

Art Gallery Management – Your Website

In our article covering some of the considerations for establishing a new gallery we only briefly commented on your website.

Often new galleries will start by setting up their website. It is important to establish your site early to take advantage of Google and other search engines to draw potential clients to your gallery but be aware of the options and pitfalls.

We often see websites that state 'we are under construction – come back soon'. No date and when you go back a week later the same under construction sign is still there. We don't think this gives you a very professional image.

A major consideration is do you want a website that you update manually yourself or do you want one that is updated from your gallery software. Many galleries don't look at the overall picture before they move forward. If you don't plan to get gallery software for sometime then go with your stand-alone website. Our recommendation is that you plan to acquire gallery software early. In this case a simple website will suffice to announce your new gallery. This site can then be replaced by the gallery software driven site.

In either case you need to think about the website you would like to convey your message to your potential clients. Look at other art gallery sites to get some ideas. It will need a home page that entices visitors to look further. Remember your visitors are looking for art! As an art gallery website you will need to list your artists and their works of art, your location and contact information. Anything else is optional.

Be careful of 'fancy' sites. Professional web designers sometimes like to show how fancy they can make your site but be aware of the upfront cost and how easy they are for your visitors to navigate. Not everybody has a super high speed web connection! We often get comments from galleries that one of their pleasures is the compliments they receive on their website because it is simple and easy to navigate.

Ease of updating the content is often overlooked. Websites that are meant to pre-sell your product (art) will need to be easily updated in real-time. There is little point in having the new works of art uploaded to your website after your show opening and we all know artists often deliver their art while you are hanging the show!

Pages like "Home", "Exhibitions", "About Us", "Upcoming Events", "New Art" and "Contact Us" do not change every day and can be self-managed or updated by your web design team. A nice to have feature is a self-management tool that enables you or your gallery staff to easily update the self-managed pages of your website. You usually don't need to understand web design programs or HTML. Page updates can be done in real time. You can upload images and videos from your computer, YouTube or other sources, add links to other websites and customize the pages as often as you want. But remember these are the pages that don't need to change very often and they can be done during slow periods.

Pages with Art Images and Artist Information might change several times per day as you receive new art or sell existing pieces. These pages are best updated quickly in real-time. The best art gallery management software supports direct updating of these pages

when you click 'Update Website'. All art images, art information, artist, artist bio's and artist images are normally transferred to your website quickly without any further action on your part and no waiting for your web designer. The result is a great time and cost saving. Last minute pieces from the featured Artist are no problem, enter them into your program and click, they appear on your website.

Errors happen when you enter the same data more than once! When you correct the title or pricing of a piece you want that information to appear on your website as quickly as possible. Remember this is all part of the professional appearance you need to convey.

Websites can vary in price considerably. Factors such as availability to your visitors, number and complexity of the pages, unique appearance, special graphics, ability to do bulk email, ability to be updated from your gallery management program are all factors. Don't skimp since this is often the first face your potential client sees.

Aside from the benefits of real time updating a well done website can save you time. Think of the amount of time you spend entering art inventory data such as title, size, art type, medium and price then remember if you are not using a website that is integrated with your in-house data you will need to reenter most of that same information all over again on your website. Try doing this in real time!

GallerySoft is designed to suit Fine Art Galleries and offers a fully supported, integrated, self-managed website that runs on a Server site that specializes in high availability, high demand hosting.