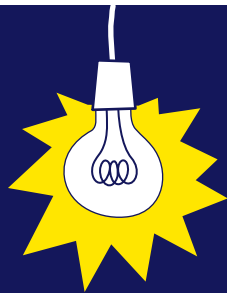


# Website Management Model



Extract from  
*The Website Manager's Handbook*  
(Chapter 1) by Shane Diffily

*"Genuinely useful for helping think through the key  
issues of website management"*

Gerry McGovern. Author of *Killer Web Content*.

# Chapter 1

## Website Management Model

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Remember the early days of the web, when the internet was all about alien abductions and freedom of expression? Wasn't it great! There were no rules, everyone was a geek and anything could happen.

And then it did.

Somebody, somewhere offered goods for sale online and nothing was ever the same again. As a result, the Developers who had dominated the web since its genesis began to collaborate with Designers to build better interfaces. Journalists and copywriters also got involved as the need for professionally written content was realised. Marketing and general managers were next onboard as angel-investor fuelled 'dot.coms' outgrew their garages and moved into business parks. And finally—horror of horrors—lawyers were drawn in as the legal challenges of the web began to emerge. The metamorphosis was complete.

Or was it?

In fact, many of the website management techniques in use today continue to betray their untidy origins in the chaos of the early internet.

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Indeed, it is still relatively easy to find websites where disorder and loose controls persist. For example, many sites have no clear goals and no dedicated development team to support them.

Needless to say, it is now past time that such mayhem was done away with. The internet has changed beyond recognition in the past ten years and there is no longer any excuse for muddle and disorder. It is time for a well-founded and practical standard for website management to emerge.

That is precisely what is proposed by the Website Management Model.

## **The Website Management Model**

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The Website Management Model is a framework for organising all the activities of site administration. That is, it identifies the people, processes, technology and other resources you need to support a web venture of almost any kind.

This model is useful for those who already operate a site, as well as those who are just starting out. For example, if you currently supervise a website, you may be confused about how some tasks are carried out or how they relate to one another. If so, you should find the Website Management Model useful as a means for evaluating current systems and filling in any gaps.

On the other hand, if you have been tasked with overseeing a freshly released site, you could use this model as a framework for creating a new system of control. In this way, you can feel confident that all of the activities needed for sound management are in place.

## The Elements of Website Management

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The Website Management Model is composed of four elements, each of which encompasses a set of management activities. These are:

- Website Maintenance.
- Website Development.
- Website Governance.
- Website Infrastructure.

To introduce the model we will begin with a brief overview of the elements from which it is composed. These will then be explored in detail (in the following chapters) in order to reveal the people, processes, technology and other resources upon which they rely.

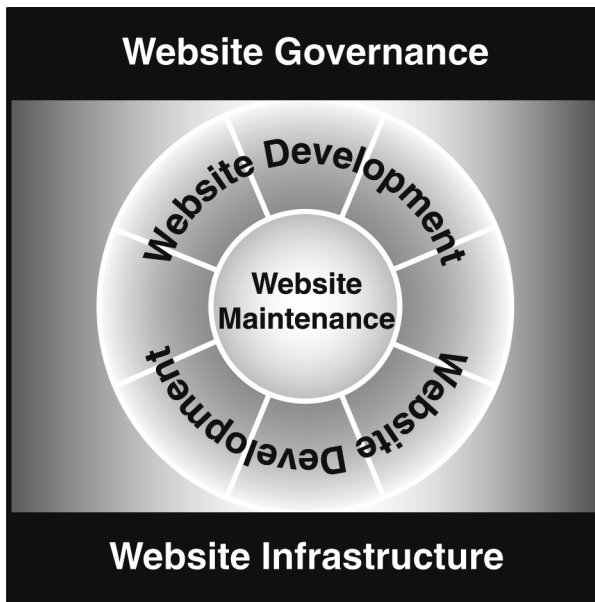


Figure 1. The Website Management Model.

## Website Maintenance

Website Maintenance comprises all the activities needed to ensure the operational integrity of a site. In other words, it is about making sure a website runs smoothly and according to plan. In **Chapter Two**, we will learn exactly what this means in terms of administration and workload.

## Website Development

Website Development encompasses the broad set of activities needed to create and review a website (or add a new section to an existing site). The activities from which Website Development is composed are:

- Planning
- Content
- Design
- Construction
- Testing
- Hosting
- Publicity
- Review

These activities are themselves bounded by the objectives of the business and the needs of users, which in turn help determine the overall character of a site.

The options you have for Website Development are explained in **Chapter Three**.

## Website Governance

Presiding over the elements of Maintenance and Development is Website Governance. While frequently upstaged by more visible aspects of management, this represents the true centre of gravity on a site.

The objective of Website Governance is to ensure a controlled approach to site management—from planning and design through to maintenance and infrastructure. Without Governance there is no-one to say what is or is not allowed. Ultimately, this means no control and no direction. Website Governance is investigated in full in **Chapter Four**.

## Website Infrastructure

Finally, providing a secure foundation for technical operations is Website Infrastructure. Website Infrastructure embraces all of the activities and resources needed to select and build an internal hosting solution, including hardware, software and staff skills.

These are explored in detail in **Chapter Five**. (External hosting is examined separately within Chapter Four)

That summarises the elements of the Website Management Model. As you have seen, a wide range of activities are covered. No doubt, this may have set some alarm bells ringing.

"Oh my God, I am going to need a dozen people to manage this thing!"

Needless to say, you won't.

Many websites operate very effectively with small teams—often just two or three people. Activities that cannot be covered internally are contracted to external consultants on an as-needed basis. All that matters is that the website is being properly managed for the benefit of your customers.

And it is with customers that we will begin our review. After all, they are the people who really matter, right? Yet, how can you be sure customers are satisfied by their online experience or that your website is performing well on a day-to-day basis?

The only way to find out is to advance towards the coal-face and evaluate how well the activities of **Website Maintenance** are carried out.