



## Your Website Coach



### ***You Can Do It; Yes You Can – 11/9/07***

Anything you do to grow and maintain your business requires time and money. If you choose to have a web developer build your web presence, you'll spend more money than time. You must supply your developer with the content (text, images, videos, etc.) but once you procure those things for him or her, you can go back to running your business. However, if you choose to use a tool provided by your web host to build your own website, you'll spend more time than money to get your website up and running.

So what can you expect when you embark on this adventure? I spoke with Mike Sheppard who built his own site, [northerntv.net](http://northerntv.net), using a site building tool that came with his web hosting package. Mike began building his site with no prior knowledge of HTML or scripting languages, which is from where most business owners start. These days most web hosts offer site building software at little or no cost. Mike's host comes with the WebsiteBuilder package, which is free. He said he spent about an hour initially setting the one-page site up. He was satisfied with the step-by-step instructions and when he needed to call tech support, their response was timely and helpful. It's been just under a year and now he wants to add navigation, more pages and correct a poorly displayed photo. Mike's problem is finding the time to do these upgrades. And herein lays the rub: He wants to improve the overall look of the site, but it will require extra time to do it.

The best way to approach a do-it-yourself website is to **make a plan** and **make the time** to execute it. Although the popular packages like: ImageCafé® Web Site Creator, Website Tonight and WebsiteBuilder; say you can knock off a site in a night, it isn't likely that it'll be even close to what you want right out of the gate. To be at peace with your site, count on a full day to implement it and then allow 2 – 3 hours per week to update and maintain it. Best approach: have your web content mapped out and ready to go and then look for how you build that first page. Having your content ready actually creates a frame of reference for you so you are always looking for *how* to make that next thing happen rather than "now *what* do I do?"

Here are some features you may find in a site building package: forums, web stats, animation, forms, search friendly elements, photo galleries and more. If you spend more money, you'll get more features.

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