



## Checklist for Creating Your Adoption Website

1. Gather your “Dear Birth Mother” text you used for your profile
2. Gather the photos you used in your profile
  - a. You may choose additional photos for your website since your space is virtually unlimited
  - b. Ensure your photos are not too large of a file size and are in .jpg format
  - c. If photos are not digitized, scan them to your computer’s hard drive or to a thumb drive
3. Decide on your look, general navigation and layout
  - a. If you are new to creating a webpage, consider starting with a sitemap. It will help you sort your information in much the same way you did on each page of your profile. Basically, you are determining how many pages you need and what will be on them.
  - b. Look around at other websites (or your own profile!) for ideas for color, theme, etc.
  - c. Keep your ideas general at this time. So you know where you are headed, but not a specific and set idea of what it will look like when complete.
4. Decide on a host and get started
  - a. You can begin a site on GoogleSites, WordPress, or Weebly for free. GoDaddy also has low cost sites available with web builders for people new to building websites. You can create your own site with existing themes and styles. It may take a little work and focus, but you can do it!
  - b. You can purchase a custom URL (like [www.SteveAndCarolAdopt.com](http://www.SteveAndCarolAdopt.com)) and point it to your site if you’d like. GoDaddy has information on this.
  - c. If you don’t choose a custom URL, get a link shortner to use in networking. Bit.ly and tinyurl are two options.
  - d. Visit lots of sites and consider reading some web design articles to get some ideas.
5. Start putting it all together
  - a. Make sure your photos are clear and your text is readable.
  - b. Add navigation (links to other pages) and to your Facebook account if you choose to share. (More about this in Networking)
  - c. Add meta tags – these are keywords which are used by search engines.



- d. Make your page attractive by using color, graphics, and backgrounds. Ensure that any clipart or photos you use are approved for use in their licensing terms. There are some free art sites for personal use – don't use copyright protected images without permission!
6. Add your contact information
  - a. Include your toll-free phone number
  - b. Include a contact form for people to send you an email, or just an email address
7. Include your hard copy profile as a PDF that a birth parent could print out
8. Test your page
  - a. Preview your page and test all links. Ensure the navigation is working properly and that everything looks right.
9. Tell everyone about your site
  - a. Include a link on your profile and on your adoption business cards
  - b. Send an email to all your friends/contacts with a link to your page. Ask them for help in getting the word out
  - c. Share it on your Facebook page
  - d. Submit it to the major search engines like Google, Bing and Yahoo. (Google the phrase "submit URL to Google" to get the most recent link/info. Look for other search engines to submit to.)
  - e. If you participate in online forums, add a link to your signature. This works best if the forums you participate in are NOT adoption related. Some families have had luck with active family members who were regular eBay posters in their online forums.
10. Don't get frustrated! This takes some time but your sense of accomplishment will be great. In addition to learning a new skill in basic web design, you are gaining knowledge that will help you later as a parent if you want to create a family homepage or volunteer to run the website for Cub Scouts or the PTA.