

Welcome to my newsletter on the topic of:
Making Your Website Work for You

[You can read this newsletter on my website if you prefer - click here >>](#)

Sometimes a web page is not enough.

You need to give your visitors more detail or give them something they can keep on their PC to refer to or to print out. Things like:

- Product brochures
- Specifications
- Event flyers
- Course programmes
- How to's
- Terms & conditions and warranties

If you include these on your website, you can direct people to your website to read and download and maybe print these docs saving you printing and mailing costs. However, there are a few things to bear in mind, so this month's newsletter is about:

Including documents on your website

1. What type of file?

Your visitors will need to have the appropriate program installed to open and read your document. So if it's a Word document they will need the correct version of Word to open and read it. With all the new versions being released that can be a problem. A way around this is to convert your document into Adobe Acrobat pdf format. PDF stands for Portable Data Format which is a protocol designed so that documents print out the same on all computer/printer combinations. Nearly everyone has an Adobe Acrobat reader installed.

There are several ways to create a pdf file from your Word, PowerPoint, Excel or other program. Many programs have a "save as pdf" feature or you can use a specialist (free) program like [CutePDF](#). I use this and it's simple to produce a pdf from any document.

Another reason for offering documents in pdf format is that it's more difficult for your visitors to make changes – either inadvertently or on purpose.

2. How big is your document?

You may have noticed that if you include images or photos in a Word or PowerPoint document the file size can get VERY BIG. This is because these programs allow you to insert an image of any size and will scale it for you to the available space – you can change the size of the image on the page by pulling the "handles"



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around the image. But this doesn't change the size of the image saved in the Word file. If you have taken some hi-res shots with your camera or phone and insert them into your brochure you may have a nasty surprise when you try to email the doc to a client. Word provides various options to reduce the file size of images – like deleting the cropped bits and changing the resolution.

Once you've finished editing your doc and you're ready to send it out you can change the settings of the images. Highlight an image and click the "compress images" button on the Pictures toolbar. For more, look under the Help section in Word. Another way is to resize the images and/or change the resolution in another program, like Photoshop or PaintShop, so you have more control. In Word, or Open Office, when you "save as pdf" you are offered an option to create a smaller file suitable for the web or email. *I recently reduced a one-page event flyer from 1.5MB to 200KB by using these techniques.*

If you have a brochure, user guide or journal produced by a graphics designer or printer they will be able to provide you with a document in pdf format. However, ask them to make it web friendly or it may be too big to download. You could divide very large brochures into sections.

Will people be just looking or will they want to print it out? How far you go with reducing the resolution of images depends on whether you want people to print the document. The answer is – try it and see if a) download time is acceptable and b) is print quality good enough.

This can all be quite a lot of work to set up. Ask your webmaster to help or generate suitable files for your website. *(I provide this as part of my [website support service](#).)*

3. How do the documents look on your website

When someone clicks on a link to a document what happens depends on the browser they are using and how they have it set up. In IE the default option is usually to display a pdf or doc file in a new browser window but in other browsers (Firefox, Chrome, Safari) the viewer will usually be asked if they wish to open or save the file. With this in mind, it's best to keep downloadable documents for more detailed information and to have the main points in a normal web page.

4. How do you include the document in your website?

Technically, you need to upload the file to your host and you need to create a link to it in the code on your website. Your webmaster can do this very easily. If

you are using a Content Management System or a blog you may be able to upload and link in one step or you may need to upload the document (using ftp) and then make a link to the file's url e.g.

<http://www.realcomnet.co.uk/newsletter08.pdf>

5. How do you know how many people have downloaded the files?

It's useful to know how many times a document has been downloaded. It gives you an idea of whether you're providing the right kind of information on your website and, for example, how many people are interested in an event or have downloaded a booking form. (*Interesting then to see how many actual bookings*) Your hosting stats package should tell you how many downloads of each file. If you use Google Analytics you need to add a little code to each file link to track downloads as "events" - so ask your webmaster about this.

6. And lastly - include a clickable link to your website in your downloadable documents.

Nearly any document type can be included on your website - Word, pdf, Excel spreadsheets, PowerPoint presentations and videos. Videos need special attention and you could try publishing your video on YouTube and embedding a link to the YouTube page. (More about Videos in a future newsletter!)

I hope these tips on **Making your website work for you** are useful. Give me a call or [email](#) if you've any questions or if I can help in any way.

Best wishes and make your website work for you!

Sandra Dillon

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If you found it useful and would like me to include any specific topic in a future newsletter please let me know

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