



The Seven Deadly Sins of Web Development

Websites are wonderful things. They work 24/7 without complaint. They never have to be paid benefits. And they have the potential – the potential – to reach billions of customers. So why are so many websites complete failures? Because the developers made the following false assumptions. We call them the seven deadly sins of web development.

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1) **“If I build it, they will come.”**

The truth is many sites couldn't be found with a search warrant. Read on to discover the problem – and the solution.

2) **Design is more important than content.**

On the web, content is king for two reasons: first search engines are designed to look for keywords, not images; secondly, visitors are looking for information, not fancy graphics. The challenge is to have content that is both visitor friendly and search-engine friendly. Get this wrong and your site will end up in a cold, dark corner of cyberspace that even your mother won't visit.

3) **Web designers are trained in graphic design.**

We are amazed by the number of websites that are virtually unreadable. The problem is that many web designers lack training in graphic design – and hence are not even aware of design basics, such as how to make the right choices in terms of font size, line spacing and column widths.

4) **Web designers are expert marketers.**

Very few web developers have any marketing training. That's worth repeating.

Very few web developers have any marketing training, let alone any internet marketing experience. As a result, their work is limited to converting print advertising into web pages, known in the trade as “brochureware.”

5) **Build it and forget it.**

While it is quick and easy to update or add web pages, many companies go months – or even years – without making any changes or updates. Naturally, visitors note these failings and never visit again.

6) **Web visitors are infinitely patient.**

Actually, just the opposite is the truth. Web visitors have no tolerance for the most common website mistakes: home pages that take too long to download, misleading and/or confusing content, forms that don't work, links that go nowhere, menu systems with dead ends.

7) **Company information is most important to the visitor.**

Wrong, wrong, wrong. If you check the web traffic stats of effective sites, you will see that company info, typically found on the About Us page, is not even in the top 10. Visitors care about the benefits they could derive by buying your product or service,

so make it quick and easy to find that information and never forget to ask for the sale.

If you are still not convinced, here is one more dose of reality. The Internet is not a static thing. It is a living, changing thing. Even the experts have to work hard to keep up with the changes. They know why you can have a great ranking one month – and a not so great ranking the next month. And they know the basics, such as how to:

- set up a site for both high-speed and dial-up users;
- build a simple, easy-to-follow navigation system;
- build attractive pages without indulging in elaborate FLASH designs that are a waste of time and money.

So what should you do before building a website? Take care developing your content. Make it visitor focused and search-engine friendly. Next, look for a provider that has the mix of skills required to build a site that draws traffic and generates sales. That means you need a provider who understands not only how to build a web page, but also – at a minimum – the basics of graphic design, marketing and copywriting. It's a sin to settle for anything less. **MB**