

NEW INNOVATIONS



**“Location,
location, location.”**

**–WILLIAM DILLARD,
FOUNDER OF DILLARD’S**

Until the Internet, thousands of years of commerce happened locally. That placed a premium on good locations that were affordable and well-trafficked. Otherwise high-quality stores would perish when customers were far away.

The Internet has dramatically changed this; competitors can now be just clicks apart. The Internet is also increasingly the first way that people learn about and purchase from a business. In ten years, more than a few industries that are currently retail will become predominantly digital (e.g. Borders vs. Amazon). Therapy isn't as far along that spectrum as

How & Why to Build a Website for Your Therapy Practice

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books but it's clear that an online presence can benefit therapists.

Here are three basic steps to consider in building an online presence.

1 GET A GOOD DOMAIN NAME

Domain names like www.mayoclinic.com are the Internet's street address. An online business's domain name is its first and strongest marketing asset. Finding a good one for yourself is worth the investment of time and money.

A generically good name like therapy.com or counseling.com will likely be out-of-reach. The next best thing may be your name. Now that the internet has over 200 [top-level domains](#) - suffixes such as .com, .org., and .info - your

name could well be available in one of these domains. Domize.com is a good, free tool to check their availability (click the Options link on Domize to search more than the main suffixes).

Once you find the domain you want, you can purchase it from a domain registrar such as GoDaddy, NameCheap, and 1&1. Domains cost about \$10 per year and



hosting a website on the domain costs about \$5 per month. These costs are well worth it.

2 CHOOSE A WEBSITE BUILDER

Once you have your domain, you can start creating a website. There are many tools to do this and it's no longer necessary to learn HTML. There are free and low-cost tools that let you create websites in a way called What You See Is What You Get (WYSIWYG). This means you can type text into a page and the tool will show you what it will look like when published.

Some of the best free website builders include Wix, Weebly, and Webs.com. They can help you create a basic, professional-looking site in less than an hour.

One option is to build your website as a blog. Wordpress and Blogger are the two most popular blogging services and are both free. Building a blog is a good choice if you can invest time into writing



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interesting articles that other sites might link to and thus increase your visibility in search engines like Google and Bing.

To make your site look more professional, consider investing in custom graphics and photography. You can hire a decent graphic designer for \$50 per hour. A designer can create a logo and website design that helps you stand out.

3 MARKET YOUR WEBSITE

Once you have a new digital home, you need to invite people in! That means marketing your website wherever people may find you. To find potential clients, therapy

directories are a good place to start. Google Adwords lets you buy affordable advertising that people will see when they search for terms that you specify, such as "therapist Palo Alto". Social media sites like Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn let you publicize your website and build a following.

I know all of this can seem overwhelming but you don't have to do everything at once. If you invest just a few hours a week, you can have a domain, website, and early marketing presence going within a month or two. If you need help, you can always reach out to a techie-minded friend or acquaintance. You don't need to limit yourself to just one location. There's a whole world waiting to meet you! ■