

Skills4Retail
Building sustainable growth

WEBSITE ESSENTIALS

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1. INTRODUCTION TO WEBSITES

- **Website-uri** = collections of web pages that contain various types of content accessible via the Internet

- ***Examples of popular websites: Google, Facebook, Wikipedia etc.***

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GOOGLE

- **Diversity**: Google is primarily known as a search engine but offers a wide range of services beyond search, including Gmail (email), Google Maps (navigation), Google Drive (cloud storage), Google Docs (document creation), YouTube (video sharing), and Google Photos (photo storage and sharing).
- **Utility**: The Google search engine helps users quickly and efficiently find information on almost any topic. Gmail provides email communication tools, Google Maps offers navigation and location services, Google Drive enables file storage and collaboration, and YouTube is a platform for entertainment, education, and video sharing (Merril, 2024).



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FACEBOOK

- **Diversity**: Facebook is a social networking platform that connects people from all over the world. It allows users to create personal profiles, share updates, photos, and videos, communicate with friends and family through messages and comments, join groups based on interests or affiliations, and follow pages of companies, organizations, and public figures.
- **Utility**: Facebook serves as a communication hub where users can stay connected with friends and family, share important life events, discover and interact with content tailored to their interests, participate in discussions and communities, and even conduct business through Facebook pages and Marketplace (Kontentino, 2024).



WIKIPEDIA

- **Diversity:** Wikipedia is a free online encyclopedia that covers a wide range of topics in multiple languages. It contains articles written by volunteers from around the world, covering subjects ranging from history, science, and literature to pop culture, technology, and current events.
  Utility: Wikipedia serves as a valuable source of information for users seeking knowledge on a wide variety of topics. It offers comprehensive and well-researched articles that provide basic information, summaries, and references on various subjects. Users can also contribute to Wikipedia by editing and improving articles, making it a dynamic and evolving resource (Selwyn & Gorard, 2016).



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WHY ARE WEBSITES IMPORTANT?

- **Websites are very important in today's digital landscape.** They serve multiple roles, among which we highlight the following (Arasu, 2023):
  - communication,
  - information dissemination,
  - business promotion,
  - establishing an online presence.
- Having a website can bring benefits to **individuals, companies, organizations, and causes.**

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WHY ARE WEBSITES IMPORTANT? (2)



WHY ARE WEBSITES IMPORTANT? (3)

- **Increased visibility:** A website provides a platform for individuals, companies, organizations, and causes to showcase their products, services, missions, and initiatives to a global audience. It allows them to reach potential customers, supporters, partners, and stakeholders beyond geographical boundaries, thus expanding their visibility.
- **24/7 accessibility:** Unlike physical stores or offices with limited working hours, a website is accessible 24/7, allowing individuals, companies, organizations, and causes to connect with their audience anytime and anywhere. This constant availability enhances convenience for customers, supporters, donors, and other stakeholders, leading to increased engagement and interaction.
- **Credibility and professionalism:** A well-designed and professionally maintained website instills trust and credibility in the eyes of visitors. It serves as a digital storefront or virtual headquarters that reflects the professionalism, expertise, and legitimacy of individuals, businesses, organizations, and causes. A website with high-quality content, easy-to-navigate design, and updated information enhances credibility and fosters positive perceptions.

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WHY ARE WEBSITES IMPORTANT? (4)

- **Effective communication:** A website serves as a central hub for communication, allowing individuals, companies, organizations, and causes to disseminate information, share updates, and interact with their audience in real-time. Through features such as contact forms, live chat, blogs, and social media integration, they can engage with customers, supporters, donors, and stakeholders, answer questions, and provide valuable resources.
- **Marketing and branding:** A website is a powerful marketing tool that enables individuals, companies, organizations, and causes to effectively promote their brand, products, services, or messages. They can use various digital marketing strategies, such as search engine optimization (SEO), content marketing, email marketing, social media marketing, and online advertising, to attract and engage their target audience, drive traffic to their site, and increase conversions.

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WHY ARE WEBSITES IMPORTANT? (5)

- **E-commerce and fundraising:** For companies and organizations, a website can serve as an online storefront or fundraising platform, allowing them to sell products, services, or merchandise directly to customers or accept donations and contributions from supporters. With e-commerce functionality, secure payments, and donation processing capabilities, they can generate revenue, raise funds, and support their operations and initiatives.
- **Information exchange and education:** Websites play a vital role in the exchange of information and education, providing individuals, businesses, organizations, and causes with a platform to disseminate knowledge, resources, tutorials, guides, and educational content. They can use their website to publish articles, books, case studies, videos, podcasts, and other valuable content that educates and informs the audience.

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2. TYPES OF WEBSITES

TYPE	SCOPE	CHARACTERISTICS
Informational websites	Designed to provide visitors with information about a specific topic, product, service, or organization. They aim to educate, inform, and answer questions.	They typically contain static content, such as text, images, and videos. These can include pages like About Us, Services, Frequently Asked Questions, and Contact. ***Examples:*** news websites, educational resources, company websites, and government portals.
E-commerce platforms	They facilitate the buying and selling of goods or services over the internet. They allow businesses to reach customers globally, manage transactions, and process payments securely.	They feature product listings, shopping carts, checkout processes, and secure payment methods. These may include product categories, search functionalities, customer reviews, and order tracking. ***Examples:*** Amazon, eBay, Shopify, and Etsy.

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2. TYPES OF WEBSITES (2)

TYPE	SCOPE	CHARACTERISTICS
Blogs	They are online platforms where individuals or organizations post regular entries (posts) on specific topics of interest. They serve as a means to share opinions, experiences, perspectives, and expertise.	They typically present chronological entries displayed in reverse order, with the most recent posts appearing first. These may include categories, tags, archives, and comment sections for reader engagement. ***Examples:*** WordPress, Blogger, Medium, and HubSpot.
Portfolio websites	They showcase the work, projects, skills, and achievements of individuals or creative professionals, such as artists, designers, photographers, writers, and developers.	They often feature galleries or portfolios of work, with descriptions, client testimonials, and contact information. These may include sections for resumes, biographies, and previous projects. ***Examples:*** Behance, Dribbble, GitHub Pages, and Adobe Portfolio.

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2. TYPES OF WEBSITES (3)

TYPE	SCOPE	CHARACTERISTICS
Social media platforms	They allow users to connect, interact, and share content with friends, family, colleagues, and online communities. They facilitate communication, collaboration, and networking.	They offer user profiles, news feeds, connections with friends, messaging, groups, events, and content-sharing functionalities. These may include features such as likes, comments, shares, and privacy settings. ***Examples:*** Facebook, X, LinkedIn, Instagram, and Reddit.

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3. CREATING A MARKETING-ORIENTED WEBSITE

- Creating a marketing-oriented website involves 3 main steps (Penalver, 2024):
  - 1. Identifying the target audience and conducting market research
  - 2. Setting marketing goals and KPIs
  - 3. Planning the website structure and content strategy

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3.1. IDENTIFYING THE TARGET AUDIENCE AND CONDUCTING MARKET RESEARCH

- **Knowing the target audience** is important because content and marketing strategies can be personalized, engagement and conversion rates can be improved, and resources can be allocated more efficiently.
- Characteristics of a target audience:
  - **Demographics**: age, gender, income, education, occupation, etc.
  - **Psychographics**: interests, values, lifestyle, personality
  - **Behavior**: purchasing habits, brand loyalty, online behavior

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3.1. IDENTIFYING THE TARGET AUDIENCE AND CONDUCTING MARKET RESEARCH (2)

- **There are three main methods of market research:**

Primary data research	Secondary data research	Using online tools
surveys	industry reports	Google Trends
interviews	competitor analysis	social media analysis
focus groups	online resources	keyword search tools

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3.1. IDENTIFYING THE TARGET AUDIENCE AND CONDUCTING MARKET RESEARCH (3)

- **Market research data analysis means:**
  - Analyzing survey results and feedback
  - Identifying trends and patterns
  - Drawing actionable insights for the marketing strategy
- **Applying market research to the website strategy (adapting the website to the audience):**
  - Content strategy: topics, tone, format
  - Design and user experience (UX) considerations: appearance, color schemes, navigation
  - Marketing channels: social media platforms, email marketing, paid advertising

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3.2. SETTING MARKETING GOALS AND KPIS

- **The importance of marketing objectives and KPIs:**
  - Provide direction and focus for marketing efforts
  - Allow measurement of progress
  - Facilitate data-driven decision-making
- **Setting SMART objectives:**
  - **S**pecific – clearly defined and focused
  - **M**easurable – quantifiable and trackable
  - **A**ttainable - realistic and achievable
  - **R**elevant – aligned with business objectives
  - **T**ime – with deadlines

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3.2. SETTING MARKETING GOALS AND KPIS (2)

- **Common KPIs for websites:**
  - **Traffic metrics:** page views, unique visitors, bounce rate
  - **Engagement values:** average session duration, pages per session, social shares
  - **Conversion values:** conversion rate, number of leads, sales revenue
  - **SEO metrics:** keyword ranking, organic search traffic, quantity and quality of backlinks
  - **Email marketing metrics:** open rate, click-through rate, conversion rate
- **Aligning KPIs with marketing objectives:**
  - Matching KPIs with specific marketing goals
  - Prioritizing KPIs based on business objectives
  - Using KPIs to monitor and adjust strategies

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3.2. SETTING MARKETING GOALS AND KPIS (3)

- **Tools and techniques for tracking KPIs include:**
  - Google Analytics,
  - Social media analysis,
  - SEO tools,
  - Email-marketing platforms
- **Using KPIs to drive continuous improvement:**
  - Periodic review of KPI performance
  - Identifying trends and areas for improvement
  - Making data-driven adjustments to marketing strategies

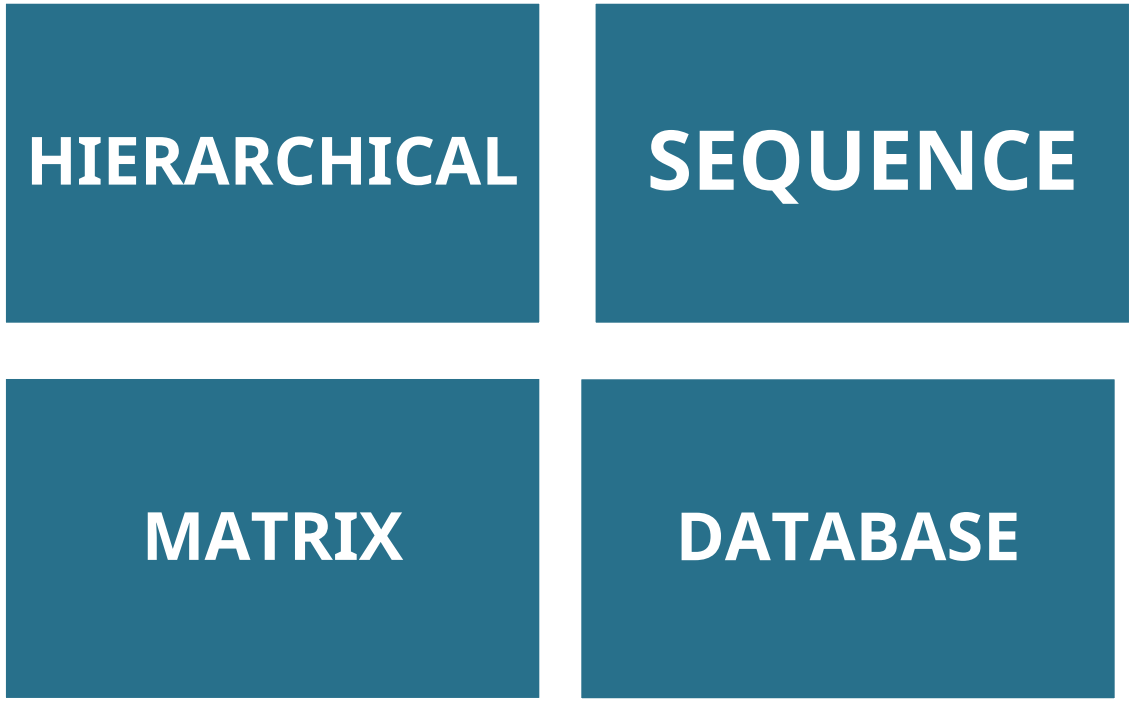
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3.3. PLANNING THE WEBSITE STRUCTURE AND CONTENT STRATEGY

- The structure of the website and content strategy matter because they enhance user experience (UX) and navigation, improve search engine optimization (SEO), and ensure that the content aligns with marketing objectives and audience needs.
- **Definition and importance of website structure:**
  - A website structure refers to how the content and pages of a website are organized and interconnected. It involves the hierarchical arrangement of web pages and their relationships. This structure helps visitors and search engines navigate and understand the website's content effectively (Studio, 2024).

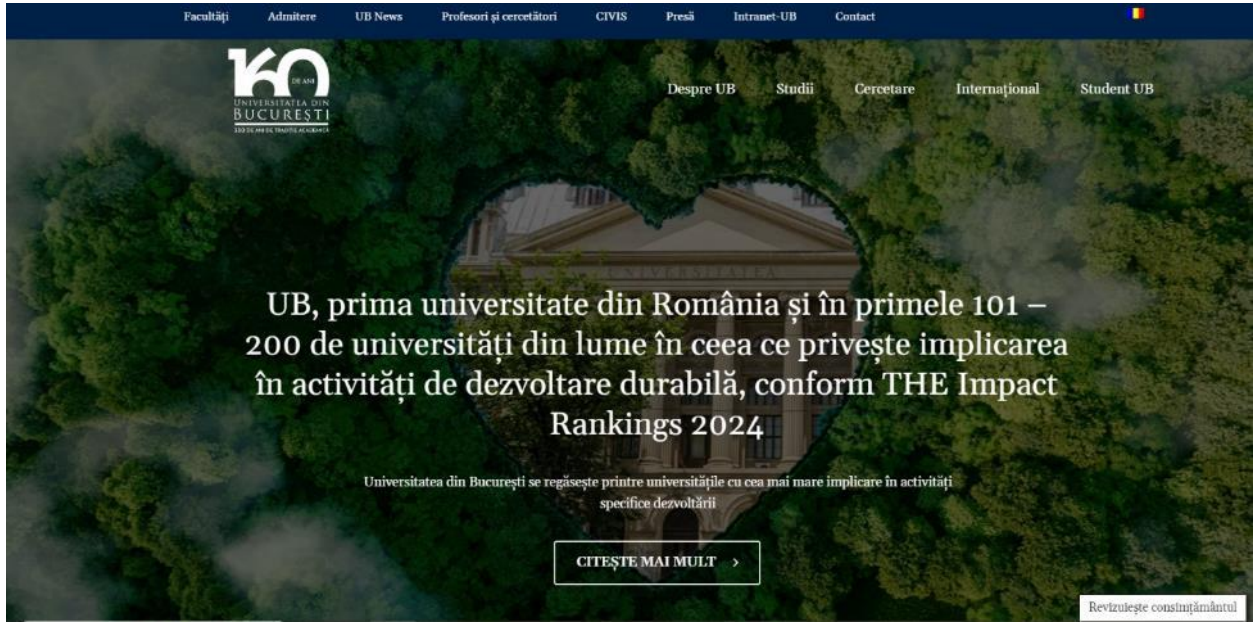
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THE MOST COMMON WEBSITE STRUCTURES



HIERARCHICAL WEBSITE STRUCTURE

- The hierarchical structure is the most common website structure.
- It is based on a parent page (homepage) with secondary pages (categories and subcategories) branching out from it.



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SEQUENTIAL WEBSITE STRUCTURE

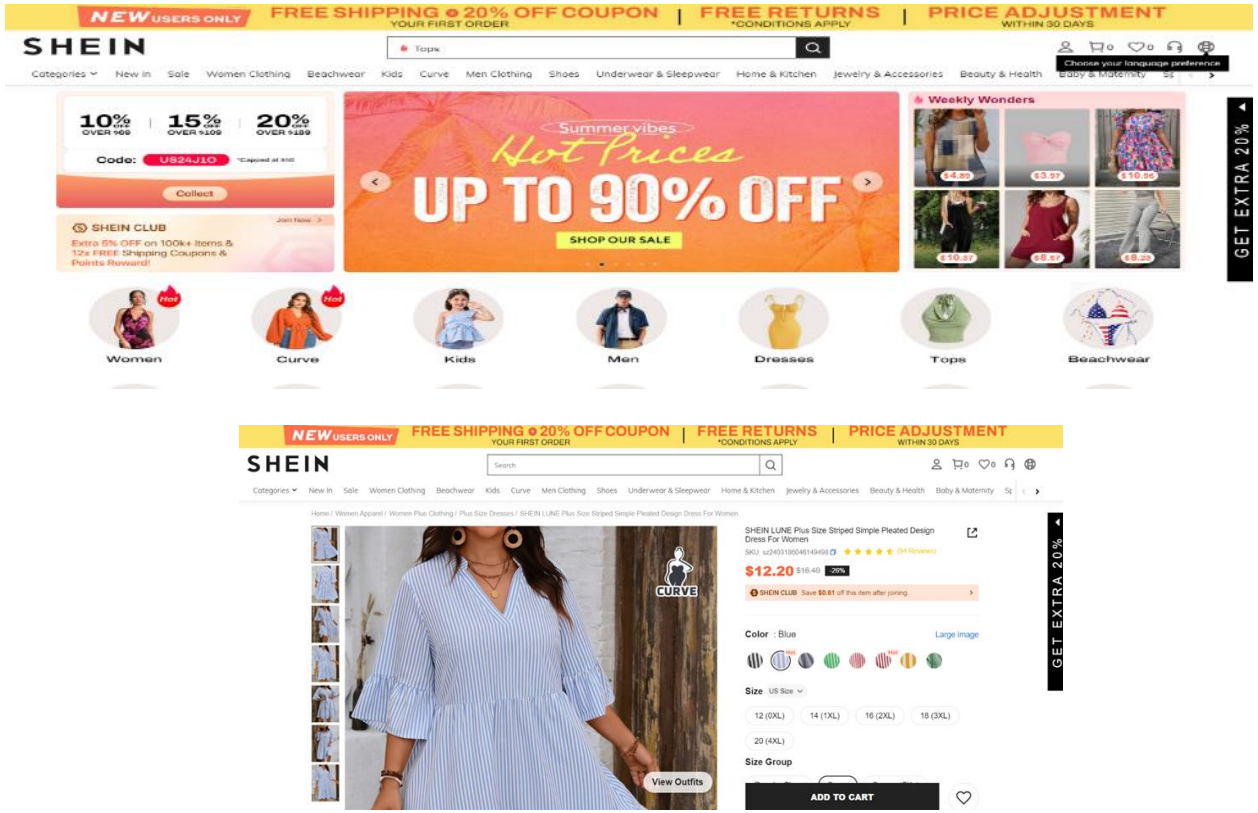
- A sequential website structure is a design approach that guides users through a series of steps or a specific sequence of content to achieve the desired outcome or experience. This structure is particularly effective for storytelling, illustrating a process, or leading users through a logically progressing journey. It ensures a focused and linear flow of information, making it easier for users to understand and interact with the content.



www.vola.ro

MATRIX WEBSITE STRUCTURE

- Although the matrix structure is one of the oldest website models, it remains relevant due to its flexibility. This model allows visitors to navigate freely without strict categories, offering multiple access points to the site's content. While it might seem chaotic, it prioritizes user experience through robust interconnectivity, comprehensive menus, and advanced search functions. Categories and pages exist but are not sequentially organized for users. This freedom enhances the browsing experience, making it suitable for diverse content platforms.

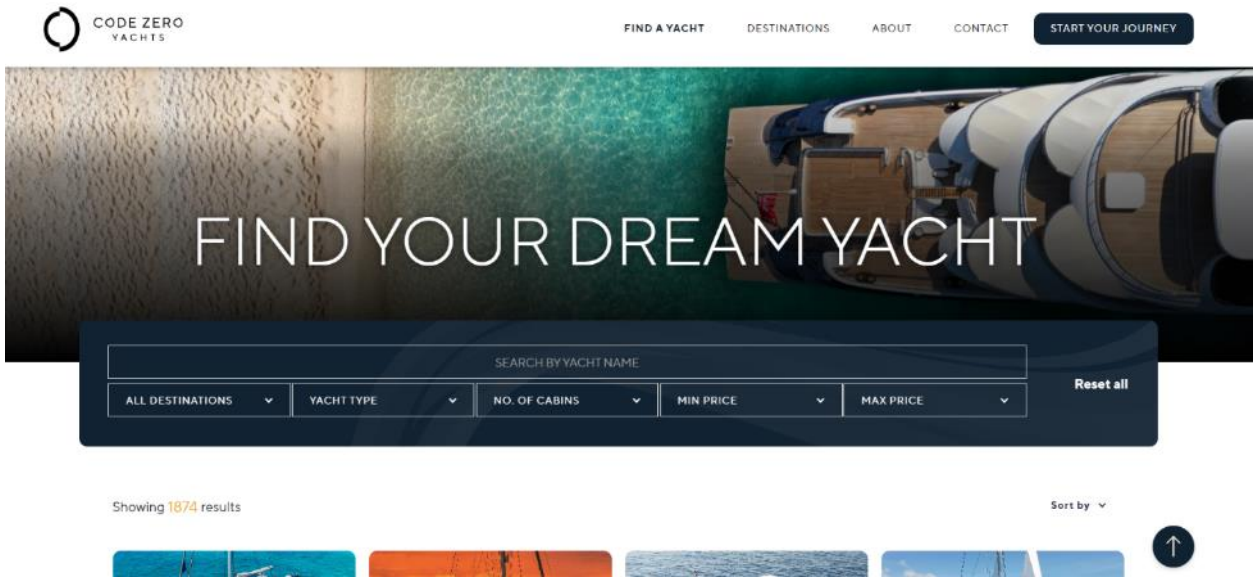


www.us.shein.com

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DATABASE WEBSITE STRUCTURE

- Database-driven website structures create dynamic, personalized experiences by utilizing visitor-provided information such as personal details or preferences. This allows the site to pull relevant content from its database, such as customized details or product pages. To implement this, websites require software that can handle internal or integrate with external databases, and interfaces must be designed to display dynamic, personalized information. This structure enhances the user experience through tailored content.



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3.3. PLANNING THE WEBSITE STRUCTURE AND CONTENT STRATEGY (2)

- **Steps for creating a sitemap:**
  - Identifying main pages (homepage, about, services, contact, blog)
  - Organizing subpages and categories
  - Ensuring logical and intuitive navigation
- **Developing a content strategy:**
  - **Elements of a content strategy:**
    - Content goals and objectives
    - Audience analysis and content needs
    - Types and formats of content (articles, videos, infographics, podcasts)
    - Content calendar and publishing schedule
  - **Aligning content with the user journey:**
    - Understanding the stages of the user journey (awareness, consideration, decision)
    - Creating content for each stage

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3.3. PLANNING THE WEBSITE STRUCTURE AND CONTENT STRATEGY (3)

- **Creating and optimizing content:**
  - Best practices for writing web content:
    - CLARITY
    - CONCISENESS
    - SCANNABILITY
    - Effective use of keywords for SEO
    - Crafting compelling headlines and calls-to-action (CTAs)

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CLARITY OF A WEBSITE

- **Use Simple Language:** Write in a clear, simple, and easy-to-understand manner for your target audience. Avoid jargon or complex terminology unless absolutely necessary.
- **Organize Information:** Structure your content logically, with clear headings and subheadings. Use bullet points and numbered lists to break down information into digestible chunks.
- **Avoid Ambiguity:** Be precise in your wording to prevent misunderstandings. Clearly state the main points and avoid vague or ambiguous language.
- **Provide Context:** Ensure every piece of information is presented within its appropriate context. Use examples or explanations to clarify complex ideas.

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CONCISENESS OF A WEBSITE

- **Use Simple Language:** Write in a clear, simple, and easy-to-understand manner for your target audience. Avoid jargon or complex terminology unless absolutely necessary.
- **Organize Information:** Structure your content logically, with clear headings and subheadings. Use bullet points and numbered lists to break down information into digestible chunks.
- **Avoid Ambiguity:** Be precise in your wording to prevent misunderstandings. Clearly state the main points and avoid vague or ambiguous language.
- **Provide Context:** Ensure every piece of information is presented within its appropriate context. Use examples or explanations to clarify complex ideas.

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SCANNABILITY OF A WEBSITE

- **Use Descriptive Headings:** Ensure headings and subheadings accurately summarize the content that follows. This helps readers quickly find the information they need.
- **Highlight Keywords:** Use bold or italic text to emphasize key words and phrases. This makes it easier for readers to scan and grasp the main points.
- **Short Paragraphs and Sentences:** Break the text into short paragraphs and use concise sentences. This improves readability on screens and encourages users to keep reading.
- **Bullets and Lists:** Present information in a structured format using bullet points or numbered lists. Lists are easier to scan than blocks of text.

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3.3. PLANNING THE WEBSITE STRUCTURE AND CONTENT STRATEGY (4)

- **Content Management Systems (CMS) and content planning tools:**
  - **Popular CMS platforms:** WordPress, Joomla, Drupal
  - **Editorial calendar tools:** Trello, Asana, Google Calendar
  - **SEO tools for content planning:** Ahrefs, SEMrush, Yoast
- **Measuring content performance:**
  - **Key metrics to monitor:** Traffic, engagement, conversion, shares
  - **Using analytics tools:** Google Analytics, social media insights
  - Adjusting content strategy based on performance data

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4. ASSIGNMENT

- **1. Create a Sitemap**
  Instructions:
  - 1. Determine the purpose of the website.
  - 2. Identify the target audience.
  - 3. Define the main goals and objectives of the website.
  - 4. List all existing content and pages.
  - 5. Identify any new content that needs to be created.
  - 6. Start with the homepage and branch out to main categories and subcategories.
  - 7. Evaluate the sitemap draft for clarity and ease of navigation.
  - 8. Ensure it aligns with user needs and website objectives.
  - 9. Highlight how the sitemap supports user navigation and content discovery.

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