



CHECK OUT CHECKTHIS

Build websites quickly, easily and for free

There are many ways for people or organizations to create a website. You can hire a graphic designer and programmer to build a sophisticated site with commercial applications. You can set up a free Wordpress site using pre-designed templates that offer a fairly wide range of styles and functions. You can sign up for a Facebook page and load it up with your personal content. You could also learn to use design and code-writing software to build

a site from scratch, or use one of the many online options for creating websites with varying degrees of sophistication.

But what if you just want to quickly put up a webpage to commemorate a special event, invite friends to a party or sell your car? And suppose you're not interested in learning how to write code, use special software or register with a social network? That's when you should check out **CheckThis.com**.

Simple site setup

This site lets you build a simple, one-page website in a matter of minutes. You can include text, images, video, audio, Google maps, links, polls and PayPal functionality.

There's a basic template with options for customizing. You can change the font styles and colors, the overall color scheme and even add your own background image that fills the screen.

Technically, each site you build is limited to one page. But you could build several related sites and add links on them to each other to create a quasi-multi-page site. The pages are a fixed width, but you can scroll down as deep as you like.

No new knowledge needed

Building pages is ridiculously easy and fast on CheckThis. You don't need any specialized Web knowledge, but you do need to be computer literate in order to prepare and locate any images, video or audio you want to include.

The site has a very minimalist appearance. A shallow toolbar across the top of the page features 10 tools that help you manage, customize and publish the site, or look at examples of other users' sites. The tools are easy to figure out and use.

Below that is the question "What do you want to do?" followed by links to four potential answers: Tell, Sell, Ask or Invite. Clicking one of the answers opens up a template with the appropriate content. For instance, selecting Sell opens a template containing sections for a product title, description, photo, price, purchase options and an option to add additional content. Select Invite and the template gives you sections to add an event title, description, image, RSVP and more.

Text can be entered into the sections by simply typing or pasting from another source, such as a website or Word document. Images can be placed from your computer or websites such as Facebook, Instagram or Flickr. Video and audio has to be placed from a Web source, such

as YouTube or Soundcloud. Simply copy the URL of any image, video or audio from the original site and paste it into your CheckThis site. Google maps can be added in the same manner.

If you already have all of your text, images, videos, etc., saved where you can access them from the computer you're working on, you can build a site in a matter of minutes. CheckThis will generate a random URL for your site, or, if you register, you can create your own URL (it will be preceded by "checkthis.com/" so it will read "checkthis.com/yourURLhere").

Build, publish, share

Publishing your site is as easy as clicking a button. You can share your page through various social media sites, such as Facebook, Twitter, Google+, etc. Or you can just email your URL to whomever you want to show the site to. Or, if you happen to write a column in a newspaper, you can put your URL (**checkthis.com/kevinoneillart**) in it so people can visit your site.

I built a test site at the above URL in less than 15 minutes. I tested it on an iMac, an iPad and a Windows computer in Firefox, Safari, Chrome and Internet Explorer. The only problems I had were missing links with Internet Explorer. That could be a problem for CheckThis since Internet Explorer, despite often having problems displaying Web content, is a commonly used browser.

KEVIN O'NEILL is a graphic artist for The Times-Tribune. Contact him at koneill@timeshamrock.com with links to your favorite websites.



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