

Website Development.

Off-the-shelf versus a custom or bespoke website solution



First impressions matter!

Who are you? What do you offer? What makes you stand out from the competition. A quality website is the gateway to answering these questions, driving traffic and generating leads.

That's why having solid online presence is essential for lead generation and business growth.

Off-the-shelf versus a bespoke website solution

Here we note the differences between the available solutions for website development: an off-the-shelf or out-the-box solution versus a bespoke or custom-made solution.

We also hear from our Senior Web Developer Brendan Proctor. He will relate from his own experience why a bespoke website yields far better results. This in terms of investment, ongoing maintenance and lead generation.

What is an off-the-shelf solution?

This solution involves purchasing a pre-built template with some ability to customise, allowing you to drag and drop elements onto pre-built pages. The user can create a simple site with basic functionality and the ability to add plugins for extra costs. This type of solution is usually aimed at start-ups with little to no budget.

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The limitations of an off-the-shelf solution

At a first glance, this solution may appear more cost effective than a bespoke solution. However, it is only once we delve into it, that we can see its limitation and hidden fees.

- **Limited Customisation.** The templates are mass marketed and are designed to account for the needs for many users. Therefore, certain functions may not be available, requiring you to adapt around the template.
- **Generic.** As the template and theme is likely to be used by 1000's of other users, it is a challenge for it to stand out and be unique.
- **Cluttered.** The templates are likely to come bundled with a massive amount of code and functions. The user would also have to purchase additional plugins and features to suit their business requirements.
- **Speed.** Not only does this end up being more costly, too many functions and apps can slow the website down considerably.
- **Hidden costs.** While this option does appear cheaper at first, the initial costs don't consider additional plugins and the functions paid for as part of the template. In addition, there are the admin costs of maintaining a rigid template and time-consuming upgrades.
- **Usability and SEO.** An abundance of functions can also impact the usability and SEO as users would require extra navigation to get to their destination.
- **Limited Flexibility.** These templates come with limited customisation for making changes. As requirements change, the business would need new functions and features, which may not be compatible with the existing template. The current design can therefore become redundant over time.

Relating from his own development background, Brendan has the following to say:

“From my experience, an off-the-shelf solution ends up requiring many extra features and plugins to keep up with the user's needs. This leads to an overloaded, cluttered site. The multiple plugins are also likely to crash when updates are not compatible.

From a coding perspective, to hack away and change a theme to suit a client's needs is very costly, time consuming and frustrating. And often it doesn't fit within the theme's capabilities and isn't possible. So, there is a very little freedom when it comes to any coding or custom development. In general, Php programmers or developers struggle to code anything custom within this framework.

These sites generally seem to crash and fall over at some point as they fall behind on WordPress or plugin updates. So, in our experience they don't ever last very long.”

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What is a Bespoke Website?

A bespoke website is designed specifically for you – your requirements and your business goals.

In simplest terms, this solution provides a unique, customer centric website with a competitive edge!

An expert web developer would work with you to fully understand your business, your brand and what you'd like to communicate. This allows them to create a site specifically matched to your needs, saving time and complications along the way.

The benefits of a bespoke solution

While at first it may appear costly, a bespoke website is not as expensive as you might think! In fact, when adding everything up, the overall cost ends up being similar to an off-the-shelf solution.

- **Bespoke.** User journeys are mapped out before development begins to ensure visitors get to where they need to be, as soon as possible. The overall user experience is improved with the emphasis on user flow and interaction
- **Suitability.** Instead of having to decide from a huge range of templates, features and plugins, the best ideas and latest trends are presented to you by experts.
- **Uncluttered.** As the systems and features are built in, the website is uncluttered from 3rd party add-ons and unnecessary functions.
- **Flexible and adaptive.** The code is written specifically for the website, so is adaptive to support business growth. It is responsive and designed to work across all devices.
- **SEO and social media.** As these are pre-built, they are set up and ready to generate client leads straight away. The developers can take advantage of the latest techniques to optimise search engine rankings while coding.
- **Integrations.** The system is developed specifically for the business, allowing it to integrate with its unique database, CRM and other applications.
- **Support.** An expert team is at hand for support, advice, maintenance and training. The designers take care of all upgrades and improvements.
- **Extra Security.** Web developers write the code themselves giving the owner complete control of it. This removes the need for 3rd party plugins and open source codes, both of which are favoured by hackers.
- **Assurance.** The website comes with an SSL certificate, reassuring customers that they are safe while visiting and making purchases.
- **Ownership.** The website is the intellectual property of its owner. It's not reliant on 3rd parties to maintain and update plugins.
- **Reduced overall costs.** There are no per-user costs and no license fees. There is also no need for 3rd party plugin or hefty costs to develop additional features.

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As a web development and coding expert, Brendan has the following to add:

“The site is tailor made for the client so there is no unnecessary heavy code or functionality for the user to download.

The site is much faster website that is preferred by search engines Google prefers faster/leaner websites to crawl – so there are more client leads.

The flexibility allows for easy maintenance, any changes or new development. There’s also less support or maintenance required on regular plugins and software updates.”

No Problem Web Design

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We are a team of web developers building sites that are lean, fast and search engine optimised. We are not limited by one specific web technology and will choose the most effective option for you.

No Problem Web Design grow businesses by building great websites that drive traffic and generate leads.

Contact us to plan your next website project.

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