

Web Development Terminology

by Sherry Holub (<http://www.jvmediadesign.com>)

Hosting and Domain:

Most people do know about web hosting and domain names are these days, but every now and then some confusion might arise as to whether they are independent or one in the same. Basically, your web hosting is the space you "rent" on the internet to place your website. Your domain name, also called your URL is `www.your_website.com`. Some hosting companies will offer the purchase of your domain name at the same time you purchase your hosting account. Often times however, you purchase a domain name separately from a company such as Register.com or GoDaddy.com.

FTP or Login Info:

When you are asked for this information, this refers to the host name, user name, and password needed to access your hosting account. This will come from your hosting company when you sign up.

Site Map:

A site map is exactly what it sounds like - a flow chart or outline of all the pages on your website. This is created to help organize the way your website is put together.

Menu or Navigation:

Often times before creating a concept (see below) for your site, a designer will ask you what Menu items or Navigation you would like. These are simply the "buttons" within your page design that help a visitor get around to the other pages. For instance: About Us, Our Services, Our Products, and Contact Us could all be menu items.

"Mock Up" or Concept:

When designers mention these terms they are talking about the initial or concept designs for your project. In the case of a website, the concept will most likely be delivered to you via the web and be an example of how your site will look. These concepts are created and revised to achieve the final look of your website. Also note that designers often use "dummy text" (see below) if you have not already provided "content" (see below).

Royalty Free or Stock Photography:

Royalty Free and Stock Photography refers to photos and graphic images that you or your designer purchases to use within your design or on your website pages. These images can vary greatly in price, depending on the company they are purchased from. A good designer will have their own selection of images that were already purchased for you to choose from. Even so, sometimes the "perfect" image(s) can not be found so you must turn to other sources.

Screen Resolution:

The resolution for images and graphics for the web is 72 dpi (dots per inch). If you supply images to your designer, they should be of this resolution or higher. If you expect to do any printing (say, you want a brochure made to match the look of your website), your images will have to be in print resolution or 300 dpi.

Vector Graphic:

Designers will sometimes ask if you have your logo as a vector graphic. Vector graphics are shapes, lines, text, even illustrations which have been created in Adobe Illustrator or Macromedia Freehand. What makes a vector graphic different from a regular graphic is it's ability to be resized (especially larger) without distortion or loss of quality.

"Dummy" or Filler text:

Designers (both web and graphic) often use nonsense text in place of your real page text when first creating your site. Do not be alarmed! This is just to show you the areas where text will be placed. Once you provide your actual text, the designer will place that in those spaces.

Content:

Content refers to any text or special images which will go on your website that you will need to provide to your designer.

Meta or "Head" Tags and Keywords:

The meta (often called the head tags and keywords) of your page are special code to help search engines find your page. If your designer ask you for these you should provide the following: a description of your company/site (this can be several sentences that include your company name and a few keywords about what you do); page titles (what you would like each page of your website to be titled - this shows up in the browser window); keywords (these are single words and short phrases that you believe your visitors might type in a search engine in order to find your website).

CSS or Stylesheet:

CSS stands for Cascading Style Sheet. It is a system of coding that helps control things like the font on your page, link colors, page layout and many more.

Static HTML or Static Page:

Most websites are created with the language of HTML. Often times, a designer will call something "static" to denote that it is 1) not Flash (see below), or 2) not dynamically generated from a database. This is simply a "regular" website page.

Flash:

Flash is the software from Macromedia that designers use to create motion and animation on your website. This can be in the form of a presentation, moving graphics, or even a game. The applications for Flash have grown along with high speed internet connections such as DSL and Cable.

"Splash" Page:

This is usually referred to as a page that loads up before the main pages of your site. It can be your logo, or a Flash animation. Most designers are trying to steer their clients away from such a page as the attention span of the average internet user is quite short these days!

Blog:

Blog is short for Web Log and has fast become a very popular feature on many websites. Basically, a blog is a way for you to keep your site content fresh by posting articles and other information on your site.

Online Marketing:

A designer might mention Online Marketing to you as something to consider to help promote your site. This can include: affiliate programs, search engine optimization (see below), banner advertising, placing your website link in directories on the web, email advertising, newsletters, and online press releases.

Search Engine Optimization (SEO):

Although most designers do not perform this type of Optimization, they might mention it if you show an interest in ranking better in the search engines. SEO is the process of manipulating your page content and Meta tags in order to achieve better rankings.

mySQL or msSQL/SQL and Databases:

Unless you have custom programming or an ecommerce shopping cart on your website, your designer most likely would not mention these things. Nevertheless, sometimes they do come up if

some of these things might be happening at a later stage. MySQL is the type of database that you would need to have set up if you are hosting your website on a UNIX server whereas msSQL is the type that is set up if your are hosted on a Microsoft Windows server.

For more information, see how we work at JVM: <http://www.jvmediadesign.com/design.html>
Request a free project estimate: <http://www.jvmediadesign.com/quote.html>