



Your Web Coach, Christine Chubenko:

Understanding Your Website

**by Christine Chubenko | for Oakland Business Review
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The current state of our economy is forcing business owners to cut back on spending and therefore take on the work they would normally pay to have done for their business. As you may have guessed, one of those areas is their website. These days it's common knowledge that other than your *self*, your website is your strongest marketing tool. I'd like to address a few scenarios that I encounter regularly with the hope that you have a clearer understanding of why these scenarios exist.

Scenario 1. Your cousin pulled together a website for you using a website template package on a webhost provider. Now you want to use Frontpage to maintain your site. Let's call the template package SiteCreate and we'll call the web host provider *Hosting Is Us*, to make the explanations easier. SiteCreate is a template package that operates only in the *Hosting Is Us* environment. Unless SiteCreate states that you can use Frontpage to maintain your site, the template package and Frontpage will not know how to communicate with each other. It's like only knowing English but trying to read Japanese.

Scenario 2. Your web developer built your site using a professional tool and you would like to use SiteCreate to maintain your site. Website template packages are not built to interact with other development tools. In order for them to be easy-to-use by the non-developer, there is a lot of overhead code in the package. This prevents outside tools from properly communicating with these packages.

Scenario 3. You have an existing account on Hosting Is Us and you had a web developer create a new site using their own tools for that account. You now want to use SiteCreate to maintain your site. Your hosting account is not exactly the same as the SiteCreate account. SiteCreate is a program that sits in your account. A site that's built outside of SiteCreate can't be interpreted by the template package. Again, if SiteCreate does allow for outside tools, then you need to make sure you fit the parameters. As an analogy, consider that you can't use Word to read a PDF, it requires the Adobe Reader because the Reader understands the embedded code and Word cannot.

There are other considerations like what language was used to build your site? Was it ASP.NET, Java, PHP or ColdFusion? Some of these look like HTML, but they are far more than that and many of the inexpensive HTML editors aren't robust enough to edit these pages. It

boils down to compatability again and you need the appropriate tool plus enough time to continue the work that was started on your website.

Contact Christine Chubenko at christine@yourwebsitecoach.net.