

## Website design VS. Website development

A lot of clients come to me for a complete website package. This is great, since I love being able to manage all aspects of a client's project. One confusion that can arise, however, is understanding the difference between website designers and website developers.

A website designer tends to be a jack-of-all-trades, but his primary skills lie in visual design and creating a front-end experience for visitors. If you enjoyed a cool background or paused to look at a unique header on a website, give some credit to the web designer. The designer is usually the "artist" behind the layout of a website. Designers may work with graphic designers, or incorporate some third-party artwork, but they are responsible for how the page looks to the visitor. A web designer should be capable of launching a large range of websites, including e-commerce sites, blogs, CMS systems, and more. Custom development or [computer programming help](#) is not necessary if your website fits an existing popular model for a website (blog, shopping cart, etc.).

If web designers are the artists, developers are the programmers who work with the heavy code behind a website. Developers create the functions, while designers make things look pretty. Developers write elaborate custom features in PHP, ASP, Javascript, and so on. If you have an idea for an e-commerce site with a hand-crafted user experience, you'll be looking for a website developer to write in the new features. Developers are called in to write features that don't exist in the standard shopping-cart platforms, blogs, or CMS systems. If a script is not readily available for the functionality that a client desires, a developer will be needed.

Most designers have at least a few contacts who do web development. If your project fits a well-known model for a website, there isn't going to be much custom

work. For example, if you want to have an e-commerce site where you sell and ship products, this fits the standard shopping-cart model. If you want an e-commerce site that displays certain specials on different days of the week, you'll need some custom development.

I typically describe myself as a website designer. While I know web developers, they are also freelancers and it may take additional time to quote for any custom features. As a client, you have a few options when gathering quotes. Feel free to contact your favorite designer; this is a great starting point. Designers will usually know which technologies or additional expenses will be involved, if not the exact amount of hours required to develop those features. If you know your project is very original or will require a lot of custom work, you may want to get quotes straight from developers. It is reasonable to have a front-end designer of your choice work with the developer of your choice. It is also possible to have the developer write the project before the designer works on it at all. It is not uncommon for a platform to be created in a bare-bones functional state, and then have a designer customize the front-end to the desired look and feel of the site.