

INTRODUCTION

As more and more photographers become interested in creating a website to display and sell their work, questions relating to web design are becoming more common. I've had a few people both in our photo club and on the blog ask me for some tips and assistance with getting a website set up.

In an effort to hopefully help those who are interested in getting a website set up, I've put together a series of documents that will help navigate the waters of website design, setup, layout, and yes... even some coding (**GASP!**) I've divided the content into four categories: registration, hosting, design & layout, and optimization.

First, let me qualify this set of articles by stating that I am **not** a website designer by trade, so any advice I give here is solely from my own "enthusiast" level of experience. Having said that, it may help to know some of my background in web design and administration. My first experience came from acting as a web content manager, first for the College of Charleston's Helpdesk Center, then for the Charleston Housing Authority. Since then, I have continued on with my own web interests, including www.aitolutions.org, www.scphotogs.com, and most recently, www.canonblogger.com. During this time, I learned a lot of the basics of coding, including HTML, XHTML, CSS, JS, and PHP. I am not fluent in **any** of these languages, so if you are looking for instruction in advanced web coding, I unfortunately will not be able to help you. I do share some of what I know toward the end of this set of articles.

With the above in mind, it does bear mentioning that having a background in the minutia of web design and codification is no longer really a requirement in the creation of a visually appealing photography site. In other words, you don't have to know anything about HTML, XHTML or any of that alphabet soup stuff associated with web design. While you don't have to know any of it, I will admit that knowing something about it can definitely be helpful, especially if you want a customized look to your website.

So, how can you set up a website without knowing anything about web design? Easy! Many of the photo editors we have come to know and love can actually do this for us. Photoshop has built in web design templates, as does Lightroom, and I am sure a host of others offer similar functionality. There is even free software available through the open source community that can help you accomplish those ends. Some of these include Gallery from Menalto, JAlbum, and Coppermine. I'll get into these more later, but for the time being, it's safe to say that you can generate a website for your photos without buying any more software or knowing anything about coding.

Before getting into the nitty-gritty of which software to use, and how to do it, some explanation is needed on some fundamental concepts that are common to any website setup. If you are familiar with things like registration, domain names, and hosting, you may want to skip these sections, and move on to the layout and design. However, for those who are new to the whole idea of websites and getting started, I'd recommend moving on to **Getting Started!** Here's how I'll be moving through the material, so if you're already comfortable with some sections, you can pick up just where you need to for your area of interest and development.

Chapter 1: Getting Started

- Domains
- Registration
- Hosting

Chapter 2: Web Design Software

- Photoshop
- Lightroom
- JAlbum
- Gallery
- Coppermine

Chapter 3: FTP Software

- Windows
- Macintosh

Chapter 4: Coding – the basics of HTML, CSS, and scripting

- HTML
- CSS
- Scripting

Chapter 5: Optimizing/Customizing Your Website

- Cross-browser support
- Site Engine Optimization
- Responsible web design
- Page Rank