A Training Course for the Underserved Population

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A TRAINING COURSE
FOR THE UNDERSERVED POPULATION

by

Sally M. Cordrey

A Research Project Presented in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts
Specialization: Adult Learning & Media Development

Regis University
December, 2006
Micro Business Development is a non-profit organization that assists the underserved community of Denver, Colorado in moving into the formal business economy by providing access to capital, training, and marketplace opportunities. It is in need of the instructional design and development of a training course that would inform their clients about E-Business and website design. This nonformal training course will not only assist their clients expand their client base, but also help them to become more established, and increase the visibility of their businesses. This paper describes a Service Capstone Project that will be a beneficial solution to an adult learning problem for a local community-based organization.
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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Statement of Problem

Micro Business Development (MBD) is a non-profit organization that assists clients in moving into the formal business economy by providing access to capital, training, and marketplace opportunities. MBD focuses on the underserved community of Denver, Colorado who are striving to become successful with their own businesses. Today’s entrepreneurs recognize the advantages of including a dynamic E-Business web site in their business plan. MBD is in need of the instructional design and development of a training course that would inform their clients about E-Business and web site design. This training course will not only help their clients expand their client base, but also help them to become more established and increase the visibility of their businesses. This paper describes a Service Capstone Project for a Master of Arts degree with emphasis in Adult Learning and Media Development. This project will be a beneficial solution to an adult learning problem for a local community-based organization.

Project Overview

Background

I am drawn to fulfilling my final capstone project as a Service Capstone Project for two reasons. I believe in sharing my talents for those in need; particularly, where my understanding of adult education and theory can be directly transferred to practical application. Secondly, I truly believe in the Regis University mission that strives for service to others. The beauty of service learning is that this project has created an experiential learning environment where I have found growth and connection to a part of our society outside of the classroom. Together we have developed a truly serviceable contribution to improve the community as a whole.
The Organization

Established in 1993, Micro Business Development offers a continuum of services through three arms of service: YouthWorks, TeamWorks, and BusinessWorks. MBD is a leading force “in creating economic justice for microentrepreneurs and an innovative model in microenterprise development” (Micro Business Development, 2005, p.2). MBD’s core values center around providing services and collaboration to achieve individual, business, community, and economic development. The mission statement expands on this notion that the goal is to “stimulate and support microenterprises by creating economic development opportunities and business growth through access to knowledge, resources, and business capital for underserved populations” (Micro Business Development, 2005, p.2). MBD’s clientele consists mainly of minorities (71%), low income (68%), and women (63%). In 1994 MBD established a loan guarantee program and in 1996 the technical assistance and training program began (Micro Business Development, 2006). MBD depends on capital funding and individualized business development services for their clients from a collaborative effort through business partners and community resources. This collaboration of volunteers, funding partners, community partners, sponsors, and donors serve over 1,500 clients per year. A total of 8,300 participants have benefited from MBD’s vast resources since the doors opened. More than $6.2 million has been loaned (Micro Business Development, 2006).

MBD offers a variety of training opportunities through classes, seminars, workshops, and tutorials through their state-of-the-art technology resource center. The center is fully equipped with twelve computer workstations and includes two handicap-accessible stations with software specific to the disabled community. Through regularly scheduled training workshops, the center
provides many opportunities for their clients to develop additional skills and knowledge of the various components of running a successful business (Micro Business Development, 2006).

The Problem

MBD has discovered that their clients find difficulty growing their businesses beyond their friends, family, and local community. MBD believes that their clients should have access to creating web sites for their businesses and they have come to this conclusion through consistent contact and evaluation of client needs. MBD is in need of a training course that would inform their clients about E-Business and web site design. This course will help the entrepreneurs expand their client base, help them to become more established, and increase the visibility of their businesses. MBD has begun the process for the development and implementation of a training course. The content has been written but the staff has had no one to develop and execute the content into a finished curriculum.

This project became a potential Capstone Service Project after I met with Ms. Denise Cope, Regis Service Learning Coordinator, who arranged for me to contact Ms. Elli Behr, MBD Director of Resources. I met with Ms. Behr at her office at MBD. This nonprofit is a truly remarkable organization that I am eager to be of assistance. I prepared several questions about the project: What are the various project options? What problems does each of these address? How did each these problems come to light? How can I help you with this? What is the scope? What is the timeframe? Has a needs assessment done? Is there a need for one? Are there any other details I should be aware of? What instructional method or model would you prefer that I would use? Definition of roles, who is the project manager? What is you policy about my contact with employees, clients? Who would retain ownership? Would I have access for my portfolio? Ms. Behr answered my questions and gave me insight to the general goals and training needs for
MBD. She had a variety of projects needing attention in the adult learning area but this one seemed to be a perfect fit. The timeframe worked well for my Capstone completion, two to three months planning and two months implementation in time to present the course to their wider audience in January, 2007. Ms. Behr said that an informal needs assessment has been presented and that she will oversee the project. She said that MBD believes in the experiential learning methodology and that MBD is open to my expertise in the areas of adult learning and course design (For a complete version of questions and answers, see Appendix A).

Presently, the training course content is written and designed to be delivered in a two-hour presentation format. It presents an introduction to e-commerce web sites. It is divided into seven topics to consider as a business owner regarding an e-commerce web site: 1) establishing an online identity, 2) creating an effective web site, 3) finding a server to host the website, 4) website security, 5) developing an online payment option, 6) testing the functionality, and 7) promoting the website. My challenge has been to expand it into an informal classroom-based training course with activities and robust participant interaction in the classroom. The proposed completed project was to include: course instructional design, development and research, test marketing, and training of the staff. The actual finished project was adjusted somewhat to adapt to more specific needs for MBD. This new project will be far more enriching to the participants than its current state. MBD truly believes in the experiential learning methodology: this improved training will be immediately relevant to their clients’ worlds as it will give them the tools they need as they plan and expand their businesses to the Internet market.

After receiving and reviewing the course content, I met with Ms. Behr again at MBD, prepared with more questions about the project: What are your objectives and outcomes for this training? Tell me more about your clients. Will they be prepared for this course? What type of
classroom will the training take place? Do you see this training to be designed as a single workshop or a series of training sessions? How many participants would be in each training at one time? Ms. Behr explained that there are two objectives. First, this course is not a “fix-all” to marketing problems. Second, the clients will learn cost effective ways to implement a website. The outcome is to give the clients the information they need about e-commerce and to prepare them so that they know the steps involved to create their websites. Six to eight participants will be in the class that will take place at MBD’s computer lab. MBD will make sure that they are prepared for the course. The sequence can be flexible depending on the design (For a complete version of the questions and answers, see Appendix B).

Rationale/relevance to my experience and degree

This Service Capstone Project is an ideal fit for the conclusion of my graduate school experience. It is the perfect marriage of my 25-year work experience in graphic design, web development and multimedia and my degree in adult learning theory and media development. I have five years experience designing multimedia components and graphic materials for the Regis University Distance Learning unit. I work directly with content experts, instructional designers to identify course elements that could be enhanced by multimedia such as graphics, photography, flash animation, and web design. I have over twenty years experience in designing graphics, meeting deadlines, and solving design problems for clients. I have the ability to help MBD find a strong solution to this problem through my combined experience and my graduate degree that has included courses on theories of adult learning, program planning, instructional design, adult learning motivation, computer-mediated communication, and project management for media development.
List of Definitions

Underserved population: This definition includes similar terms such as the poor, the welfare recipients, and the low-income, impoverished, and disadvantaged community. The underserved population does not have the means to access quality education, jobs, housing, health care, and emergency services. The U.S. Census Bureau (2002) states the poverty rate rose to 11.7% in 2001, to the sum of 32.9 million people. Increases in poverty have been concentrated in urban communities, where 16.5% of the population is considered poor. A total of 46% of female-headed households with children under eighteen years of age are below the poverty line and more than 55% of African American and Latina female-headed households are considered poor (Sheared, McCabe, & Umeki, 2000). The socioeconomic conditions of many urban cities are populated by the most economically disadvantaged individuals, who lack training, and that their families experience long spells of poverty and being on welfare (Wilson, 1987). To break the cycle of poverty, the underserved population must find ways to pull themselves out. Paulo Freire insists that they can achieve success through action and education. Freire states that freedom emerges “through invention and reinvention, through the restless, impatient, continuing, hopefully inquiry human beings pursue in the world, with the world, and with each other” (Freire, 1970, p. 55).

Adult learners: Adults learners are different than children and traditional college-aged learners. Adults are much more interested in subjects that have immediate relevance to their lives. Educators will find that mistakes and prior learning experiences provide a great basis for classroom discussion. Teaching techniques such as case studies and role play are effective with the adult learner.
**Scaffolding:** The concept of adult learning theory echoes the concept of scaffolding. A scaffold is defined as a supporting framework; a temporary structure used to support workers and materials above ground during construction (American Heritage Dictionary, 2003). In adult education, a scaffold is also temporary and ever-changing during the construction of learning. The workers are both the educators and the learners. The materials are the various learning tools used to reach every learner no matter what their level or learning style. With these support mechanisms in place, the student is then successfully able to reach higher heights. Education theorists Knowles, Pratt, Vygotsky, and Gardner, among others, have defined the adult learners and their characteristics. Knowles asserts that adults learn differently than other age groups. Adults prefer self direction. They feel more comfortable when new learning is in relation to life experiences and their present circumstances (Conner, 2002). Pratt’s framework of instructor-lead and student-lead learning, and peer review are great examples of cooperative learning (Merrium & Caffarella, 1999). Vygotsky’s Zone of Proximal Development describes the best way to learn almost any practical or intellectual skill is with the help of a mentor who guides one’s entry into the area between what one can accomplish alone and what one might accomplish with assistance. The knowledge is within the potential of the learner but is not yet mastered (Rogoff, 1990). Gardner spells out the need for scaffolding for different learning styles by describing eight distinct intelligences that every student has but each is stronger in some than in others (Gardner, 1989).

The scaffold represents the adult learning support mechanisms. The theorists are at the root or base. Educators look to these theories and manifestations to help them plan their instructional strategies and teaching so that they may support their students and help them to reach the next level.
Formal and Nonformal Learning: Formal learning has changed over the years; no longer just classroom based but includes distance learning, computer labs, and teleconferences. Formal learning settings can be described as traditional higher education institutions; independent adult education organizations; quazi-educational organizations such as museums and libraries; and non-educational organizations such as business, industry, and government training of employees. Nonformal education meets the needs of the underserved learners in a setting that is outside formal education. This format is less structured and more responsive to localized needs. It is concerned with social inequities and often seeks to raise the consciousness of participants towards social action. Nonformal educational opportunities are presented in two formats. Those are community-based adult learning programs such as non-assessed programs held at community centers, the Red Cross, and the YMCA; and indigenous learning where the process and structure of learning are linked with a culture, usually through storytelling and art forms (Merrium & Caffarella, 1999).

Instructional Design: Instructional Design is defined as “the systematic and reflective process of translating principles of learning and instruction into plans for instructional materials, activities, information, resources, and evaluation” (Smith & Ragan, 2005, pg. 4). Instructional design is “an emerging profession, focused on creating and maintaining efficient and effective human performance, guided by a model, carried out systematically, based on systems theory, and oriented to finding and applying the most efficient solutions to performance problems” (Rothwell & Kazanas, 1998, p. 3). In other words, the goal of this process is to solve an instructional problem with a curriculum that uses instructional strategies, practical application of educational theories, and a combination of activities, interaction, discussion, and assessment to achieve that goal.

E-Commerce: Commerce that is transacted electronically, as over the Internet (American Heritage Dictionary, 2003). This word has been known as a hyphenated version of “electronic business.” The word E-Commerce includes buying, selling, marketing, and supplying products and services over the Internet. It is considered by many companies as a valuable niche to their business.

Review of Literature

The literature review discusses the most recent research on instructional design, educational methodologies used to reach the underserved populations, and examples of successful community programs.

The article, “Provider Training and Education in Disease Management” (Muramoto, 2003), discusses instructional training for healthcare providers. The article describes ways in which workplace training is provided using adult learning theory and instructional design methodologies. The concept of educational technology is introduced as the most current innovative trend in instructional design. The author warns that as technology becomes the norm within instructional design methodologies, caution must be taken when making technological choices.

The primary form of face-to-face learning is in a classroom or lecture hall. Modern teaching methods and instructional paradigms are conducted in the forms of using small groups, role-plays, and learner skill demonstrations. The need to respond to the variety of teaching
requirements for adult learners suggests multiple educational modalities as a best practice, thereby providing flexibility to reach the greatest number of learners effectively. Continuing education is most effective “when it addresses two key issues: presenting an appropriate amount of information in the time available and demonstrating the full range of alternative problem-solving methods using the new skills and knowledge” (p. 646).

The introduction of technology has broadened instructional design and training options. The term educational technology is defined as “current innovative educational approaches to electronic-based delivery methods and instructional design” (p. 634). Advances in electronic technology include distance learning, which uses technology to link instructors separated from learners by time and/or distance. The range of electronic technologies consist of relatively simple methods such as audio or videotape instruction to methods needing substantial infrastructure such as interactive Internet-based instruction and highly sophisticated simulators. Because adults commonly learn by integrating new knowledge with first-hand experience, the application of knowledge is often influenced by the learner’s work culture, an important consideration for corporate trainers and instructional designers. “Technologies that more closely simulate actual interaction can help engage (learners) in a training program, and include the experiential learning that is important in adult education” (p. 639).

The positive aspect of computer-assisted training is that it can take place anywhere, anytime. The Internet is ideal for effectively providing up-to-date factual information and reference material. Online training can be cost effective because the users do not have to travel to receive training. Advantages of new technologies such as handheld computers hold promise of having infinite information in the learner’s hand including “use at the point of service for a multiplicity of applications such as documentation, access to reference information, data entry
and transmission, support in decision-making, and communication” (p. 641). Adult learners have multiple and competing demands on their time, “Electronic learning technologies that allow the learner to self-pace and select a convenient time for learning establish flexibility for (learners) to fit training into busy schedules” (p. 639).

On the other hand, concerns regarding computer-assisted learning methodologies require careful consideration of both the program and learner characteristics. The author speculates that “although distance learning is becoming increasingly available, it is not effective for every learner, and may not be suitable for some topics and skills” (p. 635). Lack of familiarity with electronic technology for accessing training is another concern. Acceptability of computer-assisted training (that is, addressing how well the learner relates to content, delivery, and the overall training experience) can be improved by employing principles of adult learning. “Adequate instruction in the use of electronic technology is an important and sometimes overlooked aspect of implementing a training program…” (p. 642).

The article, *Course Design Elements Most Valued by Adult Learners in Blended Online Education Environments: An American Perspective* (Ausburn, 2004), discusses a recent research study conducted at Oklahoma State University. It describes course design elements most valued by adult learners in blended learning environments that combine face-to-face contact with web-based learning. The results of the study indicate that the principles of adult learning in combination with modern technology continue to successfully reach adult learners in a higher educational setting. Regardless of the technological tools used, adults value course designs containing options, personalization, self-direction, variety, and a learning community.

Higher education has seen a shift in its demographics where part-time adult learners and non-traditional working adults over the age of 26 now comprise over 50% of the American post-
secondary student population. Colleges and universities must focus on this market; understand their needs and preferences; and attend to the value of superb adult customer service to achieve success in targeting this market. The concept of the *hybrid model*, a blended classroom where Internet learning is combined with face-to-face experiences, has become an effective alternative that can combine the best features of each model. This mixing of “bricks and clicks” may be the ideal learning structure for non-traditional adult learners (p. 328).

The purpose of the study was to identify the instructional features selected as most important by adult students. The subjects were 67 students enrolled in five courses in a large state university in the United States. All courses were similarly structured with periodic class meetings, self-directed study and collaborative work through a web-based course site. They represented a mix of 58% males and 42% females ranging in age from early 30s to mid 50s with a variety of full-time jobs (p. 332). The study’s data were obtained through a questionnaire and a self-test instrument that the students used to gain understanding of self and others, improve performance, and assess learning styles. The students were categorized into three sub-groups based on learning styles: Problem Solvers, those that are critical thinkers who explore a variety of options in working with learning problems and avoid rapid closure; Navigators, those that are focused result-oriented learners who favor efficient and effective learning; and Engagers, those that are passionate learners who love to learn with a high level of involvement in a learning project (p. 331).

The results of the study concluded that the highest values were placed on variety in course presentation; connectedness to fellow students and the instructor; and self-directedness in their learning opportunities. Moreover, adult learners with different characteristics may differentially prefer and benefit from various instructional features and goals.
Several specific preferences were revealed in the study. Some were similar among the sub-groups, some were different. The concept of community in learning and connection to the instructor was strong with all groups. Course announcements and reminders from the instructor ranked first, higher than the course syllabus, which was ranked second, and information about specific assignments and instruction for completing them was ranked third (p. 332).

The differences indicate that further research should explore not what techniques are better, but rather for whom various techniques are most effective (p. 335). The comfort level in regard to technology also was a factor. For learners inexperienced with self-direction, course content with student-teacher interaction was more familiar to them and was considered a need and an expectation. For the students more comfortable using computers, the results “indicate that their high comfort level with online technology allowed them to have fewer technical concerns and to turn their attention to the substance of what they were learning…” (p. 333).

The article, “Designing Experiential Modes: A Key Focus for Immersive Learning Environments” (Appelman, 2005), discusses learning environments and the various new virtual options used in creating environmental modes such as simulations, games, and tutorials. Instructional designers must consider both observable attributes (physical surroundings, sentient beings, objects, systems and events that occur) and the non-observable perceptions of the learner (engagement, cognition and affective responses) when designing environmental modes. The learning environment may incorporate sophisticated technology systems, or they may use few to none. The design must include ties to the learning objective in order to succeed (p. 65). For example, to achieve an environmental mode that affords a high degree of interactivity among students, a classroom instructor may break the class into small groups without the use of
technology; yet, a distance learning instructor might open a discussion for a subset of students using an online chat room.

Examples of environmental modes resonate with new virtual technologies. The video game industry has captured the interest and enjoyment of young adults and that has impacted the learning potential for simulations and games. One example shows the beauty of the ability to simulate a science laboratory experiment. In the classroom, the students interact with chemicals and gasses; dissect worms, frogs and plants within the time limits of a class period. Educators now have the ability to provide easier access to greater numbers of examples immediately. By providing students virtual exercises, students are able to dissect without having to use animals or endure the smell of formaldehyde. Additionally, the students may practice the procedures repeatedly at their leisure (p. 68).

Similarly, because there is so much information available through the Internet, an additional focus is on “content density.” The amount of information available from the Internet and other sources is relative to the entry level knowledge of the learner. For instance, if a novice runner injures her foot and begins to explore the anatomy of the foot by browsing the Internet, the content density will be high, due to the use of many new medical terms. This same information browsed by a registered nurse would be considered low content density due to professional knowledge of the subject matter (p. 69).

Games are now becoming environmental modes that enhance learning outcomes in the classroom. The use of the game Civilization III as a tool to engage learners on the topic of world history is an example. The students who were not motivated previously even to discuss history, were “now excitedly dealing with the strategies used by colonial dictators and the issues raised by negotiating territorial boundaries” (p. 71).
What resonates repeatedly throughout the articles above is that instructional designers are faced with new challenges by incorporating new technologies in their curriculums. The bottom line is, however, the same; sound instructional design is based on strong learning objectives and a variety of activities while always keeping the learning outcomes in mind.

Numerous publications illuminate two key components of the topic of instructional design for the underserved population. First, experts in the field express the importance of reaching this audience and promote strategies to do so. Second, several articles highlight programs at the local level where neighborhood centers and community leaders partner in advancing the education of the underprivileged in their communities.

The article, “Future Directions for Collaborative Strategies” (2003), Knox describes recent publications that illuminate the need for partnerships between community coalitions of adult education and local businesses. This point echoes Freire’s message that the underserved can achieve success with a combined community effort. In his 2000 book Riches for the Poor, Shorris views education and public participation as a positive route to influence and advancement. He urges adult educators “to creatively use praxis of knowledge and action instead of reaction and resistance” (Knox, 2003, p. 29). One particular focus, according to Wood’s 2002 book, Faith in Action, is on the coalition for community problem solving. Learning from each other, “adults with little political experience learn how to engage in collective action, participate in civic society, and gain greater access to social capital by creating and sustaining networks of solidarity beyond their extended family.” (Knox, 2003, p. 29). The importance of community-based adult education is discussed as the ideal format to reach this audience. Non-formal educational activities include mentoring, meetings, and workshops lead to empowerment, enlightened self interest, subsequent support and reciprocal relationships.
A promising community-based educational program based in St. Louis, Missouri promotes success in developing leaders which aid in the renewal of communities and quality of life for the residents. The article, “Learning to Rejuvenate Metropolitan Communities” (Isaac & Tempesta, 2004), details the initiatives that offer urban learners opportunities to develop inner resources that result in long-term benefits for both the individual and the community. The local nonprofit community-based agency called Grace Hill Neighborhood Services offers more than fifty courses on aging, business and employment, child care, and parenting, and wellness and community health. In particular, students may learn how to start and manage a business and how to find career opportunities. This organization has placed more than 200 students in jobs. Many participants have moved from welfare dependence to fulltime employment. An example of Grace Hill’s success is highlighted by describing a “single mother with an asthmatic child took an asthma class, eventually became a paid coordinator for Grace Hill, and subsequently took a position with a social service agency in St. Louis” (p. 66).

A model for a pilot project is explained in the article, “The Broker and the Catalyst” (Milner, 1998). This model, based at the University of Sunderland in northern England, is an example of how the public and private sectors can work together to bring access to skills training to people where they work or live. The program is not a place where learning happens but a model where the “University for Industry” (UfI) is a central source of information, connecting individuals and companies to learning programs that best meet their needs. The model relies on regional and national partnerships between companies, colleges, and voluntary agencies. The UfI coordinates learning centers based in libraries, companies, community colleges, and schools. Each has computer labs with Internet access and offer proficiency for advancement in computers, finance, management, and skills for small businesses. Free classes are initially offered to
encourage those who are nervous or disinterested in formal learning and to develop confidence in their ability to learn. The students are not tested, which can be a potential barrier to participate. The course names include “IT for the Terrified,” “Time Management,” and “Communicating in the Electronic Office” (p. 15). This program promotes the use of local expertise in these communities to educate local adults with a united approach to increasing the employment prospects of those out of work and to the productivity of England’s economy.

The article, “Social and Cultural Issues in Urban Communities” (Rogers & Hansman, 2004), explores the programs available in the urban neighborhoods of Cleveland, Ohio. The article highlights two programs that serve low-income urban residents. The program called Escuela Popular “emphasizes the role of the culture in the community and the role of both student and practitioner as co-learners in fostering social change” (p. 23). The English as a Second Language curriculum includes a computer course taught in a small-group environment where adults learn how to repair computers while learning how to speak English. After completing the course, participants are allowed to keep the computers. The second highlighted program is called Hard Hatted Women (HHW). Through partnering relationships with local businesses, unions, and associations, HHW encourages urban women toward self-sufficiency with access to education and support. HHW has three central educational features. Career training and development offers pre-apprenticeship training, proficiency testing, counseling, math tutoring, and resume techniques. The second component is leadership development where graduates of HHW collaborate with HHW board members to create opportunities for current program participants. The third component is supportive services, training, and community outreach that allows this successful program continued support for their graduates. HHW has
created a positive reputation among employers within the city of Cleveland which has led to mandates to hire women and people of color throughout the community.

Project Development Method

Problem Identification

MBD is in need of the instructional design and development of a training course that would inform their clients about E-Commerce and web site design. This nonformal training course will not only help their clients expand their client base, but also help them to become more established, and increase the visibility of their businesses. MBD has begun the process for the development and implementation of a training course but the staff has had no one to develop and execute the content into a finished curriculum. Currently, the content is in a two-hour presentation format with the information offered in a notebook for the learner to keep as a reference. This course is called “Web Site 101.” The course objective has been established as to teach the foundational steps to create an E-Commerce web site and provide the knowledge needed to be competitive in the online business market. It is divided into seven topics that are common necessities of an E-Commerce web site: 1) establishing an online identity, 2) creating an effective web site, 3) finding a server to host the web site, 4) web site security 5) developing an online payment option 6) testing the functionality, and 7) promoting the web site. This presentation is a good beginning to be used as the course content. To be fully designed into a true training curriculum it required better examples, more activities, and spelled-out objectives, evaluation, and assessment for each of the steps.

My role was to implement sound instructional design theories and strategies into the curriculum. My design skills and web development experience was useful in describing and showcasing examples of successful web sites as well as displaying non-examples that illustrate
real-world instances. In the future, I plan to prepare the materials to conduct a formative evaluation through test training with a select group of MBD clients. The next steps will be to evaluate and revise the course as needed and train the trainers who will schedule and teach this course to MBD’s wider client base.

I used the resources that I have absorbed through my graduate coursework to create a solid instructionally-designed training course. I integrated adult learning theories to strengthen the activities and learning strategies to reach this diverse audience. I will use methods learned from the program planning class to base the context and environmental issues. I will draw from the motivation class to develop motivational strategies throughout.

The core resource was the Morrison, Ross, Kemp instructional design model (Morrison, Ross, & Kemp, 2004). It is a flexible model. The concept is that each design project is unique and that projects begin and finish at different places. With a model that is circular rather than linear, designers are able to complete steps that are more logical to the project, yet the model is comprehensive for expanding on each step that is needed to complete the instructional design. The model includes the following nine steps: Identifying the Need for Instruction; Learner and Contextual Analysis; Task Analysis; Instructional Objectives; Designing the Instruction: Sequencing; Instructional Strategies; Instructional Message; Instructional Materials; and Evaluation (pp. 7-9).

*Identifying the Need for Instruction.* A needs assessment is performed to identify the needs for solving a problem and to recommend options to fulfill those needs. The questions that must be answered are: What is happening? What should be happening? What are the effects of the problem? Why does the problem exist? The need for instruction occurs when a problem arises and instructional intervention is identified as the best solution.
Learner and Contextual Analysis. An assessment of the characteristics of the target audience is necessary to understand the types of learners that will benefit from the instruction. The constraints and context of the development and delivery environments will be identified.

Task Analysis. An analysis of the characteristics of the tasks involved is performed. Tasks, cognitive processes and difficulty of knowledge and skills contained in the curricula will be assessed. Prerequisite knowledge and skills for tasks will be identified.

Instructional Objectives. Each activity or lesson has its own set of objectives. The objectives will state, in performance terms, the intent of the instruction.

Designing the Instruction: Sequencing. The order that the content is presented is important to consider so that it makes sense to the learner. It can be presented in a number of ways such as simple concept to complex; task-related steps; or general concept to specific detail.

Instructional Strategies. Learning is an active process in which the learner connects new knowledge to existing knowledge. Instructional strategies engage the learners in activities such as role play, scenarios, examples, and discussion that promote and motivate them to construct these connections. These types of activities are implemented throughout the training.

Instructional Message. Strategies to reach the learner are accomplished by choosing text and pictures that illustrate the instruction. There must be coherence to the structure of the content so that the learner is able to easily follow instructions. A strongly designed instructional message helps to inform the learner of expectations and aids in comprehension.

Instructional Materials. The participants can succeed in learning with the proper materials. It is important to provide all of the content to the learners to take away with them after
the training. These materials in this new course include examples and resources to use for future reference.

*Evaluation.* The assessment must match the outcome of the objective. Performance measures are developed. Although this training course is not formally assessed, measurements of achievement must be included to ensure training success. A summative evaluation may be in the form of a questionnaire, interview, observation checklist or performance checklist.

*The Process*

Because this project was new to me, I felt the need to understand the program, the learners, and the organization. I began with an instructional analysis by evaluating the content. I spent time at MBD to grasp the culture of the organization. I used my observations to conduct a learner analysis and contextual analysis. I addressed the need to refine the content, write clear objectives, and rearrange and organize the content in sequence that makes sense to the learner. At that point, I created an instructional plan.

*Instructional Plan.* The Instructional Plan provides the roadmap for the trainer who will teach this course. It includes details about the instructional delivery system; instructional strategies; strategies for motivating learners; strategies for stimulating recall of prior knowledge; and strategies for fostering critical thinking skills. The Instructional Plan also includes the instructional materials; lesson plans; and strategies for both formative and summative evaluation.

The training course is divided into three sessions with homework built into Sessions One and Two. The participants will need to return to their busy lives and their businesses, reflect on what they have learned so far, and come back to the next session refreshed, ready to ask questions, and discuss the learning topics and how they relate to their worlds.
Product

The final product is a complete training course on creating E-Business web sites. The development and implementation includes: course instructional design and development, lesson plans and training materials. The scope of the training course provides a continuum of information from the very basic to more involved and sophisticated web design. The course objective has been established as to teach the foundational steps to create an E-Business website and provide the knowledge needed to be competitive in the online business market. The topics have been reordered to a logical sequence, some were deleted and others added: Why E-Business?; Planning an Attractive and Effective Web Site; Establishing Your Online Identity; Shopping Cart: Accepting and Managing Online Payments; Web Development Tools; Finding the Right Online Home; Testing the Functionality of Your Web Site; Marketing Strategies and Budget. Each lesson has its own objectives, examples, activities, and assessment tools.

The development timeframe was two to three months planning and two months implementation. Then, MBD will be prepared to offer this course to their clients.

MBD has the capacity to host the training sessions at their organization site. The state-of-the-art technology resource center is fully equipped with twelve computer workstations and includes two handicap-accessible stations with software specific to the disabled community. The training sessions will be taught by qualified trainers who understand the needs and methodologies to reach the diverse audience that MBD serves. The training sessions will be offered at times that are convenient to their clients.
Chapter 2

SERVICE PROJECT

The result of the service project is a complete training course on planning an E-Business web site in the form of a three-session workshop. The final products are the workbook that will be given to the participants and the Instructional Plan that will be used by the trainer as a guide for the workshop. The contents of the entire workbook, titled “Web Site 101” may be found as Appendix C. The Instructional Plan may be found as Appendix D.
Chapter 3

DISCUSSION

The Service Capstone Project encompasses theories and practices in relation to all of the coursework of my degree plan. The Master of Arts degree with emphasis in Adult Learning and Media Development was designed to incorporate elements of adult learning theory and media development together as a winning combination to become adept at creating powerful images, interactions, and animations for the purpose of educational enhancement. This project is a showcase for illustrating the leap from where I began as a novice at understanding the principles of adult learning and instructional design to this current level of confidence to have the ability to design an entire course. This has been the perfect opportunity to put my skills and new knowledge to work for the benefit of a nonprofit organization and their clients.

This Service Capstone Project reflects the points presented in the literature review that adult education programs can be successful when attention is given to clientele needs, application of transfer of knowledge, and when encouragement and support is supplied throughout. This particular project is outside the realm of higher education and typical corporate training but illustrates that the powerful instructional design tools can be used in a nontraditional adult learning environment. These tools will help MBD’s clients to change their circumstances and improve their economic conditions.

The experience of creating and developing the Service Capstone Project, “Web Site 101” has been an incredible journey of transferring theory to practice. This discussion explores the experience itself, what happened during the process, and what changed from the project
proposal. The discussion continues with an exploration of the expected outcomes of the Service Project, what I learned and what I would do differently if I had to do it over again.

*The Experience*

As mentioned in the beginning of the process, I met with Ms. Denise Cope, Service Learning Coordinator. She described the wonderful opportunity service learning provides to not only our community but to my personal growth. Ms. Cope suggested I read Paulo Freire. She was correct when she said she hoped that it would help me to gain perspective for serving this audience by reading “Pedagogy of the Oppressed” before beginning the project. Freire links education to social change. This concept opened my eyes to the immense possibilities for the underserved populations of Denver as result of this project. The possibilities are far greater than just the successful development of a three-session workshop.

The entire project progressed smoothly. I worked well with Ms. Elli Behr at MBD as we continuously shared a common vision for this training. After reviewing the original content, I was eager to make changes, simplify wording, and reorganize the content that would make more logical sense to the learner. I was concerned about MBD’s reaction to my recommendations and I was pleased to find that they trusted my judgment and approved of my recommendations. The major changes were to bring the content back to a more introductory level and in a more logical order; add objectives to each topic; use small businesses instead of major corporations as examples; and create activities that include the interactions of the participants.

The change of focus to a more introductory level came about midway through the process. Discussions with Ms. Behr revealed the need to simplify the existing course to an introductory level on web site design in general and not specifically for E-Commerce web sites only. We realized that some business web sites may not need the components of an E-Commerce
web site and that this course must address that. This changed the focus and content of the course.
The pages which featured more advanced web site design strategies were deleted for this course
and set aside as content for a more advanced class to be created at a future time.

Outcomes

What I learned from this experience is that the transfer of learning from theory to practice
can be rewarding yet very different from what I expected. This project is unlike my professional
work as the Multimedia Specialist in Distance Learning at Regis University. The differences
were felt in many ways. The Regis student has similarities and differences from the MBD
clients; both audiences are working adults yet the motivations are different. The Regis student is
pursuing a degree and understands that the courses they participate in are graded. The MBD
student is voluntarily participating in this course and is not expected to be tested or graded. My
professional work involves the creation of online courses that are presented in an eight-week
format. This course for MBD is a three-session workshop in the classroom. I really felt the need
to grasp these differences to understand the audience, the assessment tools and the motivation in
order to design this course.

I found the Morrison, Ross, Kemp instructional design model to be extremely helpful in
keeping me focused and remembering all of the important phases of the process. The three steps
that were most important from the model were the character analysis; the instructional strategies;
and the assessment. Instructional designers must understand the learner, be able to create
activities that would motivate them, and to find ways to assess their learning so that transfer of
learning would occur. These are the most important aspects to this process.

To understand the learner, I had the pleasure of meeting George, the owner of the
business, Tropical Items, Madagascar, and creator of the E-Commerce web site used as an
example in the course. He gave me insight from an entrepreneur’s perspective and he gave me hope that we would not overwhelm these students with too much information. I also had the pleasure of observing one of the workshops offered at MBD. Ms. Behr taught the “Foundations” class that introduces new clients to the joys and difficulties of owning a small business. This observation experience truly helped me to understand the context and the MBD environment that is so crucial to succeeding in designing instruction.

I don’t teach. I did not think about that as being a relevant factor but it really is. I have a new admiration for teachers and trainers as I found it difficult to judge the time span needed for activities and to understand classroom dynamics. I lack a trainer/teacher’s knowledge from experience. I believe that the process of creating the Instructional Plan was so important because the examination and process of creating it gave me a more comprehensive sense of how the course would flow when it is actually taught.

What I would do differently if I could would be to allow myself more time to work on the various components of the course. It was more time consuming than I estimated to reconstruct the sequence and writing the objectives. I also found that I had to do more than just instructional design for this project. I had to revert to my old profession as a graphic designer to lay out the textbook, redesign graphics, change the font, and format the pages so that they were more readable.

The other lesson learned that I would do differently is to ask more questions in the beginning. Many questions came up during process I hadn’t thought about. I worried about buy-in, in other words, “Who would have to approve of the work I was doing?” “Who would be trainer?” These were some of the questions I should have asked sooner that would have saved me time and needless worry.
I am grateful to the School for Professional Studies Graduate Programs for this opportunity. I am pleased to have participated in the Service Capstone Project option as the final project for my graduate degree at Regis University. I am delighted to know that this course will be utilized repeatedly to assist the underserved population and to better the community, our community.
References


APPENDIX A

Questionnaire
Volunteer Opportunities for Sally Cordrey regarding Micro Business Development:
(These responses are from Ellie Behr, Director of Resources to Sally’s questions)

Various Project Options: What are they?
1. Development and implementation of a website course for underserved entrepreneurs including: course development and research, test marketing and training and training of the staff.
2. Feasibility analysis and implementation of a Hewlett Packard entrepreneurship training program.
3. Design of an online application product that clients can access to apply for funding and/or technical assistance.

What problems does each of these address?
1. The hardest part of growing a business is moving beyond the familiar boundaries of friends, family, and neighborhood to generate revenue. MBD assists our clients in moving into the formal business economy by providing access to media, training, and marketplace opportunities.
2. Many underserved entrepreneurs do not have access to the appropriate technology or training that can help them manage and run their business more efficiently. Often even if the appropriate technology is available they do not understand or know how to utilize it.
3. MBD is expanding at a rapid rate and is looking to take the organizations programs and services statewide. The online application will allow entrepreneurs across the state to access MBD’s services.

How can I help you with this?
Sally and I spoke about all of the projects and decided that number one was the best fit both for the organization and for her Capstone project. Utilizing Sally’s experience in technology and adult learning methodologies Sally will be instrumental in bring website development and implementation to underserved entrepreneurs in Denver through access to training and knowledge. This in turn will turn allow our clients access to market and income generating opportunities.

Scope? Timeframe?
The scope of this project is to develop and train both clients and staff on how to successfully evaluate and launch a website. The timeframe discusses is 2-3 months planning and 2 months implementation including a test market for clients and a training of trainers for staff.

A needs assessment done already? Need to be done?
A formal needs assessment has not been conducted. However, through consistent contact and evaluation of client needs MBD feels a website design and implementation course will only help our clients expand their client base, become more established and increase the visibility of their business.
How did this problem come to light?
Through discussion, requests and looking at the ongoing and changing needs of MBD’s entrepreneurs.

Details I should be aware of?
The course needs to be a continuum of information from the very basic to more involved and sophisticated web design.

What methods would they like to see, what method or model I would use to do development work?
MBD truly believes in the experiential learning methodology.

Definition of roles, who the PM?
Elli Behr, Director of Resources – Program Manager
Brandy Bertram, Deputy Director – Director

Policy about my contact with employees, clients?
MBD will have all clients and employees sign a release of information contract.

Who would retain ownership? My access for portfolio? Updates?
MBD would like to retain joint ownership over the curriculum.
APPENDIX B

Interview
What are MBD’s objectives and outcomes for this training?
There are two objectives. First, this course is not a “fix-all” to marketing problems. Second, the clients will learn cost effective ways to implement a website. The outcome is to give the clients the information they need about ecommerce and to prepare them so that they can create their websites.

Tell me more about your clients. Will they be prepared for this course?
MBD’s clients are at various stages of owning their businesses. Some have their own websites; some may have only gone through the loan process. They will have taken a prerequisite class called “General Business Development.”

What type of classroom will the training take place?
The classroom is located at MBD and it is a state-of-the-art technology resource center. The center is fully equipped with twelve computer workstations and includes two handicap-accessible stations with software specific to the disabled community.

Do you see this training to be designed as a single workshop or a series of training sessions?
MBD is flexible and will make that decision as the design of the course is developed. The series should encompass no more than 4 sessions.

How many participants would be in each training at one time?
There are typically six to eight participants to a class.
APPENDIX C

Web Site 101 Workbook
Don’t Waste Time or Money!

Get the Knowledge You Need
Before Creating a Web Site!

Web Site 101
Introduction to Planning
an E-Business Web Site
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Web Site 101 Overview

As an entrepreneur, one of your primary concerns is directing business to your front door. Your business may be small—but utilizing the Internet will allow you to think big. Whatever product or service your business offers, having an E-Business presence on the Internet levels the playing field and lets you compete with bigger businesses.

You may only need a simple informational web site, one that provides an online electronic brochure for your business. Perhaps you want to provide the ability for customers to visit you online and buy the products and/or services your company offers. This technology, known as E-Commerce, used to be only available to larger companies; however, through great progression of technology and competition in the market, a wealth of options are now available to even the smallest businesses.

In the competitive world of small business, growing your business and increasing your profits by going online requires some careful planning. For every successful E-Business presence, there are dozens that fail by not addressing basic risks and pitfalls along the way.

Web Site 101 covers the following topics:

- Why E-Business? Identify how a web site can help your business
- Decide whether your business requires an E-Commerce or e-brochure web site
- Analyze parts needed for your web site and the proper planning strategies
- Focus on finding the right domain name for your business
- Evaluate the information you need about tools to build a web site or to hire someone to build it for you
- Identify testing and marketing strategies for your E-Business web site
- Identify the costs involved in producing an E-Business web site
- Plan your next steps

Clearly, building these core elements of E-Business into your business is a big job, but they are too important to ignore if you want your E-Business to grow and thrive. By knowing what foundational steps to take, you will be able to ensure that your E-Business web site gives you the competitive edge you need to see your business grow.
SESSION 1

1.1 Why E-Business?
Why E-Business?
How a web site can help your business grow

A business web site is an important tool for marketing and sales. A well-designed web site serves many purposes. An effective site communicates or demonstrates your company’s unique product or service in a way that connects with customers and prospects.

Learning Outcomes for Session One:

- Identify benefits of a business web site
- Decide if an electronic brochure or an E-Commerce web site right for your business
- Define web site design strategies
- Establish your domain name

Benefits of E-Business
The benefits for a small company with a business web site are:

- **Increased market size.** An online presence reaches your customers and new customers worldwide.

- **New customers can find you.** By using keywords in search engines wisely, you will create opportunities where new customers will find your business.

- **Increased Sales.** If your small business web site includes an online shopping cart you can increase your sales with very little investment.

- **Reduced need for expensive mailings.** Information distribution can come from your website for almost no cost.

- **Complete availability to your customers.** You are never closed. An E-Business web site is open 24/7. Your customers can find information and shop at their convenience in the comfort of their own computer screen.

- **Control.** Customers have the ability to make informed decisions. They feel empowered and more in control on the Internet.
• **Cost savings for you and your customer.** No gas is needed; time spent driving in traffic; or wear and tear on the car. Generally, most items can be purchased cheaper online than in a store and no one pays sales tax.

• **Space.** A store is limited to the amount of space available to display goods. An internet web site has unlimited space.

• **Customers require it.** Today, customers expect businesses to have a web site. This is an important factor when planning your business marketing strategy.
1.2 Planning an Attractive and Effective Web Site
What makes a high-quality E-Business web site?

The Big Picture

Every time you get on your computer and visit places like www.amazon.com or www.microbusiness.org, you are accessing a web site. A web site is a collection of "pages" or files on the World Wide Web that are linked together and maintained by a company, organization, or individual.

Now that you have decided to enter the online business market, you need to build the storefront. Your storefront will take the form of a web site. A well-designed web site that is easy to use will help present an image of professionalism helping to generate trust in your online business. It should effectively reflect your scope of work and professionalism to potential and existing customers.

Electronic brochure or an E-Commerce web site?

The following two web sites are excellent examples of an E-Commerce web site and an electronic brochure web site. The E-Commerce web site, www.amazon.com, provides the opportunity to buy a product or service online. The example of an electronic brochure, www.microbusiness.org, is a web site that provides information.
You may decide to create it yourself or hire someone to create it for you. Web site design can be frustrating if you have never done it before, but if you have the patience to learn, and time to spare, then it can be rewarding. If you hire someone to create it for you, have a checklist ready. You also will need to complete a plan for your web site needs for the web site developer. We will cover this more in-depth in Web Site 101 Session 2.

The first thing to do when planning your web site is to be clear on your goal. Discover what you want to accomplish with your web site. Is it informational, educational, advertising, and/or selling your product or service?

The ability for your web site to be able to adapt to each customer’s needs should also be incorporated into your web site. Customers must have a sense that you are listening to their needs and your business must be flexible enough to meet their demands. Your web site is yet another tool you can use to convince potential customers that you are the company they need to do the job they need done.

Carefully Planning Your Web Site

Examine Other E-Business Web Sites: One of the best ways to get an idea of what your E-Business web site might look like is to examine other E-Business web sites. Take notes on what you liked and disliked about them. Look at their security features, or the lack of, and ask yourself - would you feel safe doing business with them? Focus on web sites that sell similar goods and services as your business profile. This will help you see how others are promoting products like yours and allow you to create a web site that is unique but uses already proven sales techniques.

Your Home Page = First Impression: Remember that first impressions are lasting impressions. The first web page that customers see when visiting your web site is called the home page. Your home page is the front door of your online business. Your home page is one of the most important aspects of your web site. It should reach out and grab the visitor, but at the same time, not overwhelm them. The type of goods and services you are offering must be clear to the visitor and make them want to look around your web site and see what you have to offer. Your home page is that first impression that is going to hook the visitor or turn them away. You don’t want your home page to be too
Micro Business Development

complex by any means. Always remember that the visitor to your web site may turn into a new customer. Do not have a cluttered home page, lean and mean is what you are looking for.

**Easy Web Site Navigation:** Make sure your links and buttons are precise. Use uniform buttons and formatting on all pages so that once your visitors get familiar with your web site style, they can navigate though it with ease. Keep buttons and links at easily visible locations so that the web site visitors do not have to scroll around to access links and buttons. Make sure that all pages flow together and are uniform. You want navigation to be clean and organized. Everything needs to be in reach and easily accessible. The most important thing to remember is to keep a nice flow and order to your web site.

**Short Download Times:** High-end graphics, videos and animations often cause slow download times and can often cause a visitor to your web site to move on instead of waiting for your content to download to their computer. If you use any of these kinds of objects, you should keep them off your home page. Put these types of objects on your linked pages and keep their use to a minimum. Keep in mind that not all users have a high-speed Internet connection and may move away from your web site rather than wait for these objects to download. You can still get great results by reducing image resolutions on most graphics.

**Keep Things Simple:** A simple web site is an understandable web site. If it is too busy you may lose your audience’s attention. Too many flashing lights and animations can detract from your purpose no matter how focused your web site may be. It is important that your web site’s intention stays on target and is consistent. Be professional and grab the visitor’s attention without using a three-ring circus of graphics and visual effects. It is also a good idea to only use one easy to read font for your entire site rather than many different fonts. Keeping the layout, color themes and overall style consistent throughout your web site will benefit both you and visitors to your web site. Always remember, your web site is the doorstep to your online business, and should be clean and free from clutter.

Let’s take a look at an excellent example of an E-Commerce web site from a local small business. Tropical Items Madagascar is found at [www.tropicalitems.com](http://www.tropicalitems.com).
Tropical Items Madagascar is an importer, wholesaler and multiple event retailer of fair trade crafts made of high quality natural raffia fibers from Madagascar.

We work with a non-governmental association, 
Natury™ consisting of native women artisans living near the rainforest area of Ranomafana, Madagascar. Their objective is to contribute to the preservation of the rainforest while empowering and providing a sustainable alternative source of income for their members.

A portion of Tropical Items sale proceeds will be contributed to Hope For Madagascar, a charitable non-profit organization which aims to reduce poverty and improve the well-being of the Malagasy people while preserving the unique biodiversity of Madagascar’s environment.
This E-Business web site is a great example because the graphics are eye catching; the navigation simply-designed and easy to use; and the information on their “front doorstep” gives a good first impression and easily presents the products that the business is selling.

**Storyboarding**

When planning your site, you should have a clear goal of what your web site will feature. To help with your web site layout, one of the best methods of web site planning is storyboarding. *Storyboarding* is basically laying out your web site visually on paper using images and linking lines. An example of storyboarding the Tropical Items web site is shown below.
ACTIVITY: Well designed and badly designed web sites.

Let’s look at some well designed and badly designed web sites that. Take notes on what you liked, didn’t like, and possible changes to improve the web site.

Well Designed Web Sites (these are MBD small businesses):

www.brickyardbbq.com

www.purpleonion.net

Badly Designed Web Sites:


www.websitesthatssuck.com (yes, this really is a good resource)
1.3 Establishing Your Online Identity
The Domain name

Every web site you visit has a unique address which is referenced by both a unique number and name. The unique number is called an Internet Protocol Address or IP address. This is a rather complicated string of numbers that is hard to remember and thus, not advantageous to use for directing people to your web site. Therefore, to make navigating the Internet easier, a unique name is assigned to every web site. This unique name is called a domain name and allows you to use an easy to remember name to access a particular web site instead of long string of numbers. An example of a domain name is: www.microbusiness.org

The Domain Registrar

Domain names need to be registered through companies that are called domain registrars. There are many registrars who compete with one another; therefore, there are many options and pricing schemes to choose from. Investigate each potential registrar to find the one that provides the services best suited to your business. A list of registrars with whom you can register your domain name can be found at http://www.internic.net/regist.html.

Let’s go there and explore the differences.

Once you choose a registrar, you will have to provide various contact and technical information about your company. The information you provide will be placed into a central directory known as the registry. This registry provides other computers on the Internet with the information they need to send you e-mail or to find your web site. The registry information you enter will be publicly available to anyone on the Internet through the Whois directory.

The results of a successful search will contain only technical information about the registered domain name and the registrar maintaining the domain name. In the Shared Registration System model, registrars are responsible for maintaining Whois domain name contact information. Please refer to your chosen registrar's Whois service for additional information. More information on the Whois service and domain registrars can be found at http://www.icann.org/faq/.
ACTIVITY: To perform a Whois search for domain registrar information.

1. Navigate your web browser to: http://www.internic.net/whois.html

2. Then enter the domain name you want information on into the search box
3. Click the circle next to ‘Registrar’
4. Finally click on ‘Submit’

This is an example of the information available for Micro Business Development’s registrar and domain of microbusiness.org:

Domain ID:D82115218-LROR
Domain Name:MICROBUSINESS.ORG
Created On:07-Jan-2002 23:53:00 UTC
Last Updated On:03-Feb-2005 23:31:14 UTC
Expiration Date:07-Jan-2012 23:53:00 UTC
Sponsoring Registrar: Go Daddy Software, Inc. (R91-LROR)
Your Domain Name

Now that you have picked a registrar, you need to choose your domain name. When picking a domain name you should consider the following information: a) try to use your company name or some variation of your company name and, b) consider a product or service you offer as part of your domain name if your company name isn’t available. A domain name can be up to 63 characters long and contain letters, numbers, and hyphens; however, the domain name cannot begin or end with a hyphen. The best choice for your domain name is one that is short and easy to remember. Potential customers should not have to type a 63-character domain name into their web browser to access your web site. Examples of domain name based on your company’s business name are: microbusiness.org, amazon.com, microsoft.com, and earthlink.net.

You also need to consider what domain name extension to associate with your online presence. For more information visit: http://www.icann.org/. E-Business businesses most often register a name with .com (dot com) as the domain name extension, but often also register their domain names with .net (dot net). The typical uses associated with each domain name extension are as follows:

- **.com** – an unrestricted domain name extension used for commercial businesses.
- **.net** – domain name extension that is used by many types of organizations and individuals, but was historically intended for, and is still commonly used by, Internet service providers.
- **.org** – also an unrestricted domain name extension, but was originally intended to be used for the noncommercial community.
- **.biz** – domain name extension that is restricted to businesses.
- **.info** – unrestricted domain name extension available for the general public.
- **.name** – domain name extension reserved for individual personal domains as in: johndoe.name.
- **.coop** – domain name extension that is restricted to cooperative associations (co-ops).
ACTIVITY: Examples of not so good domain names.

Long domain names can be acceptable in some instances, such as if the domain name is your business name. However, you may want to also have a short domain name. Barnes & Noble bookstore’s domain name is www.barnesandnoble.com but also uses www.bn.com. Here are some examples of domain names that are too long. Not only are these names hard to read, they are hard to type into your web browser.

- www.informationwantstobefree.com
- www.eatdrinksleeplovabletype.com

Check your domain name to make sure it doesn’t spell something you don’t intend. Here are some examples of domain names that say two different things.

Experts Exchange is a knowledge base for programmers to exchange advice


Trying to find a therapist?

- www.TherapistFinder.com or www.TheRapistFinder.com

You also don’t want to choose a domain name that is hard to pronounce or spell. Here are some examples.

- www.xona.com
- www.eidos.com
- www.hisel.com
- www.tanztreff.com
- www.schweizr.com

As you can see, there is a lot that goes into choosing a good domain name. Don’t just pursue the first name you find, do some research and get opinions from others. They may see or find something you don’t. Use the space below to write down some possible domain names for your company:

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______________________________________________________________________________
Once you have a domain name in mind, you can check the Whois directory on your chosen registrar’s website to see if the domain name you want is available. If your preferred domain name is not available, most registrars will offer alternative names that are available. The Whois directory listing will also give you more information about a domain name that is already registered. From this information, you can find whom you might contact to purchase ownership of the domain name you want. However, this contact information may not be available. For security purposes, some companies do not want their company information or e-mail address available to the public. To this end, most registrars offer a service, typically at additional cost, to keep a business’ information private. You may want to consider this security feature for your own domain information. An example of a typical Whois directory entry is shown below using the information from Micro Business Development’s registrar Go Daddy (http://www.godaddy.com):

Registrant: P.A.C.E.Works!
3003 Arapahoe St.
#205
Denver, CO 80205
United States
Registered through: GoDaddy.com (http://www.godaddy.com)
Domain Name: MICROBUSINESS.ORG
Created on: 07-Jan-02
Expires on: 07-Jan-12
Last Updated on: 05-Feb-02
Administrative Contact: Hostetter, Kersten colcap@usa.net
P.A.C.E.Works!
3003 Arapahoe St.
Suite 205
Denver, CO 80205
United States
(303) 308-8121 Fax -- (303) 308-8120
Technical Contact: Cline, Eric eric_cline@hotmail.com
P.A.C.E.Works!
3003 Arapahoe St.
Suite 205
Denver, CO 80205
United States
(303) 308-8121 Fax -- (303) 308-8120
Domain servers in listed order:
NS1.CMCONLINE.COM
NS2.CMCONLINE.COM
The next consideration when registering a domain name is the decision of how long you want to retain ownership of your new domain name. Each registrar has the flexibility to offer initial and renewal ownership periods ranging from one to ten years providing that the maximum remaining unexpired term does not exceed ten years. Follow the steps on the registrar’s website to complete the domain name registration process.

Finally, once your domain name has been chosen and registered, you will want to lock your domain to prevent any unauthorized changes. When your domain is locked, no one can transfer your domain to another registrar or change any contact information. If you need to make any changes to your domain you can unlock your domain, make the change and lock your domain again. Check with your registrar for the steps to follow in order to lock your domain.

**Summary**

In Summary, *Web Site 101 Session 1* covered the following topics:

- Why E-Business? How a web site can help your business
- Whether your business requires an E-Commerce or e-brochure web site
- Parts needed for your web site and proper planning strategies
- Find the right domain name for your business

Now, with this workbook, review these topics. The following pages have three homework activities to prepare you for your next steps covered in Session 2. Next session, we will cover these topics:

- Consider options regarding shopping cart capabilities
- Web site building tools
- Find the right online home
- Web site security, testing
HOMEWORK ACTIVITY: Find a domain name that will work for you.

1. Navigate your web browser to: http://www.godaddy.com/
2. Type a name into the domain search box and click go.
3. On the next page under more options click **Smart Search**.
4. With smart search you can find variations of the name you want. If you wanted to register **tools.com** and it was already registered, you could type tools in the smart search box and choose search options to come up with other names that may be available. Here is a sample search of the word “tools.”

![Domain Name Search](image)

5. Play with the search options until you find a name combination you like.
6. Check the box next to those names and click Check Availability to see if the names are available.
7. Make a note of the available names below, but don’t register the name right now.

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Name</th>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
HOMEWORK ACTIVITY: Research web sites

Search for well-designed web sites that have qualities that you want in your web site. How do you know if a web site is a good quality web site? Look back at the exercise on good web sites, pages10-13. There are various evaluation criteria used to rate the value of a web site. These are just a few of the questions you can ask when looking at a site:

STRUCTURE AND NAVIGATION

• Who is the target audience for this site?
• How well is the content written? What is the business selling?
• How easy and intuitive is it for a user to move through the site?

VISUAL DESIGN

• How would you describe the visual appeal of this site?
• How suited is the design to the target audience of the site?
• What is the quality of the graphics and photos?

FUNCTIONALITY

• How efficiently do pages load? Would this site work on a dial-up connection or does a user need a high-speed connection?
• Do all the links work?

Use the space below to write down some ideas for your web site, you may wish to print out web pages to use as examples for design ideas:

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HOMEWORK ACTIVITY: Web Site Planning

The following activity will get you familiar with one way of planning a web site.

1. Take several sheets of copy paper. One can be your flowchart, another can be a list of graphics, logo, photos needed, another can be sketches of web designs. Start with ideas that you want in your web site and printouts from favorite web sites.

2. Now really think about your business and recall the well-designed web sites from the last activity. Start with titling your homepage and then list what products or services you would like to offer to your customers. Remember, keep things short and direct.

3. Now, take another sheet of paper and draw a box named Homepage, and continue drawing your flowchart.

4. Now think of graphics that you would like to add to your homepage and place boxes on the sheet labeled Homepage to represent where those graphics will be placed. These graphics can be things like your company logo, CEO picture, picture of your office building, graphical buttons to other pages on your web site, etc. A good idea at this step is to cut out pictures from magazines and newspapers that represent your graphics and use them in place of the boxes.

5. Think of where you will want to place text links to the other web sites or pages of your web site and sketch them on the sheet labeled Homepage.

6. Now draw boxes labeled Text Box on the Homepage sheet to show where text will be placed. This can be a text about your company, contact information, a greeting, etc.

7. Use the pages labeled Link Two, Link Three, etc to represent the links placed on your homepage to the other pages of your web site. Re-label these sheets to match the associated link and layout each web page as you did in steps 5 through 7.

8. Place these layout pages on the table to show how the web site will flow, refer to the storyboarding graphic on page 12 for an example of one way to do this.

9. Keep creating link sheets and rearranging everything until you have a good idea of what your web site will look like and how it will flow. Remember to keep in mind the previously mentioned web site design tips.

10. Bring these pages to Website 101 Session 2. Think of questions that have come up while working on this activity.
Don’t Waste Time or Money!

Get the Knowledge You Need Before Creating a Web Site!

Web Site 101
Introduction to Planning an E-Business Web Site

SESSION 2
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Nuts and Bolts of a Web Site: How a web site can be created and uploaded

In *Web Site 101 Session 1* we covered the basics on how a web site can help your business; whether your business requires an E-Commerce or e-brochure web site; parts needed for your web site and proper planning strategies; and finding the right domain name for your business. Now it is time to explore the nuts and bolts of putting a web site together and getting it up onto the web.

The options to think about for site development are the construction of components: html pages, graphics, photos, and programming navigation; shopping cart and database creation (if applicable); and search engine optimization.

**Learning Outcomes for Session Two:**

- Consider options regarding shopping cart capabilities
- Web site building tools
- Find the right online home
- Web site security, testing
2.1 Shopping Cart: Accepting and Managing Online Payments
Creating Your Shopping Cart

Checkout services, which are also known as shopping cart services, is a term used to describe a model of selling goods online. You can set prices for the goods and services you wish to sell, show available quantities of your goods, display messages if goods are out-of-stock or on back order, as well as options, such as automatically charging the rate of postage according to the amount of products a customer buys.

When users visit your web site, they can view a catalog of the products and services you are selling. To buy an item from your catalog, they simply click on an ‘Add to Cart’ button, which places the item into a virtual shopping cart. When a customer has finished adding items to their shopping cart, they go through a process called checkout. It is in this stage of the transaction that the customer submits payment and shipping information. This information should be transmitted through a secure web page on your E-Commerce web site. The ability to perform secure transactions on your web site is very important to protect your business and establish a trustworthy relationship with your customers. Finally, the customer clicks on a ‘Submit Order’ button and the payment is processed using a third party payment processing company.

The order details, including the items ordered and shipping information, are e-mailed to the e-mail address you specified when setting up your account with the payment processing company.

Accepting and Processing Payments

In the past, there were usually two companies involved in setting up an E-Commerce web site. One company created, managed, and maintained the shopping cart aspect of the site and another company was used to process payments received for orders placed through the shopping cart. While this is still a common method for handling online business for larger companies, smaller companies may find it far easier and less time consuming to use an all-in-one provider. There are many vendors that can provide you with an all-in-one shopping cart and payment processing solution.

The services offered by these providers vary. For example, some providers will only work with companies that have US-based bank accounts, while others support the use of a foreign bank account to deposit funds into. It will be worth your while to shop around, which should Some providers charge a small monthly fee (usually $10-$20), while others take a small percentage (2%-4%) of the sale. A third group of providers charge both a monthly fee and take a percentage of sales. You should also be aware that
some providers restrict the sale of certain products such as tobacco and guns or restrict the accepting of donations by users of their particular service. Check with each provider for their specific selling and trade restrictions. Because of the large number of all-in-one service providers it is recommended that you look into the service providers mentioned here as well as other companies to determine which one will suit your business needs best.

Compiling Your Online Catalog

Once you have decided on and registered an account with your shopping cart, the next step is to make an inventory of items you wish to sell on your web site and their associated costs. You should consider presenting your items both as a list and with a photograph. That means you will need to set up each item to be photographed either by yourself or hire a professional photographer to do it for you.

You should also look into shipping service rates to provide accurate shipping costs on your web site. Rate tables are available from many shippers, including USPS (www.usps.com), FedEx (www.fedex.com), and UPS (www.ups.com). You may receive a shipping discount based on volume. Many checkout solutions allow you to input shipping costs. Once you have an itemized inventory, you will then have to input these details into the shopping cart provider’s system so you can setup a customized checkout solution for your products. The process for this varies from provider to provider, but is very straightforward with very little technical expertise required.

Managing and Maintaining Your Online Business

At this stage, you will have a link or page on your web site where visitors can now visit your web site and buy your products and services. Let’s now take a look at what you must do to manage orders and payments. As mentioned earlier, when someone makes a purchase, the provider processes the payment, and sends you an e-mail with the order details. Let’s now look at how you should manage orders.

Regularly checking your e-mail is a key task in E-Commerce. Remember the tip mentioned earlier about using a separate e-mail address for just your orders. The more frequently you check your e-mail, the sooner you can pack and ship the order to your customer. The e-mails sent by your shopping cart and/or payment processing provider when an order is placed on your web site contains all the information concerning the order, such as quantity of items brought, names of the items, shipping address, and any special instructions that a buyer may have written to you. Always make sure you check
through the entire e-mail, as some customers will put special instructions and others will not. Overlooking any of this information may result in an unsatisfied customer, something that should always be avoided.

*Risks of E-Commerce*

Despite E-Commerce being so popular with many consumers, there is still the fair share of people who have a fear of buying online. Customers tend to have an even greater fear if they are buying from a small company. There are a few things you can do to assure customers that their online buying experience is a safe one. First, many of the service providers supply their own SSL Certificate when you register with them. SSL Certificates give a web site the ability to communicate securely with its online customers. Without a certificate, any information sent to a web site can be intercepted and viewed by anyone. The certificate ensures that the pages where customers have to type confidential data are protected from unauthorized persons accessing the entered data. You should consider promoting this feature of your web site as this will assure customers **before** they decide to purchase a product. Additionally, consider e-mailing your customers to let them know when their product has been shipped. This will give customers assurance **after** they have purchased a product from your web site.

**Business practices:** Due to the anonymity inherent in E-Commerce business relationships, it is crucial for a business wishing to establish an E-Commerce presence to instill confidence in potential customers that they are a trustworthy entity. Additionally, protection of the privacy of customers’ financial information is required by law, specifically the Gramm-Leach Bliley Act of 1999. More information can be found at: [http://banking.senate.gov/conf/](http://banking.senate.gov/conf/).

Disclosure of business practices detailing how your customer’s information will be used should be placed in short disclaimers on your web site. This will go a long way towards building a trustworthy relationship with your customers. Some important points to cover in these disclaimers are: how the company will use a customer’s information, assurance that the company will carry out orders for products and services in an ethical and trustworthy manner, and company policies regarding the return of goods and satisfaction guaranties. E-Commerce web site certification through the non-profit foundation TRUSTe ([http://www.truste.com/](http://www.truste.com/)) can be a very cost-effective method of assuring customers that their personal information will be kept private. Certification with TRUSTe enables your business to display TRUSTe’s logo *(see below)* on your E-Commerce web site.
ACTIVITY: Share your favorite E-Commerce web sites.

Let’s discuss our favorite E-Commerce web sites. What is your favorite site that you frequently visit to purchase products? (For this discussion, avoid eBay or Amazon.com.) What are the reasons you visit and purchase from this site? What could make the site better for your shopping experience? Consider elements such as personalization, shopping cart capabilities, and security in your response. How can these sites help you with your web site design?

Take notes on what you liked, didn’t like, and possible changes to improve your web site.
2.2 Web Development Tools
What are your options?
Web Site Building Tools

We again come to the following question, are you going to build your E-Business web site yourself or hire a web site developer? Another option that may be available to you is utilizing pre-made templates from your hosting provider that allow you to create your web site by simply filling in the blanks. Depending upon on your abilities and experience with computers and the Internet, web site creation tools can be complex or easy to use. Researching the various tools on the market is the key to finding one that fits with your experience, knowledge and skills. One major thing to keep in mind is that no matter which software tool you purchase, you need to keep it updated with all subsequent updates, patches and fixes. Keeping your software up to date also ensures that your software stays secure from the latest threats and you have access to new technologies the tool may provide.

Some of the best places to find someone to help you with your web site are universities and colleges. Utilizing the instructors and students of classes related to the Internet and E-Business can provide you with a wealth of resources. Additionally, you may consider taking advantage of short-term (five to ten weeks) classes on Internet and E-Business technology that many colleges and universities offer.

Off-the-shelf web site design software is your best bet for creating your web site as you will be able to find numerous how-to manuals for off-the-shelf software and helpful vendor support. There are many “simple to use” web design software packages available for the novice web site designer. You will need some basic computer skills, such as knowing how to cut and paste graphics, and some basic knowledge of how to use a digital camera and scanner. Most off-the-shelf software comes with basic web site layout templates; however, you must realize that these pre-made templates may present you with a limited ability to customize your web site layout.

Here are a few tutorials and software packages that you may find useful:

Microsoft Word free tutorial on building web pages in Word:
http://www.er.uqam.ca/merlin/xw999998/eng/econceptw.htm

Hewlett Packard free tutorial:
http://hplearningcenter.com
### Free html tutorials:

- [http://www.w3schools.com/myfirst/html00.asp](http://www.w3schools.com/myfirst/html00.asp)

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Tool</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Microsoft Office Front Page</strong></td>
<td>is one of Microsoft’s Office System Products. Front Page is purchased as a stand-alone product, and used in conjunction with the various versions of Microsoft’s Office Suite. It is a fairly easy tool to use and is supported by most web site hosting companies. Not only are there built-in tutorials, but an abundance of how-to books that provide more in depth detail on the product are available that can be purchased from your local bookstore or checked out from your local library. More information on Microsoft Front Page can be found at: <a href="http://www.microsoft.com/office/frontpage/prodinfo/default.msp">http://www.microsoft.com/office/frontpage/prodinfo/default.msp</a></td>
<td>$199.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Macromedia Dreamweaver</strong></td>
<td>is a powerful tool that is versatile and user friendly. While Dreamweaver is a tool that can be used by both novice and more experienced users, the interface can take a bit of getting used to. Additionally, the price might be somewhat steep for a newly established business; however, because of its powerful set of features, it should be strongly considered when looking at purchasing web site design software. For a complete description of all the features available in Dreamweaver, visit: <a href="http://www.adobe.com/products/dreamweaver/">http://www.adobe.com/products/dreamweaver/</a></td>
<td>$399.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Namo WebEditor</strong></td>
<td>is a relatively new tool that suits both the novice and the expert web site designer. The software incorporates aspects of Front Page and Dreamweaver providing a very large set of tools when compared to its low cost. Namo WebEditor is a versatile tool and provides the user with a great working environment and web site development experience. WebEditor is available at: <a href="http://www.namo.com/products/webeditor.php">http://www.namo.com/products/webeditor.php</a></td>
<td>$99.95</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Other tools needed

- Digital camera, starting at around $100.
- Photo editing software such as Adobe Fireworks or Adobe Photoshop, available at: http://www.adobe.com/products

Option for hiring someone to create your web site for you

Creating a web site can be time consuming and stressful. Here are considerations if you hire a full-service agency to create and web site and marketing plan for you. Find a developer through friends, local colleges, or directories. Make sure the developer can do what you are asking for; they need to show you examples of their work. Do not pay for the initial consultation, they should not charge you for this. Bring your web site plan and a list of any questions prepared ahead of time.

Options to consider:

A full-service agency to create and web site and marketing plan:
Ckarma inc., www.ckarma.com

Create a web site using a pre-made template:
EZWEBS, www.ezwebs.biz
2.3 Finding the Right Online Home
Where should you put your web site?

Your company now has an online name and a great web site to go with it. Now how do you give your new online presence a home on the Internet? Businesses typically have two ways to get their E-Business web site onto the Internet: 1) by setting up the hardware to store and maintain their web site themselves or 2) using an established web hosting company.

**Build Your Own Web Server**

Hosting your company E-Commerce web site on a web server is one option that you can use to establish your E-Commerce presence. A web server is a computer on the World Wide Web that stores web sites and web pages that can be retrieved via a web browser like Internet Explorer.

There are many things to think about when building your web server and, perhaps the two most important items are, who is going to maintain your web server, how are you going to secure it? These two considerations go hand-in-hand with each other. Maintenance on your web server also includes making sure that the software running on your web server is kept up to date with the latest patches and upgrades. Software that is not kept up to date can make your web server vulnerable to security threats from the Internet, thus putting your confidential business and customer information at risk. In today’s world you must always be thinking security when conducting any kind of business. Security of personal data is at the forefront of most E-Commerce consumers, and will continue to become a more and more important issue as hackers become more sophisticated. If you are conducting E-Commerce, you do not want to put you or your customers at risk of identity theft.

The following additional considerations must be kept in mind when exploring building and maintaining your own web server:

- **Hardware and Software:** Web server technology can be complicated and difficult to manage if you have no experience doing it, but not impossible. Using your own web server can also be expensive as dedicated equipment and specialized software will need to be purchased. Additionally, specialized training will need to be provided to the person or group of people who will be maintaining the web server. However, an E-Commerce web site can be hosted on a low cost machine if anticipated web site traffic is low and information on building and maintaining
a web server is available from the many books with detailed instructions on the subject. If you have a large customer base and you are anticipating a large amount of traffic to your web site, then you will want to look into buying higher end equipment. First decide on the web server software that you want to use. Then use the software’s hardware requirements as a guideline for the hardware you need to purchase. Whether the web server you choose is a high end machine or a more cost effective machine, always keep in mind the risks to your web server if it is not properly secured and kept up to date.

- **Internet Connection:** Another thing to consider when contemplating building your own web server is what kind of Internet connection your company will using. As was mentioned above, you do not want your customers to wait a long time for your web site to be displayed on their web browser. Making sure your web server is on a high speed connection will ensure your web site is being delivered at optimal speeds. Having your web server connected to a DSL or T1 high speed connection is your best bet. A high-speed cable connection only offers dynamic IP addresses at this time which is not recommended for your server.

- **Static IP Address:** In addition to a high speed connection, your web server must have a static IP address. A DSL connection with at static IP address will work well for most small business and cost is around $75 to $100 a month, depending on the provider. Larger businesses and web site expecting a high volume of traffic will require at least a T1 connection. Costs for a T1 connection are around $300-$600 a month, also depending on the provider.

- **Support:** It is recommended that if you decide to build your own web server that you make sure that you have proper support for the related hardware and software that will be required. You should look at hiring a person with experience handling and maintaining web server if you have no experience with this type of technology, especially if your time-frame for launching your E-Commerce web site is an issue. This individual might also be a good choice for making sure that your web server is set up secure and stays that way.

**WORDS TO KNOW**

**DSL (Digital Subscriber Line):** technology for bringing high-bandwidth information to homes and small businesses over ordinary telephone lines.

**T1 Technology:** also uses the phone lines but supports data transfer rates faster.

**Static IP Address:** one that is fixed and never changes.

**Dynamic IP Address:** may change at any time.
Server Software Options
There are a handful of web server software solutions on the market and some are more difficult to use then others. Each one has its benefits, and you should research the features and options of each to find the one best suited for your needs.

- **Windows 2003 Web Server Edition:** A great software package with lots of benefits but at the same time it lacks the features of the full fledged Windows Server 2003 Editions for managing a company’s network. The cost for this varies and it would pay to shop around. Using this software will require a lot of studying if you are not familiar with Microsoft’s web server application IIS or their other related applications. If you are familiar with the older versions of IIS and Microsoft Server software, you will need to refresh yourself because there are many changes in the 2003 versions of this software. If you are looking to not only set up your web server, but have a general purpose server for running your company’s network, Windows Small Business Server 2003 is a cost effective solution. More information on Microsoft’s server software is available at: [www.microsoft.com/windowsserver2003/evaluation/overview/family.mspx#ELD](http://www.microsoft.com/windowsserver2003/evaluation/overview/family.mspx#ELD)

- **Apache HTTP Web Server:** A great product and the cost is reasonable, it is free. It is forever evolving and is open source software. In general, open source refers to any program whose source code is made available for use or modification as users or other developers see fit. Open source software is usually developed as a public collaboration and made freely available. You can easily download Apache from the Internet, but finding support from a new developer might be difficult. It is recommended for users that have experience in web related applications and servers. It would be a great learning tool, but you should have a good knowledge base in web server technology and programming skills to make the most of this software. More information on Apache Web Server: [http://httpd.apache.org/ABOUT](http://httpd.apache.org/ABOUT)

- **Linux Web Server:** Another great web hosting tool with tons of related information on its use available on the Internet. Keep in mind that it does require Apache Web sever to run properly. Linux is a widely supported operating system and you can find a large amount of information on the Internet available for this product. You can run this software with limited knowledge; however it is still recommend that you have someone with experience look over your work once everything is all setup. You can find more information on this product at: [http://www.yolinux.com/TUTORIALS, http://www.linuxquestions.org](http://www.yolinux.com/TUTORIALS, http://www.linuxquestions.org)
Using a Hosting Company

A hosting company is a company that uses a web server, or multiple web servers, to provide storage space for many web sites. Good hosting companies allow you unlimited access to your web site files. Most registrars are also hosting companies, so you may be able to get everything you need for your E-Business web site from one company. As you expand your website you can add options such as an SSL certificate, a shopping cart, or even a database. Some of the key items to look for when evaluating a hosting company are:

- How much storage space do you get for your web site? You might not need much space in the beginning, but you need to have enough space for future growth.

- How much web site traffic can I have to my site? Web site traffic is the amount of visitors and visits a web site receives. Are there extra charges for exceeding the traffic limits specified by your hosting service? Traffic to your web site, in the beginning, should not be a problem; however, as your web site becomes more popular, it will get more traffic. If you are charged for additional traffic this could start to add up. You may be able to switch to a different plan with higher traffic limits instead of paying for additional traffic.

- How many e-mail accounts, if any, are included as part of your hosting service plan? Make sure you get enough e-mail addresses for your company’s current and future needs. You don’t want to pay extra if you need to add additional e-mail addresses in the future. Most hosting companies offer web based e-mail access so you can check your e-mail from any available web browser.

- Are database services available? Database services will make your site dynamic instead of static. You can make changes to the database to update your web site.

- Is a shopping cart available? If you plan to sell products or services through your web site you will need a shopping cart. A shopping cart is a term used to describe the model of selling goods online similar to web sites like www.amazon.com.

- Are SSL certificate capabilities available from the hosting provider? You will need SSL certificate capabilities in order to encrypt shopping cart
transactions. A SSL Certificate is a certificate which is installed on a secure server, in this case, one of the service provider’s servers. The certificate is used to identify the merchant associated with the certificate and to encrypt credit card and other sensitive data.

- Does the hosting provider back-up your web site on a regular basis? A back-up is a copy of your web site that has been made for safekeeping in the event that your web site is lost or damaged due to human error, hardware or software failure, data corruption, theft, sabotage or natural disaster. You want to make sure a back-up copy of your web site is available so it can be restored if there is a problem.

- What is the uptime guarantee for your site? If you sell products on your web site you’ll want it available to customers 24 hours a day 7 days a week.

- Is there 24-hour customer service? If you have problems with your web site or need some help, you will want to be able to contact someone any time of the day.
Testing the Functionality of Your Web Site
It is very important to test the functionality of your E-Business web site. The first impression customers have of your company with an E-Business web site is very important as your web site will be a virtual representation of your company. Errors with the functionality of your E-Business web site will negatively affect your business image. There is also no room for unnecessary delays when customers navigate your web site. If your customers find a non-functioning web site, it is the same as if they found a ‘Closed for Repairs’ sign on your front door.

Be sure to have someone else test your site, a friend or associate who has not seen your web site. They may see something glaringly wrong that you have missed or they may not understand the navigation or purchasing directions shown on the web site. Integrate testing into the development process which will help to ensure that testing does not get bypassed or present a significant time burden. Testing on your web site should be carried out at times when customers are less likely to be visiting your web site.

The things to be tested on your E-Business web site include:

- **Broken Links:** All the links available on your web site will have to be tested often to make sure they still link to where they are suppose to.

- **Load and Performance Tests:** This includes examining the time it takes for your pages to display to the customer, the appearance of the output (the color, graphics, fonts, etc.), and how user friendly your web site is. Too many flashy pages may take valuable seconds to load.

- **Web Browser Compatibility:** You should look at your web site using different browsers to ensure that all customers to your web site see the same thing. Test your site using Internet Explorer, Firefox, and Netscape.

- **Resources:** The resources offered by your web site must be tested to make sure they serve their intended purpose. An example of this would be to make sure your online payment service is working correctly.

- **Duplicate Pages:** Duplication of pages should be avoided.

**Inactive Files:** Files on the web site should be checked to make sure they are active and current. Inactive files should be repaired or deleted.
In Summary, Web Site 101 Session 2 covered the following topics:

- Consider options regarding shopping cart capabilities
- Web site building tools
- Find the right online home
- Web site security, testing

Now, with this workbook, review these topics. The following pages have two homework activities, think about whether you will create your own web site or hire someone to do it for you, and continue to refine your web site plan. Session 3 will cover these topics:

- Marketing your web site
- Calculate costs, develop a budget for web site development
- Plan your next steps
Homework: Interview a small business owner, refine web site plan

Interview a small business owner who has an E-Business web site. Ask them about their site, how it was created, and for any advice for you and your web site. Then work on your web site flowchart and plan.

Take notes on what you found helpful to share with your classmates and any questions you may have:

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Don’t Waste Time or Money!

Get the Knowledge You Need Before Creating a Web Site!

Web Site 101
Introduction to Planning an E-Business Web Site

SESSION 3
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Web Site Planning Final Steps: Marketing Strategies and Budget

In Web Site 101 Session 2 we covered the options regarding shopping cart capabilities; web site building tools; find the right online home; web site security; and testing.

It is time to explore the final steps for web site planning. Now that you have created and launched a secure and easy to use E-Business web site, the next step to take is to advertise your new online business. The following tips can help you to promote your new web site effectively.

Then we will explore the realities of the investment you plan to make for this project. The investment will be both your valuable time and money. Web sites are time-intensive and custom design can be expensive. Be sure to start with a simple web site planned and developed and later you may decide to expand on it if needed. The most important aspect of small business web development is its effectiveness. Small businesses generally cannot afford to invest heavily in a web site that will not produce profits. It must generate a return on investment, turn visitors into customers.

Learning Outcomes for Session Three:

- Market your business web site
- Calculate costs, develop a budget
- Plan your next steps
3.1: Promoting Your Web Site
Clear Marketing Goals

Always keep in mind who your audience is when designing your web site. Try and keep your web site design in line with the product and services that you are offering to your customers. One good thing to feature on the home page of your web site is a mission statement. You should include details regarding your policy on handling the personal and financial information potential customers may provide to you while using your web site. Providing a feeling of security and trust is important in the E-Business world, and letting your customers know that you are incorporating these goals as part of your online business should be part of your mission statement.

Register your web site with search engines

Over 90 percent of Internet users search one or more of the top online search engines, namely Google, Yahoo!, and MSN, to find information and businesses. An Internet search engine helps users find web pages on a given subject. The search engines maintain databases of web sites and use programs to collect information which is then indexed by the search engine. Getting information about your web site listed with search engines can be done either manually or through a submission service such as MyComputer.com (http://www.mycomputer.com).

The manual process will require you to submit your web site information to various search engines every month for free. Submission services are companies that take care of submitting your web site information to the search engines for you. They usually charge a small fee for doing this. These companies will automatically submit your web site to over 200 search engines, including Google, Yahoo!, MSN, and other popular search engines. Depending on your time and budget, choose the solution that works best for you.

Areas where you will need to make some key considerations when submitting your web site information to a search engine are:

- **Enter an accurate description of your site**: Search engines use this text to display the information about your web site to users when a search is done. Make note of just how many words or characters the particular search engine will accept. To prepare the description, type all your information beforehand into a word processor document. This will allow you to keep count of how many words and
characters, including spaces, you will be using. You will also have the convenience of being able to cut and paste your description into the online form being used to submit your information to the search engine. Most search engines accept 200 characters for a site description, but a few take up to 1000!

- **One Word – Keywords:** When submitting your website to search engines, you will have to devise a list of one-word *keywords* that best describe your business. Have your most important keywords listed first, and use commas in between words; however, some search engines don’t allow commas, just spaces. Using the same technique as above to create your keywords list with a word processor can be most helpful. Keep in mind that most search engines accept a maximum of 200 characters, where others will only allow 50 characters/or 5 words.

- **Your e-mail address:** The best e-mail address to use is the one directly affiliated with your website. When submitting your website information to some search engines, you must register with them first and then go back to their website after receiving an automated e-mail to confirm your listing.

- **Linking Back:** When a link to your website is placed on someone else’s website, many site owners appreciate a link back to their website and will provide you with a text link or button. Some websites only will do reciprocal links with their text link, banner, or button on your home page. Other websites don’t seem to care, and some websites allow you to put their link on one of your other pages. If this link is on a secondary page, the secondary page has to be available through a link on your home page.

**FREE WEB SITE SUBMISSION SERVICES**

Make sure that you read the instructions carefully so your website will get indexed correctly. Only add your website to one category unless the site owner asks for you to add it others:

- http://www.addpro.com
- http://www.google.com
- http://www.linksmatch.com
- http://www.searchsight.com
- http://www.searchwarp.com
- http://www.url.biz
- http://www.yahoo.com
Your e-mail address

The best e-mail address to use is the one directly affiliated with your web site. Use a signature in your e-mail program to help potential customers get in touch with you. A signature is a block of text, or text and graphics that will be inserted into every e-mail you send. Most e-mail programs such as Outlook, AOL, and Netscape allow you to designate a signature to appear at the end of each e-mail message you send. Limit it to 6 to 8 lines: company name, address, phone number, website, e-mail address, and a one-phrase description of your business offerings. Putting your company logo into the signature is also a great way for customers to remember who you are. Look for examples of signatures on e-mail messages sent to you by others.

Communication exchange on the site

An E-Business web site can also be utilized as a communication channel which will allow a company to deliver messages to customers. As more customers visit your web site, they will need to know their messages have been received and processed effectively. An effective way to test your customer’s impression of you is by allowing customers to provide feedback based on their experiences using your web site.

Business Cards, Banners, T-Shirts, Etc.

When it comes to promoting your E-Business web site, these no-brainer options often get overlooked. Hats, T-Shirts, business cards, and similar promotional items can be a very effective way to give visibility to your web site. Make sure that all reprints of business cards, letterhead, brochures, and literature contain your company’s new website. The standard is to leave off the http:// part and include only the www.domain.com portion.

Promote Using Traditional Media

One of the oldest and most effective ways to promote your E-Business business is by traditional print media sources. If you are already advertising in various printed media, don't discontinue print advertising that you have found effective in the past. Be sure to include your web site address in any display or classified ads you purchase in newspapers, yellow pages, etc. Use a two-step approach: (1) capture readers’ attention with the ad 2) then refer them to your company’s web site where they can find more information about the company and perhaps place an order. Other traditional print media that you can use to drive people to your site are direct mail, classifieds, and post cards.
Publish an E-mail Newsletter

While it is a big commitment in time, publishing a monthly *e-mail newsletter* is one of the best ways to keep in touch with your prospects, generate trust, develop new partnerships, and build future business. It also helps you collect e-mail addresses and contact information from those who visit your web site but aren’t yet ready to make a purchase. Ask for an e-mail address and first name so you can personalize the newsletter.
3.2 Costs!
Develop a Budget
Considerations regarding costs

Let’s talk about how much this project will cost and the various options available. Web sites are time-intensive and custom design can be expensive. Be sure to start with a simple web site and later decide to expand on it if needed. The investment will be both your valuable time and money. The most important aspect of small business web development is its effectiveness. Small businesses generally cannot afford to invest heavily in a web site that will not produce profits. It must generate a return on investment, turn visitors into customers.

An initial business web site can cost under $2,000. Your money can be spent on software and web development tools; how-to books; templates; monthly web site services; outside contractors. What can you get for that kind of investment? A basic E-Commerce solution should include the basic well-designed html pages, shopping cart, search engine registration, domain name registration, and uploading and server costs.

If you plan to do it yourself, budget both time and money for:
- Web site design software
- Photography, digital camera, photo-editing software
- Graphics, graphic design software
- Shopping cart capabilities
- Server needs
- Marketing
- Testing
- Maintenance
- Time

Be sure the developer is open to your suggestions; after all, this is your business.

If you plan to hire a web development service, be sure to:
- Have your web site plan ready
- Ask questions and have them prepared ahead of time. You will be discussing the same topics that are listed above:
  - Photography
  - Graphics
  - Shopping cart capabilities
  - Server needs
  - Marketing
  - Testing
  - Maintenance
ACTIVITY: Scenario

Let’s dive in and give it a try. In small groups, decide on a small business; your needs for a web site; and a budget. Decide whether to do it yourself or hire someone. Come up with a simple web site plan and questions to discuss with the web developer.

Review all considerations we have covered in *Web Site 101*.

Develop a checklist.

Come back to large group and report

*Take notes as needed for plans for your web site.*
Checklist

Take notes as needed for plans for your web site.
In Conclusion

Doing business online has become much greater reality than was expected during the early years when Internet first began. The preceding curriculum covered a large quantity of information in a short amount of time. The information you have just reviewed has provided you with an overview of the steps to take establish an online E-Business web site. We have covered the basic foundational elements that need to be established for an effective and successful E-Business. These elements were: establishing your online identity, creating an attractive and effective web site, finding the right online home, making your web site secure, accepting and managing online payments, testing the functionality of the web site and finally, promoting your web site.

There is a myriad of books and reference materials can be found that will explain in more detail each of the foundational elements discussed. Should you decide to embark on establishing an E-Business online presence, we recommend you either hire a consultant skilled in the area of E-Business to assist you or educate yourself from the wealth of information readily available.

Good luck and best wishes for your business and success with your new E-Business web site!
Resource List

Domain Name Resources
General information:
  http://www.internic.net/
  http://www.icann.org/faq/
Domain name registrars:
  http://www.internic.net/regist.html
Hosting Companies:
  EZWebs.biz - http://www.ezwebs.biz/
Whois service:
  http://www.internic.net/whois.html
Domain name extensions:
  http://www.icann.org/

Software
Web Site Creation:
Microsoft FrontPage 2003
  http://www.microsoft.com/office/frontpage/prodinfo/default.msp
Macromedia Dreamweaver
  http://www.macromedia.com/software/dreamweaver/
Namo Web Editor

Server:
Windows 2003 Web Server Edition
  http://www.microsoft.com/windowsserver2003/evaluation/overview/family.mspx#ELD
Apache HTTP Web Server
  http://httpd.apache.org/ABOUT_APACHE.html
  http://httpd.apache.org/download.cgi
Linux Web Sever
  http://www.yolinux.com/TUTORIALS/LinuxTutorialWebSiteConfig.html#HTTP
  http://www.linuxquestions.org

Federal Laws

Information Security Resources
TRUSTe - http://www.truste.com/
VeriSign - http://www.verisign.com/
Payment Processing and Shopping Cart Services
PayPal - www.paypal.com
CCNow - www.ccnow.com
2CO - www.2checkout.com

Shipping Services
US Post Office - www.usps.com
FedEx - www.fedex.com
UPS - www.ups.com

Search Engine Submission

List Servers
Infacta GroupMail - www.wilsonweb.com/afd/groupmail.htm
Constant Contact - www.wilsonweb.com/afd/roving.htm
Got Marketing Campaigner - http://partners.gotmarketing.com/wilsonweb/

Tutorials:
Microsoft Word free tutorial on building web pages in Word:
http://www.er.uqam.ca/merlin/xw999998/eng/econceptw.htm
Hewlett Packard free tutorial: http://hplearningcenter.com
HTML tutorial: http://www.w3schools.com/myfirst/html00.asp

Web Services:
Ckarma inc., www.ckarma.com
EZWEBS, www.ezwebs.biz
Glossary

back-up - a copy of your web site that has been made for safekeeping in the event that your web site is lost or damaged due to human error, hardware or software failure, data corruption, theft, sabotage or natural disaster.

checkout - the stage of a transaction in which the customer submits payment and shipping information.

cookie - a message given to a web browser by a web site server. The web browser stores the message in a text file. The message is then sent back to the web site server each time the browser requests a page from the server. The main purpose of cookies is to identify users and possibly prepare customized web pages for them.

domain name - unique name which is used to identify and locate individual web sites on the Internet.

domain name extension – portion of your domain name that signifies what kind of web site the domain name refers to. Typical domain name extensions include: .com, .net, .org, .biz, .info, .name and, .coop.

domain registrars - companies through which domain names are registered.

DSL (Digital Subscriber Line) - a technology for bringing high-bandwidth information to homes and small businesses over ordinary copper telephone lines with typical maximum data transfer rates of generally 384 kilobits per second (Kbps) for downloads and 128 Kbps for uploads.

dynamic IP address – IP Address which may change at any time.

electronic brochure

E-Commerce - the ability for customers to visit you online and buy the products and/or services your company offers.

home page - the first web page that customers see when visiting your web site.

hosting company - a company that uses a web server, or multiple web servers, to provide storage space for many web sites.
hyperlinks - links to other Internet resources.

Internet Protocol Address (IP address) - unique numerical address which is used to identify and locate individual web sites on the Internet.

Internet service provider – a company that provides access to the Internet for individuals or companies.

keywords – one-word descriptions of your business used when submitting your web site to search engines.

list server - a device that operates mailing lists and distributes new messages, newsletters, or other postings from list members to the entire list's subscribers.

mission statement - provides visitors to your web site a clear understanding of what you are trying to offer to them and what your goals are.

open source - any program whose source code is made available for use or modification as users or other developers see fit.

Packet analysis - the analysis of the data gathered during packet sniffing.

packet sniffing - the collection of data as it is transmitted across a network.

registry – central directory used to store contact and technical information about your company that is used by domain registrars.

search engine - helps users find web pages on a given subject.

Shared Registration System – a system where registrars are responsible for maintaining Whois domain name contact information.

shopping cart - a term used to describe the model of selling goods online similar to web sites like www.amazon.com.

signature - a block of text, or text and graphics, that will be inserted into every e-mail you send.
**spoofing** - an attempt by an unauthorized person to gain access to transmitted data by posing as an authorized person.

**SSL Certificate** - a certificate which is installed on a secure server. The certificate is used to identify the merchant associated with the certificate and to encrypt credit card and other sensitive data.

**static IP address** – IP Address that is fixed and never changes.

**storyboarding** - laying out your web site visually on paper

**T1** - technology that uses the phone lines for transmitting high-bandwidth information with data transfer rates of 1.544 megabits per second.

**web server** - a computer on the World Wide Web that stores web sites and web pages that can be retrieved via a web browser like Internet Explorer.

**web site** - a collection of "pages" or files on the World Wide Web that are linked together and maintained by a company, organization, or individual.

**web site traffic** - the amount of visitors and visits a web site receives.

**Whois directory** – directory of registry information that is publicly available to anyone on the Internet.
## Web Site 101 Instructional Plan

### Session 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content Heading</th>
<th>Learning Objectives</th>
<th>Key Points to Emphasize</th>
<th>Instructional Techniques</th>
<th>Estimated Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Why E-Business?</strong></td>
<td>Identify benefits of a business web site. Decide on an e-brochure or an E-Commerce web site</td>
<td>Features, advantages, and benefits of E-Business. Considerations for e-brochure vs. E-Commerce web sites.</td>
<td>Lecture/Discussion</td>
<td>30 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Planning an attractive &amp; effective web site</strong></td>
<td>Define web site design strategies</td>
<td>Present important parts to web sites: navigation, clarity of business goods and services, contact information, etc.</td>
<td>Lecture using examples, flow chart</td>
<td>30 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Activity:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>Comparison/contrast of well-designed and poorly designed sites</td>
<td>Large-group discussion</td>
<td>20 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Establishing your online identity</strong></td>
<td>Establish a domain name</td>
<td>Importance of choosing the right domain name to clearly identify business</td>
<td>Lecture using examples</td>
<td>20 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Homework Assignment</strong></td>
<td>Find a domain name</td>
<td>Two assignments: Research and rough draft</td>
<td>Lecture and question and answer session</td>
<td>10 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Begin web site plan</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Assessment plan:**
question and answer and review of homework in Session 2

**Instructional resources and equipment needed:**

For Instructor:
- Computer with Internet connection
- Overhead Projection

For Participants:
- Computer with Internet connection
- Workbook

**Room Arrangement Needed:**
Computer lab with Internet connection.

**Transfer of Learning Plan:**
Instructions to register domain name
Application workbook, room for note taking, record progress
### Web Site 101 Instructional Plan

#### Session 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content Heading</th>
<th>Learning Objectives</th>
<th>Key Points to Emphasize</th>
<th>Instructional Techniques</th>
<th>Estimated Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Shopping Cart: Online Payments</strong></td>
<td>Describe steps to creating and managing an E-Commerce site</td>
<td>Management of E-Commerce site. Details of payment process; security; shipping.</td>
<td>Lecture</td>
<td>30 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Activity:</strong></td>
<td>Analyze E-Commerce web sites</td>
<td>Ask for favorite E-Commerce sites, go there and explore details to think about.</td>
<td>Large group discussion</td>
<td>10 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Web Development Tools</strong></td>
<td>Define options for web site development</td>
<td>Considerations for learning web development software and other tools, hiring someone to develop site</td>
<td>Lecture</td>
<td>20 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Activity:</strong></td>
<td>Explore html building</td>
<td>Hands-on tutorial. Try the Word tutorial together</td>
<td>Hands-on skill practice</td>
<td>30 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Finding the Right Online Home</strong></td>
<td>Evaluate options for servers</td>
<td>Options for servers set up yourself or us a hosting company</td>
<td>Lecture</td>
<td>10 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Testing Your Web Site</strong></td>
<td>Outline steps to test web site</td>
<td>Importance of testing web site</td>
<td>Lecture</td>
<td>10 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Homework Assignment</strong></td>
<td>Review topics covered in class, Learn from others with experience, continue to refine web site plan</td>
<td>Interview a small business owner who has an E-Business web site. Ask about their site, how it was created, and for any advice for you and your web site. Then work on your web site flowchart and plan.</td>
<td>Question and answer session</td>
<td>10 minutes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Assessment plan:** Q and A

**Instructional resources and equipment needed:**

- **For Instructor:**
  - Computer with Internet connection
  - Overhead Projection

- **For Participants:**
  - Computer with Internet connection
  - Workbook

**Room Arrangement Needed:**

- Computer lab with Internet connection.

**Transfer of Learning Plan:** Specific options for web development, steps for testing site. Application workbook, room for note taking, record progress.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content Heading</th>
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<th>Key Points to Emphasize</th>
<th>Instructional Techniques</th>
<th>Estimated Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Promoting Your E-Business</td>
<td>Plan E-Business promotion strategies</td>
<td>Marketing business and strategies to promote web site</td>
<td>Large Group Discussion</td>
<td>30 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Costs! Develop a Budget Activity:</td>
<td>Develop a web site development budget</td>
<td>Discuss costs involved for creating a web site and costs for hiring someone to do it.</td>
<td>Large Group Discussion</td>
<td>30 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Practice preparing their web site for development</td>
<td>Small group activity to develop a list of needs/questions for web site development</td>
<td>Scenario Small group</td>
<td>30 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Next Steps</td>
<td>Devise a checklist to get started</td>
<td>Review everything; complete checklist started in activity.</td>
<td>Discussion Q and A</td>
<td>30 minutes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Assessment plan:** Completed checklist; Q and A

**Instructional resources and equipment needed:**
- **For Instructor:**
  - Computer with Internet connection
  - Overhead Projection
- **For Participants:**
  - Computer with Internet connection
  - Workbook

**Room Arrangement Needed:**
- Computer lab with Internet connection.

**Transfer of Learning Plan:** All objectives met will prepare participants to be ready to get their web sites developed. Application workbook, room for note taking, record progress