

# Definitions of commonly-used web-related terms



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## Introduction

If you're thinking about getting a website, or you've taken over an existing one, you're probably starting to get bamboozled by all the techie terms, but don't worry, everybody does when they start.

Unfortunately, some of the definitions you find on the internet are just as techie as the term they're trying to describe, so I thought I'd try to do a non-techie guide to techie terms.

### Back end

The back end of your website is the bit where you login to do any changes that need doing to the website – adding blog posts, updating photographs, adding new pages and so on. Sometimes it's used to refer to the dashboard of your content management system, sometimes it can refer to the host's control panel.

### Blog

Blog is a shortened version of the term 'weblog' and was originally used to mean a sort of online journal. It still means that but you sometimes find that it's a term people use for the section of their website where they add news or PR items.



You can have a website which is just a blog, or you can have a blog as part of your website.

### Browser

This is the bit of software (or app) that you use to browse the internet. Even if you don't know it, if you've ever looked on the internet you will have used one as it's the only way to do it. Browsers you may have heard of include:

- ✎ Microsoft Internet Explorer (now almost defunct)
- ✎ Microsoft Edge (comes with all Windows machines but not very popular)
- ✎ Chrome (this is probably the most popular now)
- ✎ Firefox (tends to be preferred by people with a more techie leaning)
- ✎ Opera
- ✎ Safari (for Apples)

Confusingly, Google produces a search engine specifically for Android phones and tablets which is also called 'Google', probably because the first page you go to when you open it is always Google.



## Content Management System (CMS)

A Content Management System, or CMS, is a posh way of saying 'a website that can be amended without needing technical skills'. WordPress is the most popular Content Management System. Others you may have heard of include Wix, Weebly, Squarespace and Shopify.



### Cpanel or control panel

This is where you get to the real guts of your site. You access it via a login screen provided by your host.

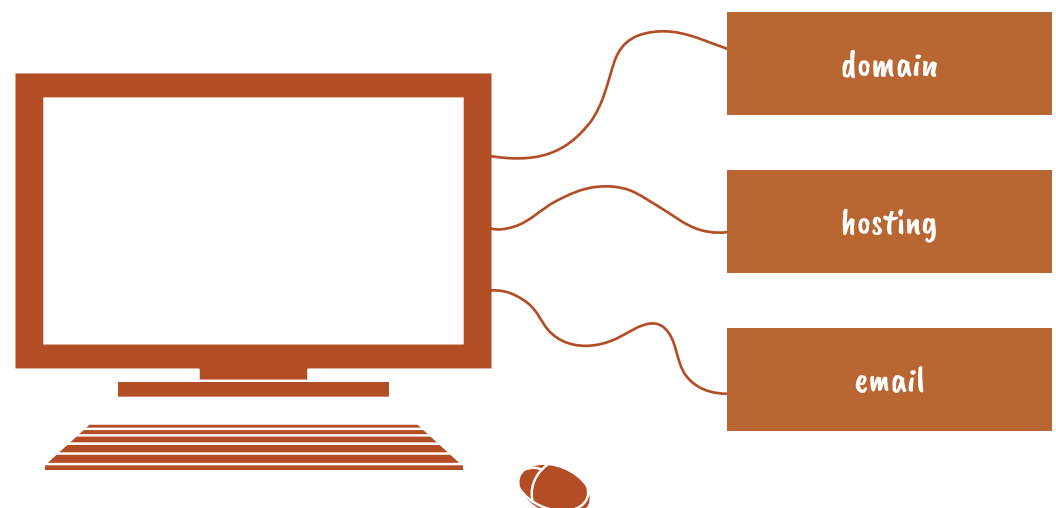
You can do a lot of very powerful stuff in here, but in reality there are only two things you are likely to want to do: install your chosen CMS, or set up mailboxes if you've decided to have your emails located on your hosting account.

However, it's very important to keep the login details for your control panel safe as they are critical if you ever decide to move or rebuild your site.



## DNS

DNS stands for Domain Name Servers and are the internet's equivalent of a phone book – they tell the internet where to find all the different bits related to your domain. This is how you can have domain, hosting and email in totally different places. It's not something to worry about if you're just starting out but I've included it here as it's a term that often gets bandied about so it's good if you know what it means.



## Domain

This is the name that people type into the browser when they want to go directly to your website. It usually ends with .co.uk, .uk, .com, .net, .org or .org.uk (though there are hundreds of other possible endings).



You can buy a domain from many different providers, some are hosts too (GoDaddy, 123Reg), some specialise in domains (NameCheap for example). It doesn't matter where you buy it. There's not really such a thing as an unreliable source for domain names, but prices do vary. You can expect to pay from £1 for the first year for a .co.uk (though it will rise in the second year) to £20 for a .com. HOWEVER – if you want a specialist domain, such as one that ends in .jobs or .museum, or you want one that is likely to be very popular, then you can pay many thousands of pounds.

Remember that although I said 'buy' a domain name, you are actually only renting it. Typically you will rent it annually, though you can sometimes pay for up to ten years at a time.

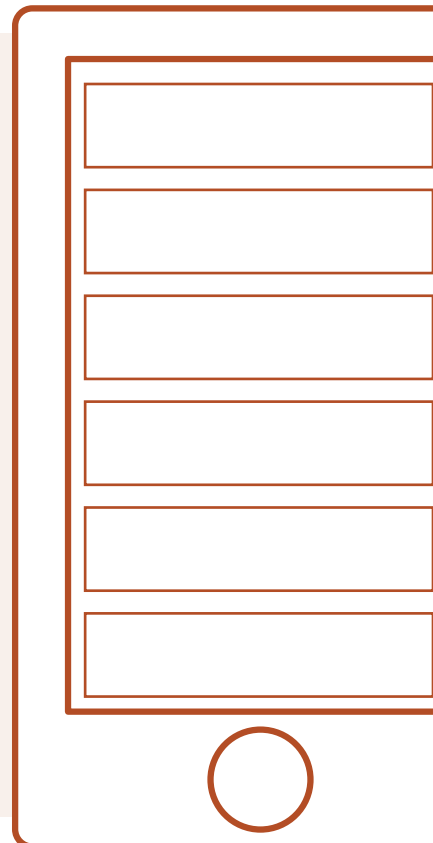
A word of warning – if you decide to buy your domain through a third party (such as your web designer) you **MUST** make sure that s/he registers the domain in your name and uses your email address as the contact email. This means that should anything happen to the third party you will still have access to your domain (but don't worry if you haven't done this already – there are ways to fix it).

If you would like advice on which domain name is best for your purposes, please get in touch with me.

## Email client or email app

Much like a browser being the only way you can access the internet, an email client or app is the only way you can access your emails. If you ever have trouble setting your emails up on your phone, tablet or computer, it's worth finding out which client (app) you're using because the instructions for setting up your email on each one are different. Ones you may have heard of include:

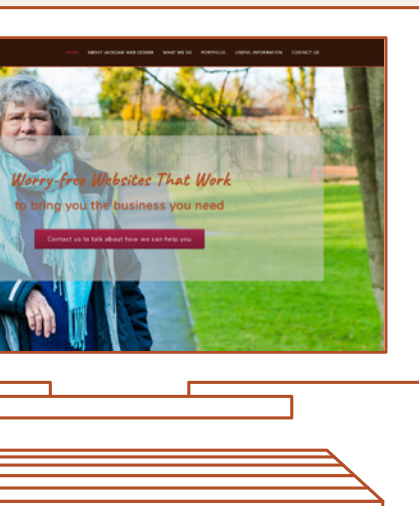
- ✉ Outlook (as an app on your phone or computer or available as a website you can access through your browser)
- ✉ Thunderbird
- ✉ Gmail (as an app on your phone and as a website you can access through your browser)
- ✉ "Email" which is generally the app that comes installed with your phone or tablet.



## Email hosting

When you're choosing which email address to use in your new venture, you might want to take advantage of the fact that you now have your own domain name to use as part of your email address (*like mine – jackie@jackdawwebdesign.co.uk*). If you decide to do this, you need to find somewhere for your emails to live too. Most (but not all) web hosts will also offer space for your emails, but many of them (but not all) will charge extra for this service, so if you want to do it this way make sure you include it in your criteria when you're looking for your host.

Alternatively, you can choose to use a separate provider such as Microsoft (via Office365) or Google (via G Suite). If you use either of them you can still use your own domain name, but you may have to pay, though registered charities are free with both at the moment. If you do have to pay, and if you want a large number of different email addresses (admin@, jackie@, jenny@, gardener@ etc), the costs will quickly mount up.



## Front end

The front end of your website is the bit that visitors to your website will see.

## ftp

This stands for 'file transfer protocol' and is the way that a web developer can access the files that make up your website without logging in to your control panel. You don't need to worry about this at all, but you may be asked to provide an 'ftp login' for your site. If you know your way around your control panel you can set up this login there, but if not just ask your host to do it for you.

## Google

Google is a software company who started life building what is now, by far, the world's most popular search engine, and it's the search engine that most people think of when you say 'Google'. They've now branched out into many other areas of webby stuff - for example, Google manufactures Android, which is the operating system (the software that tells your device how to work) used by most non-Apple mobile phones and tablets.



## Hosting provider or host

Your 'hosting provider', 'host' or 'web host' is the company from which you buy server space ('web hosting') for your website to live.

## HTML, CSS, php, Javascript

These are all different programming languages that are used to build a website. If you use a Content Management System you won't need to learn anything about any of these as it's all done for you.

## Nameservers

A nameserver is just the name of the server where your website lives. This is set up when you buy your domain name and usually defaults to the name of the server belonging to the company where you bought your domain – so if you buy the domain from GoDaddy, the default nameservers are the ones GoDaddy uses.

It's very very common that a domain registration and hosting will be with separate companies. For example, you may find the domain registration company isn't providing the services you need or expect, or you may worry that having the domain and the hosting with the same company would mean that you would lose both if something happened to that company. If you would prefer to use a different company for your hosting then you would login to the site where you bought your domain and change the nameservers there. There has to be a minimum of two nameservers defined and they usually take the form of ns1.servername.com and ns2.servername.com.

This can be a particularly confusing area for even experienced web professionals, so if you're stuck and would like to talk it through with someone feel free to drop me an email at [jackie@jackdawwebdesign.co.uk](mailto:jackie@jackdawwebdesign.co.uk).

## Search engine

This is a page you can go to on the internet to start searching for information. The most popular is Google (<https://google.co.uk>), which handles about 85% of internet searches, followed by Microsoft's Bing, which comes in second at about 10% of internet searches. The remaining five percent is taken up by the likes of Yahoo! and DuckDuckGo.



## SEO

SEO stands for Search Engine Optimisation and is the process of making sure that your website gets found by the search engines, and that when it is found it appears near the top of the list. SEO is a complex discipline and, although some web designers will do basic SEO as part of the website build to ensure that the site is findable, you should always expect to pay extra if your goal is to claim that number one spot in the search engine listings.



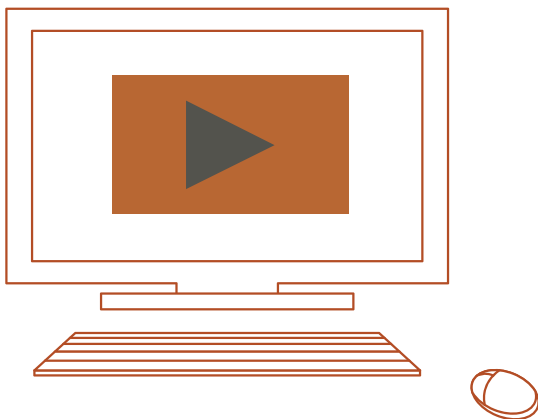
## Server

A server is a computer without monitor or keyboard. An internet server looks like the box you may have for your desktop PC but with lots of cables coming out of it which it needs to plug in to the internet.



## URL

URL (Uniform Resource Locator) is just a name for the link to a particular web page. It can be short (amazon.co.uk) or very long (https://jackdawwebdesign.co.uk/category/beforeandafter/). If you copy and paste the url into your browser you should go straight to the page you were aiming for.



## Vlog

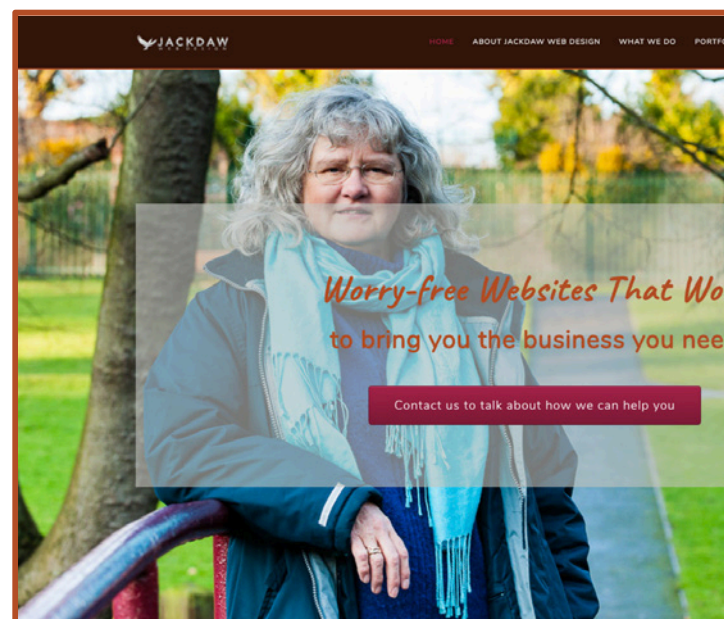
This is simply a video version of a Blog. So instead of writing their journal, vloggers will record it on a video.

You do sometimes see vlogs on websites, but usually you find them on specialist video platforms such as YouTube or Vimeo.

## Web hosting (sometimes shortened to 'hosting')

Once you've bought your domain name, you need to buy your web hosting. Typically these are with the same company, but they don't have to be. Your web hosting is basically just the space on a server where your website lives – it's as simple as that. You will pay either a monthly or annual fee to rent this space and prices vary depending on provider as well as the package you need. Make sure you shop around when you're looking for a web host as they vary enormously in price, what you get for your money, quality of customer support and quality of their server.

If you'd like advice on how to choose a good web host, feel free to drop me a line.







## Website

A website is a set of one or more related pages that are grouped under the same domain name.

## Website builder

Although not an 'official' term, this is generally used by some hosts who provide a way for you to build your own website. They tend to be very cheap, and are often included in the price of your hosting package, but they do have restrictions when it comes to things like devising your own layout, adding search engine optimisation or adding more complex functionality such as a shop.

They can sometimes be a useful first step into the website world, but you should be aware that when the time comes for you to use a more powerful tool you won't be able to copy the code from your old site to the new one.

*If you there's anything else you'd like clarified,  
or you need help with a WordPress site,  
feel free to contact me at [jackie@jackdawwebdesign.co.uk](mailto:jackie@jackdawwebdesign.co.uk)*

