

# **Company A**

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Website creation requirements and guidelines

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# Requirements

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Websites are created using best practices established by leaders in intranet usability as well as the most current effective intranet design standards.

The following lists are requirements in order to build your website in an efficient and timely manner.

“RELISH SIMPLICITY”

JAKOB NIELSEN,  
*DESIGNING WEB USABILITY*

A few tips to keep in mind while planning your site:

- Effective white space, effective white space, effective white space... the point of a website is to link to information rather than putting it all on one page. One compelling sentence cues the user that this is important and creates an unconscious willingness to “read more about it.”
- You have three seconds to get a user’s attention - a huge block of text is a deterrent to 80% of readers. Conversely, too many graphics can cause the same affect.
- Effective use of illustrations, much like the compelling sentence, will draw a user to find out more about the topic. Too many illustrations cause the user’s eye to “jump” and miss the point.
- Your site plan will consist of an executive summary, content outline/inventory and an implementation plan. Within these, you’ll have a list of resources, an outline of the site, a list of links to include in the site, needed elements such as graphics or gadgets and, most importantly, what content is to be provided and by whom.

So, let’s get started. First, a few other pointers:

- Look at other sites (steal with pride).
- Don't be overly ambitious.
- Don't try to re-invent the wheel (that’s why we have templates as well as the ability to hyperlink to other pages/applications/sites)
- Do set aside sufficient time for planning. Remember, too, planning doesn’t stop once you’ve started building your site.
- Also set aside some time for learning. We’re finding new tricks every day for presentation of content and training is available on various areas of the platform.
- Realize a web site is dynamic and needs constant oversight.
- Have fun with it!

## Step One: ABCs

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Your most important tools for digital projects are good old pencil and paper. Often you'll do your best thinking with these tools. In this digitized age, paper is still your best friend when building a web site.

Start by sketching out on a piece of paper how you think your site should be set up, how you think users will move through the site. Use this part of the process for brainstorming as well – once your site takes shape on paper, you may think of other areas needed or see that you can consolidate two pages. See [a sample of a web sketch](#). for a hand-drawn sketch of a site in its early planning stages.

Keep a notepad nearby – you'll have lots of ideas along the way that you will want to jot down for later reference.

Once you have your rough layout, keep the pencil (or pen) out to make a site diagram. This is a more formal version of the sketch and where you basically create your navigation and the source of your list of needed content.

The Post-It Note® approach is one of the best and easiest. Take a couple of pads of sticky notes (you can use different colors to designate different areas of your site such as News, Community Board, Resources, if you'd like) and write down the names of the pages you want to include on each section.

Then start sticking them up on a board or wall. You can move them around until they fall into an intuitive order in the manner you want a user to move through the site. Once done, you'll find that your navigational structure is 90% complete.

Take the Post-It approach a step further – use a separate piece to list the links you want to associate with each page. If you have a News page, for example, you may want to include links to another page that lists news articles. A discussion board may need links to a product page that has reference information. This will help refine your navigation even further.

This visual representation of your site will help you plan resources accordingly, know the order in which pages will be created and identify what content will be needed when. See [this sample of a website diagram](#). You can further develop your site visual by adding the list link you want to include on each page along with other elements.

Now that you have a good visual of your site, along with a multitude of notes you've made as ideas and thoughts have popped up along the way, you can go onto the documentation part of your web site plan.

## Step Two: Make Lists

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While creating your site sketch and diagram, you probably already have several lists started. Time to add to them – these lists will help organize your thoughts and, in turn, organize your pages and resources. Suggested lists are:

- List of people resources – team members, content providers, site administrator(s), project champions, graphic artists.
- List of pages for the site
- List of links – Contact email addresses, links to external web sites, links to applications
- List of needed graphics
- List of types of content – News, department descriptions, product information
- List of future development – You may think of things you’d like on the website but you either don’t have the resources or time to make them happen. Write a list of those as well.
- A list of content – The type of content provided on the site, who “owns” the content and who will provide it – and more importantly, who will keep it updated. Include if it exists or if it needs to be created. Remember that content needs to be dynamic; static content is eventually “invisible;” users see it so often, that it literally fades out of their view.
- A list of elements – needed graphics, proposed gadgets, discussion boards, surveys, wikis or blogs.

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**A warning about gadgets:** The addition of gadgets must be considered carefully. Intranet usability studies have shown many gadgets sound fun but go unused for the most part. Some may use too much bandwidth and slow page loading. Others may incur expenses. Please consult with your developer or, if applicable, your IT department.

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Use these lists as you develop your executive summary, your implementation plan and as you build your pages. Keep them nearby – again, you’ll have many ideas along the way that you’ll want to record.

## Step Three: Write your site plan

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Now it's time to go back to the keyboard. Using your visual sketches and lists, create the documentation that not only supports the need for your project but gives you the needed steps in chronological order.

[Use these questions](#) to help when creating your site plan. These will help you organize your information as well as provide some ideas in planning resources, content and time.

When planning your site, always keep your audience in the forefront. Consider their needs first and address those.

Your web site plan should include the following:

**Executive Summary and statement of purpose:** A concise (one page) overview of the project that communicates the basic concept. What's it all about?

You should be able to sum up your project in one sentence. Here's the one-sentence summary for a company's intranet:

[Site name] is the "go-to" place for information for employees worldwide, providing them with a view of their global community as well as tools and information for their daily work.

Once you've created your executive statement, you can then add details -- Why are you doing this? What will you do with it when it's done? What needs does it meet for your audience? Be sure to include quantitative measurements for the success of your project.

**Content Outline/Inventory:** A logically-organized outline of the project's content. You will draft this using your web sketch and web diagram. Refine it now with details on how users will move through the site as well as your lists of content, needed graphics and elements, resources and content types and sources.

**Implementation Plan:** A detailed plan which spells out how the above will be accomplished. Who does what, and when? You can use a calendar or project or, again, take out your Post-It pads, write down the task and its deadline, and stick them up on the wall, move them around until they fall into chronological order.

# Checklist for website creation

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The following items are requirements for most site developers. Even if you're developing the site yourself, providing as much detail as possible will make the build-out a more pleasant – and faster - experience.

## Site plan

- Execute summary
- Implementation plan

## Navigational structure

- List of web pages for site such as Home, Contacts, FAQs, News
- A rough sketch of what you have in mind for the site– most people use PowerPoint or Visio to create a flow chart – will definitely speed up the process and be very handy when creating the pages.

## Content

- Introductory paragraph and/or description for each page
- The content for each page/section
- Links (with URLs)
- Documents or attachments to be linked to pages
- Multimedia\* (including its format to make sure it is compatible with the server)

## Graphics/Look and feel

- Conceptual look/theme
- List of existing images and of source(s) for new images

## People

- List of people who have edit permissions
- List of people who have read access (all employees, group, or individuals)
- Site contacts
- Site owners
- Content editors
- Content providers

## Forms

- Submissions, replies

## Special applications

- Blog
- Wiki

## Questions

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Here are general questions you can use for a team meeting that will help flesh out your web design plan and create a business case document.

Website project name: \_\_\_\_\_

Prepared by: \_\_\_\_\_

General description and specifications for the site: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Team members: Assign responsibilities and deadlines.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Resource requirements: List of internal and external resources.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What do you want a visitor to do on your site?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What categories of information will the site provide?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Who is your target audience?

\_\_\_\_\_

What type of content do we want to provide? Does it exist or does it need to be created?

Who will provide the content? What links should we include?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What graphics elements do we need? Who will provide them?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What sites do we want to cross-link?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



How will users navigate our site?

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How will we promote our site?

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What gadgets do we want to provide? Are they within specifications as presented by IT?

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Any other thoughts or ideas for the web site?

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What contact information do we want to provide?

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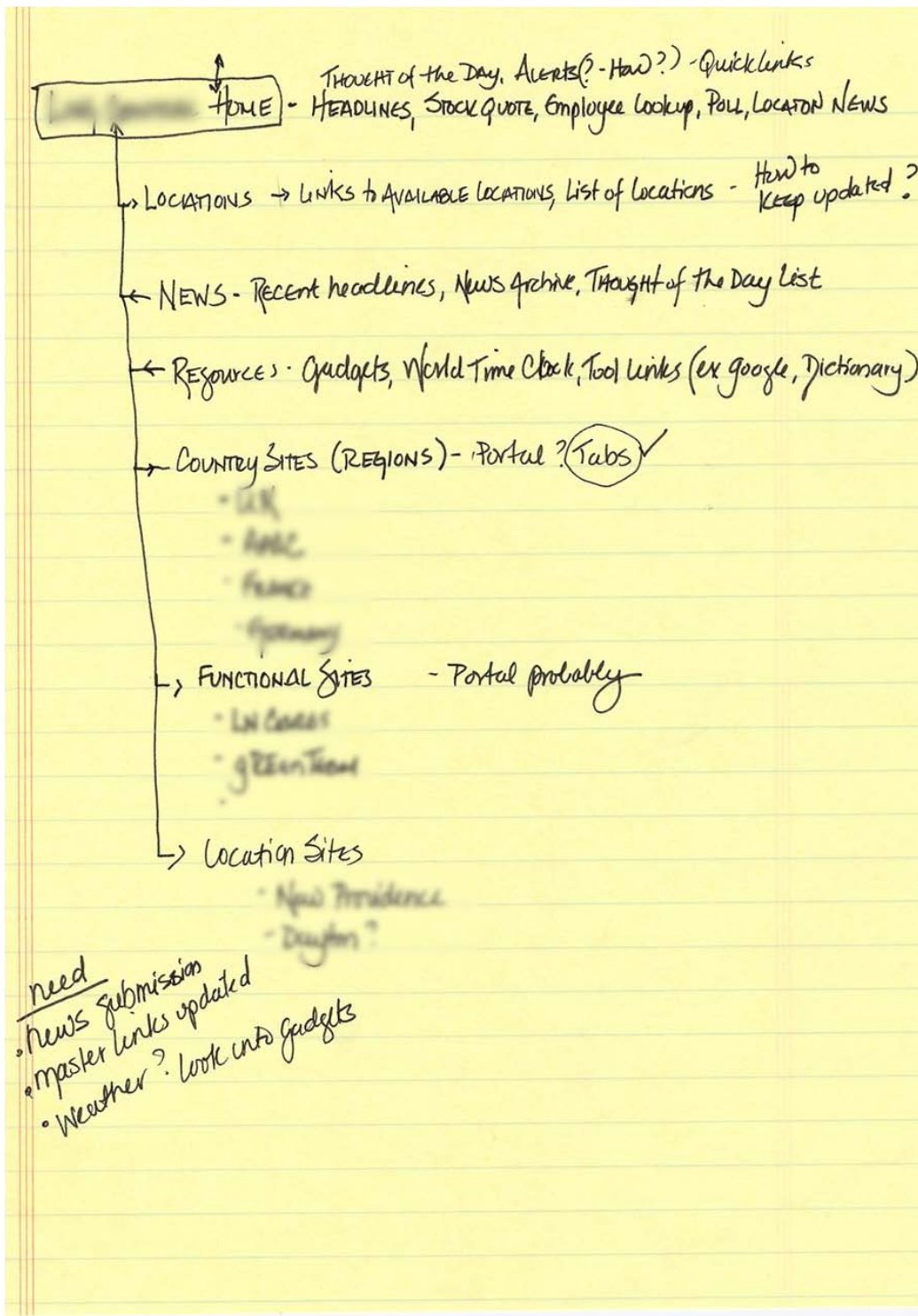
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How will we test the site – what timeline?

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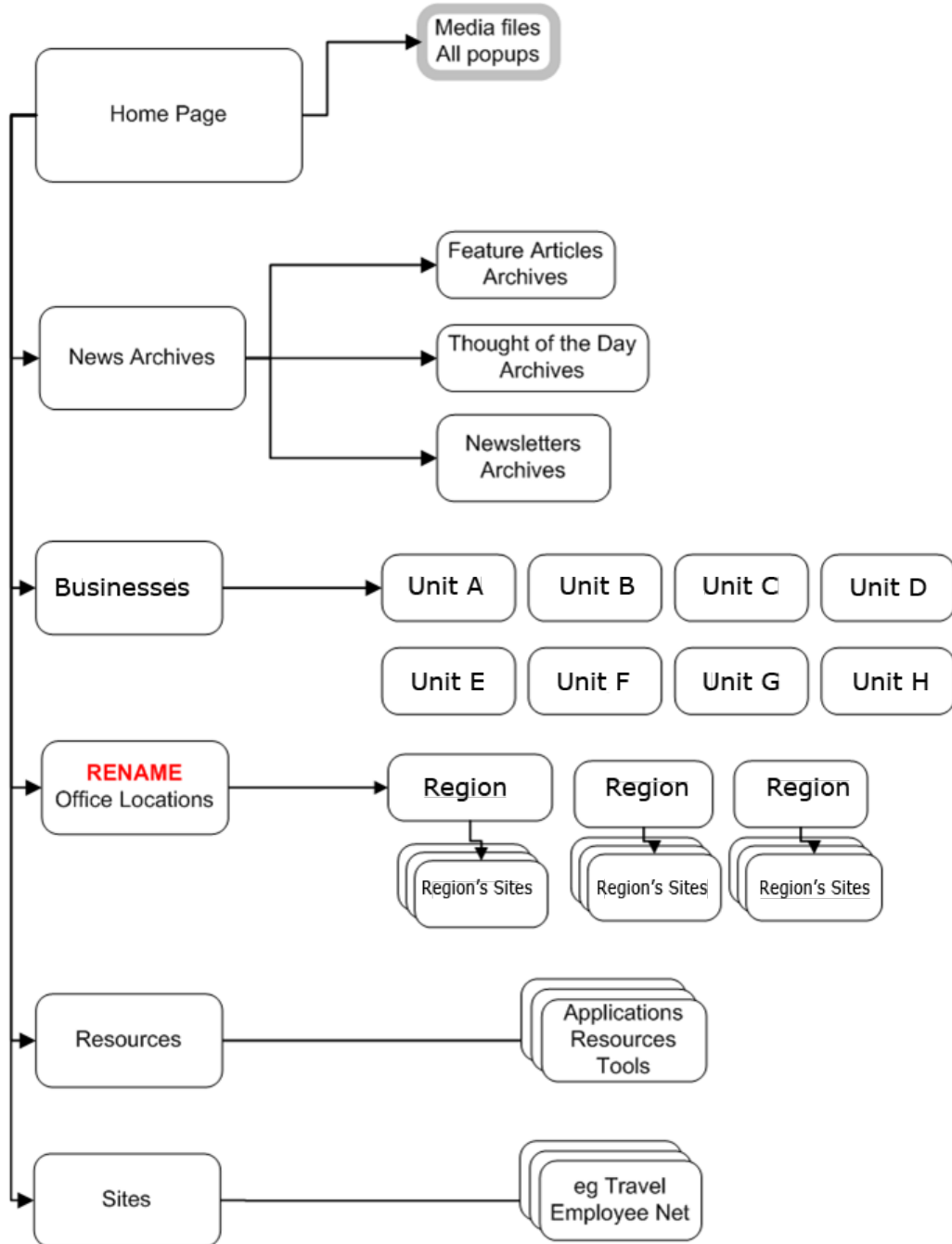
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# Sample of a web site sketch



# Sample web diagram

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# Examples

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## **Form**

Submit your comments: <http://www.sample-of-form>

## **Sites**

Site A

<http://www.sample-of-site>

Site B

<http://www.sample-of-site>

Site C

<http://www.sample-of-site>

Site D

<http://www.sample-of-site>

# Revision History

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Date	Notes	Revised By
2/22/2010	Original document	Liz Brummond