

FACT SHEET: CHOOSING A DEVELOPER

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The growth of the Internet has attracted a huge amount of attention, it is possibly the biggest bandwagon you or I will see in our lives; and everyone wants to be on it! This has resulted in a huge number of web design businesses appearing, offering a vast range of services, with varying quality. Picking the right one for you is a challenging task!

Web developers come in a number of different types, ranging from the 15 year old whiz kid in his bedroom to huge corporate consultancy services charging millions of pounds. Here's a list of the key types, with their strengths and weaknesses.

Developer Types

Whiz kid - The enthusiastic youngster that can quickly master the design and development of a basic brochure site.

- **Pros:** will produce a respectable site, and generally, as they're working for pocket money or to get themselves through college, they're cheap.
- **Cons:** they may be unavailable for contact during business hours, and they are not able to offer the level of ongoing support that an established business can.

Freelance developer - Like the whiz kids, many have turned to the internet as a second source of income, doing freelance development in their spare evenings or weekends to provide a second income.

- **Pros:** like a Whiz kid, but have the advantage of being more mature, with some commercial experience.
- **Cons:** they may be unavailable for contact during business hours, as their main job keeps them from focusing on your work. They may not be able to offer the level of support that an established business can.

Graphics designer - Many graphics designers now offer web development services in addition to their traditional services.

- **Pros:** For a brochure or product site they are ideal, as the traditional product brochure will be immediately translated to a web format by the original designers, providing a common look and feel to all your marketing. A good graphics designer will also understand the limitations of each media they use and will help you best present the brand across all of them.
- **Cons:** They will probably not be able to help provide more advanced technical features for the site.

New Media company - At the height of the dot com boom a number of companies appeared or re branded themselves as New Media companies, they offer a range of services including marketing, public relations, branding, and web development.

- **Pros:** create some excellent brochure and product sites, tend to understand the marketing aspects very well and generate some excellent viral marketing campaigns.
- **Cons:** they will probably not be able to help provide more advanced technical features for the site.

E-business consultancy - These companies are entirely focused on developing e-business solutions.

- **Pros:** they generally develop total business solutions, rather than small brochure websites. They focus on developing large scale content management systems, end to end ecommerce solutions for online retailers, dynamic database driven sites and large corporate brochure or product sites. They are able to work with other businesses to build on existing branding, or business processes. They have infrastructure to provide ongoing support.
- **Cons:** expect to pay more for quality advice, and strong technical skills.