



Xpress | a publication of Information Technology Experts, Inc. (ITX) | Nov 2008

## 5 reasons why you need a website\*



### 1. To set up a store front.

Many small businesses have found that even if they can't afford rent on Main Street, or in the mall, they still can exist in cyber space and sell their products and services. Buyers no longer get in the car or look in the phone book to shop - they go online.

**2. A cheap way to advertise.** Creating your online presence doesn't have to be expensive. Compared to other forms of advertising, websites offer very good value to money spent.

**3. Customer service.** A website is essential to establish your business credibility and to provide support for customers so that they can find easy answers to their questions.

**On 1 October, ITX launched our brand new website. We look forward to your feedback. Please visit us at [www.itxfc.com](http://www.itxfc.com)**

### Refresh your Website and have it Work for You!

- Increase** your natural search engine ranking
- Optimize** keywords and let them work for you
- Ensure** your site is uniform across all browsers
- Improve** visuals & navigation throughout your site
- Speed** up your page loading to keep visitors longer
- Acquire** more links to your page for higher ranking
- Validate** your code for standards-compliance
- Get** your site listed in major search engines
- Receive** reports about your web visitors
- Fix** broken links & avoid error messages

When is the last time you really took a hard look at your website? Have you studied it from the point-of-view of: effectiveness, content, links, images, search engine rankings, and value to your visitors?

Did you know that just by refining your "keywords" list that your natural search engine rankings (in Google, MSN, Yahoo, etc.) could improve by 30%?

Here are a few simple things that can easily be done for your website to make significant improvements:

- **DOCTYPE declaration** - check that the proper DOCTYPE is being used to ensure your site is correctly displayed across various browsers
- **Meta Tags** - properly optimized your sites' Meta Tags to inform search engines of all your content, assisting in ranking
- **Page Titles** - check your Page Titles because

answers to their questions about your business - such as where you're located, what products or services you sell, and how to contact you. This self-service information can help business owners save a lot of time.

**4. Think nationally or globally.** Having a signpost on the Web allows your company to do business all over the world. It lets potential customers in, say, Australia know what products you sell in Loveland, CO.

**5. Launch promotions easily.** On the Web it's easier to change your product or service offerings, or your prices, than in a print catalog. You can also launch new promotions with a few keystrokes. Add fresh content and incentives to bring customers back for more. If your website remains static, there's no reason to return. Weekly updates with web-only deals and coupons is a great way to keep customers checking back if you don't have any actual content to add. For a small company, a regularly-updated news page is often enough to keep you in the loop.

\*excerpts from article in Inc. magazine. Please visit:

<http://technology.inc.com>

they're essential for optimal SEO and must accurately describe the contents of each page on your site.

- **Image optimization** - Statistics show the average visitor will give your page 4-5 seconds to load before moving on. Images are a major factor in load time. Optimize every image on your site for the best balance of quality and size.
- **Free link back** (if desired) from the ITX website. Links from other websites to your site are essential for site ranking.
- **Validation check** - non web standards compliant code won't validate and as a consequence may affect SEO.
- **Aesthetic improvements** - address miscellaneous visual issues.
- **Content creation/editing** (as directed) - edit content or create new content
- **Web log analysis** - analyze your web logs and extract information about where your visitors originate, when they are visiting, what keywords they are searching on, what web browsers and operating systems they're using, and more.
- **Check for cross-browser issues** and correct - web pages don't always look the same in every browser. A site that looks great in Internet Explorer may not display the same way in Firefox or Opera. Check your site across all the current browsers and address any issues
- **Broken Links Check** - check and fix your Broken Links. Nothing is more aggravating to your visitors than clicking on a link and getting the dreaded "file not found" error
- **Manual site submission** to major search engines like Google, MSN, Yahoo, IntelSeek, and Exact Seek so your web site can be found

## Troy Clark

Web Designer/Developer



Troy has 6 years  
experience designing web

To learn more about our Web Development & Refresh, please call the experts at ITX at 970.282.7333 or email us at [sales@itxfc.com](mailto:sales@itxfc.com)

## Free & cool software? Really?

Freeware is computer software that's available to use at no cost. There are many reasons software authors provide free software; early beta versions, college work, as enticements to upgrade to more capable versions, or simply to "pay it forward." Freeware is commonly free for personal or non-profit use but often requires purchasing a license for commercial use, so be sure to read the software license.

experience designing web sites and just completed re-doing ITX's site. Troy enjoys skiing, hiking, biking, kenpo, reading, public speaking, and anything Web.

## TECH TIPS

### Defining SEO & the Top 10 reasons why you should care!

Search engine optimization (SEO) is the process of improving the volume and quality of traffic to a website from search engines via "organic" (not paid) search results. Research shows that the earlier a site is presented in the search results - or the higher it "ranks" - the more searchers will visit that site.

**TOP 10** things you should do to your website to help improve your search rankings because without SEO your site will remain unknown to your target audience:

1. use keywords & phrases that are relevant but not overdone
2. write content that's rich in keywords without overdoing it
3. use appropriate titles, descriptions, and meta tags on each page
4. get as many links to your site as possible
5. make sure all images, graphics, and video's have alt tags with strong keywords
6. develop an XML site map that can help the search engine robots know exactly how to index your site
7. continually refresh and update your sites content. A blog is an excellent SEO tool.
8. make sure your Web developer is using standards-compliant, accessible code
9. Create rich, content-appropriate inter-site links.
10. Finally, install Google Analytics for your website. It's free and it tracks the traffic to your web site, showing

There are hundreds of freeware sites on the Internet. Unfortunately many list shareware, nagware, demo programs, and other software that isn't really free. Many freeware sites also inundate you with ads, popups, and other annoyances, so how do you know if they're any good or safe to use?

Since 2002, ITX's own Troy Clark has maintained his own freeware site, [www.selectfreeware.com](http://www.selectfreeware.com). Select Freeware lists hundreds of tested, rated, and safe freeware. This site offers a large variety of freeware apps that are among the best in their category. You'll get detailed descriptions, screenshots, and ratings for each freeware title, as well as links to other resources related to the one you're viewing. Every application is grouped by category to help you quickly find that perfect program.

Below are a few of Troy's favorite freeware finds. If you have your own favorites, please let us know!

**PhotoFiltre** is a complete image retouching program. <http://photofiltre.free.fr>

**WordWeb** is a one-click English thesaurus and dictionary for Windows that can look up words in almost any program. <http://wordweb.info/free/>

With **Speed Typing**, you can type frequently-used text quickly and easily. You just type your custom key sequence, and Speed Typing will automatically replace it with a line or a paragraph. It also remembers the last 15 items saved on your clipboard! <http://www.colorpilot.com/speed-typing.html>

**Gadwin PrintScreen** creates screenshots with just one-click of the [PrtScr] button and offers numerous options and image editing features. <http://www.gadwin.com/>

**PSPad** is universal freeware text editor and hex viewer that has a wealth of formatting functions, including a spell checker. PSPad is free for commercial and government purposes too! <http://www.pspad.com>

**ColorCop** is a multi-purpose color picker for web designers, graphics professionals and programmers. Just drag the eyedropper over any color on your screen and viola, the RGB and Hex numbers are revealed and copied to your clipboard! <http://www.colorcop.net>

**Bullzip PDF Printer** is an excellent free PDF printer with a host of useful features. Bullzip enables you to create PDFs from virtually any application that can print and is FREE for personal and commercial use up to 10 users. <http://www.bullzip.com/>

These days it's easy to build a mountain of passwords: Your network login, Facebook, MySpace, email, debit card, etc., they just keep piling up! Use **KeePass** to turn your password mountain into an easily managed peak!

where your visitors come from and how they interact with your site. If a page isn't getting the traffic you'd like, you'll know.

With SEO there are no shortcuts, and if you're looking to get quick and easy results, then SEO will not work for you. Instead you need to do some hard work, especially regarding content. Also, have plenty of patience, as results do not happen overnight.

For more info and a 1 hour free web consultation, please call the experts at 970.282.7333 or e-mail us at [sales@itxfc.com](mailto:sales@itxfc.com)



password mountain into an easily managed moieniiii! Keepass is great for maintaining all your other sensitive information too, such as bank accounts, credit card information, personal IDs (i.e., SSN), PINs, software installation keys, and more. <http://keepass.info/>

## ITX in the News

### ITX awarded two contracts totaling \$6.2M from Department of Energy

ITX is pleased to announce that the Department of Energy, Western Area Power Administration, Upper Great Plains Region (UGP), has awarded the company two contracts for administrative support services and CAD/CMMS support. The total estimated contract value is \$6.5 million over five years and adds 21 staff to ITX's roster.

"We were awarded these opportunities because Western is happy with our performance on existing contracts and we're very successful in our ability to transition staff," said Bruce Hottman, ITX co-founder and VP of Government Operations.

Please visit us at: <http://www.itxfc.com> or call 970.282.7333

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