

# Do I Need a Website?

by [Stephan Maldonado](#) | December 11, 2018

Websites are an incredible way to build a personal brand and take control of your online presence. It doesn't bear repeating that the job market is becoming increasingly digitized. These days, one of the first things an employer does is search for you online. What they find can tell them a lot about you and potentially set you apart from the rest of the applicant pool.

What do you want people to find when they search for you? A Vault contributor defined [personal brand](#) as “not so much what you say about yourself when you are in the room, rather, it is what others say about you when you are out of the room.” A website might be exactly what you need to give employers something to say about you.

## Who Needs a Website?

There isn't a definitive answer to that question. Generally speaking, *everyone* can benefit from a website, though some industries and interests lend themselves more easily to a website than others. Even if you don't think having one is particularly necessary for your career, employers are still likely to Google you, and managing your online presence helps you own the information they find. Maintaining an updated LinkedIn profile that reflects [your most current experience](#) should be the bare minimum.

Websites are especially useful for current students and recent graduates whose employment history is a little light, but who have had vibrant college experiences. A website is an excellent way to showcase the highlights of your academic career, from major projects to life-changing semesters spent abroad. If you'll soon be applying for internships or entering the job market, the time to consider a website is now.

Working professionals in certain industries use websites to establish their voice and share that voice with audiences—be they employers, customers, or fans. Some examples include:

- Artists, who may use their site as a portfolio to showcase and sell their work.
- Authors who hope to build a readership by sharing samples of their writing, blogging, and linking to the places where their work is available to purchase.
- Freelancers, who often use [their sites](#) to attract and retain customers. A freelancer might use a website to introduce themselves: who they are and what their experience and qualifications are. They can also provide examples of their work, the clients they've worked with, and detail their pricing and services. Copywriters, graphic designers, web developers, and marketing specialists are among some of the freelancers whose careers thrive from leveraging their sites.
- Entrepreneurs, architects, musicians, small business owners—your own site can apply to virtually any career you're in or are considering.

## What Do I Include on My Site?

The content on your site really depends on what you want to get out of it. What is the purpose of your website? To establish that purpose, there are a few important things you need to ask yourself:

- Who is your audience?
- Why do *you* need a website?
- What is your brand? How do you want people to see you?
- Are you selling something? How can you sell it in the most effective way?
- What key points do you want people to take away from your site?

If you specifically want to appeal to employers, your site should probably read more like a digital resume, listing your experience while *elevating* your resume beyond what the hiring manager's already read. Perhaps this includes a portfolio, or maybe—particularly for students—it includes a sample of your thesis or academic research.



If your focus is more on building a brand and widening your social network, the sky is essentially the limit. You might blog frequently or link to a feed of your social media posts. Maybe you want people to see you as an expert on a topic of your passion, or maybe you simply want to let your readers in on your day-to-day adventures.

Remember: your site will likely show up when an employer searches for you. Your brand should be authentic and true to yourself, but use discretion with what you share. Hold your website to the same standards you might hold your social media presence when you're searching for a job. Consider how inappropriate or extreme content reflects on you. If you find it necessary to post content that doesn't adhere to professional decorum, you might consider creating a site that is not associated with your name or online identity.

Here are some examples of things that are common to include on a website:

- A short bio to introduce yourself to your audience.
- A page that lists your professional experience or skills as a high-level overview. Alternatively, you can include a digital form of your resume that does not include sensitive information.
- A blog, where you write about the things that interest you. Students can use their blog to chronicle their academic or internship experiences, and working professionals can speak to the areas in which they want to be considered experts.
- A way for people to contact you.

### How Do I Make a Website?

Let's face it: unless we're in the field, not all of us are particularly adept at web development. Many people are intimidated by the prospect of building a website—their mind wandering to vague thoughts of advanced code and complicated server hosting. Fortunately, there are numerous resources available to those of us who don't know what any of those words mean.

Services like [Squarespace](#) and [WordPress](#) offer simple website building solutions. The platform hosts your domain and your website, so you don't have to worry about the backend technical issues. Simply choose the template for your site and customize the color scheme, font, and layout. You can add pages tailored to your specific needs, including blog posts, portfolio pages, image galleries, forms, e-commerce pages, and more. More advanced users have the ability, if they choose, to edit code and create a truly unique user experience. They also provide integration with social media, and analytics for page performance.

When you sign up for these services, you typically choose a plan based on how you will use your site and the level of control you want over the technical aspects. Plans are priced at different levels depending on the features they offer, and it's a good idea to evaluate both your needs and the features associated with each plan before choosing one. [Blogger](#), [Weebly](#), and [Wix](#) are just a few of the many services out there besides Squarespace and WordPress. If you don't feel like you want to invest the time and effort into creating a website, [about.me](#) provides a simple solution. This platform lets you create a basic page where you can post a bio, images, and links to your social media accounts. The Pro version (priced at \$8.00 per month) comes with additional features, like a customized domain and a portfolio section.

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