

Assignment 2 - E-Commerce - Luke Evans

by Luke James Evans

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Introduction to the Organisation

The organisation, Plum-Rite LTD, requires a new e-commerce web site for selling their products and services from. Their current website seems insufficient and a new one would give them that strong online presence that they desire. The company has multiple services and products that they can offer customers through an E-commerce platform. Plum-Rite LTD is a plumbing company that have expert staff who specialise in all aspects of plumbing and heating [1].

The Purpose of Developing an E-Commerce solution

This company definitely needed a new outlet for their e-commerce presence. First of all, there are a few grammatical errors on the original site that would make the company seem unprofessional; a new site would allow a fresh start with wording paragraphs and this can be read over to ensure there are no more errors.

Secondly, the site is simply outdated because there are no bespoke graphics that the customer can link the company to which means they're less likely to remember them. A new site with a nice looking logo and banner will attract customer and it will be familiar to them for when they return and recommend. Even the navigation bar buttons look out dated and a new e-commerce site would make the company seem new and fresh.

Also, most pages tend to be squeezed in and cluttered on their website. Cluttered pages have a lot of information to take in for a customer when they might not have time to read large paragraphs. A new site would allow the company to open up each page, spread the information out and possibly keep paragraphs brief and to the point so it's easily consumed by the viewer. The side bar on each page also takes up a lot of room and would free up space if they had their own page. Removing this unnecessary bar and repositioning the navigation bar would free up a lot of space on every single page and this feature would be very beneficial for viewers on the new E-commerce website.

The main reason why Plum-Rite needs to switch to a new E-commerce website is because they wish to be both a B2B company and a B2C company, which means they aim to sell their products and services to your everyday customers and big companies that will order in bulk. With normal customers, they may want separate pages to show precise prices for products so they can then get in contact and place an order; whereas with a business, they would probably order products in bulk and their own separate page would have a detailed description of said product but no set price. Once the business got in contact, then the price and capacity of the order would be discussed in length [2].

E-Commerce Options

E-commerce options are used to sell or purchase products and services via the transmission of funds over the internet [3] [4].

There are a few different ways that someone can go about creating an E-commerce infrastructure. Obviously the main option for an E-commerce platform and clearly the most popular for a company to use would be to create an E-commerce website and this can also be done using a couple different methods. The first method to building an E-commerce website would be coding it completely from scratch; while this method may take a substantial amount of time to complete and update in future, it can be more rewarding and customisable so long as the person who is doing the programming is knowledgeable enough. Another option for creating an E-commerce website would be to use an online design option. These online options are easy for non technical personnel to pick up and edit as they please, creating a site using this method would drastically increase progress of the websites design in comparison to coding it from scratch; the company may limit what they can do with the website however, due to each option only having a certain amount of themes and tools. Some online options will charge you to use their service and also charge extra to host the website. Certain options will have an upgrade package and it's up to the websites company if they wish to expend extra money for more tools and abilities with the website [5].

Another option for an E-commerce outlet is an online store front such as Face book store front. Options like this tend to be more catered to C2C and not suited for businesses to get set up online. How this option tends to work is that it will mainly show you all items that are for sale in your local area through this particular store front; usually people use an option like this as a one off sale and a business would be unable to get notice selling their products or services this way. These transactions usually take place in person with no form of e-payment involved [6].

Another option for e-commerce is another form of store front but one that is more catered for a business environment. Websites such as EBay and Amazon are the hosts for multiple businesses products. Amazon even primarily undergoes transactions through forms of e-payment. These kinds of sites are perfect for businesses that don't really care about branding and mainly want to sell their small range of products that could be completely unrelated to each other. Amazon allow people or businesses to advertise and sell their items on their platform and will even take care of delivery, however, they do take a small portion of the income. Meanwhile, EBay has a lot less advertisement potential for products but the person/company keeps all of their profits. Both of these options have no sales of services and essentially primarily sell items/products [7].

An Online design option has been chosen for Plum-Rite LTD's new E-commerce output. This is mainly due to the lack of coding knowledge and experience, as well as the distinct lack of time to fill the gaps in that knowledge while still trying to make the deadline. An online option was also chosen because there are a number of different e-commerce site design options that offer different things. Obviously an option to create a website as opposed to any other option such as a store front was chosen because it was just a much more suitable replacement for their old website in comparison.

An online site design option is also the better option to divide B2B sales and B2C sales, separate pages allow the website to divide the potential customer base and cater to them accordingly [8].

Technologies used to build an E-commerce application

Once the decision was made to create an E-commerce platform for Plum-Rite LTD using an online site design option, extensive testing of different options started before any work began on the site itself. The aim of testing was to determine which online site design option would be best suited for the creation of this E-commerce website [9].

Now obviously the simple hardware required to even start testing let alone carry out work on the site would be access to a Computer (either PC or a University computer) and also internet access for research and also to gain access to the websites of each option available. The hosting server would also be necessary to keep the site up and working while being worked on and for user viewing.

If the decision to create a website from scratch using code was made, specialised software would be required such as Adobe Dreamweaver so that the code was being input somewhere where the website interface could be shown while being worked on.

Out of the Multiple online e-commerce site design options that are available, the site ended up being created using Weebly. Just to start off with why Weebly was chosen after testing, Weebly had been used before but did not make the overall choice bias as many options were tried and tested. Weebly ended up to be the best option for this website; it had a wide range of themes to quickly get the web site started and looking rather professional with minimal effort to begin with and it has a very simple to use GUI that had a drag and drop system which was very easy to use a navigate. Weebly allowed the user to easily add and delete pages as well as rename and customise to your choosing. Weebly was the preferred option while testing and it was also mobile compatible so the new Plum-Rite LTD website could be viewed on Mobile Devices. Weebly was also free, unless you want a custom URL or their extension package for more tools to work with which was not necessary for this project [10].

Weebly was just a lot more user friendly over all when compared to options such as Wix and Square space which both took a little longer to navigate and work out where everything was [11].

Bespoke graphics had to be made for the new site so specialist software was required. A brand new logo and banner for Plum-Rite LTD was created to be easily implemented via Weebly. The software required was Adobe Illustrator and Adobe Photoshop.

Methods Required for E-Commerce Monetary Transactions

Due to Plum-Rite not having any set prices on any of their products or services, they rely on their customers to contact them via email or phone. If they did have set prices then the website could have used a basket system which means the customer could choose everything they wished to purchase while browsing and then buy them all in one go using an e-payment method much as PayPal or simply by debit/credit card [12].

Payments for products and services will have to be sorted after discussions about pricing are complete to the customer/business will either pay them in cash after delivery or the service is complete or possibly beforehand via a bank transfer. All of these payment methods are known as a one-time customer to vendor payment because these kinds of payments are often involved in e-commerce [13].

Case Study: Electronic Payment

This case study was to research why certain types of E-payment methods benefited a specific business compared to others [14].

“When companies enter electronic commerce market, choosing an electronic payment system that works well with the way they run their business, which be both popular and safe, is a major concern. This research examined major criteria and current situation of e-payment systems”

Evaluating Site Performance

There are numerous ways to check the performance of your website even if it's a prototype like this new website for Plum-Rite. A great method to evaluate site performance is to use Google Analytics, this tool allows a user to view how many people use or view the site in real time or over a set period. Tools like this are a good way to see how well a site is doing and to see if the company needs to spend more time working on advertising their online presence.

Google Analytics has a large number of ways to monitor a sites performance, for example, it can measure the response time of each page to see how quickly each one loads for a user. If certain pages load a lot slower than others then those pages may need to be edited to make them less demanding to internet connections. It could be possible that Google Analytics shows that all pages on the site are appearing slow in all browsers, in which case the site owner may want to contact the websites host to discuss these issues or maybe even switch hosts completely.

Google Analytics also allows you to see where the majority of your viewers are based in the world. If this was irregular because you expected the majority of viewers to be local then the company may need to rethink advertisement in the local area for their E-commerce presence. If you thought that viewers would be more spread out because the website is owned by a worldwide business then they will also need to think about expanding the awareness of their E-commerce presence to other countries around the world.

A user will be able to see a sites ranking on Google, which simply means how soon someone will see it in the Google search pages when they search for your Meta tags. If a website is discovered to have a bad ranking it should maybe check how suitable their tags are, how suitable their content is or maybe pay Google for a rank boost. Google can also temporarily advertise sites across search pages for a fee if the site really wasn't doing so well with both views and ranking [15].

(See Appendix for Site Map and Website Screenshots)

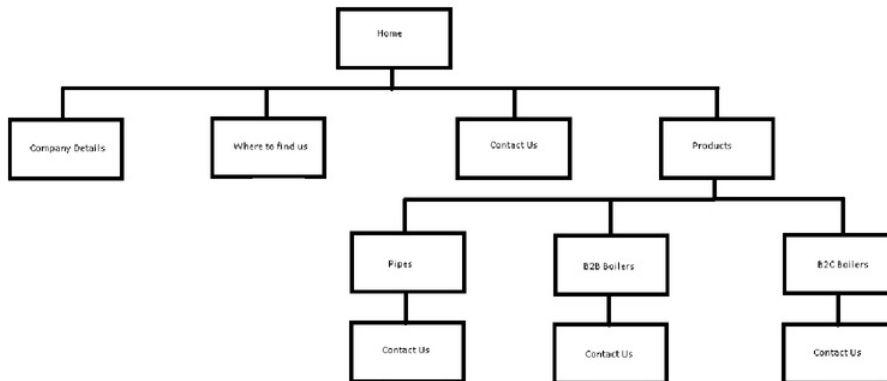
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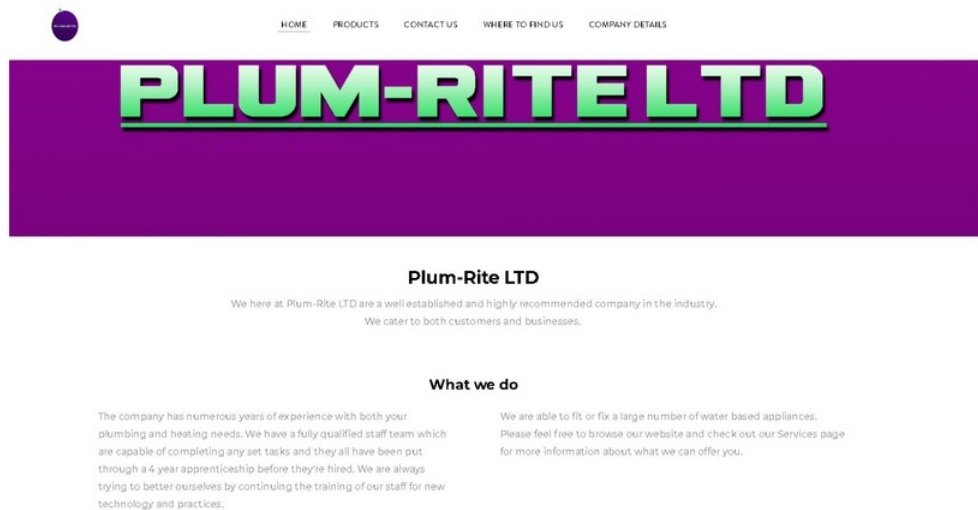
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Appendix

Site Map:

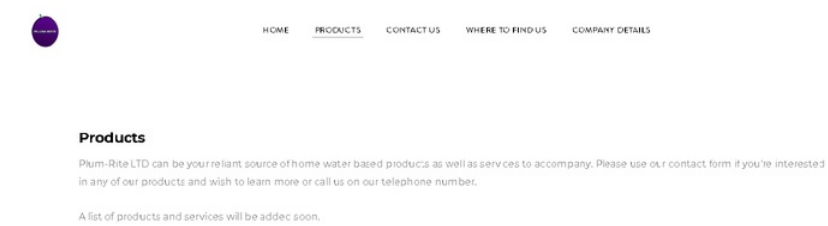


Screenshot 1 (Home page):

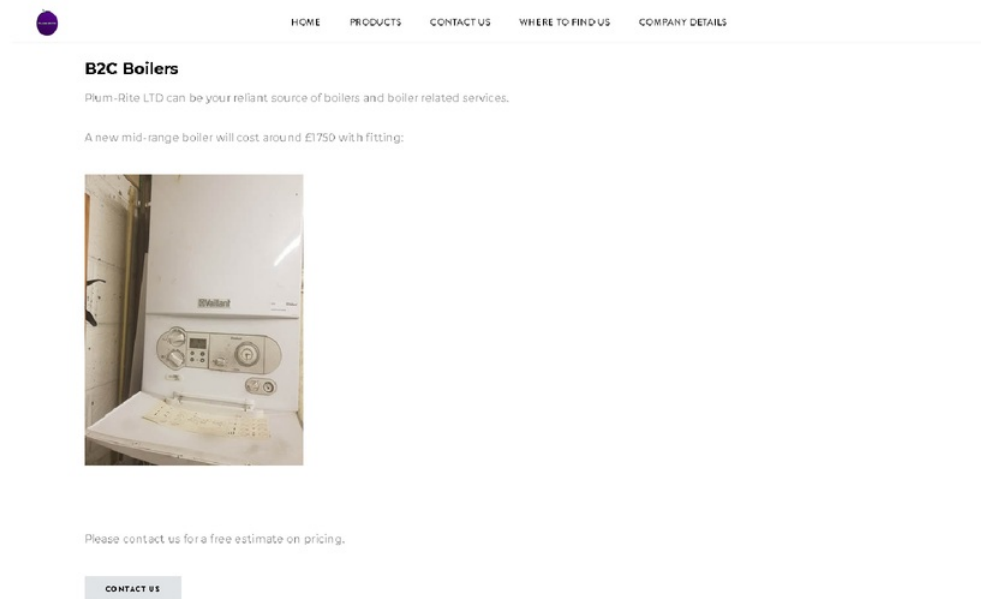


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Screenshot 2 (Products):

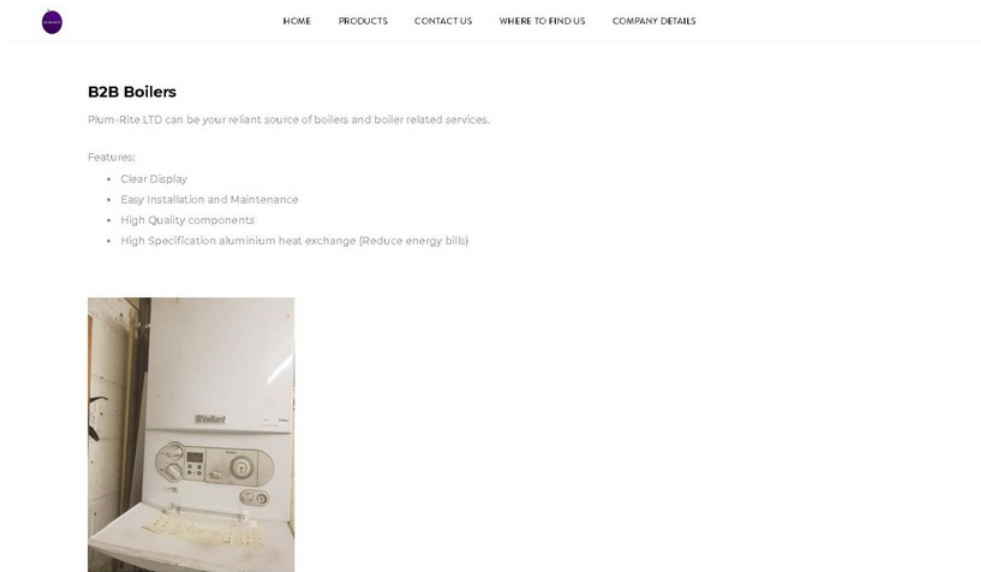


Screenshot 3 (B2C Boilers):

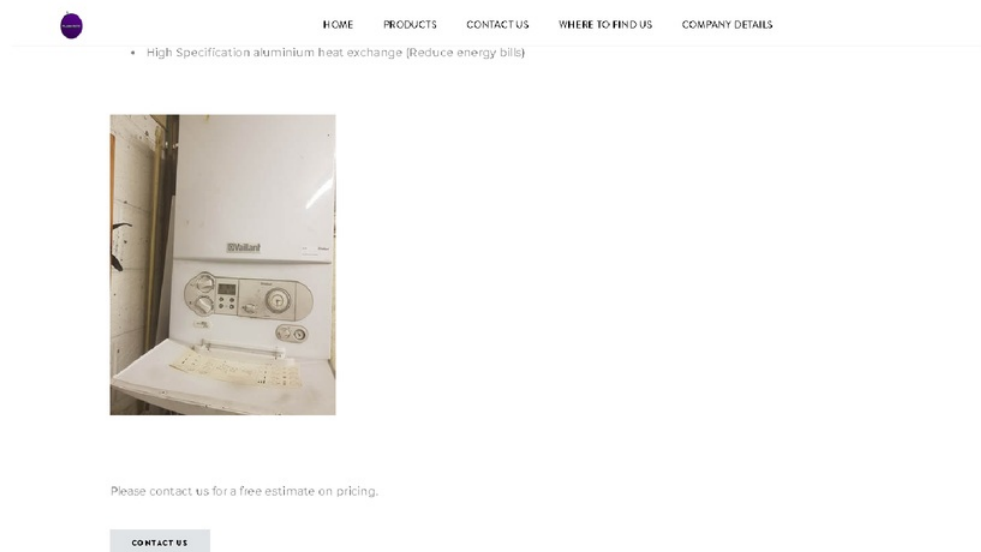


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Screenshot 4 (B2B Boilers):



Screenshot 5 (B2B Boilers):



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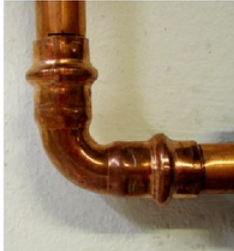
Screenshot 6 (Pipes):

[HOME](#)[PRODUCTS](#)[CONTACT US](#)[WHERE TO FIND US](#)[COMPANY DETAILS](#)

Pipes

Plum-Rite LTD can be your reliant source of pipes and pipe services.

Copper pipes 15mm x 1mtr is around £5:



Please contact us for a free estimate on pricing.

[CONTACT US](#)

Screenshot 7 (Contact Us):

[HOME](#)[PRODUCTS](#)[CONTACT US](#)[WHERE TO FIND US](#)[COMPANY DETAILS](#)

Contact Us

We look forward to hearing from you about any inquiries either via email or call us on our telephone Number.

Email us

* INDICATES REQUIRED FIELD

NAME *

EMAIL *

COMMENT *

[SUBMIT](#)

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Screenshot 8 (Contact Us):

[HOME](#) [PRODUCTS](#) [CONTACT US](#) [WHERE TO FIND US](#) [COMPANY DETAILS](#)

NAME *

EMAIL *

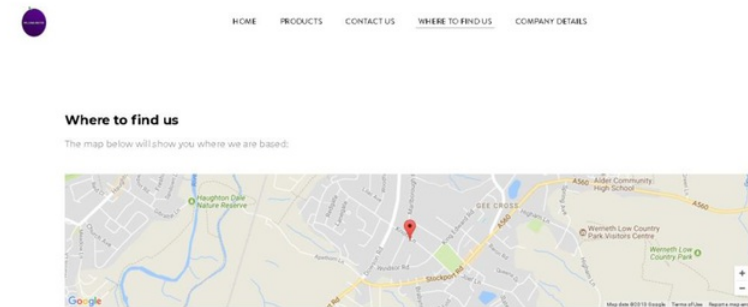
COMMENT *

SUBMIT

Contact Information

Address: 71 Knott Lane, Hyde, SK14 5HZ
Telephone Number: 0161-351-1301
Mobile Number: 07960 683413
E-mail Address: simon@plumrite.freeserve.co.uk

Screenshot 9: (Where to find us):



Screenshot 10 (Company Details):

[HOME](#) [PRODUCTS](#) [CONTACT US](#) [WHERE TO FIND US](#) [COMPANY DETAILS](#)

Company Details

Here are just a few extra details that you might find useful:

Company Name: Plum-Rite LTD
Company Registration Number: 04654353
Gas safe Registration Number: 37999
Registered Office Location: 48 Union Street, Hyde, Cheshire, SK14 1ND.
Postal Address: 71 Knott Lane, Hyde, Cheshire, SK14 5HZ.

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GRADEMARK REPORT

FINAL GRADE

59/100

GENERAL COMMENTS

Instructor

Scenario

Some good discussion which makes the case for e-commerce in the scenario. Further references would be an improvement.

Infrastructure

Good overview of options here - some of the references are out of date but are used for general points that are (hopefully) still true. Brief justification of choices made.

Monetary Transactions

Brief recommendations are made here for the scenario - some background of the trends in e-payment would be an improvement.

Metrics

A good discussion of site metrics - an improvement would be to make this discussion include wider business metrics and to take a critical approach to analyse common metrics today.

Overall

Some good content here - see comments above.

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