

If you are an actor and know you need some sort of web presence, read on!

This is a work in progress, so check it again in a while.

Networking sites

Right now the most popular networking site is Facebook. This is where you need to be, whether you do it yourself or you let a friend or fan do it. If you're doing it yourself, you have the choice between a profile or a page. I'll explain more about this [here](advice/43-networking-sites/68-facebook-tips). If you leave that to someone else, it needs to be a page, and if it's an unofficial thing, a group. However, if you never have anything to post - whether news, thoughts, opinions, jokes or media like photos, videos or audio - a website might be better.

Twitter

is good if you have a lot of news, and say you're in a very popular movie that has a huge fan following, such as Twilight.

Myspace

is good if you're a musician.

Youtube

is good if you often create videos that a lot of people will want to see, or you want to set yourself up as a guru on some topic.

Some have all of these and a few others. That's a jungle, and none of them are all that good at displaying information for an actor, so let me suggest a Google profile (if you don't have a regular website), or any other profile service that offers the same features. It lists all your links, and you can put your resume on there.

Create your own website

You have a few main choices when deciding on what kind of website you want. You have to identify your main objectives. Do you want a slick graphic display? Do you want to be able to update the site yourself? Does anything technical make your head spin? Your choices will be different based on the answers to those questions.

A flashy site

- This normally means using flash, a technology that will look fantastic, but has a few built in disadvantages. It will not be visible to users of iPhones and iPads, and many companies also block this content. It will also mean you need the original designer to change the content, for every little change.

You want to be able to change things

- This means you need a website based on some kind of CMS (Content Management System). The main ones are Joomla and Wordpress, but some webhosts also have CMS-like frontends. Including what was formerly <http://smallbusiness.yahoo.com/webhosting/> Geocities (which is rather overpriced, BTW).

Joomla

is extremely mature and advanced, and makes beautiful websites (this one is built on Joomla). It's fairly straightforward to install, just make sure you install it from scratch, not from the version that comes with your webhosting - it's easy to install, but too old, and therefore insecure. Joomla is however quite complicated once you get past that stage. You'll need someone who has experience with sites built with Joomla, unless you're a really good computer geek yourself. Let's put it this way, I (Annie) can do it, but I've goofed more than normal in the process. Once the backend stuff is done, changing stuff from the frontend is simple, and something most actors can do themselves quite easily.

Wordpress

is a blogging platform. Easy to install and easy to maintain. The downside is that you'll need a custom template, otherwise the front page will look like a blog. Ideally you'll pay a designer to do this. The front page will not be easily changed if you make a custom one, but all the rest is easily changed, including the menu structure. Compared to Joomla, it's easy, but access to a

computer geek is good, especially in the beginning. What you don't get done then, can be added as blog posts.

**A regular website** is easy to make for any computer geek by using a website editor of some sort, but changing the content later means you need to change the actual pages. If you have a control panel at the webhost, you can change the text on the pages in the file editor provided in the control panel. To change more complex things, either download the pages to your computer, change them in the software used, and then upload again. Or see if the WYSIWYG editor in the control panel can change the pages without messing up the design (the code is often changed by WYSIWYG editors, whether they're on your computer or somewhere else). Check with the geek/designer what method you can use to change things, before completing the site.

**Anything technical makes your head spin**. Either leave it alone, or hire someone (professional or friend) to create and maintain the site. It IS doable, but can get expensive if you need to pay for it.

**Buying domains and webhosting**

This is where a lot of people pay more than they need to. Make sure you own the domain (yourname.com for instance). Buy the domain first, but decide on the webhost first. Don't go to say GoDaddy and buy hosting from them unless you actually need what they offer - it's very overpriced. Domains are cheap, they make their profit on hosting. The best way is to ask a geek who just researched the topic which webhosting you should choose. Also be aware that unless you're part of a franchise such as Twilight, you won't get as much traffic per month as you think. You won't need unlimited bandwidth. There are many types of webhosts, from the fly by night to the very reliable. And from the hosts that cater to geeks to those that will help you with just about everything - the geek solutions are normally very reliable, cheap and not willing to do everything for you.. A web designer will often have hosting as part of the package. Still make sure you own the domain yourself, but hosting it with the designer is OK.