



Review Your Website: A Checklist

Does your site look professional and current? Do your site visitors find what they are looking for? Take a few minutes to click around your website with the eyes of a first time visitor. Then check through the list below to improve your web presence. They won't all apply of course, but scan through to start:

FIRST IMPRESSIONS: Your **Home page** introduces the vision/mission/mood of your work. Click on your homepage as if you were a first-time visitor:

- What is the first thing you see (homepage banner?) Does it lead to what is inside?
- The Home page should include:
 - your logo, and tag line somewhere at the top of the page
 - banner or image at the top which represents your work (ie your artwork, front of your store, image that sets the mood of your work)
 - a paragraph which describes your vision/mission for your work or business
 - Easily navigated links to the rest of your site. Categorize and group the pages if you have many.
- **SECOND IMPRESSIONS:** Your '**About**' page is often the next click on your site. Keep it clear, friendly, and inspiring. Visitors click this page to know the "why" and "how" of your work.
 - For businesses & organizations: include a brief mission/vision statement and a brief history of how you have arrived. You may want to include links to event and program pages here.
 - For artists & artisans: include your Artist Statement here, keep it short and update it frequently. You may also include a very brief bio and description of your technique and process here.
 - Photos are a must to introduce yourself and your work. They can describe your work better than words.
- **CONTACT:** The third 'must-have' page in your site
 - Use an embedded contact form or your linked email address
 - Again, keep it simple. People often want a physical address—if you don't have an open studio, state this without trying to seem evasive. Instead offer a location where your work can be found.
 - Also include your hours, directions & GPS coordinates (or also embed a map) to your place.
- **DESIGN & CONTENT:** Note: If you are building your website yourself, many web building programs (ie. squarespace, weebly, wix, wordpress) will do a lot of the work for you—keeping the design sharp, clean and uncluttered, resizing photos, user friendly templates, and incorporating mobile accessibility.
 - Purpose. Always keep in mind your vision for your work. This can be reflected in your site's design. Are you playful? serious? practical? bold? compassionate? ...
 - Use consistent colors and fonts throughout
 - Clear out, clean up! Get rid of unnecessary clutter. Make content relevant, don't junk up your site with unnecessary stuff, clutter is confusing.
 - Text must be easy to read. Decorative fonts, tiny text, all bold, light on dark background can be hard to read and may feel dated or unprofessional. Simple dark on white background and standard fonts are best for most content.
 - Keep it Simple - Be concise: Complicated instructions and long paragraphs probably won't be read. Use subheadings to divide up longer text, bullet lists are easy to understand



Review Your Website: A Checklist

- Make an impact with images, use quality, clear and well cropped photos.
- Encourage browsing by making your images and text intriguing, interesting and artfully appealing, keeping it within the scope of your works' vision.
- What are similar websites doing? Trend is less clutter, more open space, simpler designs, limited color palettes.
- Make content relevant, don't junk up your site with unnecessary clutter
- Constantly update your site with new work—keep it fresh!
- Does your site have a 'call for action'? Give visitors a suggestion to continue the experience. (Just don't overuse this tactic, it begins to feel manipulative if constantly being told to buy - sign-up - click here - etc)
- Have business reviews? Add testimonials to your about page or to a separate reviews page

• FACILITATE

- Is your site mobile friendly? More people are accessing the web through their phone or tablets
- Add links to your social media to continue connections
- Do you have a customized 'page-not-found' page just in case? Include a link to your home page
- Is the site clear & easy to navigate? Misleading link titles or buried information just make people feel manipulated.
- Search: either use a search window or have clear, not fancy or clever link titles to navigate your site. Use clever in your text, it is often misunderstood in link titles
- Use your name or logo, tag line for clear identification
- Check your site's loading time, too many hi-res images or videos, esp flash, will make visitors lose patience. Consider continuing content from a very slow loading page to a second, linked page.

• SEO! (Search Engine Optimization) You need to be found—there's a lot of digital noise out there so be sure your customers can find you.

- Use your web builder's tools to optimize searches with tags, keywords, clear titles and content
- Include key words text that is near top of pages and in titles, subtitles. Be judicious however, reading a list of keywords over and over is just annoying and obvious.
- Consistently use your name or tagged logo for an easily recognizable image and font
- Think about incorporating a blog: fresh content often results in higher search listings
- Be sure to tag/name images with short descriptives, not numbers - include keywords discerningly here too
- Keep track of your stats through your web building service or google analytics
- After rebuilding: request a 're-crawl' so that search engines (google, yahoo, bing etc) can rescan your pages and update their robot's indexing
- Do you have an 'XML Sitemap'? This is a file that allows search engines to easily monitor all of your site's pages. Your web builder might do this automatically

• PUBLICIZE

- Put your website address on everything you send, print, or share. Your site is your communications home base
- Be regular but restrained with social media. Posts that are too often, too long and too loud might condition readers to ignore you — not often enough and they will forget you.



Review Your Website: A Checklist

FINAL FAST CHECK:

- Grammar & Spelling correct?
- Design & layout consistent, clear?
- Links all connected?
- Key words incorporated in text, image titles?
- Fast Loading time?
- Mobile Friendly?
- Web address on stationery, biz cards, other print materials?

A FEW RESOURCES:

User Friendly Web-building sites:

www.weebly.com

www.squarespace.com

www.wix.com

www.wordpress.com

SEO:

<http://www.google.com/webmasters/>

<http://siteexplorer.search.yahoo.com/>

<http://www.bing.com/webmaster>

- (Google AdWords tool to determine strategic keywords)