

# THE ONLINE SCIENTIST

## WEBSITE OPTIMIZER

Before we start building a website, it's good practice to think about the purpose, your target audience, what you want to have on the website, and your expectations. For this purpose we developed the website optimizer that helps you to discover what you need before you start building the website. So fill out this optimizer for your project and take it to our first meeting!

### TELL US ABOUT YOU!

Name:

Function:

Organization:

E-mail:

Phone number:

Address:

# PURPOSE AND CONTENTS OF THE WEBSITE

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Before starting to build your website, it's important to think about why you would want a website in the first place and what to put on it. The following questions help you to think about these topics and serve as a solid foundation for the contents and design of your website.

## Why do you want a website?

A thought experiment: think about the use. Is a website really necessary, or is it better to create a brochure, video, animation or poster? A brochure may be the better option if, for example, the audience is the elderly and the information does not have to be updated.

## What is the primary purpose of the website?

For example: facilitating collaboration between researchers, providing information for students / journalists, describing your expertise, reporting on a subsidized project, show the results of an investigation.

## What effect do you want to have on the visitors of the website?

This is the take-home-message you want people to leave your website with. For example: increase awareness of your research, convince subsidizing parties, acquire or process symposium registrations.

Can you briefly describe the contents of the new website? When you do that, think about what will make it unique – what will set it apart?

Is there an old website? What was good / bad about it?

## WHO IS YOUR AUDIENCE?

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Understanding your audience makes it much easier to make certain decisions about the content and the design and makes your website much more effective.

Who is your target audience (or audiences)?

For example: the general public, other scientists, funding bodies, decision makers.

What is the frustration or need of your audience that you will solve with your website?

For example: it's hard to find good credible information online about a certain topic, getting an overview of someone's publications and books, getting in touch with a person.

Call to action: what do you want a visitor to do when they visit your site?

For example: they should contact me for information, leave their email address for a newsletter, sign up for a conference, be convinced of my expertise, hire me.

## DESIGN: LOOK & FEEL OF THE WEBSITE

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Can you give three examples of websites that have a similar **goal or content** to your website?

For example the websites of your main competitors or collaborators.

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Can you give three examples of websites that have a **design** you like? Explain for each site what you like and dislike about it.

1. URL: .....
  - Like:
  - Dislike:
2. URL: .....
  - Like:
  - Dislike:
3. URL: .....
  - Like:
  - Dislike:

Is there a corporate identity that we must use for the website?

- Yes, we can send over our style guides.
- No, but only a logo is enough for us.
- No, we would like for The Online Scientist to develop a full corporate style guide document.

## ELEMENTS OF THE WEBSITE

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Let's get building! Even though you might have no idea yet about what you need exactly, take a look at some features of typical websites and see whether you think you could use it on your site. Thinking about this early in the process helps you define a scope of work from which we can build a custom quote.

Which pages do you need on your website?

- Homepage
  - Blog or news page with weekly / monthly updates
  - About us
  - Contact page
  - Informative, static page(s) (who are we, what do we do)
  - Disclaimer
  - Downloads page (with PDFs, for example)
  - Event page (e.g., dates of upcoming symposia)
  - Results / page publication (e.g. all the results of the survey)
  - Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)
  - Other:
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How many pages do you think the website will have?

- 1-5 (basic website)
- 5-10 (medium website)
- 10-30 (large website)
- > 30 (website or blog with a lot of articles)

Which features should the website have?

- Contact form
- Search function
- Newsletter signup (when you have a steady stream of new content)
- Archive of past newsletters
- Web shop
- Visualization tool for your research results
- Possibility for visitors to comment on articles
- Registration form for e.g. a symposium
- Tracking of visitors via Google Analytics (if yes; share your tracking code with us)
- HTTPS access (or other specific security needs)
- Multilingual
- A hidden part of the website with login functionality for visitors or employees
- Password protected pages that are not public
- Forms, such as sign-up forms
- Calendar
- Printer-friendly pages
- Share buttons for social media
- Automated emails

Do you have any other specific technical requirements?

For example a security requirement, or are there plugins/websites/tools that you already use and that you want to keep? For example Dropbox for sharing documents, Gmail for sending mail, or Trello/Slack for project management.

Which (design) elements do you want us to develop?

- Content architecture plan: developing a comprehensive plan for the content and structure of your website and its content.
- (Re)writing of texts
- Logo design
- Corporate identity for web
- Corporate identity offline (e.g. business cards, posters, etc.)
- Animation
- Infographic
- Video
- Photos (stock photography)
- Photos (custom photography)
- PDFs made from Word documents

Do you want other (offline) products that match the website?

- Business card
- Poster
- Brochure
- Pen
- Notepad
- eBook
- Presentation
- Other.....

Do you have anything that can be used as the basis for the parts mentioned in the previous question?

Yes we already have...

- Complete texts written for use online
  - Logo
  - Some rough information
    - Such as a grant application or syllabus (PDF or docs), which is written more or less for the audience.
  - Published scientific articles
  - Videos
  - Animations
  - Images (photos)
  - Other ...
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When it comes to content and structure, which answer characterizes your situation?

- We have made a layout of the website, per page and with wireframes of how to structure each page. We hire The Online Scientist to execute our well-defined idea.
- We have a general idea of the structure, but would like suggestions from The Online Scientist.
- We like to do this in full cooperation, and let The Online Scientist guide us.

Regarding texts, how would you like to handle that?

- We already have all the final texts written.
- We write all the texts ourselves, after the structure of the site is ready.
- We would like advice about content and layout, but write everything ourselves.
- We want The Online Scientist to write new texts based on existing materials.
- All texts must be re-written and would like to hire The Online Scientist to do this.

In the case of a multilingual site, do you provide the content yourself, or do you want to have the content translated professionally?

- It is not a multilingual website, and the language is
  - English
  - Dutch
  -
- We provide all translations ourselves.
- We would like for The Online Scientist to take care of the translations.

How will people find your website?

- We want to be found when people search for certain keywords.
- We will promote our website during conferences, periodicals and on other websites.
- We just need to be found when people Google our name.

If you want to be found easily, the right keywords are important. Do you already have a list of SEO terms?

- Yes, we have a marketing plan with the right search terms.
- No, we would like advice on this and then we can make a list of SEO terms.
- No, we would like for The Online Scientist to make a complete SEO analysis and implement it.

Would you like social media integration for your website?

- No, we do not have any social media presence.
- Yes, sharing content on our website via:
  - Twitter
  - Facebook

- Instagram
  - LinkedIn
  - Reddit
  - Pinterest
  - Google+
  - Other:
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Yes, we would like to use social media and receive a comprehensive social media plan by The Online Scientist.

Would you like to link an email address to the domain name?

Examples are info@mydomain.com or john.smith@mydomain.com

- No, we're all set with our email addresses.
- Yes, we would love email addresses for this website and:
  - o We have an email program such as Outlook, Apple or Thunderbird where we'd like to receive our email.
  - o We want to organize our mail ourselves, through a professional service such as Google for Business via MX records (recommended).
  - o We'd like a webmail link to the website, so we can read our mail online (not recommended).

## MAINTENANCE OF THE WEBSITE

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A website is never finished. After you publish a website you have to update the software and plugins regularly to avoid security problems and crashes. The content also needs maintenance: is the team directory correct and are the addresses current? Is the content still up-to-date? Running a website takes time, planning ahead helps to prevent websites that have unnoticed technical problems, outdated content, and confusion about who does what.

Where do you want to host your website?

- We have our own hosting provider or server and do not need support.
- We want advice on where to host our website.

Do you regularly post new content or do you want a static page?

- Our website is pretty much static content that hardly needs to be updated.
- We regularly have new content such as blogs, new publications or updates on our project.

Who is going to maintain the website, technically and in terms of content?

Think about changes to the website, technical updates, fixing of technical issues or crashes and updates to design and functionality.

- We will maintain, update, and fix technical issues of the website ourselves.
- We like some support for maintenance when we need it, but not on a regular basis.
- We will update the content of the site, but want technical support from The Online Scientist.
- We will do the technical support, but we need someone at The Online Scientist to create and/or upload new content for the site.
- We would like The Online Scientist to take care of all technical maintenance and content updates.

Do you need training on how to update the website in WordPress?

- No, training is not necessary, I'm familiar with WordPress
- Yes, in the form of an online tutorial, e-learning or a video.
- Yes, in the form of a live workshop.

## BUDGET

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It's good to know in advance what you can/want to spend on a website, as there are restrictions to what can be done for a certain budget. If the budget is a limiting factor, it's good to know in advance so we can work out how we can make the best of the budget available.

Do you have a specific budget for this project?

For large projects (>€10.000), we require a 50% deposit.

- No, we do not have an indication of a budget, we would like to know how much it would cost first.
- Yes, we have a ballpark budget:  
€.....
- Yes, we have a specific maximum budget that cannot be exceeded:  
€.....

Does your budget account for maintenance of the website?

Having a website costs money, starting at the basics like a domain name and hosting, but don't forget the maintenance of the site and upkeep of the contents.

- No, we have our own servers, IT crew and employees who can manage the website.
- Yes, but we would like to spend as little money as possible on running costs.
- Yes, we have a budget for the next X years until our project ends.
- No, but now you mention it, we would love to get advice about our options.
- Yes, we have budgeted a monthly amount for hosting, maintenance and technical support:  
€.....

## PRACTICAL

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How quickly (or when) should the website be finished?

If there is a delay in your feedback or your input for the finalizing steps of the website, additional costs may apply.

Do you already have a website or domain name?

- Yes, our website is live at: .....
- Yes, we have claimed the following domain name: .....
- No, but we are thinking about this domain name: .....
- No, we would like your advice on the domain name.

Do you have a Google Analytics account you want to link to the website?

- No, we will track our visitors in a different way.
- Not yet, we will create an account for our website.
- Yes, we can send over our tracking code when needed.

## COLLABORATION

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Who is our contact person for direct appointments and who takes the decisions (if not the person who filled out this document)?

Name:

Contact information:

How quickly can he or she give feedback? Within...

- 1 day
- 2 days
- 3-5 days
- A week or more

How would you like us to stay in touch?

- E-mail
- Phone
- WhatsApp call
- Google Hangout
- Skype
- Face to face

And finally ... When do you consider the website a success?

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WEBSITES | E-LEARNING | PRESENTATIONS

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