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How I Created My Website "www.LeyblsVelt.co.il"
(A little long, but hopefully useful)

Hello people!

A few months ago (Nov. 2010), I approached this wonderful forum, Techshoret, for assistance in creating and putting up a website. I received numerous responses, for which I thank everyone involved. There was also a request to get back to the forum with a summary of the various answers to my queries, and suggestions made to me concerning my 'project'. Many of the suggestions regarded hiring a professional/experienced Web designer – but I liked the challenge of doing it on my own. Although I don't regret it, if I had had the funds available, I might have gone that direction too, at least for some of the initial steps.

Following is a partial summary, combined with a chronologic report and some notes and tips on how I set up my website www.LeyblsVelt.co.il (that you are all welcome to visit). I've taken the liberty to equate some of the following issues to 'documentation' terminology we are all familiar with, to show how similar it is to certain stages of preparing a website. Hope the info contained here will be useful to you.

So, without further ado, and hoping you enjoy it:

Part I – Initialization:

> **Step 1)** Decide on the general makeup of the website (i.e. contents) and the target audience(s).
>
> **What I did:** I used a top-down approach, and sketched out a sort of Table of Contents (TOC) of the various items I wanted to display and give people access to. I set up the equivalent of "Level1" (chapter), "Level 2" (section), … etc. headings, where these would be my webpages. At the moment, I have a Homepage [equivalent to a book cover], a Contents page [equivalent to a TOC], and various webpages [equivalent to chapters] with texts and/or links to external objects or sites. My Site Map [equivalent to an 'all encompassing' Index] is not ready yet.
> **Note 01:** Since my website is of a non-commercial nature, I have more flexibility on appearance, content, etc.
>
> **Step 2)** Think up a 'user friendly' Domain Name and register it ASAP (exactly what 'user friendly' is, I'll leave to your own judgment and imagination). This is one of the most important first steps, and may even pre-date **Step 1**. Let me briefly explain (you'll find better and more thorough explanations on the Web, and in the links I'm providing further on): In many ways, your Domain Name is the first contact anyone has with your site, even before they get to

it. For example, in Web searches.

What this is: The equivalent of a Domain Name (I picked up the following analogy from one of my suggested links below) is the name of a "company" you want to set up. It must be unique and 'user friendly'. The issue of 'unique', however, is vital. You must register the name before you can continue with other things (if the 'name' you want is, indeed, critical) – because names are being registered every second of every day … So if you have a good one, get it registered ASAP, before someone else grabs it first.

What I did: I consulted with a few persons who were Web-savvy, and also checked the Web with some searches on registering a Domain Name – and decided, for personal reasons, NOT to register on 1) a free site [apparently it's possible to set up 'virtually free websites']. 2) via a non-local (i.e. non-Israeli) registering site. What I did do, was go to the Israel Internet Association site (http://www.isoc.org.il/index_eng.html) and register via one of their recommended registrars. I signed up and paid (by VISA) for 2 years, but 1 year is also possible.

Step 3) Select a Web Host and sign up with them.

What this is: The equivalent of a Web Host (I picked up the following analogy up from one of my suggested links below) is the physical place you want to set up shop. Just as in the real world, you can put up a sign outside your apartment/house door, or you can rent office space – in the same way, you hook up to a Web Host who will give you disk space on their server(s), and offer various other standard and non-standard perks. The links below can offer more insight into this.

What I did: There are free hosts – but as I said, I didn't go this route. On the other hand, I'm afraid I also don't have too much to report on this issue, regarding paying and registering with commercial hosts. You see, I was lucky to find a generous colleague who had some spare space on his server, and he offered to set me up there, since I don't need all that much. The key issue for me was that I had someone to consult, and also somewhere 'safe' to 'play' in, as I learnt to create/build my site.

Part II – Construction:

Step 1) Get the Web to help you. At this point, I'd like to take a few steps back, and explain how I got this far in the first place, since it was all new for me.

As I mentioned, I consulted with various persons, including some very friendly and informative Techshoret members. However, much of what I really needed was available on the Web. Truth to tell, at first it was rather difficult to find exactly what I needed – not for lack of information, but rather from the flood of data I found. Fortunately, I located several very useful sites that basically took me in hand and guided me right up to the actual creation

of my site.

The following links are my suggested reading material (and I'm sure there is a lot more good stuff out there – just that these hit the spot and got me up-and-running very smoothly, very fast).

The first link offers good, solid background material. Worth the read to 'get your mind wet', and includes a great downloadable PDF chock full of tips and guidelines. Via the PDF, you can jump to various very useful links, including the author's very own excellent YouTube tutorials (e.g. several for learning some CSS):http://www.theperfectsiteguide.com

The second link is a great hands-on site with multiple clear and useful tutorials that will help you 'get your feet wet'. I used this almost exclusively, and it accompanied me right through to my 'completed' site: thesitewizard.com

Step 2) Build the site structure based on the original design of step 1 of Part I above, using applicable site-building applications, and start loading material and links to it. At this point, you need a Web design application. Although I haven't used it myself, many have recommended Dreamweaver. I used a freebee called "KompoZer", recommended and followed up with tutorials at **sitewizard.com**, mentioned above.

Step 3) Get an FTP tool. Although KompoZer is just what I need (nothing sophisticated) for my simple website, and it handles much of the communication between the Web design and actually uploading the HTML Web pages to the host server – I still needed a tool that would assist me in uploading files to the Web host. The tool I found and got myself up-and-running quite quickly (i.e. minimal learning curve) is "FileZilla". Simple to install, and simple to use (drag and drop).

Step 4) Learn the quirks of your tool (in my case, KompoZer), and how to best use its functions to get the optimum effects, etc. At this point, I must mention – if you haven't yet visited my site – that it's about 95% in Yiddish. This means that most of the texts are right-to-left using the Hebrew alphabet (plus special diacritics for vowels – not usually used in Modern Hebrew). Although KompoZer has the option to switch between right-to-left and left-to-right, it has caused me numerous headaches: first, to find that functionality, and second to master it – and I'm afraid to say, I'm still not sure why some things work, and why others don't. I'm still learning the functions and possibilities of the tool.

Step 5) Learn how to modify / add to the source code HTML commands. At this point, I gave up on getting KompoZer to do everything I needed it to do, and have tweaked the code somewhat, circumventing the tool itself.

That's all for now. There's a lot more to talk about, but I'll stop here. People are welcome to contact me offline for related issues.

One more item that may be of interest to people. My website is far from 'complete': I still have more material to link up. There are also some basic structural changes I want to make – now that I've put up this 'prototype'. And there are more things I want to do with the site itself (e.g. scrolling, hotspots, feedback form, etc.).

I struggled with the issue of whether or not to 'go public' and announce the site. Since this is an 'amateur' site I had the benefit of going 'live' whenever I felt like it. A professional site should be more polished before it goes up – although it's sad to say, that many sites are in relatively poor shape and go live, regardless (OK so you want to strut your stuff – time is money – but at least update and improve from time to time …).

<mark>I've put in about 80 hours of work</mark> on this site, within a period of about 2 months (late evenings and nights). – I'm talking about: design, reading up, learning the KompoZer and FileZilla tools, as well as locating the materials, preparing/adapting, and linking them, and then testing the whole shebang, again and again and again and… – a WebMaster's job is never done (- that's "vebmayster" in Yiddish ☺).

Visit www.LeyblsVelt.co.il. There's even specific technical communication related material !

- Leybl Botwinik