



**Colleen Rice Nelson**  
www.TUAWebDesign.com  
Colleen@TUAWebDesign.com  
323-533-0887

## **Website Planning Questionnaire**

### **Introduction**

Thank you for your interest in the services of The Ultimate Answer!

Every choice and decision you make concerning your website may or may not impact the creation process. I have created this guide to ensure that you start with a strong base, and some basic but important considerations. Even if you believe you are ready to get started on your website, I *strongly* recommend that you read through the guide and confirm you are ready. You may find you have overlooked some critical matters that can alter your vision of your site. If nothing else, it will help you communicate your ideas to ensure an effortless process. My goal is to help you think of your website needs, as this is *your* site. This guide is just that; a guide. It is not exhaustive, but your answers may lead to more questions, or alternative answers, which will hopefully result in your effective and professional website.

I have spent over ten years working with the World Wide Web in programming, developing, researching, surfing and just enjoying the net. I love the idea of global connectivity, and that is where you come in. You are interested in putting a website up for the whole world to see, literally. While you may not necessarily care about who visits your site outside of your own country or city, I am here to make certain, that the site is viewed and functions properly by anyone who does visit your site. The answers to the following questions will help guide you through the various options available to fit your needs and requirements.

The following guide should be reviewed before the purchase of any related Web service or product. The answers to these questions will lead you to consider all the questions that are relevant to having a website. Your answers now will help you save money and time down the road.

Thank you again for taking the time to work with this guide. Moreover, please, do not worry if you do not have the answers to every question. Skip them and move on, because one question may help you answer another question later. There are no right or wrong answers, just ideas.

Let's get started! You can print this out, fill in the information and fax it to me; or you can copy, and paste the entire document into a Word (.doc) file, type it in and email it. Either way is fine.

**Colleen Rice Nelson**

Multimedia Muse

The Ultimate Answer

*Expanding and growing your online presence through creative collaboration.*



**Colleen Rice Nelson**  
www.TUAWebDesign.com  
Colleen@TUAWebDesign.com  
323-533-0887

## **Part 1: Goals - The Environment of your site**

*Why do you want a site?*

Goals are the keys to consider to fully understanding the commitment necessary in benefiting from a web site. Long term considerations in the beginning, can assist in the development, and may create phases for development that will save money down the road. If you are unsure, continue through the guide and come back to this later. You will be amazed at how your goals play a critical role in the various aspects of your website.

- 1) What is the purpose of your site?
- 2) Why do you want people to visit your site?
- 3) What message do you want to convey to your visitors?
- 4) Who is your site for?
- 5) Who is your target audience?
- 6) What is your short term goal?
- 7) What is your long term goal?
- 8) How will you determine if you site is successful?
- 9) Will you sell services?
- 10) Will you sell products?

## **Part 2: Domain Name - The Cornerstone of your site**

*www.yourwebsitename.com*

Your domain name will be your street address in cyberspace. Technically, it is a piece of virtual real estate. It is important to consider the length as it can be used on all your traditional advertising. A long website address can be cumbersome for visitors to type, and take up valuable space on business cards and advertisements. Also, consider that the site address will be your email address as well. Your email address will be *anything@yourwebsite.com*. However, abbreviations can be considered for the domain name, as the pages themselves will contain the full company title. Also, consider the various extensions that are now available. Extensions are the .com, .net, .biz, .us etc... that appear after the name, and can have different meanings for the overall address. This can be explained through our consultation. Once the domain name is purchased, you should be prepared to keep it for as long as plan on having a website. So, consider carefully.



**Colleen Rice Nelson**  
www.TUAWebDesign.com  
Colleen@TUAWebDesign.com  
323-533-0887

**Hint:** You can research a domain name at any website hosting company; it is referred to as the “WHOIS” database. Go to [www.GoDaddy.com](http://www.GoDaddy.com) and search for you ideal domain name.

- 1) Do you have a domain name that was previously purchased?
- 2) If yes, do you have the registration materials for that domain?
- 3) If No, what name do you want to use for Web site address?
- 4) Have you researched your options?
- 5) Is the name available?
- 6) Do you have any other choices if the first choice is taken?
- 7) Is it easy to type into the browser?
- 8) Is it too long to for a business card?

### **Part 3: Content - The Building Material of your site**

#### *What you will say*

The content of your website is all the information (building material) you will provide your visitor’s to your site. The content is also what determines the website’s foundation (hosting), structure (layout) and style (aesthetics). You need to consider what you overall goal is for your site, similar to a mission statement. While you have an overall goal, you will need objectives in order to reach your goal. Your objectives are the individual pages within your website. Every page requires content, and how you create your content will determine the success of the overall goal of your website.

You should have the information (i.e. the text), photos, logos, tagline and any other information you want to convey ready to go before you begin the web site creation process. Many hopeful website owners consider the content as an afterthought, and have a frustrating time with their site. If you imagine your site completed, and think of the contents as pieces to a puzzle, you can begin to see how the site will be organized. As the content is created you will see a natural evolution of how your site should be structured.

**Warning!** *Don’t be an overachiever with your website! The greatest aspect of a website is its inherent nature to be fluid. You should think of your site in steps or phases. Trying to get everything you have ever thought of, up on a website will only delay the results and make the process very frustrating.*



**Colleen Rice Nelson**  
www.TUAWebDesign.com  
Colleen@TUAWebDesign.com  
323-533-0887

***Reality Check:*** *Once your website is up, there is a natural time period where no one will know you have a website until you tell them. Why build a site in a hasty manner, when you can build a site properly from the start.*

If you take the time to consider your site in natural phases, you can consider options that you may not have had the opportunity to consider if you were flying along. Your website can be, and do, almost anything you want. However, you need to be aware of what you might want to do in the future, as it will affect what type of hosting you need now. The following questions will help you gather your content together.

- 1) Do you have a mission statement, biography or resume?
- 2) Do you have any photos or logos you want to include?
- 3) Who is your audience? Young? Older? Tech savvy?
- 4) What type of information do you want to convey specifically?
- 5) Why should your visitors go to you and not the competition?
- 6) What do you offer that others do not?
- 7) How many topics, issues or ideas do you want to include?
- 8) What word or phrase would you use to categorize each idea or topic?
- 9) Do you want to include any interactive elements?
- 10) Will your site have e-commerce?
  - a. If yes, how many products will sell at any one time?
  - b. If yes, do you have photographs of the products?
  - c. If yes, have you considered payment methods?
  - d. If yes, do you have a PayPal account?
  - e. If yes, have considered shipping methods?
  - f. If yes, have you written descriptions for the products?



**Colleen Rice Nelson**  
www.TUAWebDesign.com  
Colleen@TUAWebDesign.com  
323-533-0887

#### **Part 4: Style - The Aesthetics of your site**

*How will it look?*

Consider what you envision for the overall look and feel of the web site. Answers to these questions will assist in graphics and design. Consider your content and determine what style suits your content. The style is the first impression a visitor receives in the first few moments of viewing your site. How many times have you visited a site, and clicked away because it just didn't seem like the right one?

- 1) Is your audience hi-tech or lo-tech?
- 2) What style suits your industry?
- 3) What type of personality do you want to convey?
- 4) What are you company's colors?
- 5) Do you see your site as informational?
- 6) Do you see your site as interactive?
- 7) Do you see your site with multimedia elements?
- 8) Do you plan on writing articles regularly for your website in the future?
- 9) Can you list 3 website links of sites that you like the style for one reason or another and explain why?

#### **Part 5: Layout – The Structure of your site**

*What is on each page?*

As stated before, the content is your determining factor in how the individual web pages are structured and organized. The grouping of the information into small bites works well for the web. As a matter of fact, the smaller the bites of information, the more interactivity you can bring to your site by allowing visitors to click on words / buttons to bring up more information. It is also much easier to read nuggets of information on a computer monitor, than one very long page. If you do have a large piece of information you want to post on your site, consider using subcategories to break up the information. See the next page on sample layouts, and ideas for page sections.

- 1) How many topics/ideas/issues do you think you will include?



**Colleen Rice Nelson**  
www.TUAWebDesign.com  
Colleen@TUAWebDesign.com  
323-533-0887

- 2) How many pages do you think you will need?
- 3) If you have more than 5 categories (or pages), have you considered using subcategories?
- 4) Do you like the links across the top of the page?
- 5) Do you like the links down the left of the page?
- 6) Do you like newspaper style columns?
- 7) Do you like blocks of information?
- 8) Do you have lots of text to display?
- 9) Do you have lots of images to display

### **Sample Layouts**

Fill in the Topics and Notes on Content for that page. Example Main Pages:

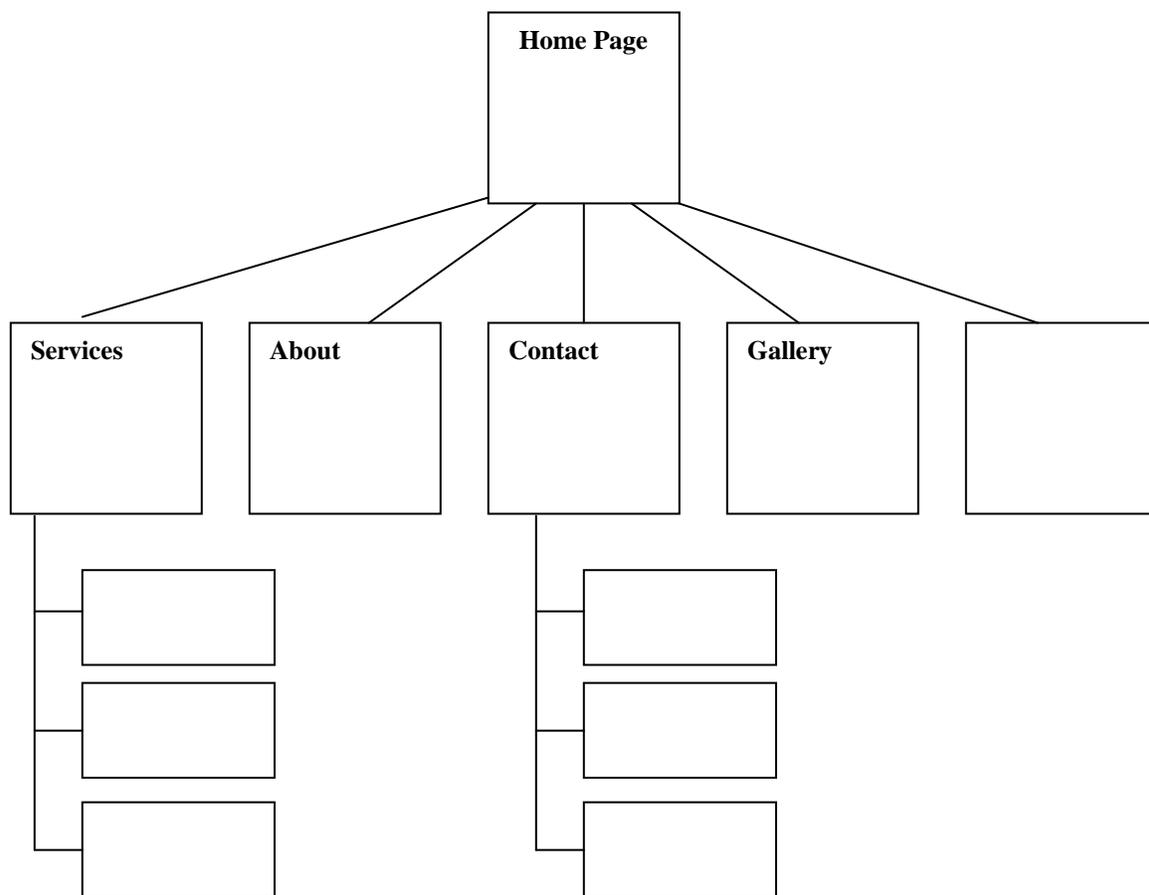
Services	Press	FAQ's	History	News
Contact	Media	Downloads	Products	How We Work
About	Pricing	Blog	Clients	Community
Gallery	Shop	Resources	Links	More...

Sub-Categories are a great way to further organize a site if you have different information about the same topic. But remember if you can't follow the logic, neither will your visitors.



**Colleen Rice Nelson**  
www.TUAWebDesign.com  
Colleen@TUAWebDesign.com  
323-533-0887

Use this as a sample worksheet. Your “Home” page is always the main page. All other pages flow from the Home page. You may only need a few other pages if your site is simple and informational. You may have lots of information you want to share on your site. Consider categorizing the information into groups, and your pages will flow more logically.





**Colleen Rice Nelson**  
www.TUAWebDesign.com  
Colleen@TUAWebDesign.com  
323-533-0887

## **Part 6:            *Hosting - The Foundation* to your site**

### *Where your site lives*

Hosting is where your website resides in cyberspace. The type of hosting completely depends on your needs of your website. Once you have completed this guide, I will be able to assist you in determining your hosting needs. You should not consider a hosting company based on price alone. The main consideration I take into account working with you is whether or not it will provide to room to grow. Will it fit your needs now and long into the future? Does it provide room for expansion, without costing any more money now? Does it provide the website the ideal place to grow and change, without causing any issues in the future? You do not need to know all the technical jargon involved, however any web designer worth their salt should be able to tell you what bells and whistles your hosting package offers now, and what it can do in the future.

For example, you might not want to sell anything on your website today, however, in the future you might. You just don't know. If you really don't know, than you should use a hosting company that offers you the ability to upgrade or downgrade your package at anytime without interrupting your existing website. Some hosting companies offer e-commerce, however, if you don't buy it up front, you would have to pull your website off the web for several days in order to switch to an e-commerce hosting package. Not a very good plan. Hosting company considerations that I will consider based on my expertise, to fit your needs.

- Security
- Uptime and downtime
- Server type (Windows or Unix based)
- Add-on Features
- Growth possibilities
- Will the company be around in 1-5 years?
- Tech Support availability
- Reputation
- Blog capabilities
- CMS capabilities
- Friendliness of Support Staff
- Technical help and assistance
- Name brand recognition
- How long has the company been in business?
- Cost
- Search engine submission options
- Traffic Statistic analysis



**Colleen Rice Nelson**  
www.TUAWebDesign.com  
Colleen@TUAWebDesign.com  
323-533-0887

Some questions that can assist in determining the technological factors of the hosting company include the following.

- 1) Will there be e-commerce?
- 2) Will you want to update the content of the site yourself?
- 3) Would you like to maintain the website yourself?
- 4) Will you want a blog, journal or message board?
- 5) Will you want a feedback form built into your site?
- 6) Will you want to add live news sources?
- 7) Will you want to provide streaming music or video?
- 8) Would you like a photo gallery?
- 9) Will you want a password protected webpage?
- 10) Will you have money transactions through your site in the future?
- 11) Will you have any additional people contributing content to your website?

Functions of your website can include some or any of the following. Select the functions you would like to consider for your website.

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Blog   | <input type="checkbox"/> Email Capture System (Constant Contact, MailChimp) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commenting System (after blog or articles)       | <input type="checkbox"/> Social Media Sharing (Content, Blogs)              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Forms (Contact, Fill In Submission, Information) | <input type="checkbox"/> Pop Up Windows for Marketing                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Social Media Links                               | <input type="checkbox"/> Event Calendars                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Customer Support / Chat System                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Event Registration                                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Calculators                                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Ticket Sales                                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Google Maps                                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Online Testing                                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Rotating Banner / Slideshow Front Page           | <input type="checkbox"/> YouTube Video Gallery                              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Photo Gallery                                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Testimonials                                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Downloadable Documents                           | <input type="checkbox"/> Online Appointment System                          |



**Colleen Rice Nelson**  
www.TUAWebDesign.com  
Colleen@TUAWebDesign.com  
323-533-0887

## **Part 7: Did you know?**

### *Things to be aware of*

There are some technical aspects of the World Wide Web that may restrict how some ideas are achieved. Here is a list of some issues that you should understand, or at least be aware of, as they can affect your “perfect” site. Here are just a few quick points. I could write a book on each one of these topics, but they are here to give some insight as to why you may not see your site the same at home versus at work. My goal is to help you create a website that functions properly, and looks great no matter the circumstances.

**PC vs. Mac** Not all computers are created equal. PC and Macs are different. Colors of images, programming languages, and other subtle details can be seen differently on a Mac versus a PC.

**Fonts** Not all fonts are created equal. In fact, there are only a handful of fonts that are exactly the same on a Mac and a PC. Some are easier to read than others. What you see may not be what your visitor sees.

**Images** I thought it looked good when I shot it. PC’s show images a bit darker versus a Mac which tends to lighten or wash them out a bit. Every monitor will read an image based on the settings of that monitor alone. In addition, every monitor can have different resolution settings, which will effect how clear the image appears on the screen.

**Videos** It won’t play. Saving videos in different formats may require users to download different programs in order to view a video. Also, the size of the file may be too large for dial-up users, but perfect for DSL users.

**Connectivity** Dial-up vs. DSL. Not everyone has DSL. Everyone tends to think like their neighbor. The reality is that there are places around the nation and the world that do not have DSL available. Major cities of course, tend have more DSL users, but never assume.

**Mobile** **To be mobile means different things to different people. I build websites that are “Responsive” which means they will adapt to normal monitors, to tables and to mobile phones. To have fully functioning sleek website for the phone, it is common at this point to basically build a second site and strip out many items of the website that aren’t necessary for mobile phone use. If this is important to your site, then let’s discuss. There are many options available but they depend on your requirements.**



**Colleen Rice Nelson**  
www.TUAWebDesign.com  
Colleen@TUAWebDesign.com  
323-533-0887

## **Part 8: Final Note in Planning**

### *Closing*

Not having these answers in the beginning, can delay the launch date and incur extra costs as the web site process is in progress. Estimates can only be reasonably accurate, if all attempts to capture the details are considered beforehand. Additional costs will increase the original estimate based on changes and unforeseen alterations during the creation of the web site.

Thank you for taking the time to consider all of these questions. It is alright if you do not have the answers to every single question. In fact, if you are having trouble in one particular area, just let me know and we can discuss.

When you are done, simply fax me or email your responses. Please include your phone number, email address, and mailing address. Have a great day!

*Just think...you are one day closer to your website!*

Goals	Is the Environment of your website.	Climate
Hosting	Is the Foundation of your website.	House, Store, Condo
Domain Name	Is the Cornerstone of your website.	Address
Content	Is the Building Material of your website.	Wood, Nails, Hammer
Layout	Is the Structure of website.	Rooms
Style	Is the Aesthetics of your website.	Paint