Planning Your Website: Strategy

In order to make sure your website is as effective as possible for you and for your audience, you need first to work out what you want it to do. You can complete the sheet below to help you decide where best to focus your attention.

Defining Your Audience:

Think of up to six possible/likely potential audiences for your website:

Of the above, which one or two audiences do you most want your site to speak to?

Take some time to think about the characteristics of your stated core audience. You could start by asking yourself questions like:

- Are they regular web-users?

- Will they be accessing the site on a mobile device?

- With whom do they socialise?

- What do they value most highly?

- What is likely to annoy them?

- When are they most likely to be visiting your site?

- Are they social media users?

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Understanding Purpose:

What are your key reasons for setting up the site?

What are the main six things you want the site to do?

Thinking about your audience as defined above, what do you think will be the main six things they will want the site to do?

Thinking about your audience as well as your intended purposes, is there anything that it would be particularly important to avoid on your site?

Having defined your audience to one or two key groups, you can then start thinking clearly about how best to target your site content and structure towards those specific people. Trying to develop an understanding of what they want from your website (rather than just what you think your website ought to do) will help you to make a website which is both popular and effective. There's an easy way to discover what your potential audience want from your site: ask them! You could set up a couple of focus groups of people who might fit your audience type, and spend some time with them discussing how they might use a website such as yours. This kind of research can be even more useful if you have some examples of equivalent sites for them to look at. And remember the maxim 'release early; revise often'. Launching your site is just the beginning: then you can begin to gather data (from direct feedback as well as your site's statistics) to give you the information you need to revisit your site's content in order to align it as closely as possible with your audience's needs.

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