

Interactive Features on Web Site

Our expectations of web design have changed with time. Website visitors have become used to the interactive features found on social media websites. All websites are now expected to include interactive features.

Businesses can benefit from this trend by offering interactive features on the company's website that are easy to implement. Building an effective web presence is vital for any company today and the company's website is its greatest marketing tool. Improving the interactivity of the company website can help increase traffic to the site and improve brand loyalty and recognition.

- **Feedback forms** to gather information (with validation)

You can provide "forms" of varying designs to give people a chance to send you feedback about your site or to provide you with information. They can type in comments or just click on "radio buttons" or "check-boxes" to make their selection from various options you present to them.

Feedback forms to gather information

Here is an example of a feedback form from a medical site we designed. It is used to gather information, generate prospects and make it easy for an interested visitor to request information on a topic that interests him or her. When the sender submits it, a confirmation of what he has submitted is shown to him in the browser window, together with a link back to the page he was on. If he has not filled in some of the required fields (you select these) then an error message is shown to him.

(This form will not mail anything now, but you can still make selections and type in)

Get more information with this form:

Your details:

Name:

Email Address:

I would like more information on:

- Knee Replacement.
- Hip Replacement
- Sports injury
- Exercise and Arthritis
- Drugs and Arthritis

Would you like information on a subject not mentioned? Tell us here:

Do you want one of the staff to contact you?

Press and your request will be processed or to start again. We aim to respond within 24 hours.

- **Survey/Polls**

Like feedback forms, used to gather information. The difference is they usually are limited to one or a few questions. People make their selection, submit the form and then are taken to another page where they see the current results (automatically updated) of the poll/survey

ZambaGrafix Survey Script

E-Mail Address

Gender Male Female No Answer

Are You A First Time Visitor A Repeat Visitor No Answer

Comments

- **Automatic subscribe/unsubscribe to a Mailing list or Newsletter**

This can be used to allow people to, for example, subscribe to your newsletter or get details of your products. Of course, it builds a mailing list. Be careful to have a privacy statement (and stick to it!).

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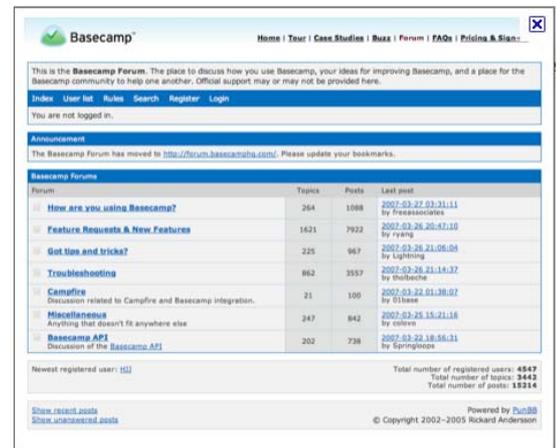
In the script we use, you can control everything through your browser: check and edit your mailing list(s), even send a mail-out to all your subscribers. Note that people can choose to unsubscribe themselves too if they wish. Confirmation messages are sent automatically.



- **Bulletin boards/ discussion forums**

These are in essence places where people can place messages, ask questions and reply to other contributors on line. We use a very sophisticated system that includes chat room facilities (see below), automatic registration and password options, automatic email notification of new messages and many other refinements.

These forums can be completely open or completely private. They can be valuable for customer service and relationship management, eg assign a member of staff to answer customers' or prospects' questions on a board dealing with certain products or services. This also builds up a fund of valuable "frequently asked questions" which can save staff time.

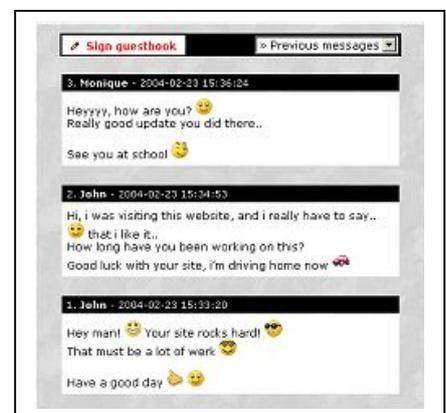


A "Chat Room" is a web page similar to a bulletin board (people type in messages) but these appear instantly on screen, and other people "in the chat room" answer immediately. Commonly these work best when set times are arranged when it is known that there will be someone in the Chat Room, eg an expert, to answer questions etc.

- **Guestbook/classified advertisement system**

A type of bulletin board where visitors may upload their own comments (hopefully positive) about your site, thereby providing an attractive feature (people love reading other people's opinions, and will often use a guest book as a shortcut to seeing whether your site is worth their visit).

Apart from the usefulness of the comments (although forms are the best way to gather more sophisticated, detailed information) it allows others to see the hopefully positive remarks and encourages them to add their own and explore the site further.



The same program can be reformulated to provide a classified ad system, where people can post items they wish to sell or buy (subject to the rules you set). It could be password protected, or subject to site-owner's approval, so that a charge could be made. This can be a feature that attracts a lot of traffic to your site, and/or provides a service to your clients.

- **Password protected private areas**

What it says, and obviously can be used for a variety of reasons. The protection can be of differing degrees of security and created in different ways, with corresponding differences in implementation costs. It also depends on your server/ISP factors.

- **Self-selected FAQs**

A searchable database of frequently asked questions (FAQs) online can save valuable staff time. Bulletin boards (see above) can become a valuable source of information for a separate FAQ section, as well as being a good resource for customers in their own right.

We can provide a facility where people select the questions they are interested in from a list, and the replies to those questions are then automatically assembled in a new page for the person choosing to read.



A more sophisticated alternative provides the option of selecting questions, viewing the answers, and choosing to have all or any of them emailed to the viewer's address. If their question is not covered, viewers can submit it directly to the site via a form, receiving an automatic acknowledgement online. The website owner can choose to have the answer he provides emailed to the questioner and automatically added to the stock of FAQs online.

Questions and answers can be simply uploaded from an ordinary web browser by a non-technical person in your company, and the program will do the rest. This cuts maintenance costs and means you can easily keep things up to date.

And FAQs are a great marketing tool, too!

- **Site search engine**

This is absolutely essential. Research has shown 50% of your site's visitors will use a "search this site" facility (if you have one!) to find what they want rather than use the navigation system.

Site searches can be run internally or outsourced very cheaply with weekly reports provided.



- **Interactive games/puzzles**

Basically used as part of an overall marketing mix to attract people to your site. There are many of these games freely available on the web, and better ones that can be purchased for use on your site very cheaply. Some can be tailored with your brand identity.



- **Referral service**

You can get people to refer their friends to your site (or an item of interest on it) by integrating a simple facility that either generates an email containing the site or page URL (address) or emails the complete page to their friend. All people have to do is fill in their own and their friend's addresses. Apart from boosting your traffic, this also generates a mailing list.

If you have a friend who could gain from a visit to our site, quickly fill in the boxes below and send them a personalised e-mail.

YOUR E-mail Address YOUR Name

FRIEND'S E-mail Address FRIEND'S Name

You can also add a personal message; 1000 char max

This information, your first names and e-mail addresses, will not be used for any other purpose, or made available to others for any reason what so ever.

- **Calendar**

You can have a graphical calendar on your site where anyone or just people with the password can enter appointments or events and see them displayed. This feature can be utilised in a variety of ways.

March 2011						
M	T	W	T	F	S	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

- **Google Map**

Google Map can be used in many ways to improve a website. In its simplest form, it can be used to provide map and satellite views of your location. This can be particularly useful for retail businesses. Google map can also be used to develop advanced features for your website. It can be used to display data from a database. This provides limitless possibilities. Real estate agents can display properties on the map or retail businesses can provide travel directions to their store.

- **RSS Feed**

RSS (Really Simple Syndication) is a commonly used format for sharing content on the web. By offering RSS feed of your website content, you make it readily accessible to millions of internet users who use feed reader applications to find information on the internet. It also makes it easier for users to subscribe to website updates by email. RSS feeds also make it easier for users to share content on other social media sites .

