



New England WebArt

Quality Affordable Website Design & Redesign

PO Box 414 ▪ Huntington MA 01050-0414 ▪ (413) 667-3346 ▪ www.newebart.com

Content Development Checklist

Use this checklist to develop your content and to identify areas where you need help. The checklist is organized roughly from top to bottom of the webpage, but you don't need to complete the tasks in that order. It may make sense to rearrange the completion of the tasks, since developing an item halfway down the list may clarify the development of an item near the top of the list, etc.

Choose a domain name - Use the availability checker linked to from our *Domain Names* page (<http://www.newebart.com/checker.php>) to find one that suits you or your business. The *Domain Names* page includes some helpful tips on choosing your domain name.

Choose a title for your site – Your title will probably be the same as or similar to your name or your business name. It will be contained in the header of your website's code and show up in the frame or tab of your browser. It will also appear in search results that contain your site's URL (web address). If yours is a multi-page site, it will have the name of the specific page appended to it. For example, the title of our home page is "New England WebArt [Home]".

Write a description of what you intend to offer on your website – Your description will be included on your website as a "meta-tag". Meta-tags are generally invisible to visitors, but extremely important to search engines. The following guidelines are taken from the Open Directory Project's website (the Open Directory Project is a compilation of data which many search engines draw from in returning search results).

How to Write your Description:

Do not type in capitals, nor capitalize all nouns.

Do not include a list of keywords.

Do not include your products.

Do not write a sales pitch.

The description should describe, or list, the services you offer.

Do NOT include superlatives ("We're the best, "The greatest website...", "We're #1...", etc.).

The description should be in English, in coherent sentence form, and free from mistakes.

Do not use unnecessary capitalization, or include HTML tags.

Compile a list of keywords or phrases – Keywords are also included as a meta-tag and should be typical words or phrases that a potential visitor to your site would use as a search term that you would expect to direct you to your site. For example, if you are a jewelry maker, you would probably include such terms as “jewelry, gold jewelry, silver jewelry, earrings, gold earrings, silver earrings,” etc. Separate each term or phrase with a comma. It’s good practice to include common misspellings of words too, since search engines see strings of characters, rather than words. The length of your list of keywords is virtually unlimited, but you should avoid including keywords that are so generic that they have no practical value in driving quality, targeted visitors to your site. If you don’t care about visibility to search engines (if you are aiming at a strictly local market, for example), you don’t need to spend much time thinking about keywords.

Choose the name to be used in your banner - More than likely it will be either the same as your domain name, your current business name or your own name. Ideally, your domain name will be the same as or a logical derivative of your name or business name, so this will require very little thought. In other cases, you may need to be quite creative in order to maintain a meaningful linkage between your domain name and the name you’d like to be identified with.

Write a ‘tag-line’ for your banner - The tag-line is a catch phrase that helps to describe you or your business: “Serving Southern New England”, “Your Satisfaction is our Goal”, “The Best Widgets Money Can Buy”, etc. You may prefer to use the space that a tag-line would occupy for your address and/or phone number. You may also opt not to include anything but your site name in the banner.

Plan your site navigation – Even if you intend to have only one page, navigational links can be very helpful to your visitors. You may find it advisable to develop the main textual content of your site before you give much thought to navigation, or you may have been thinking about the content in outline form already, which could make a logical framework for navigation. In any case, whether you prefer to do it prior to, in conjunction with, or following development of your text content, navigation should be planned.

Develop the main text of your site – Here are some brief guidelines:

1. Write objectively – It’s fine to use hyperbole and superlative language (“The greatest widgets in the world”, “The finest writer who ever picked up a pen”, etc.), but be prepared to be challenged.
2. Choose a voice (1st person or 3rd person; professional, folksy, etc.), and use it consistently throughout.
3. Try to put yourself in the shoes of a representative of your target market and speak to him or her.
4. Try to anticipate things in your description that might need clarification or expansion and provide it.

5. Write as crisply and concisely as possible – if a website visitor isn't hooked immediately on arriving at a site, you've frequently lost the one opportunity you'll have.
6. Include a "call to action" – some typical ones are "click here (email link) for details", "add to cart", "sign up", "register today", etc.

Choose some images – Pictures can both add visual interest, and illustrate points that are made in the accompanying text (especially when paired with captions).

Choose a color scheme – You may already have an established color scheme on print materials or a sign, or you may prefer to choose colors elsewhere. As long as you can give us either a digital file, or printed matter that we can scan, we'll be happy to use any colors you choose. We can't match your favorite sweater or the color of your house, but we *can* match a photo of your sweater or color chips from the store you bought the paint for your house at. It's good to have 4-6 colors that can be applied to different elements on your site, but you need a minimum of two.

Decide how you'd like to be contacted – It's typical to include an email address, a phone number and an address (physical and/or mailing). You may prefer not to list your email address, or you may choose not to include your phone number. Unless your site is accomplishing its intended function simply by being visited though, people will need a way to find you.

Most hosting services (including ours) offer at least a few email addresses. These will usually be in the form of something@yourdomain.com, where "something" could be your name or a generic addressee such as "info" or "contact". It's usually possible to set up forwarding of mail, so you don't need to have another mailbox to check. You can also opt to leave the mail on the remote server, minimizing the risk of infecting your computer with viruses or cluttering it up with spam.

An email address derived from your domain name has the dual benefit of advertising your site, and being easy for visitors to your site to remember.

Please enclose or attach a copy of the short checklist, keyed to the requested items, when submitting the content for your site. For example, you might have a file titled "bodytext.doc" that contains the main text of your site. Please include the file name under the "Develop the main text of your site" line of the checklist and submit the file (and the checklist) as an attachment to an email or on a CD. Call (413-667-3346) or email (info@newebart.com) if you have any questions.