

If you have ever done any decorating you will know that the quality of the finished job depends largely on the preparation work before applying the final coat of paint or the wallpaper. The colour scheme is a matter of personal preference and, frankly, it might not please everybody. You can try, but the important thing is that the shelves stay on the wall and the paper is the right way up.

So it is with the creation of a web site. We have all seen web sites that look terrible and have moved on quickly to something more attractive.

Even pretty sites can be difficult to use if they are not arranged sensibly. The beauty is only skin deep, so to speak. Getting everything right takes careful preparation.

That is not to discourage the creation, but to increase the general quality of the on-line experience.

Several times during his talk Chris stressed the need for the planning process when creating a web site. The end result depends on the planning. A good end result actually takes less effort overall if the planning is given all the time it needs before anything is committed to the computer.

He recommends pencil, paper, post-it notes and lots of thought.

Why do you want to make it?

Who do you want to read it?

What will they want to see?

What do you want to show?

All these things can be jotted down on post-it notes and these can be shuffled around to play with the layout of the site to give a logical arrangement.

Only then should the computer come into use - but only to prepare the storage area for the information to go onto the site.

You can then browse the web to view sites that might inspire you to follow a particular 'look' for yours.

If you are not artistic you should note the colour combinations of background and text. Their readability varies enormously. Note also that the words you use should suit the reader. People from the other end of the country might struggle with local expressions. Those from further away even more so. Always be polite, of course.

The process of composing the site should be carried out on your own computer and tested exhaustively before being uploaded onto the Web. For this part of the creation Chris suggests using the FREE web authoring software **Vnu**. *There is a link on our developing website at www.penarthcomputerclub.co.uk where you can also look at the slides he displayed.*

Chris will be returning later in the year to answer any queries and to talk about the 'mechanics' of putting your site onto the web.

The next meeting will be on Tuesday 23rd February when Kevin will be reviewing how to keep your computer safe from interference. Visitors and new members always welcome. For more information ring Howard on 029 20708439.

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