

How We Build Websites

The following outlines the processes involved in how nfinia designs websites, right from inception to completion.

Our Development Methodology

The follow is our proven 6-step methodology for building effective, powerful websites.

1. Needs Assessment
2. Project Scope Definition
3. Layout and Design
4. Development
5. Testing
6. Posting and Completion



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During development, there are **important considerations** to be made that, if overlooked, can compromise the effectiveness of your website. Be sure to check them out before beginning any design project.

1. Needs Assessment

We will meet with you to flesh out exactly what it is you perceive as the goals for your website. You might be interested in using your website simply as an online brochure, or you may want to do transactions over the Internet in order to sell your goods or services. This step is critical in that it will define the effort required for the rest of the project.

Do you have a website already, or is your business new to the Internet? If you don't have a website, then we will guide you through the process of securing a domain, or web address (e.g. www.yourcompany.com), and securing a hosting package from a reputable ISP (Internet Service Provider). We will handle every step of this sometimes tedious and confusing setup.

Establishing who your target audience, or demographic, is, is a critical phase in development. It is vital to have a firm grasp on who your website will be working for, and to gain some insight into how your audience will most likely utilize it. This decision will assist us further in Step 2.

We also gather some technical information from this step in terms of keywords and descriptions. By clarifying what the goals are of your business on the Web, we will establish the types of keywords (to be utilized in META tags, titles and descriptions) we want to utilize in order to maximize your Search Engine placements.

2. Project Scope Definition

In this step, we will define the structure of your website. Some people refer to this as a 'Site Map'. If you have an existing website, we could potentially use this as a starting point. This step involves a large degree of understanding of the concepts of Usability. The physical architecture of your website (which will mimic the actual flow of content that your users experience) must be well thought out and must be conceived with a user-centric approach in mind. What this means is that the flow of your website must follow the way a user will navigate. What you believe to be a logical hierarchy might make no sense at all to your customers. We will outline some of the tasks that we believe users might undertake, and then design the hierarchy of your website around those tasks. This is a user-centric design.

Once we have defined the pages within your website, we will spec out how the content for these pages will be developed. Will you write the content yourself or have Nfinia Design do it for you? Perhaps a combination would be the best solution. Either way, defining what we anticipate to appear on your web pages is crucial to development of the Site Map.

During this step, we will also define any special development pieces that may be required. Whether you



want some Flash animations, database-driven pages, feedback forms, or any other automated procedures or code, they will be identified here.

This Step is also critical in establishing the scope of the website design project. We are now both confident in the number of pages to be developed, what they will be called, and how they will flow between each other.

3. Layout & Design

During this phase, one of the most time-consuming, 2 or 3 design and layout concepts will be put forward by Nfinia Design. Based on your feedback, 1 or 2 further iterations of the designs and layouts will be performed, and a final concept will be agreed upon. These designs will be developed with, once again, the user in mind. Your preferences are, of course, the final word on the design decisions, however.

Some often overlooked design elements will also be established during this step. Appropriate fonts and colors need to be established to ensure consistency throughout your website.

4. Development

In this step, development of the actual web pages begins. We now have enough information from you to start putting our ideas into physical form. Template pages are necessary to ensure consistency among all pages in your website.

We incorporate all the technical data gained from Step 1 (e.g. keywords, descriptions and META tags), all the design and layout gained from Step 3 (e.g. images, fonts, colors, etc.), and a template page is developed for each hierarchical layer in your website, which we established in Step 2 (your Site Map).

We now begin to create all the individual pages in your website. From your Home Page to your Contact Us page, right down to your individual product pages, every item identified in the Site Map is brought to life.

Whether we are writing your content for you, helping you write it, or simply posting what you give us, the pages within your site will now be functional, and you will be able to view your website in reality for the first time.

5. Testing

This is essentially the final development step. Your website is thoroughly tested to ensure it is error-free, and any changes and fixes are made before posting.

We take a copy of your site and put it onto a CD for you for backup storage purposes.

6. Posting & Completion

The final website is posted to your domain and you are now live!

Usability Issues

Usability is perhaps the most commonly overlooked and/or misunderstood technique on the Internet. It is often overlooked as its dollar value is difficult to measure outside of potentially complex and expensive user testing.

These assumptions about user testing are most often inaccurate. User testing can be quite simple and inexpensive, and its value is tremendous. Users are happy when they can use your site, and unhappy when they can't. You don't want to drive users away, and if you can get them, you want to keep them.

Usability, in the context of the Internet, is essentially the science of applying common sense and a touch of psychology to interfaces and layouts. From creating obvious and sensible navigation, to laying out pages in an easily readable format, to placing common buttons in common locations, usability is an invaluable resource to tap.

How do we measure up?

The following elements of this website (nfinia) had usability considerations:

- **Navigation Bar**
Our main navigation bar is located along the top, which is a common location where users will instinctively look for such a navigation tool
- **Breadcrumb Navigation**
We implement a 'breadcrumb' style navigation just below our main navigation bar at the top of each page. This shows visitors where they are in the hierarchy of our site, and allows them to back out, 1 level at a time
- **Sub Navigation**
Our second layer of navigation is located in a left-hand table, which is also a common place to see navigation
- **Navigation Choices**
Not only do we provide visitors to this site with some consistent navigation elements, but we offer a Site Map as well as a Search feature, should they choose to browse our site that way.
- **Consistent Color Usage**
We consistently use the same colors throughout our site to reinforce our brand and provide consistency.
- **Layout Consistency**
The layout of our pages is very consistent. From the logo area up top, to the main navigation buttons, highlight table, and 'Next' link at the bottom of each page.
- **Simplicity**
Our site is designed to convey information to visitors in a speedy, easy to understand, easy to read manner. Thusly, you will not see fancy Flash animations or dancing kittens; just a simple, elegant design with text that is communicated in a direct and memorable fashion.

Design Issues to Consider

To understand websites properly and how they function, you must understand some basic principles of design. Design goes beyond simple graphics and aesthetics, and into usability, accessibility and writing techniques.

Read more about:

- Design Theory
- Usability Issues
- Accessibility Issues
- Writing for the Web

Understanding Design Theory

Graphic design theories go far beyond which colors elicit which emotions. These theories, like the theories of usability, are grounded in **scientific research**. The following are of an important nature when discussing graphic design:

Color theory	The usage (and sometimes absence) of colors in differing combinations and differing intensities. Certain color combinations work well, others do not.
Balance	Elements in any design should be equally positioned throughout the page.
Repetition	Repeating common elements throughout your website will create a sense of continuity for the user. They will recognize, regardless of the page they're on, that they're on your website.
Alignment	Aligning items helps to organize web pages, and gives user a sense of ease. Content and page elements flow much better, and more easily comprehended and remembered whenever strong alignments are used.
Typography	Contrast and concord is what we're aiming for here. Contrast is great; it divides up elements on the page, and gives us something distinguishable and interesting to look at. But make sure you use no more than 2 or 3 font types. Concord is simply using bold and italics and different font sizes to achieve some distinction. Just be careful to avoid conflict, which is using fonts that are similar but not exact; this is distracting and difficult to read.

Accessibility Issues

For people with disabilities, using the Internet is not always a simple task. What you or I may take for granted may be a major stumbling block to **someone who cannot see or hear** as well as the average web surfer.

At nfinia, we pride ourselves on ensuring that accessibility is maximized wherever possible. Issues to consider can be summarized as follows:

- Text and text equivalents:**
Wrapping up your entire website in images and Flash animations will make it impossible for a teletype machine to feed the information to someone who has difficulty seeing. Using text for as much of your content as possible is crucial, and using text equivalents (e.g. ALT tags) for images also ensures that disabled users can 'read' your images if necessary.
- Understandable content:**
This may seem obvious, but it's a widely made mistake throughout the Internet. Content should always be simple and easy to read. This means not being overly wordy, as well as taking care to avoid spelling and grammatical errors.
- Quick download times:**
Keep pictures to a minimum, and make sure that those that are used are fully optimized for file size. Avoid using too many nested tables when possible, and ensure you use style sheets. This will trim down page size, and also allow users to control the look of your content if they so choose, by overwriting the style sheet on your website with one of their own.
- Limited use of Plug-ins:**
The use of Flash, Java, ActiveX and the like has increased dramatically over the years. Sometimes the function of the website is compromised at the expense of a visually appealing animation or navigation structure. This goes beyond accessibility issues, as users who lack the appropriate plug-ins or hardware will be unable to view these pages properly.

This is not to say that plug-ins should be completely avoided, rather their use should be carefully implemented, and only when necessary or appropriate.



- **Functional and inherent navigation:**

A website's navigation is its lifeblood. A poor navigation structure can destroy a user's experience, and hurt your online image. nfinia uses user-centric methods to determine your website's architecture and navigation, ensuring that usability and memorization of your navigation is maximized.

Another tip is to avoid the use of frames when possible, as this can change the appearance of your website within different browsers, and makes linking and bookmarking to specific pages unnecessarily difficult.

How nfinia Measures Up

To show that we practice what we preach, the following accessibility considerations were taken for this website (nfinia):

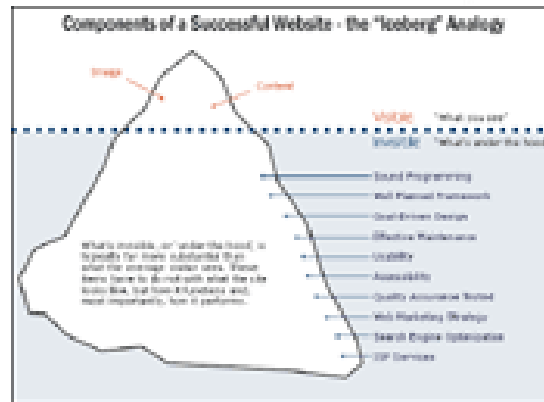
- **Text**
Text and text equivalents (such as ALT tags) are used as much as possible.
- **Content**
We have strived to make our content easy to understand. Ideally, we want to communicate our ideas to all our visitors, whether they have extensive knowledge of the Internet, or none at all.
- **Download times:**
We have limited the graphics on our site, and those that are here are optimized for size. Larger pictures have smaller versions, or thumbnails, available for users to click on to view the larger equivalents. We also utilize style sheets extensively to trim our page sizes and allow users to control the site's appearance.
- **Plug-ins**
We avoid the use of Flash, Shockwave, embedded sounds, etc. in favor of a site that is viewable to a higher proportion of web browsers 'out of the box' (i.e. without having to download plug-ins). These plug-ins can have their place, but we made the decision that they were unnecessary for us to communicate our message effectively.
- **Navigation**
Our navigation is consistent (always appears in the same places) and adheres to standards (appears along the top and down the left-hand side). We also avoid using frames which can make using, navigating and bookmarking a site difficult.

What Makes a Good Website?

This is a question a lot of people are asking. **What makes a good website? What makes a bad website?** The answers to these questions are obviously highly subjective, but we'd like to offer a more structured approach to our thoughts on the subject.

Components of a Successful Website

The components of a successful website are more numerous than you may think. We have designed a diagram illustrating some of the important components of a great site.



Components of a Successful Website

As illustrated in this diagram, a successful (i.e. good) website has many components above and beyond just image and content:

- Sound programming
- A well-planned framework
- Goal-driven design
- Effective Maintenance
- Usability considerations
- Accessibility considerations
- Quality assurance
- A great web marketing strategy
- Search engine optimization
- Excellent ISP services

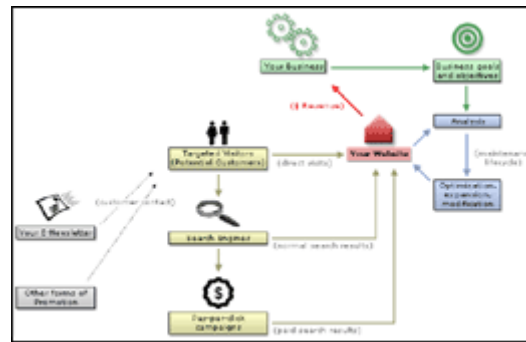
But... content is still King

Now, we would like to make one small caveat. We noted in our diagram that 'content' was only a small part in the formula for a successful website; but content is probably the single most important element. If you have outstanding content, most people will be able to suffer through a horribly planned, ugly website. But if you have the most elegantly designed and well thought out website on the Internet, but your content is poor and riddled with errors, your site will fail.

The key to success is making proper use of *all* the components

How We Work

How a website firm operates is paramount in this business. What sets one website development company apart from another are its methods, reputation, previous work, and customer service. We pride ourselves on our **proven methods**, and we invite you to take an in-depth look at them.



(Click to enlarge image)

Our Reputation

Our reputation among our clients and contacts is something we treasure and nurture. Our previous work is professional, compelling and beautiful. And, most importantly, our attention to customer service is a key focus of our business. Our mission is to ensure that every one of our clients is **completely satisfied** with our **highest quality** services. If something is wrong, *we will not rest* until we have made it right.

Whether you're a potential or existing customer, a web surfer, or even a competitor of ours, we hope you can learn something from the way we do our work. We have been developing websites successfully using these methods for many years.

How We Implement a Web Strategy

The following outlines the processes involved in how nfinia designs websites, right from inception to completion.

- 1. Needs Analysis**
 The first thing we need to do is assess what your website goals are, and what services you require to help achieve those goals
- 2. Proposed Solution**
 After determining your specific needs, we will put together a plan of attack. This custom web strategy will contain all the services nfinia will provide on an on-going basis.
- 3. Implementation**
 Once we have agreed on a solution, nfinia will get to work! To see how the process takes place, please visit our Web Strategy services page.

Complete Web Strategy

Our Complete Web Strategy service is aimed at providing a more effective, better constructed website, with a complete strategy in place to achieve specific goals. At nfinia, we're all about providing a **Complete Web Strategy** – that's what we *design*.

Pieces of the Strategy



Search engine submission, newsletter management, pay-per-click campaigns, regular maintenance, web page optimization, accessibility makeovers, usability analysis, even custom website design – these are part of the *components that we can include in your complete web strategy*. Contact us today to find out how Nfinia Design can turn your website into a *website that works*.

A **complete strategy** that we design for you will contain some or all of our *key services*, depending on your specific needs.

- Design & Development
- Promotion
- Maintenance

Everything that we do is designed to achieve **your business goals and objectives**, whatever they may be:

- Online sales
- Brand awareness
- Information dissemination
- Leads/Prospects/Customers

If you'd like to discuss how nfinia can formulate an effective, goals-driven strategy custom-tailored to your business, please contact us today, or read more about the complete web strategy.

Implementing a Strategy

Here are the **3 basic steps** by which we implement web strategies for our clients.

Step 1 – Prepare/design your website

You must create or modify your site to ensure that it will perform; it must be molded and shaped to fit commonly defined standards, and make it attractive; attractive not only to your visitors and customers, *but to search engines*.

You should also have **pre-defined goals** for your site. Goals such as getting people to contact you, download your latest newsletter, or maybe order a product.

- **Proper preparation and design will help you achieve your goals.** -

Step 2 – Get Your Site Out There, Bring Your Customers In

Once your site has had the proper makeover, it should be pushed out onto the world. There are a variety of tools and methods that can achieve this and, when combined with your objectives, are exceedingly effective at ensuring your website is well known and well indexed across the globe.

- **Promote your website to attract targeted visitors.** -

Step 3 – Maintain and Promote: Repeat Steps 1 and 2

Once you have invested the time and energy to create an effective website and draw in the proper traffic, you must maintain this strategy.

Regular updates, fresh content, and dynamic promotion strategies will keep your site top of mind with your customers, as well as the search engines.

- **Bringing in more targeted visitors will bring in more revenue - guaranteed.** -

Web Site Design and Development

Web design/development is one of our core competencies. But, what sets nfinia apart?



- **E-Commerce**
Accept payments online, build a mailing list, password-protect sections of your website and so much more.
- **Usability/Accessibility**
Proper built web pages and business rules to make your users (and search engines) happy.
- **Goal-driven design**
Our unique approach to building and promoting **websites that work**. Identify goals first, develop second. Sound intuitive? You'd be surprised how seldom this is done.
- **Search Engine Optimization**
Bring in targeted visitors who are looking for exactly what you're selling!

E-Commerce Capabilities

Our e-commerce capabilities and experience are extensive. Our skills are well rounded to suit whatever project requirements you may have:

- **Shopping Cart.** List all your products on your site, complete with pricing, descriptions, pictures and ordering information. Allow your visitors to shop online through your store that's open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- **Online ordering.** Accept credit cards, money orders, PayPal and more. Or process your orders the old fashioned way by phone, check or invoice.
- **Mailing Lists.** Gather names and email addresses of visitors to build up your mailing list database. Contact these customers with specials and announcements, or a regular newsletter.
- **So much more...** E-Commerce options available to you are very numerous. We can help you decide which strategies would be best for your business.

Regardless of your requirements, nfinia is ready to help. Contact us to chat about your project and have us provide you with a free, no-obligation proposal.

Usability & Accessibility Considerations

Usability and accessibility are perhaps the **most commonly overlooked** and/or misunderstood elements of web design. They are often overlooked as their *dollar value is difficult to measure* (outside of potentially complex and expensive user acceptance testing).

There is little doubt as to the effectiveness of proper usability and accessibility considerations. Users are happy when they can use your site, and unhappy when they can't. You don't want to drive users away, and if you can get them, you want to keep them.

Usability

Usability, in the context of the Internet, is essentially **the science of applying common sense** and a touch of psychology to interfaces and layouts. From creating obvious and sensible navigation, to laying out pages in an easily readable format, to placing common buttons in common locations, usability is an invaluable resource to tap.

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- **Understandable content:**
This may seem obvious, but it's a widely made mistake throughout the Internet. Content should always be simple and easy to read. This means not being overly wordy, as well as taking care to avoid spelling and grammatical errors.
- **Quick download times:**
Keep pictures to a minimum, and make sure that those that are used are fully optimized for file size. Avoid using too many nested tables when possible, and ensure you use style sheets. This will trim down page size, and also allow users to control the look of your content if they so choose, by overwriting the style sheet on your website with one of their own.
- **Limited use of Plug-ins:**
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This is not to say that plug-ins should be completely avoided, rather their use should be carefully implemented, and only when necessary or appropriate.

- **Functional and inherent navigation:**

A website's navigation is its lifeblood. A poor navigation structure can destroy a user's experience, and hurt your online image. nfinia uses user-centric methods to determine your website's architecture and navigation, ensuring that usability and memorization of your navigation is maximized.

Another tip is to avoid the use of frames when possible, as this can change the appearance of your website within different browsers, and makes linking and bookmarking to specific pages unnecessarily difficult.

Goal-Driven Design

What is your website trying to accomplish?

What are you selling? Who's buying? What sorts of information do you need to present and in what fashion? Answering these questions is no simple task. Inexperienced web designers have a tendency to "put the cart before the horse". In other words, they will madly charge head first into a project without considering the most fundamental starting point - **your website's goals**.

Setting your objectives

Knowing what you want to achieve with your website gives everyone involved something to focus on. Whenever a decision needs to be made, we always return to the objectives: **How will this decision affect the goals?**

Answering this question gives you a foundation for the rest of the project. If certain elements will help achieve the goals, they are included. If other elements do nothing to achieve the goal, they can be left out.

If this philosophy sounds rather simple to you, excellent. You would be surprised how often it is overlooked. And it is simple. The most profound questions usually are.

Search Engine Optimization Considerations

One element of website design that is critical to a site's success is **search engine optimization**, or SEO. Building a great site is much more than a pretty interface - you must attract the search engines, and give them exactly what they're looking for.

We build every one of our sites as **search engine friendly**. Proper coding, page structure, accessibility information, and more. SEO is an ever-changing game (read more about it in our Website Promotion section) and keeping up with the rules is a challenge.

Playing the SEO game, and playing fair

Optimizing web pages and website for the major search engines is a game; don't let anyone tell you otherwise. Just as in any game, there are rules. Obey the rules and you will stay in the game. Violate the rules, and you will get caught and penalized. You may not get caught right away, but if you repeat the same violation, it is only a matter of time.

How nfinia does SEO

At nfinia, we have an **organic, common sense approach to SEO**. We obey the rules that the search engines themselves lay out, and we build our websites with these rules in mind *from the ground up*.

There are a lot of different tactics and methods to employ for SEO, and the earlier you apply them, the less time and resources are required to incorporate them later on.

Website Promotion

- Is your site not drawing enough **traffic**?
- Are you not appearing **favorably** on the search engines?
- Are you interested in **optimizing** your web pages to enhance search results?

Website promotion goes far beyond *search engine optimization* and *search engine submission*. A lot of people will use these terms interchangeably, but search engine optimization (or SEO) and search engine submission are just two components of **website promotion**. An effective website promotion campaign will be constructed around your business, and will contain elements designed specifically to help you achieve your business goals.

Website Promotion Strategies

Here are a list of some strategies that nfinia utilizes in its website promotion efforts.

1. Search Engine Optimization
2. Pay-per-click (PPC) Campaigns
3. Affiliate Programs
4. Search Engine Submission
5. Web Catalog/Directories
6. Electronic Newsletters

What Works?

The most effective website promotion you can do is to **combine these methods**. One single method may not be enough to *increase the revenue generated by your site*, but several of these methods as part of a complete web strategy can do the trick quite nicely!

Search Engine Optimization

Optimizing web pages is a terrific way to improve how search engines rank your website. Drawing on sophisticated software and the latest in search engine research, we can make slight (and not so slight) changes to your pages to give them the best chance possible at ranking highly with the search engines.

Driving Factors

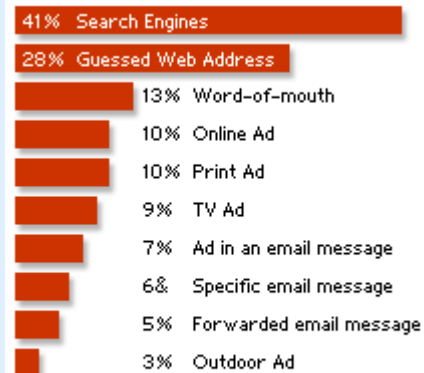
Going beyond just web page optimization, other factors can influence how well your website is ranked by the search engines:

- The names of the web pages and files in your website
- The directory names in your website
- Whether or not certain pages (e.g. Site Map, Links) are present
- What is contained in your META tags, how they're positioned, etc.

Website Promotion Options

- Search Engine Optimization
- Pay-Per-Click
- Affiliate Programs
- Search Engine Submission
- Web Catalogs & Directories
- E-Newsletters

How Users Find Web Sites



Source: eMarketer
(from Doubleclick, March 2003)

- Accessibility considerations (e.g. ALT tags, TITLE tags, etc.)

Staying Smart, Avoiding Tricks

Some companies will promise 1st place rankings to their unsuspecting clients. Typically these companies will *employ the latest and greatest tricks* of the trade to get you there. Our experience here at nfinia has been that these tricks are *temporary* and will only **punish your site in the long term**.

Using a little common sense as well as professional knowledge about websites and the Internet is the best long term strategy to good search engine rankings.

Pay-Per-Click Campaigns (PPC)

Pay-per-click (or PPC) is a type of **search engine marketing** where advertisers pay either a set amount or a 'bid' amount to have their ads appear within search engine results. Actually, the advertisers only pay when a user actually *clicks* on their ad.

How does pay-per-click work?

When a term that the advertiser is bidding on is searched for, the pay-per-click ad will appear in a special location on the results page (display thumbnail image of Google AdWords).

The order in which the ad appears is relative to the bid amounts of other advertisers competing for that search term. The ads will appear in the order of highest bid to lowest bid.

When and only when the ad is clicked on, the advertiser will be charged their bid amount for that click. If the same user clicks on the ad multiple times, the advertiser is only charged once, and the advertiser is not charged when ads are displayed but not clicked on.

A budget amount is also chosen so that when the monthly budget has run dry (i.e. the advertiser's ad has been clicked enough times that the total amount paid for the clicks has reached the budget level) the ad will no longer be displayed until the account has been replenished with more funds, or the next month arrives and an auto-renewal of funds takes place.

Why does pay-per-click work?

You bet. In fact, PPC campaigns are one of the most popular forms of web promotion that our clients undertake. The reasons? They are simple:

- **Low risk**
It doesn't take a lot of money to get setup, and you can spend as much (or as little) as you like on your daily/monthly budget.
- **Targeted visitors**
Your ads *only* appear when someone searches on a phrase that you have identified as being valuable to your business. E.g. if you sell widgets and some one searches on "widgets for sale", your ad will come up; if someone searches on "cheap cruise vacations", it won't. Your ad is placed in front of people who are ***already looking for what you sell***.
- **Results are measurable**
Most PPC services offer some form of tracking. This enables you to gauge whether or not someone who clicked on your ad ended up buying something - or contacting you, or answering your survey, or whatever you specify as a "conversion" or "sale". These metrics demonstrate which ads are most effective, which keywords are bringing in the most revenue, etc.

Will pay-per-click work for you?



A **simple calculation** to determine whether or not PPC will work for your business is this:

$$\frac{\$ \text{ Revenue generated by your site in Month A}}{\# \text{ Visitors to your site in Month A}} = \$ \text{ Value of each visitor to your site}$$

E.g. You receive **10,000 visitors** to your site in June. You also figure that your website was responsible for bringing in about **\$10,000 of revenue**. This formula would indicate that each visitor to your site is **worth \$1** to you. It stands to reason that if you can "buy" your visitors with PPC for *less than \$1*, **you'll make money**.

The trick here is typically measuring how much revenue your website generates. If, like us here at nfinia, you sell a service, measuring how much of your business comes directly from your website is a difficult undertaking. Typically estimates are made in favor of tracking down the hard and fast numbers. But so long as common sense is applied, the above formula can give you the answer you need.

Popular PPC Programs

There are many pay-per-click programs available on the market today. The following is a list of the more popular ones, and some information about each program's details.

Program	Method	Setup Fee	Initial Deposit	Minimum Bid Amount
Google AdWords	Bid	\$10	\$25	\$0.10
Yahoo Search Marketing	Bid	\$0	\$50	\$0.10
FindWhat	Bid	\$0	\$25	\$0.05
Mamma	Fixed	\$0	\$25	\$0.01
Kanoodle	Bid	\$0	\$50	\$0.05
Yahoo SiteMatch	Fixed			

* All prices are in US dollars

Click Fraud

What is click fraud? Click fraud is when people or automated software programs click on advertisers' pay-per-click links with no intention of purchasing the advertisers' products or services.

How much does it cost advertisers? It is estimated that about \$10,000,000 USD is spent each year on fraudulent clicks. This is money spent on consumers that simply do not exist.

Who are the offenders? The major offenders of click fraud are most often 1) traffic affiliate partners and 2) your competitors.

1. Traffic affiliate partners of search engines make a commission on paid clicks generated by their website visitors. The fraudulent clicks may be generated by an army of human clickers or using an automated software tool.
2. Competitors may click on your ads to deplete your pay-per-click budget or reduce your "click through rate" to force you to place higher bids for the same terms.

How do I avoid click fraud? Avoiding click fraud can be an extremely difficult task. The best way to prevent it happening to you is to 1) make use of any advanced tools offered by the program provider and 2) keep an eye on your campaigns.

1. Some program providers like Google allow you to specify geographic regions where your ads are displayed. Countries like India and Russia are some of the biggest offenders of human-based click fraud, as poorer people can be lured by small dollar amounts to simply click pay-per-click ads ad nauseum.



2. If you notice strange activity in your pay-per-click campaigns, it may be a result of click fraud. Read one man's story of discovering click fraud. You can also be refunded money spent on click fraud by certain program providers, like Google.

Affiliate Programs

Also known as viral marketing, affiliate programs can be a fantastic way to get others on the Internet to sell your products for you. The fundamental way in which an affiliate program works is by giving independent "salespeople" commissions for selling your products/services.

Here is how a typical affiliate program would work:

- **A user visits an affiliate's website.**
Your affiliate would have their own website where they promote your product and potentially many others.
- **That user clicks a special link to your website.**
This special link could look something like <http://www.your-product.com?affiliateID=1234> or maybe <http://www.your-product.com/products.asp?affID=1234>.
- **Your website tracks this new user, typically by giving them a "cookie".**
Because this user followed your affiliate's special link, your website knows where this user came from and tracks them, typically with a cookie (a small text file that sits innocently on the user's computer).
- **When the user makes a purchase, the referring affiliate is tracked.**
When the user makes their purchase of your product, the e-commerce system you utilize on your website will look for a potential affiliate cookie. If it's found, the e-commerce system tracks it so that it knows how much the purchase is worth and which affiliate was responsible for it.
- **The user gets their product, the affiliate gets their check.**
You will fulfill the user's order normally and your e-commerce system will track what you owe each particular affiliate. You then pay commissions to your affiliates on a regular basis.

The bottom line is, everybody wins. The user gets the product at exactly the same price as if they had visited your site directly; the affiliate gets their commission on all purchases they helped to create; you get a number of new customers that you otherwise might never have received.

Available Affiliate Programs

The following is a list of affiliate programs available to you. Don't forget that through our custom web development services we can create your very own unique affiliate program. Contact us for more information.

- **Commission Junction** - a very large, widely known program that is very expensive to join and operate.
- **Performics**



Search Engine Submission

Simply building a website is not enough anymore. You must promote it; both actively and passively.

The old adage, "If you build it, they will come" no longer applies.

Getting the word out

Search engines can take weeks and even months to visit (or re-visit) your website. Perhaps you have made some significant changes within that time, or had your web pages optimized? *Don't wait for them to come to you.*

We actively submit our client's websites to the major search engines on a regular basis, to keep their websites fresh in the search indexes. We only submit to a handful of reputable engines, and we strictly avoid over-submissions and link farms, which can dramatically hurt your site's rankings.

Catalog/Directory Inclusions

Paying to have your site listed on the major web catalogs can greatly *increase the amount of traffic your site sees*. These fees are typically paid yearly and are on-going. They can guarantee your inclusion with the major indexes that drive the vast majority of website searches. We always advise our clients to take advantage of this promotional outlet – it is money well spent.

Which directories should you belong to?

There are thousands if not millions of catalogs and directories on the Internet. How do you know which ones to belong to? Well, we can only help point out some of the bigger players, but we always encourage our clients to seek out niche directories to list their websites - typically these directories are very targeted and cost far less - a double win!

- **Yahoo!**
One of the larger search engines in the world is also a human managed directory. They are one of the more expensive directories to belong to, but typically the investment is well worth it.
- **Business.com**
This directory is specifically targeted toward, yes, you guessed it, business. A great asset at a reasonable price if your website business-to-business oriented.
- **MSN Small Business Directory**
Provides listings within the MSN Small Business Directory, search engine submission services, and more.
- **Fast/Inktomi**
Definitely the largest paid inclusion directory on the Internet, serves results to around 70% of all searches conducted on the Internet. (now known as the Overture SiteMatch program)

Newsletters

Electronic newsletters are a fantastic way to stay in touch with customers and potential customers (here at nfinia, we have the **Internet Kick**). They help create your brand identity, and keep you top of mind to your customers.

Key elements to a successful newsletter include the following:

Useful Information

Include information that is *useful and valuable* to your customers, *not* sales-oriented information. If they like the information, they will begin to trust you as an expert in your field, and will naturally migrate to using your products or services.

Short

Keep your newsletter *short and concise*. People get so much email these days, they are more reluctant than ever to wade through the larger ones.

Free

Keep your newsletter *free* at all costs. People are extremely unlikely to pay for an electronic newsletter. The exceptions to the rule are businesses where the newsletter *is* the business (e.g. stock trading tips).

No Ads

Avoid advertising if possible. People are bombarded with ads online at every turn, and will appreciate your newsletter more if it is ad-free.

Frequency of Delivery

Don't oversend or undersend your messages. Once or twice a month is a good target. Any more and people will start perceiving your mailings as spam; any less and your goal of brand recognition will be lost.

Timing of Delivery

The *best times* to send your messages are on Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday, between 11:00 am and 2:00 pm. Research has shown that these times receive the greatest percentage of opens and click-throughs.

Visually Appealing

Writing a text-based newsletter is easy, but some nice imagery (including your logo) will go a long way to gaining more interest and attention.

Promotion

Newsletters are a fantastic way to *promote special deals and prices* to your audience, or help move overstock.

Online Sales

When most people first hear of a website, their first question tends to be, "What products are they selling?" Selling products online is the most tangible form of a website, but it can also be the most difficult to do successfully.

Selling Products Online is Difficult

Amazon.com and other online retailers lost millions of dollars during their first years of operation. Figuring out how to lure customers away from 'brick and mortar' stores and into an online store was no easy task. It is only recently that companies like Amazon have started recording profits.

The difficulty in selling tangible goods over the internet is delivery and warehousing. You still need a physical presence to store your goods, and you must still ship your products to your customers, neither of which is cheap.

The Best Way to Sell Products Online

Currently, the best way to run a successful (and by 'successful', we mean 'profitable') online store is to already have a traditional brick and mortar store, and simply supplement your business with a website. This isn't to say that you couldn't run a purely online business, it's just that it will be a bit more difficult to do.

Selling Services Online is Much Easier

Selling services online is much easier than selling physical products. Services can be sold and delivered *without any warehousing or shipping costs*. All the benefits that a website affords (e.g. worldwide audience, easily updatable information, interactivity, etc.) and none of the drawbacks.



nfinia sells services online. We don't have to have gigantic warehouses to store our web design skills, or enormous vaults to house our knowledge of web marketing. Fortunately, our computers and our brains seem to do the trick quite nicely.

Business Promotion/Brand Awareness

If used properly, a website can be an excellent tool for promoting your business and building brand awareness.

Key to Success - Consistency

The key to successfully promoting your business and your brand is to be **consistent**. Make sure that your website uses the *same colors* and *logo* as the rest of your marketing materials (e.g. letterhead, business cards, brochures, etc.). Having one look for your printed materials and another for your website will simply **dilute your brand**. Keep your efforts focused and consistent, and your brand will be reinforced to your customers.

Use Your Site - All the Time!

If you've invested the time, energy and money into building a solid website that effectively communicates your objectives to its visitors, *you must use it!* Be sure to put your **web address** on all your letters, emails, faxes, business cards, brochures, t-shirts, stickers, etc.

Constantly are driving people to your website for more information!

Information Dissemination

You may have heard the term 'brochureware' or 'static site' in your travels through the Internet. Typically what people are referring to is a website that disseminates information.

Now, just because giving out information to your visitors is a goal of your site doesn't mean your site has to be boring. In fact, the more attractive and well-built your site is, the easier it will be for people to get the information, and the more successful your website will be.

Types of Information

Typically, businesses that have information dissemination as a goal for their sites will distribute the following types of information:

- Financial reports
- Stock information
- Meeting information/minutes
- Brochures
- Forms
- Policies
- Guidelines
- Instructions and manuals
- Etc.

Organizations that are not-for-profit, like government sites, tend to be focused on strictly information dissemination.



Selling Information

This type of goal for a website is not the same as selling information online. As far as we're concerned, that is the sale of a service online.

Generating Leads

All websites can function in this manner. Having a great site with some useful, relevant content will generate interest.

Content is King

This website (nfinia.com) was designed to generate interest about websites and the Internet, as well as interest about **nfinia** by providing useful information about websites and the Internet. We capture leads from our site all the time, and we realize that this is one of the great values of our website - but we've worked hard for that. We focus on quality content, and you should do the same.

How to Facilitate Lead Generation

One mistake that some websites make is not *making it easy for their customers to contact them*. You should have, **on every single page**, a link to your contact page, as well as an email address, if not phone (317-697-0528) and fax numbers as well (on our site, our phone number and email address appear in the footer of every page).

If your website has convinced a potential customer to contact you, then be sure that they can!