

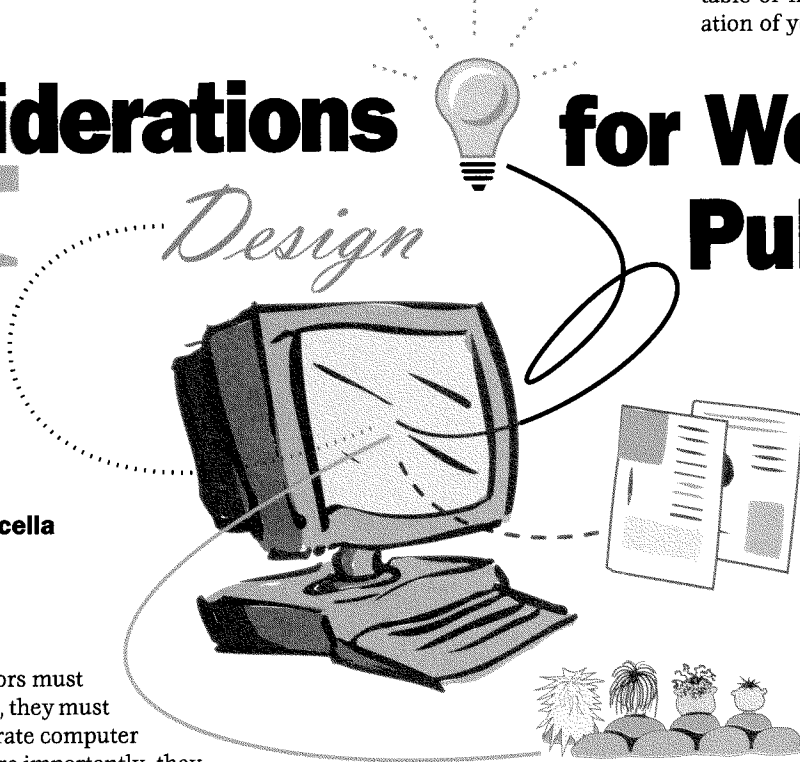
PUBLISHING a website is useful for every educator in every discipline (Hill, 1996). Unfortunately, developing a website requires more effort than just typing in a few simple keyboard com-

this important question: Who is the audience for this website (Burger, 1993; Hofstetter, 1995)? For instance, is its purpose to discuss technology education issues for an audience of technology educators? Or does your audience consist of business persons, of politicians, of parents?

your ideas (Hofstetter, 1995). Thumbnailing the storyboard allows you to quickly lay out the site's basic design without forgetting ideas that could otherwise vanish when creating the site on computer. When you have met this objective, tape the storyboard to a wall or lie it out on a table or floor. This helps during the creation of your website's direction.

4 Considerations for Website Publishing

Design



By Joseph A. Scarella

mands. Website authors must also have an objective, they must know how to incorporate computer technologies, and more importantly, they must know how to deliver a message.

To help educators understand more clearly the issues of website publishing, I have developed four simple considerations for developing websites. I hope this article sheds light on the subject and offers alternative suggestions for those seeking to develop and publish a website for educational purposes.

Step 1: Design basics and conception execution. How should you approach the task of publishing a website? Well, publishing a website is much like authoring an article. Most website authors start by establishing a theme. This theme should carry throughout the entire website just as an article's theme carries throughout its entirety (Burger, 1993). Therefore, you should first determine the aim of your website and clearly understand that it will make a statement.

After creating a theme, ask yourself

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Step 2. Product visualization questions. To help you establish a purpose, here are four tasks to assist your visualization of the final product.

1. Identify the problem, need, or issue that the website will address.
2. Research the subject on the internet and via related literature in order to discover what has already been reported on it.
3. Generate ideas for solving the problem or need, or addressing the issue, by choosing the appropriate way to present information (e.g., text, graphics, photos, video, etc.).
4. Ask your colleagues for feedback on your website idea. Then make the appropriate alterations. A website should constantly evolve due to information and techniques added, changed, and communicated (Wiggins, 1995).

Step 3. Integrating ideas. Before doing any computer work, create a storyboard with thumbnail sketches (Burger, 1995). A storyboard to display and express ideas will allow you to better visualize your work's organization. When developing the storyboard, gather photographs, images, sound, and video, and compose the text you will use to solidify

***Neither as difficult
nor as easy as it
looks, website
publishing can offer
great satisfaction
and be of great
service if done right!***

Step 4. Characteristics of design. As with any other media presentation, the various pages of your website should have a consistent appearance, creating a feeling of proportion, rhythm, balance, and unity (Burger, 1993; Johnson, 1992). Also your website should be original. Your goal, however, is not to show the sophistication of your work but to clearly and effectively communicate ideas. It is more important to motivate action, explain particulars, and establish a presence with an audience in need of specific information than it is to simply publish a website for the sake of publishing (Burger, 1993). For now, consider the following points when integrating characteristics of design.

1. Time and budget. As with any endeavor, you should consider cost and time associated with publishing a website. It takes plenty of time to plan and design a site. Be sure you have enough time and stamina to complete the task (Burger, 1993).

2. Keep it simple. A website should be interesting without overwhelming the viewer. Ask yourself these questions: What image do I want my website to convey? Is my goal to encourage visitors to use the site as a resource center or purely for recreation? Always keep in mind user

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friendliness. This is an important aspect of good website design. Websites should not take long to load on a browser—visitors are unwilling to wait. Therefore, the size and number of images must be used sparingly.

3. Know software limitations. Before you begin designing your website, and to reduce technical constraints, be technically proficient with the software you will use. I recommend that those with limited computer programming skills try to find a software program that has authoring capabilities with graphic user interface (GUI—an icon-driven program much like *Microsoft Office*) and is comfortable to use. As you well know, learning new software is laborious.

4. Keep the site updated. Once you finish creating your website, keep it updated. It does not take long for visitors to view the entire contents of a site before losing interest. If you keep your website updated, you will keep visitors returning.

The internet is now an integral part of our society. Still in embryonic stages of development, it is an educational opportunity luring many. Who would have thought that the internet would prove to be so attractive to so many people? Every

aspect of business, industry, and education is captivated by its market potential for teaching. Anyone can access a wealth of information with relatively inexpensive technology because the internet extends everyone's horizons.

Similar to many hobbies, making a website does generate feelings of accomplishment. Understand, however, that designing a website can be a challenge. If your first few attempts to design a website fail miserably, keep tinkering. All anyone needs to succeed at website authoring is a desire to learn and the imagination to explore. Not surprisingly, the internet and number of websites are expanding daily. Keep exploring website authoring options and consider referencing some of the many outstanding publications readily available. Most of all, simply have fun! **TD**

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