How to Build a Website

Stage 1: Choose a website hosting service

Website hosting services provide the infrastructure needed for your website to be online and accessible to visitors. These services rent space on servers where your website's files and data are stored. They also handle the technical aspects of making your site available on the internet.

Think of it like renting a physical space for a shop or library (website). The hosting company provides a server that stores your website's files, images, and other data.

The hosting service ensures your website is available to anyone with an internet connection. Hosting companies manage the technical aspects, like server maintenance, software updates, and security.

It is easiest to pick a Host with a **Website Builde**r included.

A Website Builder is usually the online programme that allows you to design and populate your website. If you do not want to spend ages learning how to code (!) the website builder will be the easy way in which you get your website up and running.

A list of popular Hosts with Website Builders can be found here. You want to pick something that is as simple as possible. Do not be too worried about features such as e-commerce or hundreds of templates. It is very unlikely you will ever need more than a **basic** plan. There is no such thing as a free lunch! Many Hosting Companies offer 'free' or cheaper starting prices. Pay attention to what the price will go up to once this period is over.

I used www.GoDaddy.com. Expect to pay roughly £6 per month for a year as the opening offer, rising to about £12 per month once the offer period is over. A basic plan is usually good enough because a lot of the more advanced features are geared towards people who are trying to sell goods and services via the web. As it is likely that anything relevant to your area will be about sharing information as opposed to selling things, lots of the extra functionality (and therefore cost) is unnecessary.

Likewise, there is a lot of jargon floating around about websites. You do not particularly need to be bothered about SEO, buffer speeds, bandwidth or anything else other than the most basic functions, which are easy to learn from 'playing' with the website builder.

Stage 2: Choose a website address

Your website address is known as your domain name (e.g mywebsite.co.uk). Most website hosting services makes this easy and it is the first thing you will do after registering with a website hosting provider. The name you choose must be unique, but the website host will make sure that is the case. Again, they might try to 'upsell' you things like 'domain name protection' etc. You do not need it. Sometimes, if you do not want to have a name that includes the website provides' name in it (e.g. mywebsite.*godaddy*.co.uk) you might need to pay a small one-off extra fee to have a simpler, shorter domain name.

Stage 3: Plan what you want on your website

Who is it for? What type of information do you want to share? Have a look at www.cumbriadfj.info and you will see how I have divided my website into 4 broad categories with submenus. You may like to map out a general structure which is similar or you may want to organise it differently. I have divided my website into two distinct areas – pages for court users and pages for professional users. There are of course other ways of doing it.

Who is going to write what?

How much is going to be 'new' and how much is referral information (links to other websites)?

Who is going to update it?

Stage 4: Build your website

The best way to build a website is to play with the website builder that's part of the package you have subscribed to. It is worthwhile remembering that no one else can see your website until you 'publish' it. This usually involved clicking on the large button that says 'publish'. Until you do that, you can play around with it in private and there is always a function that lets you see what it *will* look like once you have decided to publish it.

Once you have something you are happy to publish, it is worth considering:

How are you going to let people know about it?

How much are you going to integrate it e.g. with orders or other information.

5. Do you need an email address?

The one thing it is worth looking into, which is often part of any basic package, is an alternative single email account linked to the website so that if you invite feedback, it comes to an address not directly associated with your judicial address. For example, on my website the email address dfj@cumbriadfj.info.

My website also has the following disclaimer on every page:

> "Nothing on this website constitutes legal advice and the inclusion of any other website or publication does not imply or mean an endorsement of the contents thereof. Any messages sent via this website do not constitute formal or official communication with any member of the judiciary or court staff."

CAB

May 2025