

Microsoft Expression Web	
Cost	\$299
System Requirements	PC <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Windows Vista or XP SP2 • 512 MB of RAM • Pentium 700
Programming Languages Supported	HTML, XHTML, CSS, XML, XSLT, ASP .NET

Microsoft Expression Studio	
Cost	\$599
System Requirements	PC <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Windows Vista or XP SP2 • 512 MB of RAM • Pentium 700
Included Programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Web • Design • Blend • Media

Adobe Dreamweaver	
Cost	\$399
System Requirements	PC <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Windows Vista or XP SP2 • 512 MB of RAM • Pentium 4, Intel Core Duo, Xeon, Centrino Mac <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • G4 or G5 • Mac OS X version 10.4.8 • 512 MB of RAM
Programming Languages Supported	HTML, XHTML, PHP, ColdFusion, JavaScript, ASP, ASP .NET, CSS

Notepad or text editor	
Cost	Free
System Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PC • Mac
Programming Languages Supported	No graphical interface, requires some knowledge of HTML and programming

Content Management System	
Cost	Requires Web site redesign
System Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PC • Mac
Programming Languages Supported	No technical expertise required

Adobe Photoshop	
Cost	\$999
System Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PC • Mac
Notes	Image & photo manipulation: resize, crop, enhance

Following these tips may not necessarily assure that your Web site will be a sure-fire success, but if you stick to these you can at least rest easy, knowing you aren't confusing, angering, and driving away potential customers.

10. Keep your font sizes, colors, and styles consistent.

You want to make sure that your text is easily readable. By changing styles or colors, you can easily distract and confuse the reader.

Also avoid underlining any text unless it is a hyperlink. Even if the text color is not blue, underlined text is a queue to the reader that the text should be a link, and they will often be confused if it is not.

9. White space is not always a bad thing.

This is somewhat related to number 10. The goal is to make your Web site easily readable. Having some white space keeps content from being cluttered and allows the reader to easily find what they are looking for on a page. If a reader has to do too much scanning they will get frustrated and probably leave the page quickly.

8. Go easy on the flash.

Flash can be a nice enhancement to a site that adds a little "wow" factor to the design. However, if it is not used properly, it can really hinder and annoy visitors after the first 10 seconds. Load time is still extremely important to most visitors, and if a page cannot load in less than 10 seconds, they will often go elsewhere.

Flash can also be very annoying when used on navigation buttons if it is not subtle. If a user simply wants to click on a button but they are constantly hindered by an animation that they have to wait for every time, you will make them angry and they will leave.

7. Avoid using sounds, background patterns, and animated GIF images.

While these things might be "neat" to have on a Web site, they really add very little, can contribute to making the site less readable, more obnoxious, and antiquated-looking.

6. Do not use "Click here" for links.

Make sure that your links are well labeled so that the visitor knows exactly what they are going to see when they click a link. For example, don't use "[Click here](#) to read more about the Galapagos Islands." Instead, say, "The [Galapagos Islands](#) are a fascinating place." This is a clear queue to the user that when they click on the link they will get more information about the Galapagos Islands.

5. Do not do anything that will annoy your visitors.

This includes resizing their browser window, opening new windows, excessive use of pop-ups, disabling the right-click mouse button, etc. Forcing visitors into your contained box by restricting functionality they are used using or by adjusting their environment for them can be very agitating and does not encourage them to return to your Web site.

4. Use a copywriter for copy.

Content is the most important asset of your Web site. It is crucial that this content is well-written, informative, and easily accessible. It will be worth the investment to have content professionally written. If you simply do not have the budget to hire a copywriter, at least have one or two people proofread content before you publish anything to your Web site.

3. Keep your content as concise and to-the-point as possible.

Studies have found that people generally read about 20 percent slower on a screen than they do on paper. Having to read through paragraph after paragraph on a screen can be very tiring on the eyes. Try to keep your content as concise as possible while still being informative.

If you do have a very content-heavy Web site, try using teaser paragraphs that summarize an article and include a link to the entire article at the end of the summary. This will allow the user to choose if they really want to read the entire article or move on. For content-heavy Web sites, also have a printable version that allows the visitor to print longer pages if they want to read the entire article. This is most effectively done through the use of stylesheets.

2. Be sure that the information contained on your site is easy to find.

Visitors have a very short attention span. If they do not know exactly where to find what they are looking for within about ten seconds, you will likely lose them. The key is to have very descriptive and intuitive navigation buttons, hyperlinks, and section headings. Group similar information in sections and do not leave any ambiguity as to what a page or a hyperlink is about.

1. The Web is not the Field of Dreams.

Just because you build it does not mean they will come. Your Web site should be treated like any other product or service, it requires a lot of promotion to be successful. When you launch your site, you will not instantly jump to the top of Google searches. It takes a well-thought-out marketing plan and a lot of effort (and possibly money) to drive traffic to your site. And while search engines can be great for driving traffic to your site, consider more traditional marketing techniques, such as targeted mailings, promotions that involve your Web site, or advertising.