

Ecommerce or Website Builder:

Which Tool Is Right
For Your Business?



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Today's business climate is digital, of that we can all be sure. Whether you're simply showcasing your business online or actively trading over the internet, all businesses - large and small - should now have a web presence. For some organisations that means simply snapping up a Twitter handle and discussing the day-to-day running of the brick and mortar business, but for many others it means delving into the world of servers, domain names and website builds.

To the uninitiated, the world of websites can seem like a minefield, and admittedly it's pretty complex. Deciding on your hosting solution, a domain name to park your website and then the myriad web design frivolities can be overwhelming, and for many small businesses it's best to keep it simple.

The two primary software packages any small business should be considering are website builder and ecommerce store builder. Although many of these packages boast similar features, it can be simple to mistake one for the other and end up with surplus or inefficient capabilities. This may seem like a minor obstacle - both packages are relatively cost-effective when compared with a complete ground-up website build - but it's important to avoid any roadblocks in your digital transformation, hence it's important to purchase the right package for you as soon as possible.

So how do you pick between the two?

While there are several versions of each software package available on the web, essentially two website builder tool options are available to businesses and individuals: website builder and ecommerce store builder. Firstly, it's important to note the primary difference between the two packages: one's purpose is to showcase, the other's is to sell.

Website builder, being the less extensive of the two options, allows you to showcase your brand, products or services on your business website, providing information about your business and offering contact details. Ecommerce store builder packages, however, take this a step further by offering all website builder features but with additional store function: it enables you to sell. Website builder is considered by many to be the "first step" towards selling online. Digital disruption - caused by the explosion of the internet into our lives - has caused businesses around the world to undergo digital transformation to be real contenders in today's business climate. For this reason businesses are working to establish their web presences, and a major stepping stone in this process is setting up a website. To the uninitiated, a website builder package provides the perfect platform for this.

While it may be pegged as the “first step” towards selling online, and in many ways it is, website builder lacks the functionality that will allow your website to actually start trading. Website builder, for all its perks, allows you to simply get your brand out there on the internet, providing as little or as much information about what it is you do or sell for webizens to browse at ease. With website builder you can build a platform to connect with your customers, providing contact details and links out to your social channels. You can use your website builder to publish and maintain a blog about your business and your industry, which can then be used to generate organic traffic to your site through search engine optimisation. The one thing you can't do with a standard website builder package is process transactions and actively do business on the web.

Business, by definition, is any “commercial activity”, or the act of trading. Having a website that doesn't facilitate transactions is little more use to a trading business than a flyer is outside of the internet; to conduct business electronically over the internet companies need to fully commit to taking their commercial activity online, and take the plunge with ecommerce. Ecommerce - short for electric commerce - is the process of trading online, and to get started with ecommerce businesses need to make the leap from their “stepping stone” website builder package to an online store builder.

Ecommerce website builder packages open your business's trade channels to the world. With an ecommerce solution you can not only showcase your products, you can also offer them up for sale. For less than £10/month you can ensure your products and services are available for purchase in all four corners of the globe, 24 hours a day.

While many businesses go through the journey from brick and mortar to website builder and then on to ecommerce store builder, there are some who wish to simply start selling online immediately, and leapfrogging the website builder step. Unfortunately the various website builder packages available on the internet can serve as a confusion in this process for businesses, and some companies end up with an insufficient package that doesn't allow them to sell their products. Identifying and understanding the subtle differences between standard website builder tools and ecommerce store builders is key for any business who wishes to trade successfully on the web; after all, why should businesses waste their money building a website without store capabilities? In addition, why waste money on an ecommerce package when you simply want to provide information about your business?

We know about the key difference between website builder and ecommerce online store builder, but what are the similarities?

Essentially the software at the core of both website builder and ecommerce store builder is the same, with additional storefront functionality separating the latter from the former. Both website builder and ecommerce store builder are novice-friendly, designed to allow those lacking in technical web design abilities create fully functional and visually pleasing websites for themselves. The software is template based, with many providers offering a vast selection of website templates to choose from. This doesn't mean that each site created using website builder and ecommerce store builder is the same, though, as the templates are fully customisable via an easy drag-and-drop tool, allowing users to alter the colours, images and text to name but three elements.



Both website builder and ecommerce store builder will put your brand in the spotlight; building your business's online presence couldn't be simpler than with these software packages. You can provide information about your business, an avenue for customers to contact you with ease - for example, links out to your social media accounts or a built in contact form - and an insight into the daily running of your business. Your website builder website can be used to house your business blog, providing your customers with information and news about your industry, which will in turn give your site an SEO boost. The same - however - can be said of a website built with ecommerce store builder, although with this option you can sell the products or services you are sampling in your blog posts from the very same place.