



The Web Design + Development Process

Whether a project is valued at \$2.5k or \$25k+, the successful execution of any project, large or small, has to follow a process. Without this process, it's very easy to lose control of the scope of a project and no one wants that.

Donkey Ink Design ("DID") has developed a time-proven collaborative process for developing database-driven websites and content management systems ("CMS") over the years – a process that very much includes you, the client. This document outlines the DID process for a website project. There may be variations depending on the project.

Step 1. Discovery

The first step prior to designing and developing your website is to determine what DID is going to be building so that a quote can be presented. This part of the process is called "discovery" and is executed by having our clients focus on 3 important questions:

- 1) What is the purpose of the site?
- 2) What kind of content will the site contain?
- 3) How will the content be organized?

During the discovery process we will look at the answers to these questions and establish a sitemap, which is basically a structured list of the sections/pages and subsections/subpages your website will contain for both users and site administrators. A brief description of the content types appearing in each section/page is also compiled within the sitemap. By creating a sitemap for your website, the scope of the project is determined and DID is able to prepare a quotation for the design and development of your website.

Step 2. Quote Presentation/Consultation/Approval

DID will then present you with a quotation for the design and development of your website and CMS. At this time you can make any changes/adjustments to the project outline and the quote will be adjusted if necessary. Once the quote is approved in writing (email), a timeline is established and a deposit of 50% of the total agreed upon amount*, accompanied by all collateral files (logos, images, textual content, etc.), is accepted by DID.

* While most projects require a 50% deposit, larger projects may require a payment schedule wherein the deposit is dependent upon the payment breakdown.

Step 3. Wireframing & UI/UX design (larger sites only)

The first and most important step taken for any website project is to establish the manner in which the website content will be organized and how the user will interact with your website to access the content. Working with the sitemap established in **Step 1. Discovery**, and tweaking it if necessary, DID will produce an interactive wireframe prototype. A wireframe is a rough sketch of your website's page content and functionality represented with placeholder text and content boxes. The wireframe does not incorporate design and no final layout concepts are established; it simply serves as a functional prototype of the finished site allowing for usability assessment.

Once the wireframe prototype behaves more or less how the live site should, DID requires written sign off on the wireframe(s) before we can move into the design portion of the project. Projects requiring more than one user interface may require more than one wireframe prototype.

Step 4. Overall Design, Look & Feel

At this point the desired visual direction is determined through a consultation with you. Here we discuss things like your branding, colour palettes, and what your clients respond to in terms of aesthetics and functionality. A conversation about the photography and image sourcing process will take place during this step as well. Two versions of the home page or initial section design are created based on this discussion. Each page is designed and laid out as it will appear on the web. These design composites (or mockups) are static and non-functioning, though there will be instances of rollover/hover states (what a link will look like when the user has the cursor over it) to help give you an idea of the overall interactive colour scheme.

Step 5. Design Approval & Sign Off

The two home page/initial section mockups are submitted for design selection. You'll now spend some time deciding which design you want to go with and then come up with a reasonable revision list to ensure that the design meets your approval. Once DID has your design choice and revision list, the revisions are implemented and the chosen design is resubmitted. Any further design tweaks are then implemented if necessary. Once the chosen design is signed off on in writing/email, the rest of the site is designed and the above process is repeated until you are satisfied with the whole site's look and feel. Once we're there, written sign off on the design as a whole is required. *Any design change requests made after design sign off may be considered an add-on and could incur additional cost.* This is to ensure that we do not move into **Step 6. Site & CMS Development on the Development Server** and have to change the design, which will likely affect any programming that may have already been implemented. Reworking code to incorporate design can be a lot of work, which is why the design needs to be 100% complete and approved by you before programming begins.

Step 6. Site & CMS Development on the Development Server

This can be the most complicated and time-consuming step for most projects. The approved designs are now converted into functional web pages using development technologies/platforms including, but not limited to, HTML5, CSS3, jQuery/Javascript, MySQL, PHP, Drupal, and Wordpress. Development and configuration of your CMS environment usually occurs alongside Steps 3 and 4 to prepare content, forms and modules so they will be ready to be integrated with your website design. The development website ("dev site") is now being built on a development server, which is a server belonging to the developer assigned to the project. When fully built the dev site will look and function exactly like your finished site.

Step 7. Site Introduction/Client Administrator CMS Training on the Dev Site

Once the dev site is complete and has gone through a thorough round of internal testing by DID, we go over the dev site with you during a training and site introduction session. During this session, you'll be populating your dev site with some of your real world content. After the CMS training/site introduction is complete, you'll be required to spend some time populating the dev site with the rest of your real world content. This will allow you to become familiar with your administration access and the processes involved with updating your website content.

At any point during this step, further revisions can be requested and implemented. Depending on the revisions, these may incur additional costs.

The CMS training/site introduction session may differ for every site subject to variables such as client location and scope of the specific CMS attached to the project.

Step 8. Overall Project Sign Off, Final Payment & Site Launch

After all the site content has been populated, any last minute revisions have been implemented, and you are satisfied with the website and have a solid understanding of how to administer it, it's time to launch the site. At this time DID requires a written/emailed sign off that the job is complete, accompanied by your web hosting information and final payment. Once this is received, your website and CMS are uploaded–launched–to your servers and the site is live! The popping of champagne corks is optional and should occur a safe distance away from any computers obviously. ... and of course, if there are any questions or issues after the site is launched, we'd be all too happy to address them.

