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English Composition I
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Web Site Design
Process Analysis
Revision

I like to paint. What better way to share my work with family and friends, and also with the World Wide Web, than to design a web site?

The process of designing a web site requires few steps.

First of all, you have to **know how to design it**. If you don't know anything about the subject, you have to **learn how to do it**. You will need the right books, but finding the right books could be a difficult task. Reading the online reviews that some of the booksellers are offering is a very good start—it will narrow down your search to a smaller number of books. Internet research could also prove very helpful. There are a multitude of good online courses available.

Web Design involves the proper use of Hyper Text Markup Language (HTML) codes. It's helpful if you **know how to read and insert HTML codes** within a web document. Working with HTML only can be a real nightmare. In order to make your work easier, you may have to **use specialized software** such as Front Page, Netscape or Canvas. You will have to determine which one is best for you. Also, your Operating System (Windows, Mac, Unix or Linux) can be a major factor in determining which software package(s) are suitable; price could also influence your final decision.

Once you know how to design your web site, you can **start the actual process of creating the web site**. You need to have a **clear plan** of what your web site is going to be about—in my case, my art work. There are other important things to consider: the page layout—frames/no frames, tables/no tables—and additional elements to spice up your web site (guest book, background music, background picture and graphics). Make sure your web site is not very complex; new visitors should be able to find their way around your web site easily.

Having a web site on the Internet can be very costly. You have to **know exactly how much you're willing to spend** per month. For example, registration of domain name could cost around $35 per year, and the actual web site hosting could cost an additional $10 per month or more. In my case, I'm not willing to spend a penny more than I have to; therefore, I will opt for a site that will host my web site free and also assign me a free domain name. It will not be a real domain name, and I won't own it. That's okay for me since I don't have a lot to lose in the eventuality that they decide to cancel our agreement.

The next step is to **load your web site on the cyberspace**. In order to do that you need to know what a File Transfer Protocol is and how to use it. Assuming you know it by now, you will have no trouble loading your files on the Internet. At this point you can say: "I've done it!" You have a web site.
If you think that that's all, you're wrong!

You will have **to test your web site** for bad links. The best way to do this is to use a different computer than the one you've used to set the web site up. Some of the links can point to your computer's hard drive; and if you don't realize it, the links will not work. All the links have to point to your web site's files and folders. If you don't have a second computer, that's okay! Some online services will test your web site and determine how fast it loads, how accurate it displays with different types of browsers, link popularity and HTML errors. If your web site is not loading fast enough, you will have to reduce the size of your graphics, compress files—where possible— or crop pictures.

Now that your web site is on line, it displays properly, it loads fast enough and there are no browser incompatibilities, you will definitely want to know if anybody is looking at your web site.

In order to look at your web site, people must be able to find it. You must **add your web site to the search engines.** There are also a few online services that will add your site, for free, to all major search engines. Make sure that you have incorporated **special tags**, called meta tags, in your web site. Meta tags are recognized by the search engines. Also, create a banner add for your web site.

Once you know that your web site can be found by the search engines and your add banner displays on other people's pages, there are a few additional questions that you will have. How many unique visitors per day are viewing your web site? Who are they? Where do they come from? How many of them return? How many of them bookmark your page? What kind of browsers are they using? What pages are they visiting most? Who are my top referrals? You will not be able to answer these questions by simply inserting a "counter," as I found out. There are some special sites that offer free statistic services that will answer these questions and more regarding the usage of your web site. All you have to do is to insert an additional special code in order to activate statistics monitoring for your web site.

Analyzing your web site on a daily basis is the best way to find out what things work best. Make sure your web site is up to date. Follow up on emails and guest book postings that you might receive. Don't get discouraged easily! The cyberspace is growing day by day and only hard work and dedication can lead to a successful web site.