



# LOCAL WEB DESIGN

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Designing a Website That Produces Results



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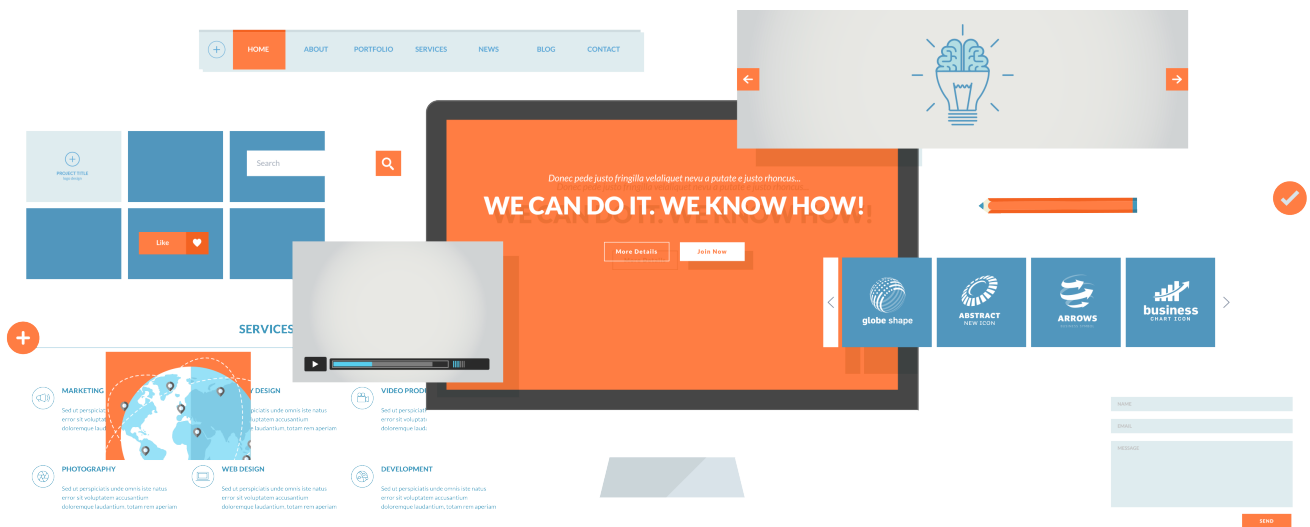
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# INTRODUCTION



In a technology driven age, it has become essential for local businesses to create a presence online. A website allows you to bolster your current advertising campaigns, take control of your brand image online and build long-term relationships with your clients.

Wordpress is a universal website platform that provides the scalability required when growing your business.

This guide will walk you through the web design process and explain the benefits of using Wordpress as a website platform.

# USER BEHAVIOUR

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Before we start, we need to look at user behaviour online. Keep in mind that your website is there to guide your existing and potential customers towards a specific action. This action must address a specific need from the customer. The better you understand the behaviour, the easier it will be to address their needs.



## QUALITY & CREDIBILITY

Website users know how to appreciate quality and credibility in a website. You can have the most beautifully designed website in the world, but your design will mean nothing if your content lacks quality and credibility.



## ANALYSING A WEBPAGE

Users scan web-pages. They do not read every single bit of content and search for anchors to guide them through the content of the page.



## INSTANT GRATIFICATION

Your website needs to grab your user's attention in the first few seconds, or risk an exit.



## INTUITION

As users tend to follow their intuition, it is important to apply an intuitive flow for your website structure.

# PRINCIPLES OF EFFECTIVE WEB DESIGN

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When you apply these principles, your web design process will put you in good stead with your users.



## GOAL

Each page on your website must address a specific goal of your user. Whether your user is looking for your contact details or more information on a product or service, your website needs to cater to that in the most effective way.



## COMMUNICATION

Users consume information very quickly on the Internet so you must communicate information clearly on your website. Information must be easy to read and digest. You can accomplish this by formatting your text with headers, bullet points, etc.



## COLOUR

Use colour effectively throughout your website. To create harmony and balance, use complementary colours. Provide contrast for the text and background colours to make your website content easy to read. Colours have the power to evoke emotions, so bear this in mind when deciding which palette to use.



## MEDIA

Text is not the only way to communicate with your users. Rich media like images, videos and infographics can communicate a point more effectively than any piece of text, making it easier to position your brand to your target audience.



### USER JOURNEY

This refers to the actions the user takes when moving around your website. There is a general "3 click rule", which states that a user should not take more than 3 clicks to get to their goal/destination. Make sure the website has a logical page structure following an intuitive user flow.



### USER ATTENTION TRACKING

Studies have shown that users scan computers in an "F" pattern, placing their attention in the top left hand side of the screen. Good designers build a website using this flow instead of forcing a different type of flow; they prioritise the most important information from left to right and top to bottom.



### LOAD TIME

Websites that take too long to load are universally hated by most users. Always check if the codes and images are optimised to make the website load faster.



### MOBILE FRIENDLY

Make sure that your website is optimised to be viewed across all devices. You will be missing a big chunk of traffic if your website is only optimised for desktop usage.

# WORDPRESS FEATURES

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With Wordpress, you can create powerful, polished sites. It is the most popular website publishing platform and currently powers more than 20% of the web.

Wordpress is constantly improving, with updates rolling out regularly to enhance the user experience. With their user-friendly content management system, you do not need to be a programmer, or know anything about HTML to update your website.

An estimate of 50, 000 new Wordpress websites get published every day, from small business websites, to big media organisations like CNN. The scalability ensures that your website can grow with your business.

Here's a list of reasons we recommend using Wordpress.

## 100% CUSTOMISABLE

Your website is totally customisable in Wordpress, from the colour to the layout.

## USER-FRIENDLY

An intuitive user interface is the result of Wordpress' simple, uncomplicated technology. You can add new pages, blog posts and media without coding and HTML knowledge.

## SEO FRIENDLY

One of Google's considerations when indexing your website is your HTML code. Google does not like excessive code. Wordpress is already streamlined, which creates a good basis for your future SEO efforts.

## FULL W3C COMPLIANCE

W3C sets standards for HTML code to ensure that websites will comply with the latest browsers. Wordpress is W3C compliant.

## DATA SAFETY

When you build a website on a hosted service, you may lose data if the hosted service fails. With Wordpress, no one besides your developers has access to your content. Your content is also automatically saved, which protects you against data loss.

## SCALABILITY

You can add hundreds or thousands of pages to your Wordpress website without compromising its performance. Your website can grow alongside your business.

## WEBSITE SECURITY

If you have the right partner setting up your Wordpress installation, they will "harden" the installation that actually provides more security against hackers.

## MULTI-USER FUNCTIONALITY

Within Wordpress, administrators can create user accounts and specify the level of access these accounts hold.

## UNIVERSAL PLATFORM:

Finding a designer to work on your website will never be a problem, as most designers know how to work with Wordpress. Instead of starting from scratch when doing a re-design, a designer can edit the existing website.

## MOBILE FRIENDLY

With responsive themes, your website will identify the device your site visitors are using and adjust the view appropriately.

## BLOG READY

Wordpress has a built-in blog functionality, ready for you to design and activate.

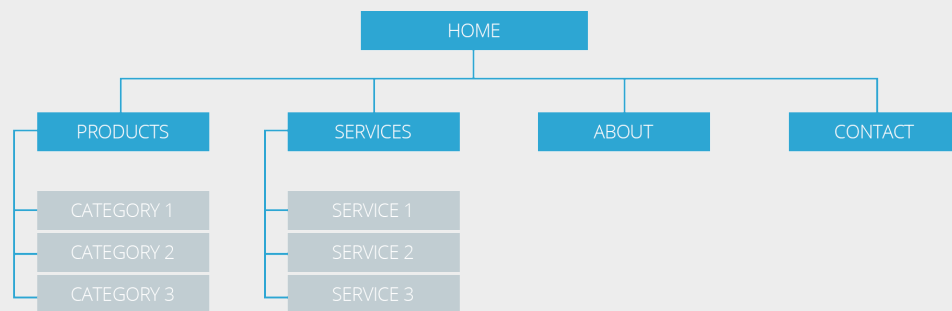
# DESIGN PROCESS

## PLANNING

**Website Goals** - During the beginning phase of the process, it is important to determine the goals of the website, whether it is to gather leads, improve sales or provide information. These goals will dictate the design of the website.

**Content Structure** - It is crucial to map out the content structure during the planning phase. This will save you time and effort later on.

Example:



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## DESIGN

**Quality Branding Materials** - Your website needs to have consistent branding to make sure the user journey off-line matches the user journey online. An example would be the logos on your letterhead; these should match the logos on your website.

**Mockups** - The mockups are created with the website goals in mind. It is important to have enough variety in the mockups to view how different styles could possibly affect the website's look and feel.

**Review & Approve** - The website look and feel needs to be considered and approved by all stakeholders before the start of the development.

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## DEVELOPMENT

**Website Template Framework** - The main template framework for the website is developed before the individual page templates. This serves as the foundation for the various page templates.

**Page Templates** - Once the master template is developed, the individual page templates are created. An example of this is the product page template to be used for all product pages.

**Add Special Features** - Special features are developed when the need arises for a specific function; for example adding social network buttons where users can “like” your blog posts.

**Upload Content** - After the content has been written and approved, it needs to be uploaded along with any other media to the specific pages of the website. Other media include videos, images, PDF documents or slides.

**QA** - Once the website has been fully developed, it needs to go through Quality Assurance by testing all links and functionalities. This process can be time consuming, but is necessary to avoid any errors when going live.

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## LAUNCH

**Transfer to Live** - When all testing has been completed, it is time to transfer the website to the live server where it will be hosted.

**Test** - Live testing is necessary to ensure there are no errors or bugs on the live website.

## SITE MAINTENANCE

**Security Updates** - To ensure that your website is safe and secure, a monthly update of Wordpress and plugins is recommended.

**Website Backup** - It can be devastating when you lose your website data. Make a backup at least once a month to ensure that you never lose website data.

**Content updates** - Keep your content fresh by updating it at least once a month with new blog posts. When products or services get added to your business, it is important to transfer that information to your website, so users have easy access.

## CONCLUSION

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Whether you are building your first website, or re-designing an existing one, this quote applies to you:

*"If you don't have time to do it right, when will you have the time to do it over?" - John Wooden*

Make sure that you apply best practices in website design. Most of all, keep your users in mind during the process. What will they like? What is their journey?

Your website is an extension of your business; it needs to receive the same attention as your physical store does. Do a good job with your website the first time around.