

Make an informed decision.

Deciding on which website to spend your advertising dollars on can be a confusing endeavor.

You owe it to yourself to make an informed decision based on your own research. Consider the following:

- 1) Is the website "user friendly"?
- 2) Does the website have integrity? In other words, does it appear to be well updated?
- 3) How do people find the website?
- 4) Are people looking at the website?
- 5) How will you be represented on the website?

1) - Do you like the appearance of the website?

Is it easy to read?

Is it easy to find the information that you are looking for?

Is it easy to navigate from one page to another and come back to where you began?

2) - Maintaining a website is a "full time" job.

Check for integrity of the information given.

If there is an events or schedule page, are the dates current?

You may need to call a venue to actually check this information.

Is contact information provided?

If a quote is used, is the source of the quote documented with a viable link?

3) - Does the website have good search engine placement?

Write down a few "key words" and "key word phrases" that pertain to your business and to the audience you are wanting to attract.

Enter these into the search engine. Does the website you are considering show up?

How close to the top of the results page does it show?

For instance, type into the search engine " winter texan " (the audience you want to attract)

Then try "winter texan (your product or service)"

You may also want to enter "(your product or service) in the Rio Grande Valley"

If the website shows on the first page of search results it is likely to be viewed by more people.

If it places within the first five pages of results, there is still a good chance that it may be viewed.

How far people will go into search results is a good question. How far would you look?

4) - The number of visitors to a website, and the pages they click on, is called website traffic.

When a visitor arrives at the site, their presence is logged and any links that they click on are also monitored. These numbers get added up, giving the website owner an idea of how many people are visiting the site. It is a way of measuring the success of a website, as the more traffic it gets, the more popular it is.

Website traffic is measured in "hits", "page views" and "unique visitors".

It is important to understand the differences in these terms.

A **HIT** is counted each time someone views a file (HTML file or graphic file) on a Web site.

A single Web page can be made up of many files; for example, if a Web page is one HTML file and ten image files, that would show as 11 hits when people view that page. If you're just interested in how many people are looking at a site, you probably don't care about hits.

PAGE VIEWS is the number of web pages that visitors have viewed.

If a visitor visits 10 pages in a website, this counts as 10 page views.

This is good information to gauge if a website gets browsed through or just visited in passing.

Compare the number of page views to the number of unique visitors to accurately judge this information.

UNIQUE VISITORS is the approximate number of people who viewed pages on your site in a given month. Unique visitors are tracked by the IP address of the computer the person is using. If the same IP address returns to view your site within the month, that will add hits and pages, but won't increase the number of unique visitors.

Be aware of information given to you about website traffic.

If someone tells you that they get 12,000 hits per month, this does not mean that 12,000 people looked at their website. What you want to know is how many unique visitors there are per month and what is the average number of page views per visitor.

You can verify website traffic information on the internet.

www.compete.com, here you can compare unique visitors for up to 3 websites at a time.

Simply type in the website addresses and click on the compare button.

www.alexa.com, this website shows a variety of webtraffic information.

5 - Will people see you immediately or do they have to look for you?

There are 2 ways of representing an advertiser on a website.

1) banner ads - a picture or graphic that represents your business

2) text - your business name

These are usually "linked" to a page that displays your advertisement or to your website.

You want to know in advance where these links will be placed. Are they in an obvious location.

Does the viewer see them right away? How many pages are your links placed on?