



**THE KENNEL CLUB**  
*Making a difference for dogs*

THE KENNEL CLUB  
**WEBSITE  
ENHANCEMENT  
TOOLKIT**



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## INTRODUCTION

A clear and informative website is one of the best tools to have to promote and publicise the health and welfare of any breed. With more and more people turning to the internet for advice and information, an increasing number will be looking to the representatives of the breed (Breed Health Co-ordinators, Breed Clubs and Councils), to provide them with answers to their questions. Having plenty of accurate information available is important, but it must also be presented in a user friendly way.

Having a website that looks professional and laid out in a logical and easy to use manner, will ensure that:

- People find what they are looking for
- They come back to the site for more information
- The website is seen as an authority on health

This toolkit is designed for those breeds that already have a website and would like to enhance it, as well as those who are looking to create their first website.



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## 1. DESIGN

First time visitors to any website are likely to gauge how useful they think it is by their first impressions. It takes roughly 3-7 seconds for visitors to judge a website and for it to catch their eye, so think about what information visitors will want to see first. Remember that the website is a representation of the breed, so make sure it portrays the key messages of the club(s) or council(s).

### 1.1 THEME

The website's 'theme' is essentially its overall look. Creating a theme that runs throughout the webpages is one of the most important steps in designing a website. Every page should have a similar feel to it, allowing the user to know that each page belongs to the site and ties all content together. A good website theme will flow easily throughout your website.

The theme should be clear, focused and consistent. Think about the colour schemes that could be, or have been, used and how the content is presented. Have one area of focus on each page and limit the number of colours you use to a maximum of three. When choosing which colours to use, remember that dark colours will make your site appear gloomy. You may want to consider using lighter colours with a few strong colours.

Either keep your background white, or use simple colours. If you do choose a background colour, make sure that it does not make it difficult to view or read the page. Avoid choosing pictures to fill your backgrounds as these may distract from your written content.

### 1.2 WEBSITE NAVIGATION

It's important for visitors of the website to be able to move easily from page to page and it should be obvious where to look for particular pieces of information. Try to imagine that you are looking at the page for the first time and try to anticipate where you would look for certain information and topics.

Across the top of your website should be a navigation bar, otherwise known as a menu bar, which can be used to direct people towards certain pages. The headings on the navigation bar could be individual pages, or it could be used to categorise further pages under subheadings. Ensure the navigation bar does not have too many pages or headings and does not look too crowded. This can be avoided by adding relevant subpages, which will appear as a dropdown list underneath. Visitors should be able to access the contents of the site quickly through its navigation. Keep navigation links in the same place so as not to confuse visitors. It can also be helpful to include a Search function which allows visitors to type in their own search terms and to be directed to the most useful pages in response.

### 1.3 PICTURES

Pictures are a useful way to demonstrate the health of the breed, or to raise awareness of specific health conditions. Images can also be a good tool to break up large blocks of text and make a page look more interesting. If photographs are used on any page of the website then these should be of a suitable size. Large photo files may make the site slow to load and discourage people from using it. Large amounts of photos could be placed in a gallery or perhaps a link could be provided to an online photo management and sharing application such as Flickr.

Make sure photos are relevant to the subject matter and are labelled underneath when relevant. High quality images should be used where possible. Images can be purchased from online photo libraries such as iStockphoto, but do ensure the relevant copyright details are attached if they are used. Animations and clip art images shouldn't be used, as these will make your site appear unprofessional and amateur.

Always be sure that the photos used are credited appropriately and that appropriate permission should be sought from owners of the photos (and as a courtesy, the owners of the dogs) before publication.

### 1.4 VIDEOS

Videos are a good way to turn a static website into a user-friendly interactive tool. Websites with video content are often prioritised by search engines, such as Google, and may make the website appear above others. Videos that play automatically however may put visitors off and make them leave the site. Therefore, use a media player for videos which allow visitors to turn it on and off.

### 1.5 MUSIC

It is unlikely that the addition of music will enhance an informative website in any way. Automatically playing music will often make a site appear unprofessional and amateur and will detract from the rest of the information present.

### 1.6 LINKS

Links to other websites or other pages on your own website are a great way to direct people towards other useful information. When adding a new link, most web-design software should make this text distinguishable from other text, by changing its colour so that visitors are aware that it is a link. Where possible, a hyperlink should be added instead of the full website address. A hyperlink is a word, or collection of words, in the middle of a body of text which has a link to a website attached to it. A hyperlink is often underlined and a different colour, and when clicked on will take users to a different webpage.

Each time you add a new link, check that it is correct and ensure that it takes users to the page or website you intended.



## 2. TEXT

### 2.1 FONT TYPE

Choosing an appropriate font will influence whether visitors read the content. There are often wide selections of different fonts to choose from, but the majority of these may not be appropriate for most websites. Try not to use anything quirky or unusual, as this may make a website appear unprofessional and amateur. Avoid using lots of font styles or fancy fonts, but instead stick to one simple style. If in doubt, stick to Times New Roman or Arial.

### 2.2 FONT COLOUR

To maintain a professional-looking website keep the majority of the text black. Using coloured text can be risky, especially if using a coloured background. Ensure that there is a contrast between the text and background so that visitors are able to read the content clearly. Keep in mind that the website will be viewed by all ages and abilities – including those that may not have perfect vision.

### 2.3 FONT SIZE

Font size should be reasonable and must allow visitors to read any text clearly (usually around size 11pt or 12pt). Do not use a font size that is too large as it may appear as if you are trying to fill space. Avoid using words written in CAPTIALS as reading words in capital letters is much more difficult and may come across as shouting. To highlight certain words use italics, bold or underline, but use these sparingly. If these are used too frequently this may dilute the effect of highlighting certain words.



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### 2.4 LAYOUT OF TEXT

Sentences should be as concise as possible. Only use the words that are needed to get the essential information across. Ensure that text is relevant and split it into short paragraphs (approximately three sentences per paragraph). Large blocks of texts are automatically unattractive and may dissuade visitors from reading them.

Where there are large amounts of text, use sub-headings. This will make it easier for visitors to the website to scan the page and locate the appropriate information. Bullet points are another good way to break up text and summarise information, making it easier for readers to scan and look for particular points. Alternatively, boxes of text can be used to provide one or two sentences of vital information. If used occasionally and between paragraphs, they can break up large chunks of writing and are a useful way to make one piece of information stand out from the rest.

Paragraphs should be either justified or aligned to the left. Centred text is much more difficult to read.

### 2.5 WRITING YOUR CONTENT

All content should be unique and appealing to visitors. If content from another site has been used, make sure that permission has been obtained and the authors are credited where appropriate. A guide to information that could be included on the website can be found in the Website Content Toolkit.

Write a draft of the content for each individual page; this will help to have all the relevant information in one place. When complete, ensure that the text has been reviewed for spelling, grammatical errors, long sentences (over 30 words) and unnecessary words. Keep punctuation simple (full stops and commas) as you are less likely to make mistakes.

- Sentences should be concise and straight to the point.
- Avoid using jargon
- Try to rearrange information, such as justifications and explanations, into more than one sentence rather than a long sentence with sub-clauses.
- If using abbreviations, explain what they are the first time they are used.
- Detect and remove any unnecessary words or phrases that can be replaced with a single word, for example, 'in conjunction with' can be replaced with just 'with'.

To ensure the content of your website is current and correct, update pages regularly and don't use the same content on multiple pages. Only publish pages on your site when they are completed; avoid using 'Under Construction' signs.

## 3. POST PRODUCTION

### 3.1 TESTING YOUR WEBSITE

Once the design and content of the website has been agreed and created, it may be a good idea to get friends and colleagues to test drive it. Ask them to see how easily they can navigate to a designated page and check how easy the content is to understand. Once the site is up and running, ask people what they think of it, how useful they found it and what could be done to improve it.

### 3.1 PROMOTING YOUR WEBSITE

One way to encourage people to look at the website is to promote it through word of mouth, by e-mail or by social media such as Facebook or Twitter. Regular newsletters are a good way to get users to visit the site frequently and look for updated or new information. Partnerships with other similar websites will allow some visitors to be directed towards your information and will make the website more popular. Don't forget to let the Kennel Club know about any new Club websites, so that we can direct people to the right place via the Breed Information Centre.

### 3.2 UPDATING YOUR WEBSITE

In order to keep visitors coming to the website keep the information relevant and up-to-date. Websites that are updated more frequently are often prioritised by search engines, so keep the site up-to-date to allow it to be found more easily.

If there are any links to external websites on the website, then ensure that these are tested regularly to confirm that the link takes visitors to the relevant information, or that the page has not been moved and is now 'broken'.

Over time, your website will become a representation of what is being done for the health of the breed, so the better it looks and the more up-to-date it is, the better impression it will make to visitors.

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