

The Keyword Matrix

Volume I

Master Of Your Domain

*A South African Business Owner's Guide To
Web Sites, Web Hosting and The Internet*

by

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What Is The Purpose Of This Book?

If you are a business owner, you probably already know that you need a website in order to promote your business on the Internet. There are two approaches you can take:

1. Learn how to do it yourself. This is time consuming and takes away from your core focus, which should be on serving your customers.
2. Have someone else do it for you. You can have an employee do it, get a family member to do it or get a website specialist to do it.

The purpose of this book is to give you a solid grounding so that you can decide whether or not you want to learn how to do it yourself, and enough knowledge of the basics so that you can talk to a website expert and understand what they're saying.

Many people get confused by the technical language. Unfortunately, it is a technical subject, and there are a few key terms you need to know. There's a glossary at the end of the manual, but here are a few terms you should be familiar with before you plunge in:

Bandwidth - the amount of data transferred through your hosting account in a month.

Control Panel - a web based interface for management of websites, email accounts, statistics etc.

Domain Name - the name used for an organization, computer or address on the Internet.

Domain Name Registrar - a company which is authorised to register domain names.

Keyword - a word or a phrase used to find useful results in Internet searches.

URL - Uniform Resource Locator. A unique identifier for a web page.

Web Hosting Service - web host, hosting company. An organization which provides space on a server and Internet access for customers who want to set up websites.

Web Server - a computer which "serves up" web pages when they are requested.

What Is Web Hosting?

The Internet is simply a vast network of computers, mostly connected together through Internet Service Providers (ISPs).

Every website on the Internet is stored on a computer somewhere. Computers which are specially designed for storing and “serving up” websites are called **web servers**. Although most computers these days (even your laptop!) are able to run web server software, there are some special requirements for web servers in a professional or commercial environment.

Firstly, they need to be able to cope with the number of visitors the website gets. Your personal website probably doesn't need as much in the way of resources as, for example, the CNN website. Facebook, with over 500 million users, apparently has over 60,000 servers. You can see some of them in the picture below.



One of Facebook's server farms

Because of these exacting requirements, it's unusual for a small business to run its own web server. Consequently, there are many specialist web hosting companies who provide web hosting services, at a price, to anyone who needs them.

There are different kinds of web hosting services, which are aimed at meeting the needs of different clients. Some of the important factors are:

Disk space - you are basically renting hard drive space on a server. The more disk space you need, the more you will pay.

Bandwidth - more accurately, monthly data transfer. This is the amount of data that can be downloaded from (and uploaded to) your hosting account every month. Every web page and every picture your visitors open in their web browsers uses some of the bandwidth you're paying for. Most hosting companies will charge you more if your monthly bandwidth usage exceeds the predefined limit for your account.

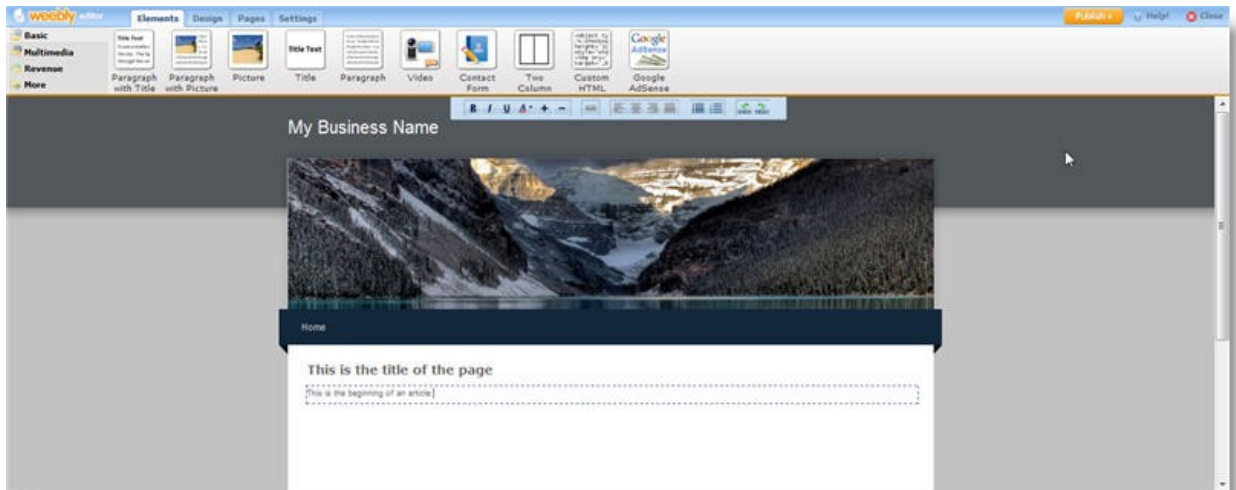
Shared hosting vs dedicated hosting - The cheapest web hosting is *shared hosting*. This means that more than one user has access to the server, sharing the disk space and the processor. If you need it, and you're willing to pay for it, you can rent a *dedicated server*, which will be exclusively used for your website.

Free Hosting vs Paid Hosting

I said that shared hosting was the cheapest. In fact, you can get web hosting for free. It may already be part of the package you have with your ISP. There are also dozens of hosting companies which will let you host a website at no charge.

In addition, there are numerous online services which allow you to create a website or blog using your web browser for free. Some of the most popular services are Blogger.com, Weebly.com and Yola.com. These services offer tools which make it quick and easy to set up a website.

Just to make it clear - free **hosting services** allow you [control panel access](#) to the files which make up your website - they may provide online site building tools as well. Free **website services** don't generally give you access to the website files; you create a site using online tools.



Weebly.com site editor

Of course, there's no such thing as a free lunch. The website you get from your ISP or from a free service may have their name as part of the **URL** (eg. <http://home.mweb.co.za/pi/pianofis/>)

Most of the free website services allow you to link your own domain name to your free site; some of them charge extra for this facility.

Many free hosting services make their money through advertising, which means that they may display adverts on your website.

These kinds of services are useful for learning how it all works, and for creating [feeder sites](#), but the support is limited.

Why Should You Pay For Hosting?

Reliability. If you are using a free hosting account, you have no recourse if your website is offline for a few hours a week (except by moving your site to another service provider.)

Support. There is no incentive for a free account provider to provide expensive human support. With a paid account, you can usually get a response to a help desk support request within an hour or so. Paid hosting providers will also usually provide support by phone and by means of online chat.

Control. With a free account, your hosting provider will have no qualms about closing your account in a heartbeat if there are any problems - spam complaints, over-usage of resources etc. If you are paying for the account, they will usually give you a chance to sort out the problem and not simply shut you down.

Appearance. If you are running a business, you do not want other people's ads appearing on your website. You also don't want a domain name which shouts out "too cheap to pay for hosting!"

Where Should Your Hosting Company Be Located?

Technology knows very few boundaries. When you phone a local business, you could be talking to someone in a call centre in another part of the country, or in another country altogether. The same is true of web hosting. The computer which stores the files which make up your website might be in another city, or half-way around the world.

Web hosting in South Africa tends to be expensive. The hosting companies say that it's because of the cost of hardware and Internet access. It might also be because of the relatively small market in South Africa.

It's quite possible to sign up for a hosting account with a US-based company, which will usually get you at least 5 times as much bandwidth and storage space as you would get for the same price from a local hosting company.

The disadvantages of international hosting are these:

1. International hosting is marginally slower (in South Africa).
2. If there is a problem with one of the two undersea cables which connect South Africa to the global Internet, it might affect your customers' ability to connect to your website. Fortunately there are more cables on the way, so it won't be long before this concern disappears.
3. It is possible that the search engines may give precedence to websites which are hosted in the country where the site is registered; ie. South Africa for .co.za domain names. Personally, I haven't noticed any difference.

If you are looking for visitors only from South Africa, a local server may be best. If you want to attract visitors from anywhere in the world, a US-based hosting account will probably be more appropriate.

What Hosting Package Do I Need?

Web hosting packages vary between hosting providers. They are generally based on the amount of disk space and bandwidth provided. The smallest possible website doesn't need much disk space - 1MB might be enough for a few pages with very few pictures. If you want to use a content management system like WordPress, you shouldn't settle for less than 50MB, and 100MB would be safer.

You should always be able to upgrade to a package with more resources.

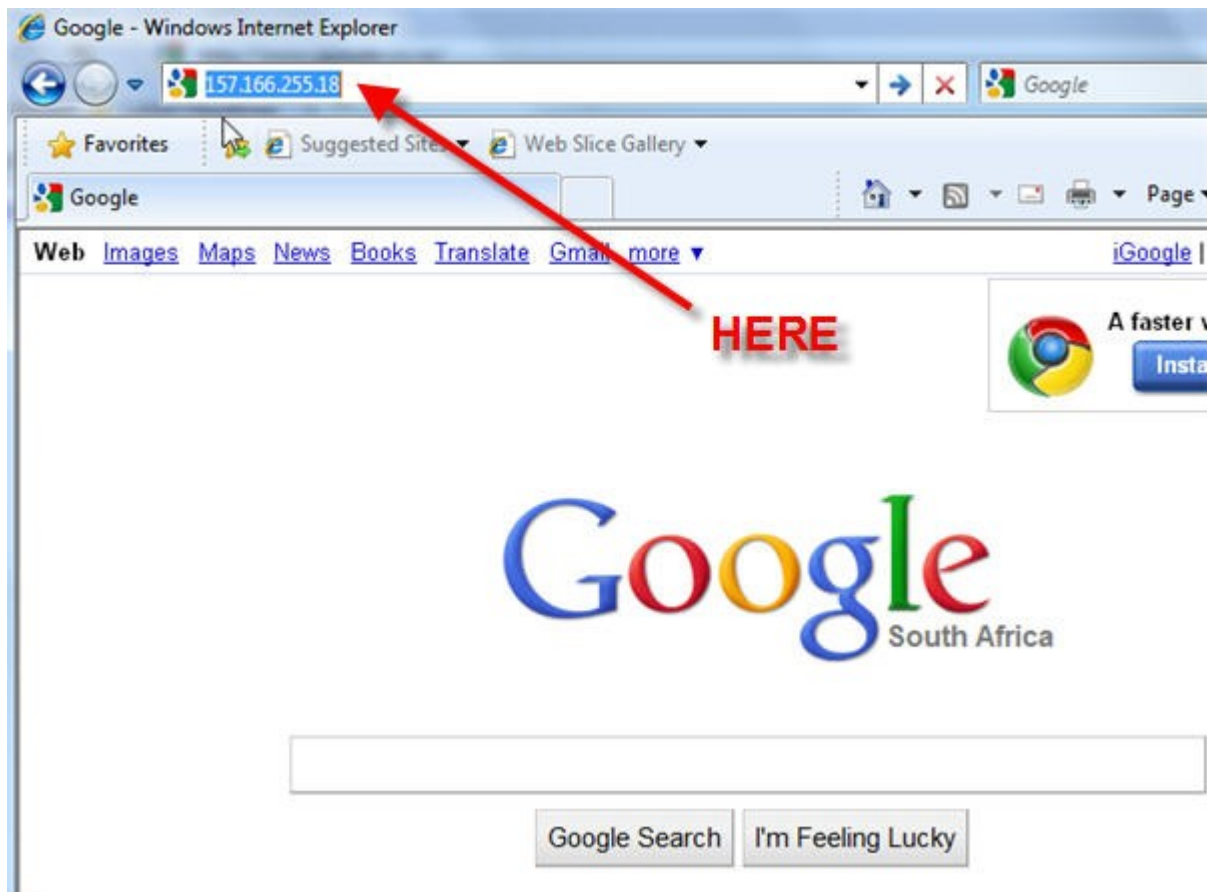
Some hosting accounts let you use more than one domain name. I would always recommend that you allow for the possibility that you may want to create additional websites within your hosting account.

What Is A Domain Name?

A domain name is an easy way for humans to connect to a website. Computers deal with *IP Addresses* which are rather like phone numbers. Each computer on the Internet (or network of computers) has an IP Address, which looks kind of like this: 157.166.255.18.

Humans are not great at remembering numbers like this, so the *Domain Name System (DNS)* was developed to make it easier for us. After all, that's what computers are for! *DNS* acts like a phone book, translating the domain names we type in into the numbers that the computer understands.

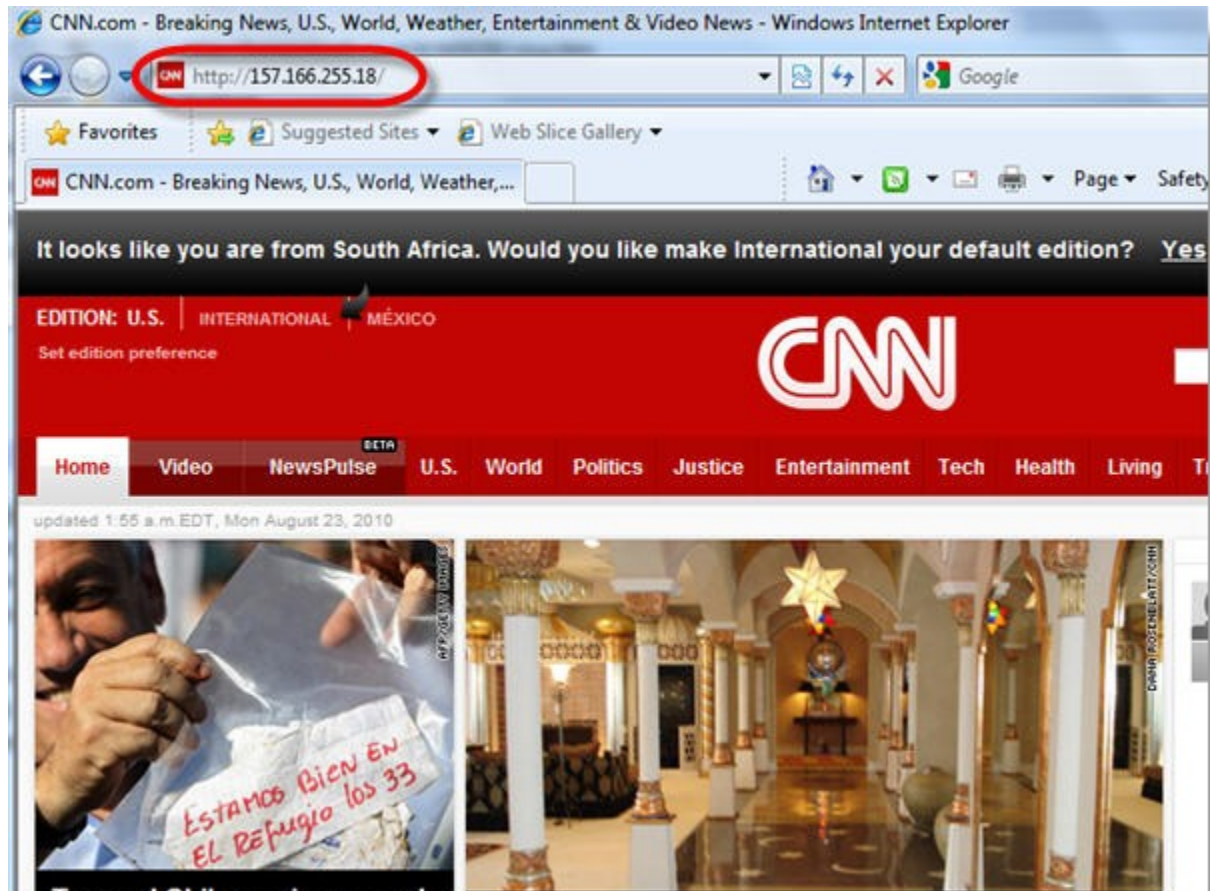
To see how this works, try typing (or copying and pasting) the IP address above into the *address bar* of your web browser:



The Address Bar

Two things should happen when you press Enter:

1. The browser should convert the URL to this: <http://157.166.255.18/>
2. The browser should open the CNN home page:



The CNN Home Page

Normally, one would type in “cnn.com,” and the browser and the Domain Name System would automatically translate the domain name into the IP address of the website.

Each of the pages linked to by the CNN Home Page shares the “cnn.com” domain name, but has its own unique URL:

<http://edition.cnn.com/video/>

<http://edition.cnn.com/BUSINESS/>

<http://edition.cnn.com/AFRICA/>

and so on.

How To Register A Domain Name

A non-profit organization called [ICANN](#) manages the assignment of domain names and IP addresses, through an international network of accredited Domain Name Registrars. The cost of registering a domain name depends on the individual registrar, but is usually between \$8.00 and \$35.00 a year.

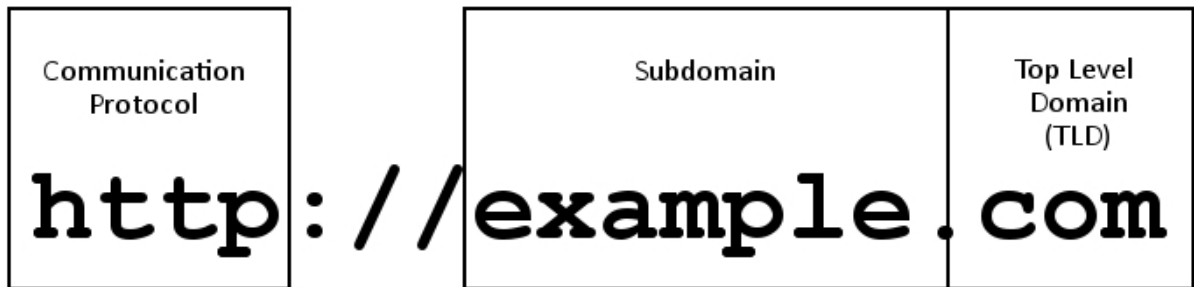
For registering .com, .org and .net domains, I recommend [Namecheap.com](#) or [Moniker.com](#).

The [.ZA Domain Name Authority \(.ZADNA\)](#) is responsible for managing the .ZA namespace, which includes the .org.za, .co.za and .nom.za *subdomains*. Each of the subdomains has its own registrar. The most commonly used subdomain, .co.za, is registered through [Uniforum](#).

You can register a .co.za domain name directly through [Uniforum](#), at a cost of R50.00 a year. Many Internet Service Providers and hosting providers will do it for you, adding a small charge for the service.

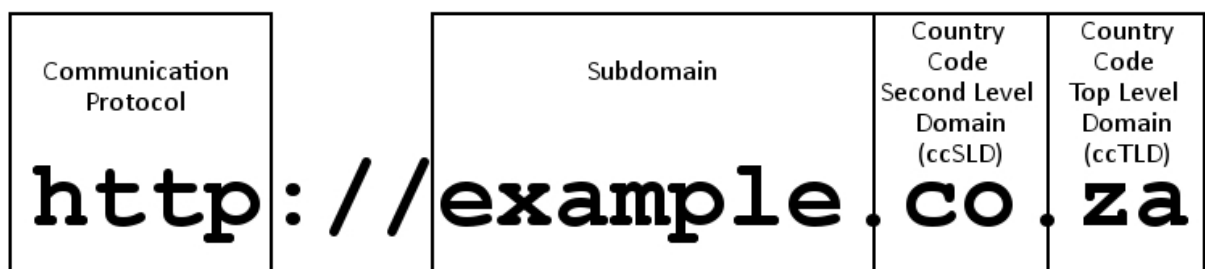
What Is A Subdomain?

The Domain Name System uses a tree structure. At the highest level, you have Top Level Domains (TLD's) such as **.com**, **.org** and **.net**. Every domain name below this level, eg. **example.com**, is a subdomain.



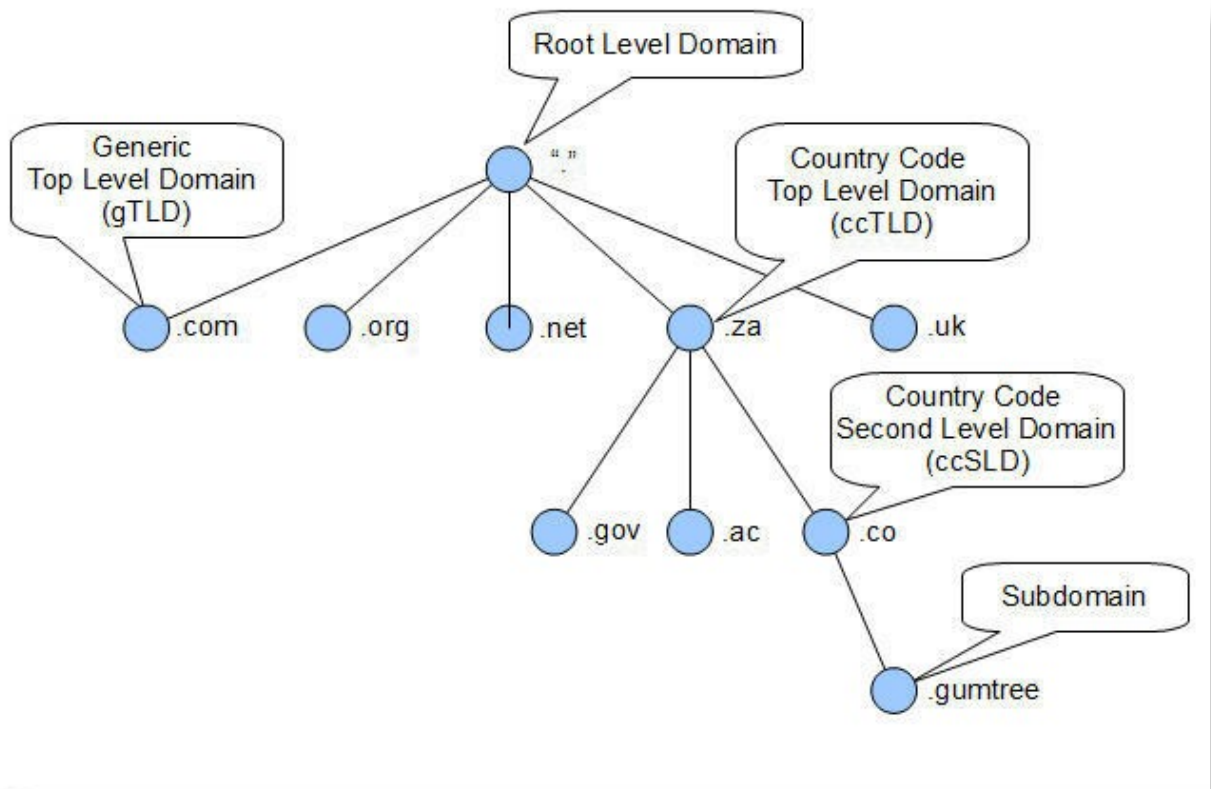
The *communication protocol*, **http**: in the example above, is the type of content. Http stands for HyperText Transfer Protocol and is commonly used for web pages. Other common protocols used on the Internet include **mail**: (used for email) and **ftp**: (*File Transfer Protocol*.)

Subdomain names can be up to 63 characters in length, depending on the registrar - for example, **.co.za** domain names can be a maximum of 30 characters. With a **.co.za** domain name, **.za** is the *Country Code Top Level Domain*; **.co** is a *Country Code Second Level Domain*. Any domain name ending in **.co.za** is thus a subdomain of the **.co** second level domain.



Other second level domains used in South Africa are:

- .ac.za** - Academic institutions
- .gov.za** - Government
- .nom.za** - Free domains for personal use only
- .org.za** - non-commercial organizations



Gumtree.co.za Domain Hierarchy

Choosing Your Domain Name

When you decide to build a website (or to have one built for you) you will need to choose a domain name. Here are some tips:

- If you are looking for visitors from South Africa, a .co.za domain name is usually best.
- Using keywords in your domain name is an effective way to get the search engines to rank your website highly.
- The shorter the better - on the whole, short domain names are easier to remember and type than long ones. Don't forget that the domain name is supposed to make things easier for human beings, though. For example, if your business is *Roy's Financial Product Solutions*, you would be better off registering *RoysFinancialProductSolutions.co.za* rather than *rfps.co.za*, which is harder to remember and doesn't contain keywords. Be careful of ambiguity - the owners of www.expertsexchange.com found that inserting a hyphen (www.experts-exchange.com) made a big difference to the kind of visitors they attracted.
- If you are setting up a *brochure website*, you will usually want your company name to be part of your domain name - if you can include your keywords, so much the better.

We'll take a more detailed look at [keywords](#) in volume 2 of this course.

What Is The Purpose of A Website?

Many small business owners have websites created without really being clear about the purpose of the site.

Here are some reasons for having a website:

1. **Education.** A website is a useful tool for teaching your customers what you do and about the products and services you offer.
2. **Company branding and image.** A website is one of the most effective ways to put your best foot forward - to show your company in a good light.
3. **Positioning.** A website allows you to position your company and your team as experts or *thought leaders* in your industry.
4. **Generating sales and leads.** A website can help you to sell your product or service by answering questions, finding out what customers are looking for and allowing you to follow up with prospects.
5. **Relationships.** Building a lasting relationship with your customers and future customers is a guarantee of future success.

A well-designed website can perform more than one of these functions. However, the way you would use a website to, for instance, generate leads is quite different from the way you would use a site to engage with existing customers.

There are some things a website cannot do. One is to replace **personal attention and direct interaction** with a customer. Another is to take the place of an **effective marketing strategy**. And a website will not immediately **start receiving visitors** without a determined promotional effort.

Here are some questions you should ask:

Is the website intended for prospective customers or existing customers?

Do you plan to sell products or services through the website?

Is the website part of an overall sales and marketing strategy, or is it the entire sales and marketing strategy?

What Types Of Websites Are There?

One way to classify websites is by the technology they use. Another way is by the function of the website. We'll have a quick look at the two main types of website technology you should know about, before looking at some of the functions websites can perform.

Dynamic vs Static

There are two basic types of website technology - static and dynamic.

A **static website** delivers pre-defined static information to the visitor. The files on the server are sent directly to the visitor's web browser.

A **dynamic website** uses a programming language to automatically create web pages 'on-the-fly' - in other words, in response to a visitor's request. The site may use a database, and the program (or **script**) may deliver different content to each visitor depending on factors such as whether or not they have visited the site before, what country they're from and so on.

Dynamic sites, while more technically complex, are easier to build, maintain, update and expand. The software used to create dynamic sites usually allows non-technical people to create and edit web pages easily.

There are some kinds of website which couldn't work at all if it wasn't for programming languages like PHP and ASP.

You may come across the term **Content Management System** (or **CMS**.) This is the term used for the software on a web server which manages dynamic websites. The most popular open source CMS programs are:

[WordPress](#)

[Joomla](#)

[Drupal](#)

but there are many more, some of which are optimized for particular kinds of website. For instance, [Moodle](#) is a CMS which is aimed specifically at educators.

There is a degree of tribalism among web developers, most of whom prefer one CMS over the others. If you are going to be doing it yourself, I would recommend that you start with WordPress. While not as flexible or as powerful as Joomla or Drupal, WordPress is considerably easier to install and use. This undoubtedly accounts for its popularity - it is currently the [most popular CMS in the world](#).

Website Functions

Here are some of the functions websites can perform.

E-Commerce - e.g. Amazon.com, Kalahari.net

Service provision - e.g. Google.com

Portal site - e.g. Yahoo.com, 24.com

Brochure site - e.g. IBM.com

Membership or subscription site is a site which provides access as long as you pay a monthly subscription eg. [Bill Myers Online](http://BillMyersOnline.com)

Forum - a place where visitors can connect and discuss a topic of common interest e.g. [MyBroadband Forum](http://MyBroadbandForum.com)

Lead capture site - a single-page site which is designed to get visitors to opt in to a mailing list, eg. [Internet Lifestyle Retirement System](http://InternetLifestyleRetirementSystem.com)

Sales page (for a single product) eg. [Upside Down SEO](http://UpsideDownSEO.com)

Social networking site - e.g. Facebook.com, Ning.com

Personal website - most personal sites these days are blogs

Blog - a site where one or more authors contribute regular articles

Hybrid i.e. a combination of any of the above

What is a Blog?

The technology that drives the Internet has made it possible for ordinary people to publish their thoughts and ideas easily and at virtually no cost, and one of the ways to do this is by **blogging**.

A **blog** is simply an online journal or diary. A **blogger** generally publishes articles (**posts**) on a regular (or not-so-regular) schedule. Readers are usually able to **comment** on blog posts, which allows interaction to take place between the blogger and the readers.

Blogs can be about practically any topic. For example, here are some of the categories used by the SA Blog Awards:

- Entertainment
- Media and Marketing
- Food and Wine
- Science and Technology
- Politics
- Fashion
- Design
- Business
- Travel

Some of the most popular blogs reach millions of readers every day. Here are the top 5 blogs according to Technorati.com:

[The Huffington Post](#)

[TechCrunch](#)

[Mashable](#)

[Gizmodo](#)

[Gawker](#)

Corporate blogging has become a useful way for business owners to build brand awareness and connect directly with their customers. Here are some popular corporate blogs:

[The Official Google Blog](#)

[The Official Nokia Blog](#)

[Technology@Intel](#)

[Douglas Green Wines](#)

Do You Need A Corporate Blog?

It's been said that websites with a corporate blog receive around 55% more traffic than websites without a blog.

The most successful corporate blogs are those where a dialogue is started between the business and its customers. Your blog should listen as well as speak.

Many companies are terrified of this - some go to the extent of blocking comments on their blog, which makes for a rather one-sided conversation.

What you should be doing is encouraging your readers to comment and provide constructive criticism. One of the most powerful ways to engender trust is by showing people how you deal with problems - not by pretending they don't exist, but by engaging and working out solutions.

Where Should Your Blog be Hosted?

There are two ways to start a blog. Firstly, you can create a free account at one of the many blogging sites:

[Blogger.com](#) (very popular; owned by Google)

[WordPress.com](#) (also very popular)

[Blogs.com](#)

or in South Africa:

[Blat.co.za](#)

[BunduBlog.com](#)

[iBlog.co.za](#)

[Bloglines.co.za](#)

Many of the free blogging sites, including WordPress.com (but excluding Blogger.com), use the WordPress software.

The other way to start a blog is by setting it up on a website you control. This means that you will need a hosting account and a domain name, which you may already have. Your blog could be the first thing people see when they go to your website, or it

could be placed in a subdirectory or a subdomain (eg. <http://example.com/blog> or <http://blog.example.com> .)

What's the difference between a blog and a post?

A blog is a frequently updated website (or portion of a website); a post is an individual article within that blog. You can say "I blogged about that last week" but never "I posted a blog about that."

What Should I Write About?

It's possible that your business is so boring that no-one would be interested in reading about it. But it's unlikely.

So how do you write about something that most people find unexciting?

You can start by seeing what other people are doing. For instance, if you're an accountant or a plumber, just go to Google and type in "accountant blog" or "plumber blog."

Here are a couple I found:

Accounting blogs

[Real Value Accounting](#) - Exactly what you'd expect an accounting blog to be

[Jr Deputy Accountant](#) - A lot less boring than you'd expect

Plumbing blogs

[Toronto Drain & Plumbing Blog](#)

[Trade Plumbing Blog](#)

Here are some subjects you can think about:

Industry news - what's happened recently that will affect your industry? Do a quick search, find a recent event that has some bearing on your business (or more importantly, some bearing on your customers,) and write down your opinion.

Product news - find out about new products which may be of interest to your readers, and write a few words about them.

How-to - explain how to use one of your products. Better yet, haul out your camcorder and shoot a short video which shows people how to use your product. If you can show an example of an unusual way to use a product, so much the better.

Tell a story - if something funny or interesting happened to you, write it down and publish it on your blog. People are always interested in other people - don't try to hide behind your corporate identity. Be natural, honest and human.

This brings us to the end of Volume I of the Keyword Matrix course. I hope that you've found the information in this volume useful.

In Volume II, I cover search engines, keywords and getting your business set up on Google Places.

Volume III covers ways to get more visitors to your website.

You can download them from the Ten Percent Salesman Online store on the Virtual Corporation website: <http://VirtualCorporation.co.za/TenPercentSalesman/>

Glossary

Anchor Text - the text part of a hyperlink (usually underlined). For example, [this underlined text](#) is the anchor text for a link. Anchor text is used by search engines as an important ranking factor. Google pays particular attention to the text used in a hyperlink and associates the keywords contained in the anchor text to the page being linked to.

Bandwidth - the amount of data transferred through your hosting account in a month.

Bounce Rate - the percentage of visitors to a website who “bounce” away to a different site, rather than viewing other pages on the same site.

Control Panel - a web-based interface for management of websites, email accounts, statistics etc.

Domain Name - the name used for an organization, computer or address on the Internet

Domain Name Registrar - a company which is authorised to register domain names

Domain Name System (DNS) - the distributed naming system for computers connected to the Internet. It translates domain names meaningful to humans into the numerical identifiers (IP Addresses) associated with computers for the purpose of locating and addressing these devices worldwide.

Dynamic website - a website which uses a programming language to automatically create web pages in response to a visitor's request. The site may use a database, and the program (or *script*) may deliver different content to each visitor depending on factors such as whether or not they have visited the site before, what country they're from and so on.

Feeder Site - a website created for the purpose of feeding traffic to your main website

HTML - HyperText Markup Language - the primary building block of all websites. Even the most technically advanced dynamic websites must provide HTML files which can be understood by a visitor's web browser.

HTTP - HyperText Transfer Protocol - a request/response protocol used in sending messages between computers on the Internet. When you click on a website link in your web browser, a request is sent from your computer to the web server which hosts the site. The server responds with a status message which provides the browser with information about the requested file as well as the file contents.

Hypertext - text enhanced by the use of hyperlinks.

Index - a database of keywords and web addresses used by a search engine to optimize speed and performance in finding relevant documents for a search query

Internet Protocol - the communications protocol used by computers to send and receive data on the Internet.

IP Address - a numerical label assigned to any device connected to a computer network that uses the Internet Protocol for communication.

Keyword - a word or a phrase (*keyword phrase*) used to find useful results in Internet searches.

Landing Page - a page which has been specifically designed to receive traffic from an advertising campaign.

Page Rank - Google's proprietary algorithm for determining the importance or authority of a web page. Google examines the incoming links to a page, treating each link as a vote for the quality of the page. Pages that Google believes are important receive a higher Page Rank and are more likely to appear at the top of the search results. Google also considers the importance of the pages on which the links appear, with votes from some pages being considered to have greater value.

Search Operator - an instruction that joins keywords to form a new, more complex query. The 'big three' search engines have similar operators, with some differences. Here is a list of [Google Search Operators](#)

Search Term - a keyword or keyword phrase entered into a search engine.

Squeeze Page - also *Name Squeeze Page*, *Opt-In Page*. A [landing page](#) which is designed to extract (or squeeze) an email address from a visitor.

Static website - a website which delivers pre-defined static information to the visitor. The HTML files stored on the web server are sent directly to the visitor's web browser.

Trust Rank - a link analysis technique used by Yahoo! to semi-automatically distinguish between useful web pages and spam.

URL - Uniform Resource Locator. A unique identifier for a web page.

Web Hosting Service - web host, hosting company. An organization which provides space on a server and Internet access for customers who want to set up websites.

Web Server - a computer which "serves up" web pages when they are requested.

Resources

Free Websites

Blogger.com

Hpage.com

Hubpages.com

MoonFruit.com

Squidoo.com

Webs.com

Weebly.com

WikiDot.com

WikiSpaces.com

Wix.com

WordPress.com

Xanga.com

Yola.com

Free Web Hosting

(Not recommended)

FreeHostia.com

[Free Web Space](#)

Recommended Web Hosting

ResellerZoom.com

Hostgator.com

Afrihost.co.za

If you have any questions about the contents of this book, please get in touch with me or connect on Facebook or LinkedIn.

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Email: derrick@virtualcorporation.co.za

Facebook: <http://facebook.com/derrickmarkotter>

LinkedIn: <http://za.linkedin.com/in/derrickmarkotter>

Twitter: <http://twitter.com/dmarkotter>

Website: <http://DerrickMarkotter.com>

Don't forget to take a look at the Ten Percent Salesman Online store on the Virtual Corporation website:

<http://VirtualCorporation.co.za/TenPercentSalesman/>