**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

DIY CMS Websites – is it for you?

I received a very interesting piece of email marketing yesterday. In it, the writer was selling a course to teach people how to build their own CMS (content-managed) websites.

A well-crafted sales letter, this piece of marketing hit all the right notes, expressing emotion and anger at the fact that agencies are out there ‘*selling websites for thousands of Rands, when they are just using a template that they’ve downloaded from the Internet … and you can do all this yourself, in the space of just a few hours.’*

Yes - all the above is true of companies that offer a CMS website development service, but it’s also very far from the whole truth. So here are a few points to consider before you embark on a DIY website development.

# 1. Building a website takes a lot of time – and bandwidth

Building a website takes a lot of time. A lot more time than what you would think. In fact, I’ve seen difficult and complicated websites take three to six months to develop completely.

We recently customised a site for a client, and one background change took a full day to implement - do you have that kind of time to dedicate to just one aspect of your marketing?

Never mind the time though – can you afford the bandwidth it’s going to take to load everything up and then download it again to back it up? Can your budget stretch to cover an uncapped ADSL line?

If you’re planning on doing this over a 3G connection, not only will you kill your cap in the space of literally 2 days (if it even lasts that long), you can also easily estimate tripling your development time, because of the slow speed and dips in your line.

# 2. Customisation and development require knowledge & skill

Yes, you have a template in front of you. But, you know that purple background in the one part, that you’d like to change to an image – do you have the HTML, CSS & pHp coding knowledge you need to be able to make the changes to the multiple source files, so that you can change your background?

## And what about troubleshooting?

Who are you going to turn to when you make a change in the back end and your whole website disappears - as happened to a client of ours recently? All she’d done was implement a new menu item and when she got the front page she only got a 404 error. Have you considered how you’ll handle that?

## Sitemaps and Submissions

Now, that’s all before we get to the technical aspects like sitemaps and submissions. Do you know where to submit your site to get it indexed and crawled?

Do you know about the differing submission portals and requirements for the various search engines?

Do you know that any site requires at least 3 different types of sitemaps, in multiple coding languages – more if you have a mobile version of your site?

## Speaking of mobile

Speaking of mobile - is your site optimised for it?

Easily 70% of **all** Internet engagement in South Africa happens through mobile devices. Are you happy to write off 70% of your potential traffic because of poorly designed mobile interface?

# 3. Copywriting & Search Engine Optimisation (SEO)

If you spend any time on the Internet, you’ll quickly realise that content is king – and bad content is a website killer. More than that – bad copywriting is an SEO killer.

How carefully have you structured your content? Have you taken into account keyword-density and how that impacts your return in search results?

Have you tied this to your alt-tags and meta-descriptions, and page display titles and meta-keywords? Do you know how to structure the layout of your text for SEO purposes and how densely your keywords have to be populated at each juncture?

## All that before you start writing

Yes – all that before you start writing. Now, you have to take the copy and turn it into something exciting and fresh and relevant for the readers that actually find their way to your pages, so that they don’t bounce off your page before you’ve had a chance to even make your pitch.

# 4. Design & Layout

How many times have you gotten to a website and made an immediate decision about the company based on how professional their site looks?

## So what does your website say about you?

Are you confident that you have the skill and know-how to develop a website that will portray the professional image you want to present?

Will it be easy-to-navigate and well laid-out? Will the pages be structured well for future integration into AdWords campaigns, or will you have to rewrite pages to run AdWords successfully?

Will it have multiple points of interest and enough variety to cater to the wide range of differing tastes that are out there, and are you confident enough in your own abilities to come up with all the ideas that are needed to populate and structure a great website?

# 5. Choosing the right platform

The right platform will either tie everything together and support your efforts – or it will make everything you do a nightmare.

Have you investigated the options available to you? Have you looked at each of the platforms in-depth, and considered aspects like Search Engine Optimisation?

A client of ours has built her website through a package from a very reliable provider… except that the company she had in to do her SEO was unable to make the changes via the system interface, and so had to use the back-end code. Now, every time she makes a change to one of her pages, she loses all her SEO.

So, her options are:

1. No SEO on her individual pages, or
2. Paying to have SEO redone **every time** she makes a change on her site, or
3. Global SEO across her entire site.

This doesn’t seem like too much of a problem, because there is still global metadata. Except, global metadata will get published to each individual page as it’s crawled, resulting in repeats – and search engines don’t like repeated metadata. In fact, what they then do is kick out all the duplicate pages - meaning you won’t be indexed at all.

## Can your business afford to not have a searchable web presence?

A well-developed and well-thought out CMS website is the cornerstone of your digital marketing strategy – and for any business who wants to stay competitive, having control over your website and it’s content is crucial to remaining digitally relevant. What you’re willing to invest in that foundation though, will determine the quality of the results you’ll get back.

Agencies and developers spend day in and day out working with these issues and keeping up-to-date with the latest advancements in technology, so what you’re paying for is a **team of specialists** to work on your site – so that it becomes the silent salesman you need in our competitive digital arena.

And a successful salesman is something you can take to the bank.

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**A note to the editor:**

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