ICCW

(The Informed Client Checklist for the Web)

When a client plans to create a website for their company there are many preparations and decisions that have to be made. Some will include:

- What should the website look like?
- What kind of customers are we trying to attract?
- How do we improve our navigation on our current site?

Sometimes the choices are simple, other times they can be difficult. When working in collaboration, often clients expect the web designer to handle these design decisions and have the correct answers. Generally, the advice of the web expert is the best choice. However, as we place additional responsibility on the designer the price of the website can increase. Before you assume the designer has all the answers and add responsibility to his work load, it's important to collect your information and consider what

resources you have to give to the Web designer. A clear picture presentation of your vision to the designer, saves time and money.

The purpose of this brochure is to help the client to know what files to put on a DVD or FTP upload for their web designer.

The writer of the brochure assumes you the client, have:

- Contacted a web designer
- Purchased a URL
- Signed a contract with their web designer
- Are currently working with the web designer on confirmation of the new layout

While working with a web designer, you may have collected some files you want to include on your website. In addition, your designer may have requested certain files that you must search for or create. Here are files you may need to collect.

❑ Files to give to a web designer/developer.

To begin the organization process, it's important to keep your files in folders on your main computer or on a memory stick. First create a folder with the name of your project. Example: ProjectFinancialWebsite

From the diagram here you can see how folders and files within this project could be arranged so that the designer can find all required materials.

Keep files organized:
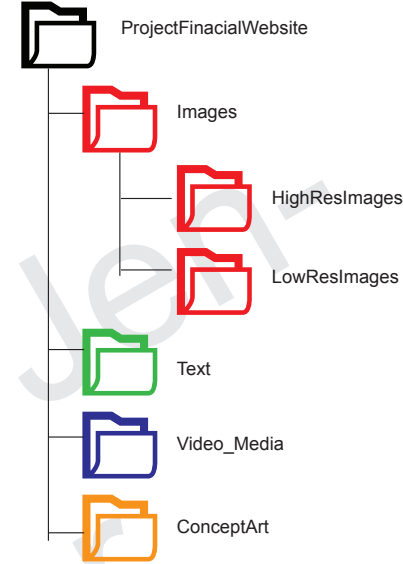
Images Folder

The Images folder stores all the images that you have collected from others and photographs of items that were taken by you. It may include two folders, a Low Resolution folder and a High Resolution folder. The Low Resolution folder is for files such as gif, jpg and png. The High Resolution folder may contain image files that you or another designer created, such as PSD and AI scalable graphics files. A High Resolution folder is optional because your web designer may create these files himself. However, it is always best to submit the highest resolution images to your designer so that they can work with quality files. Things to consider when you place these types of images in this folder are:

- Does my file version of the High Resolution image match with designer's version on his computer? For example, inform your designer, "I used Adobe Photoshop CS6 to create this file." Don't assume that all designers have the most current software.

- Have I made sure my images are a correct size or resolution for the screen of a computer, mobile or tablet? While most designers will adjust these files, it's still important to consider what devices your images and documents will be viewed upon. If you are unsure if this is important, talk with your designer.

- Are the colour settings on my images correct? Some images that you have supplied may be originally from printed items and may be in CMYK format colour mode, make sure that they are set for the web as RGB.

Text Files Folder

The Text files folder stores PDF downloads, page content/text(word files, text files) database files (excel or xml file). Not all company websites will have a database, so an excel or xml file is optional to include. However, if your website will have a database, don't expect the designer to recreate it and enter every name in by hand. Instead supply him with an excel or xml file so that the process is correct and free of spelling errors.

Video/Media Folder

The Video folder stores Video, flash files, animations and sounds that you or another designer created. This folder is optional because your web designer may do this work. However, if you have video material, review it with your designer first to see whether it meets with image quality or compatibility standards for the web.

Client's rough concept art Folder

The Concept folder is another optional folder, nevertheless if you have this material it is important to include it. The contents within may be scans of your sketches, or diagrams of approved designs or plans. This will give the designer a concept of your ideas to work with and will give him an opportunity to give you suggestions for where improvements could be made.

Once you have collected and placed your files into the correct folders, look into each folder and review the contents again. Here are some further discoveries you might make:

☐ Missing Documents

As you open each file or folder you may discover that some material you require is missing. Make a list and contact someone within your company to acquire the missing files. Or you may need to create a file or ask your designer to create a file for you. Don't assume that your designer can recreate missing documents, if he has no materials to work with.

☐ Damaged (corrupt) documents.

When a file is opened, an error message may appear or the file will not open at all. This could mean that the file has become damaged or corrupt. You should not supply a designer with a corrupt file and expect that he can repair it without knowledge of what the original looked like. First check if you have an uncorrupted backup of that file, make a copy of it, rename it and open the file to make sure it is not damaged. Or if the file contains text, you can try and copy that text into a new document and recreate the file. If you are unsure, consult with your designer or the individual who gave you the original file.

☐ Copyright issues with documents or images.

Some stock images acquired from a photo site have a copyright and may have restrictions on how they should be used. It's important that before you put any images on a website that were not created by you, to check what the copyright restrictions are. If this is not done and you are caught, you may face fines and other penalties.

☐ Check the spelling in the content.

Always check the spelling in any content you supply. Whether it is a single page or a database, don't expect the designer to do this check for you unless this is part of the agreement in your contract.

☐ Keep out unnecessary files.

There may be some items in your folders that are personal and not relevant to the project, such as confidential emails or data in your excel file that is not relevant to the website. Make sure to make a copy with private data removed before you submit it.

Final Preparations

Once you have completed your file review, get ready to present your files to the designer.

Before you upload to the designer's FTP site always keep a back up of your original work either on a DVD or memory stick. It can happen that a designer can lose a file or a file becomes corrupt, so the designer may have to ask for a new copy. Finally, when your website is done, ask for a DVD of their final work for your own records.

Check out my other brochures about print and web design at www.theinkrag.com

Topics include:

- Client sign-offs
- Industry Standard Programs for print and web design
- Further information on file organization.