

How To Create a Family Website.

When it comes to creating a website for your family, there are many paths you can take. The direction you take really depends on what you want to achieve with your family website. It also depends on the amount of time and money you are willing to spend creating and maintaining your website. Let's focus on the top two ways to create a family website; Build it or Buy it.

Building your own family website:

Many people choose to roll back their sleeves and create their own family website. Creating html pages is actually fairly simple and there are many great tools out there to help you do it. If you have Microsoft Office, it comes with FrontPage (although it may not be installed by default). There is also a barrage of tutorials on the web to help you get started in this area. However, creating the html pages is only half the battle.

One of the difficulties of creating your own family website is the setup and hosting that is required. The first thing you'll need to do is find a hosting company that can host your family website. You'll also need to purchase a domain name and then link that domain to your hosting company's web server. There can be quite a learning curve here, so be prepared to spend some time figuring this all out if you choose to build your own family website with your own domain name (i.e.: smith-family.com).

Before going this route, be sure to think about how you plan to maintain the content of your family website. Are you going to put all of this time and effort into creating something and launching it, only to end up with a website with stagnant content that everyone in your family looks at (and maybe they're impressed) but never returns to?

Pros (To building your own)

- ? You have full control of the overall look and feel of your website
- ? You have full control of the content

Cons (To building your own)

- ? May be more expense than you originally anticipated (annual domain name purchase, website hosting)
- ? Difficult to implement blogs, forums, guestbooks, online calendar, chat and other custom features. Newbie's will typically find these types of challenges far to daunting to take on.
- ? Content typically has to be manually updated by one person and then uploaded to the web server; a good family website should allow all family members to add and update content including photos, files, forum comments, etc.

Buy a family website:

The other alternative is to pay a monthly/annual fee to create a pre-built family website. Ok, maybe this sounds a little boring, but, again - what do you really want to achieve? If you want to create a website that truly connects your family, you're going to need more than just some pretty html pages.

Most high end solutions come with features that allow all of your family members to participate in the content that is available. You should be able to share photos and files, add postings to a forum, share important dates (birthdays, anniversaries, etc) with an online calendar, shared address book, create chat sessions, etc. This goal is to get your entire family actively engaged. Do this means that the content is always fresh and your family website can truly act as a central web-based hub for your family.

Pros (Buy a family website)

- ? The higher-end solutions come with a full set of useful features such as a customized home page, photo uploading to an online gallery, file sharing, forum/blog, address book, online calendar, and chat.
- ? Most solutions are private so that only family members or friends that you invite can login.
- ? Pricing varies significantly, but there are high quality solutions out there for well under \$40 a year.
- ? Most solutions offer a free 30-day trial before you have to actually start paying the monthly/annual fee.

Cons (Buy a family website)

- ? Higher end solutions are not free. (However, if you find a free family website provider be very careful! Your email address can potentially be sold or your site will contain banners that you have no control over.)
- ? You're unlikely to have total control over the look and feel, but many solutions allow some level of customization.

Conclusion

I just don't see building a family website yourself to be worth it. Spend the \$30-\$40 bucks a year, get your site up and running right away and spend your time adding content and connecting with your family. You'll be amazed at how a family website can really pull your family together, especially if you don't see everyone on a constant basis. Having your own family website allows you to plan reunions, get updated on your family member daily lives, and share family history information.

Source: <http://www.articlecircle.com>

About the Author

About the Author: Marie Christianson is a senior business analyst at <http://www.FamilyDetails.com>. She has worked directly with the family members of FamilyDetails.com's family website service to continually improve their service offering.