Website Design
CHECKLIST

Before Project Begins

- [ ] Purchase domain
- [ ] Choose host provider
- [ ] Set all above=auto-renew
- [ ] Check logins; working?
- [ ] Research target audience
- [ ] Set website goals
- [ ] Research likes/dislikes

Month 1-2

- [ ] Share logins
- [ ] Pay initial invoice
- [ ] Finalize site menu
- [ ] Finalize target audience
- [ ] Finalize website goals
- [ ] Organize website content
- [ ] Share design likes/dislikes

Month 2-3

- [ ] Homepage review #1
- [ ] Share feedback #1
- [ ] Homepage review #2
- [ ] Share feedback #2
- [ ] Secondary page design
- [ ] Final feedback
- [ ] Finalize content

Month 3-5

- [ ] Finalize design/launch
- [ ] Google Analytics set up
- [ ] Site submitted to Google
- [ ] Set site maintenance
- [ ] Goals set in Analytics
- [ ] Consider SEO work
- [ ] Consider social media

Project
NOTES

Creating your website likes/dislikes

Create a list of 3-4 websites that you like *and* dislike. They do not need to be related to your business. Note exactly what you like/dislike about them. The website isn't necessarily about you, but about your audience. However, sharing what **you** like and dislike is key so the design team considers that when tailoring the design for your audience. This creates a perfect blend.

- How you would imagine specific features working on your website?
- What don't you want your website to do?
- How will the design features or functionality support your website goals?

Understanding design revisions

Over-communicate with your design team, especially before the design begins and through the feedback process. Try to get the most detailed feedback to your team in the first round, that way the second round and any final edits will be a breeze.

- Design revisions are not intended for fixing typos and editing content. This is more efficient when done after the design is finalized, before launch.
- Are you more comfortable sending feedback via email or live? Express this before the project begins.
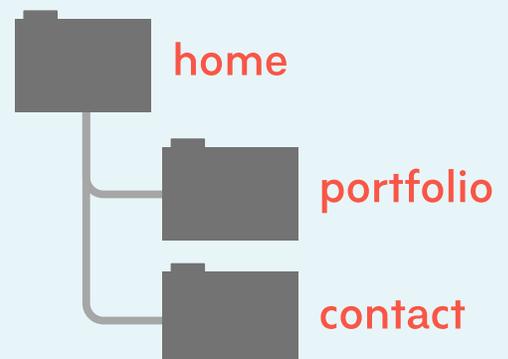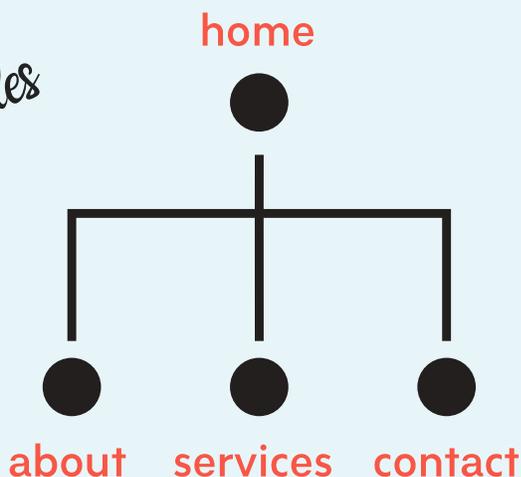
Project
NOTES

Understanding (physical) sitemaps

Your sitemap will typically be in the form of a flowchart. This helps everyone understand the high-level structure of the website as clearly as possible. They may be manually created or generated using existing website content.
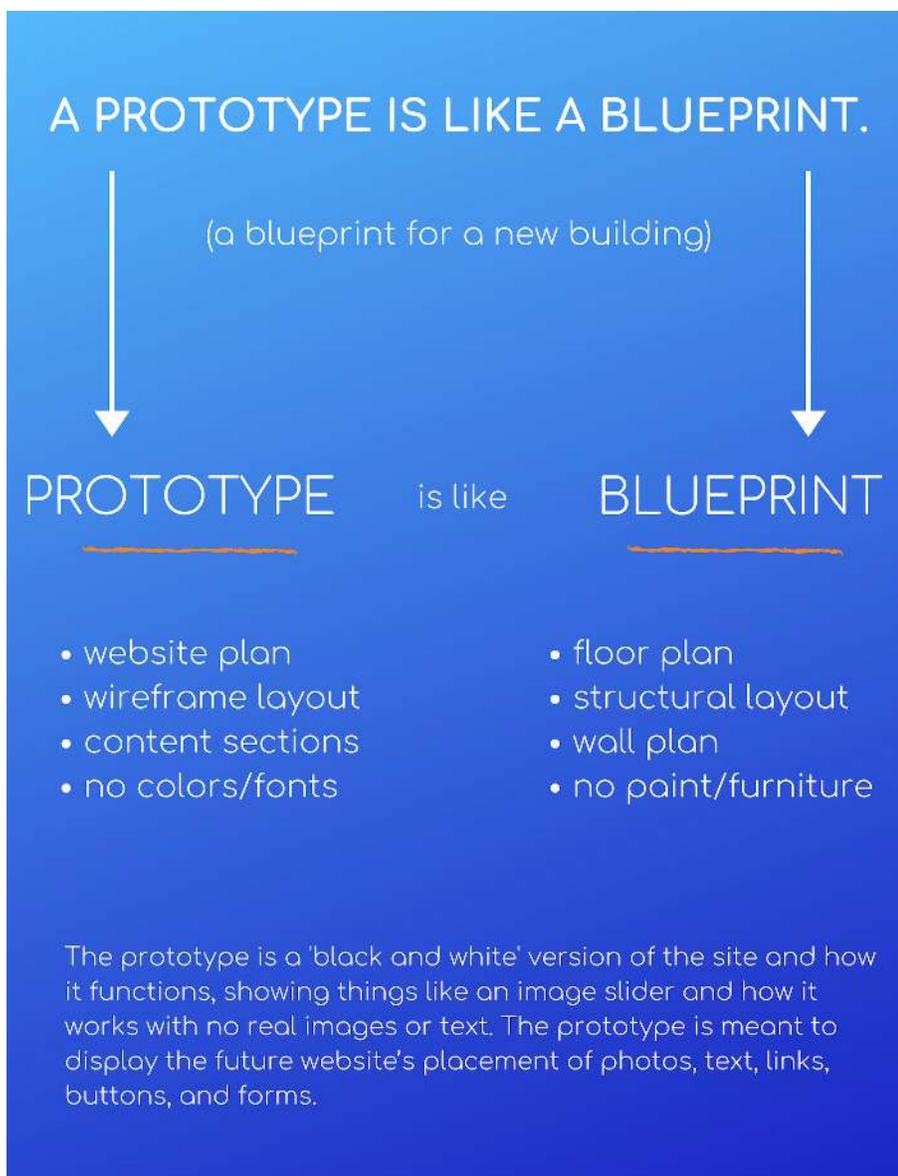
- Your most important web pages live here. If you have more than 5-6 main navigation items, consider removing content that doesn't need to be seen right away by your audience.
- Typically the main navigation should include: Home, about, services, resources/blog, testimonials, and contact.
- Other navigational item, such as links that live in the footer (the bottom) of your website, could include: Policies, contact, sitemap (auto-generated), faq, and social media.

Examples

home

about   **services**   **contact**

home

portfolio

contact

Understanding prototypes

A PROTOTYPE IS LIKE A BLUEPRINT.

(a blueprint for a new building)

PROTOTYPE   is like   BLUEPRINT

- website plan
- wireframe layout
- content sections
- no colors/fonts

- floor plan
- structural layout
- wall plan
- no paint/furniture

The prototype is a 'black and white' version of the site and how it functions, showing things like an image slider and how it works with no real images or text. The prototype is meant to display the future website's placement of photos, text, links, buttons, and forms.

Prototypes simply show how websites actually function.

Think of it as a "shell" or "blueprint". When we create websites for example, we show a prototype for an approval before working on the final website design. Once we have finished the prototype and it is ready for review, one very important thing to remember is that **the prototype is NOT the design.**

Project
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Understanding the importance of maintenance

Running a website sans regular maintenance is not just a bad idea; it is a terrible oversight altogether. **The internet is not a safe place.**

The web is the Wild West of malware. Because of this, it's vital to keep your site updated with the latest security patches and bug fixes. One of the most common ways hackers get in is by exploiting outdated web software. And if Google suspects your site might be infecting visitors with malware, it's buh-bye to your listing until you get it fixed.

RESOURCES FOR THAT OH S#!? MOMENT

Security protocols

Troubleshooting traffic drops

Secure passwords

Your website should be maintained on a monthly basis.

Similar to your computer or smartphone, it should be kept up to date with the latest security/plugin updates, to keep it secure and running smoothly.

Project
RESOURCES

SETUP

Sitemap v prototype v mockup

Why you need a staging site

Finding a hosting service

WordPress (WP) v GoDaddy

WP v Wix/Squarespace/Weebly

DESIGN

Your color palette

Design inspiration

Designing for your goals

Design/redesign questionnaire

Finding a design partner

Understanding bad design

Brand identity

Newbie design mistakes

Building online trust

EXAMPLES

Web design process

Web development schedule

Design portfolio

CONTENT

Website content questionnaire

Creating buyer personas

Where to start: social media

Where to start: SEO

Why consistency is goals

Storytelling 101

Video marketing

MAINTENANCE

Taking care of your website

Why version control matters

MAKING IT HAPPEN

The bucket system

Hiring a team

Delegating

Productivity self-hacks

Get your mind ready

SMB marketing: 5 steps

smackhappydesign.com