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### Duct Tape My Software And Hope For The Best?

By: *Joe Thomas*

The clients are different, but the question is always basically the same. Can you redesign my website?

It doesn't matter how the question is phrased, every time it's asked, I give the same response:

There is no such thing as a Re Design. It's true; a redesign of a website is simply a repackaging. It's taking the same content and putting it in a new dress. Or taking the same software or function and adding some make-up. Now seriously, why would you want to do that?

There can only be a handful of reasons to even entertain the thought of it:

1. The current site doesn't work. It's broken, kaput!
2. The current site is no longer effectively selling your product or service.
3. It's outdated and ugly.
4. You just woke up and decided to change everything for the sake of changing things.
5. Somebody told you it was a good idea.

Here's a breakdown of those reasons, and whether or not a redesign is the solution.

**1. If the current site is broken:** Well if it's broke, you've got to fix it. And if it needs to be

fixed, why use duct tape and glue? Building it correctly from the ground up is a smarter use of your money, and will most likely cost you the same thing - or less. And you can build it with the latest technology, optimized for search, easier updating and better functionality

**2. If the site is no longer effectively selling your product or service:** Why repackage something that doesn't sell? A good developer will tell you why it's not selling - he just needs to look at the data. Let him show you why it's a lame duck, then have him give you the alternatives.

**3. If it's outdated and ugly:** Well this is pretty self-explanatory but I will say this: I've seen a lot of "ugly" sites sell a lot of product; don't base your decision on ugly - that's a matter of opinion. I've told many people with ugly sites NOT to touch them. Hey, if they sell, who cares what they look like, right? Outdated is a different story. You can't compete with today's sites using outdated technology. Just ask MySpace

**4. If you just woke up and decided to change everything:** Go shoe shopping. Buy a new hat. But realize when you call a web developer, you're not going to be happy with anything he does. You'll be wasting your money and driving some poor developer nutso for nothing.

**5. If somebody told you to redesign your website:** Odds are, that person is a web designer - NOT a web developer, and trust me, there is a huge difference between the two. A web designer is going to give you exactly what you ask for - the colors, the content, the buttons, the pictures - the exact website you tell him to build. A web developer is going to tell you honestly if and why you're wrong about all of those things. A developer is going to tell you that your bio is great, but it doesn't sell you. Or that your photos make you look like an alien life form. A developer is going to tell you how and why to build it this way. And let's be honest - if you knew the exact site you needed to have with the colors, content, buttons and pictures, you wouldn't need to hire someone would you?

If I want to build a house, I'm going to call a guy who builds houses, not a guy who paints them.

So, when is it time to redesign? If your site isn't selling, it's possible that tweaking the content, navigational tools or other elements will help. But before you decide a paint job is the answer, consult a web developer, who can provide an objective opinion based on quantifiable data.

When is it time to build anew? If your site is broken or outdated, it may be time to tear it down

## Website Advice for Businesses

Written by Ginny Grimsley  
Monday, 29 October 2012 14:03

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to the studs and start fresh, using all the new wisdom and whirligigs that have become available just in the past five years or so.

In either case, I suggest staying away from the duct tape.

### About Joe Thomas

Joe Thomas is the founder and owner of Left Brain Digital ( [www.leftbraindigital.com](http://www.leftbraindigital.com) ), a web development company. He's an award-winning web designer/developer with more than 18 years of experience in print and web design and development. Thomas' work became a major influence in graphic and web design in the "Y2K" era of the Internet's dot-com explosion.