs: Blogger, WordPress, Tumblr etc.

All those other web-based presences are useful for increasing your contact base, interlinking with your website, SEO, and keeping in touch with clients. I would suggest at the very least having a 'business' Facebook page for your photography and an Instagram account to quickly share new work and/or use as a visual 'sounding' board.

Bespoke

You, or a web designer, build the site from scratch using software such as Adobe Dreamweaver. You or the designer codes the look and functionality of the site using HTML. (Hyper Text Mark-up Language) and CSS. (Cascading Style Sheets)

Advantages/Disadvantages?

Upsides

Unique Look

Complete Control

Downsides

Complexity (coding, updating)

You still need to organise Web Hosting/Domain name

Cost if you're getting someone to build it for you

You need good design skills (or a good designer)

Arguably unnecessary with today's other options

One-stop Shop

There are many sites that offer hosting, web-building options (either using some code or, more commonly, with templates requiring no coding). Many of these offer free websites or a variety of price plans for greater flexibility. You might also use web space provided by Google +, Mac etc. Some are generic, some photo or art-specific.

Examples

Generic: Wix, Weebly, one.com

Photo/Design/Art Specific: Photoshelter, SmugMug, Zenfolio, Unusual Light, Carbonmade, Virb, LayerSpace, Squarespace, Amazing Internet, Portfoliobox, Photodeck

Note that nearly all web hosting companies provide web-building options including design templates and easy to navigate gallery options.

It is worth shopping around as a comparator to other possible choices.

Be aware of:

Cost - Not just the headline but all other 'below-the-line' costs.

Allowances for image quantity/storage (you may get a free or low cost option that restricts the storage volume or number of images, possibly paying more for great flexibility).

Information regarding reliability, up-time etc. - do your research.

Advantages/Disadvantages?

Upsides:

Simplicity

No coding required

Many will allow some customization with code

Downsides:

Limitations for email

Free sites: Domain name/adverts/limited image upload and bandwidth

Some are Flash based

General:

Check statistics for up-time/server speed

Visit sites made on these platforms

Content Management Systems (CMS)

You can create a site using a CMS without coding. You will need to get hosting, but the CMS is usually free. You will need to do some work but can customize your site with themes (free or premium), plug-ins and widgets. 25% of all websites developed today are built on WordPress.org platforms.

Examples: Drupal, Joomla, [WordPress.org](https://www.wordpress.org)

Advantages/Disadvantages

Upsides:

Very flexible and straightforward to use

Easy to update as you do this on the server of your hosting company

Web Host advantages such as bespoke email

Once you have got to grips with it, easier to create other sites

Downsides:

Premium themes can be expensive (A one-off cost but you might want to pay an annual fee for continuing support)

More complicated to set up compared to a one-stop solution

What your site should have?

Must Haves:

Simplicity: you do not need complex design; navigation (the number of clicks) should be easy

Select, edit and sequence your pictures with care, as you would a portfolio

Your site should be fast to load and the transitions should be rapid too

Your site should be responsive i.e. work on mobile devices (avoid Flash)

Responsive:



What your site should have?

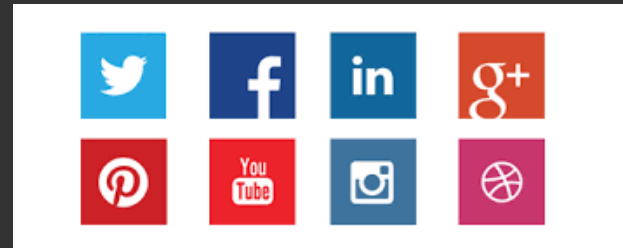
Desirable:

Your own domain or custom name: hettybarnacle.com or hettybarnaclephotography.com as opposed to hettybarnacle.wix.com

Your own professional email address e.g., hetty@hettybarnacle.com or info@hettybarnacle.co.uk etc.

At the very least, link to a more professional sounding Gmail or similar account. Ditch littlepixiehetty@hotmail.com for any client contact

Links to your social media ...



Your site is built for clients and
potential clients - an audience -
consider their requirements
ahead of your own