The difference between web application and website

Introduction

At Essential Designs, we often get mistaken for a web design company, which is an entirely different bag of worms than what we do (web application development). We have focused our business less on web design, and more on data-driven software development. This includes mobile applications, web applications, and custom software. Here's a simplified rundown on the difference between a Website versus Web App

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What is a Website?

A website is a group of globally accessible, interlinked web pages which have a single domain name. It can be developed and maintained by an individual, business or organization. The website aims to serve a variety of purposes. Example: Blogs.

A website is hosted on a single or multiple web server. It is accessible via a network like the Internet or a private local area network via IP address.

What is a Web Application?

A web application is a software or program which is accessible using any web browser. Its frontend is usually created using languages like HTML, CSS, Javascript, which are supported by major browsers. While the backend could use any programming stack like LAMP, MEAN, etc. Unlike mobile apps, there is no specific SDK for developing web applications.

Web Applications came to prominence with the advent of Software as a Service (SaaS) movement.

 Differences between Website and Web Application

Let's go further on in depth in the web application vs website dilemma and see which are the key differences between these two.

	Website	Web application
Purpose	A website has an informative role, it is based on business goals, and most of them are business presentation websites.	A web application has the purpose of helping users do a certain task.

	Website	**Web application**
Development process	A website usually is easy to be created since it consists only of a compilation of web pages.	A web application is more challenging to be built than a website because it has different types of users, a higher level of security, and various functionalities based on data processing.
Time to launch	The time needed to develop a website starts from one week and takes a maximum of one month, based on its complexity and number of pages. Here an important role is played by the website type. If the website is static, which means that it has static content on static pages, the development will go faster. If the website is dynamic, the development will take more time.	A web application has two phases. The first one is the MVP (minimum viable product), which means the basic functionality needed to test a product in the market, and it takes from two weeks to eight weeks. The second phase is the scaling one, which can take months or years, based on the uses' demands.
Resources needed	The majority of the time allocated for building a website goes into creating the content and the website architecture.	Most of the time invested in creating a web app goes into developing the functionality.
Team	The team usually consists of a project manager, a content creator, and a front-end developer that will take care of the web design.	The minimum team needed to build a web app consists of a project manager, a UI/UX specialist, a back-end developer, and a front-end- developer.
Hosting solution	The hosting solution for a website is less pricy since there isn't a lot of data to be processed.	The hosting for a web application is usually more expensive since more components are needed, such as a database and a back-end solution. Simultaneously, a web application will require multiple increased resources like CPU power, RAM capabilities, and storage.

	Website	Web application
UI/UX	Having a custom made design for your website is not mandatory, though an eye-catchy look will definitely boost your website's performance.	The User Interface and User Experience design (UI/UX) is mandatory for a web application since its goal is to be intuitive and easy to use. User interactivity is what makes a web application successful.

Web Application vs Website: how to choose which is right for you

Well, this question is quite simple. If you want to showcase your business and present your products to the world, you need a website. If you want an online tool to help you automate a process, you need a web application.

If you build a web application and want to sell it, you would probably need both because a website helps you promote the product you just created.

A website doesn't usually have functionality, so if you want people to register on your website, then you need a website with components of a web application (website = just presentation pages; web application = authentication and other functionalities).

Mode Effect described pretty well the key differences between a website and a web application in this four minutes video. If you prefer more the audio version, c

What are the characteristics of a good Website?

Now that you've learned about the web application vs website difference, we can discuss about what are the characteristics that make them performant.

A website's goal is to provide information to its readers. So let's see what the characteristics of a good website are:

- **Security** - First of all, a website must be secure for its readers. HTTP requests are not safe. To avoid any security issue and protect your readers' personal data you must use HTTPS protocols that repair the initial problem by working with TLS/SSL encryption.

- **High-quality web content**- The information that you provide to your readers should be relevant and helpful for their needs. Before starting to write, do a market research and identify the topics that get their attention so you can provide related content.
- **SEO friendliness** - In order for your website to rank higher in search

engines, you should make sure that it is SEO friendly both on the technical level and on the content level.

- Responsiveness - Since people change devices quite frequently, a website should look great on each one of them: smartphone, tablet, desktop, laptop.
- Speed - Speed is a critical metric. Nowadays, people leave a website if it's not loading in under two seconds.

To create a great website, you should think about working with a [web design company](#). The website developers will take care that all the characteristics mentioned above are implemented, and your website is ready to grow.

What are the characteristics of a good Web Application?

Web applications are widely spread, from an ecommerce platform to social networks and e-learning platforms, you find them everywhere. Each of them allows users to perform their tasks and improve their lives by winning time, giving them valuable information, or entertaining them.

The characteristics of a good web application are:

- Security - It is essential to have a secure authentication for a web application where users login and password is generated safely. People don't feel comfortable when sharing personal information so having a safe app is critical.
- Intuitiveness - a great web application needs to be intuitive so that customers will easily use it, and you won't need to invest time in creating extended documentation for it. That's why the UI/UX design plays a crucial role in its success.

- Scalability - User input is critical in this step. As soon as people start using your product, they will propose more features to be added. That's why the development company should make sure that the app is scalable and the new features can be built upon easily.
- Speed - The data processing should take place easily and without affecting the loading speed.

As mentioned in the previous chapters, web application development is more complex than website development, so there are many factors to consider. That's why to create a great web application, you will need to collaborate with a web development company. They will make sure that your application

is performing, and they will inform you frequently about the development process.

Advantages of Website

Some of the advantages of building a website are:

- **You can showcase your services or products.**
- **You can promote your business online.**
- **You can provide information that will help other people in their business journey or even their life.**

Advantages of Web Application

Some of the advantages of building a web application are:

- **You can build a product that will automate certain processes or improve parts of someone else's life.**
- **A web application can run on multiple platforms and operating systems.**
- **A web application can be accessed from anywhere without the need to install it on a hard drive.**
- **The web application development process takes less time than the mobile app development process since you don't need to build separate applications for iOS, Android, and other operating systems.**

Disadvantages of Website

Let's see now some disadvantages of a website:

- **The web design needs to be updated regularly since the design trends change as each year goes by.**
- **You need to update the website with valuable content often to keep its ranking high and users engaged.**
- **You need to take security measures so the website won't crash.**

Disadvantages of Web Application

Some of the disadvantages of a web application are:

- **In comparison to mobile applications or desktop applications, you can not use them without an internet connection.**
- **They might look different and not work accordingly on old web browsers. In order to avoid this, the application developers need to test it thoroughly.**

When do you need a Website?

You need a website when you want to build an online presence and showcase your products or services. You can get some inspiration from a wide variety of businesses from Site Builder Report's article

When do you need a Web Application?

You need a web application when you want to build a product that will automate certain tasks or build an ecommerce platform, a real estate app, a management system and so on. If you have a product with certain functionality in mind, then you most probably need a web app.