

Fire your boss. [Find out more](#)  **Subscribe to Nett and save 40%** 

NETT# TAKE YOUR BUSINESS FURTHER ONLINE

- [Finance](#)
[Technology](#)
[Marketing](#)
[People](#)
[Starting or Selling](#)
[Web & eCommerce](#)
[Govt. & Legal](#)
[Export](#)
[Latest News](#)
[Market Place](#)


Register Now | Sign in

- Articles
 Resources

eCommerce

Planning online catalogues

Resources

Registering an online business 

[More Resources](#)



Producers



Partners



Community Newspapers



NETT Partners

Corporate Design & Print Solutions

For design and print advice, we're on the same page.



[Next](#) | [Prev](#)

Subscribe to Nett and save 40% on newsstand 

Fire your boss.

[Find out more](#) 

Michela Ledwidge
22 June 2010

First impressions count on the web. How you plan, create and display your product images in an online catalogue can make a great contribution to your sales and marketing efforts.

The first step in creating a good looking product catalogue is to produce a creative brief for whoever is creating your product images and the interactive experience around them. If you're doing the work yourself, this step is still essential as it helps you identify your image requirements and record your plan for how the catalogue will appear.

In your brief include notes on:

- Examples of websites that have catalogues you like and some of the reasons.
- The ideal shopping experience you wish to offer your customers.
- Preferences for how each product could be presented.



Photo credit: BWK @ sxc.hu

Creating a simple catalogue

Think about how you want to display collections (for example, as thumbnail images); plan the journey shoppers will take from your homepage down to the product page.

Consider whether you need a full-screen display mode, and to cover all possible display options, ensure that you request delivery of any images at the highest original quality so that you have scope for re-versioning down the line (eg the RAW images from a camera, at least 300dpi if required for print).

Managing multi-angle and multi-sizes

There is a wide range of off-the-shelf tools that can help you manage a product image catalogue, though you should get your processes in order first before you choose the tools.

Think about how many actual images you will be required to manage? A content management system (CMS) like Netregistry's StoreXpress can generate three different image sizes (ie small, medium, large) from the master image file you upload. This process needs to be repeated for each and every different perspective (angle, variation) you wish to offer.

"It all comes down to the user experience you envisage for your product"

A content management system is recommended for any sizeable collection of images. Most CMS tools support tags, which are an easy mechanism to help sort your content on-the-fly.

Complex imagery

We're now seeing more and more options to generate your images based on user input or data from your store to create variations on the image automatically. Often this variation is limited to colour (eg clothing or paint sites), but taken to its logical conclusion, expect to see more and more sites that generate a combination of 2D images and 3D computer models as a single image. Google Street View and Microsoft PhotoSynth are two examples of sites where the line between 2D and 3D imagery on the web is fast blurring.

So how far should you go in producing complex imagery for your online catalogue? Ultimately, it all comes down to the user experience you envisage for your product.

Consider that the more end-user technical requirements you impose, the more likely that certain potential customers will not be able to interact with your site. Pay attention to any formal or de-facto standards that exist for your industry.


For example, Apple has blocked all Flash content from easily appearing on iPod, iPhone and the upcoming iPad. For mobile shoppers, a simpler HTML-only interface may prove to be much better value.

A good rule of thumb is to spend at least as much time producing the back-end for your image collection and your store as a whole, as you do the front-end. That way you can check how successful your user experience is and refine to suit.


If you don't have the capability to update your collection as and when it is required to do so, you are probably not going to see much return on your investment. You want to make sure you are well prepared to make necessary changes, quickly and easily.

###

Michela Ledwidge  is an artist, entrepreneur (Rack&Pin, MOD Productions, MOD Films) and technologist.

Looking for a low cost way of creating an effective website that suits your business' needs? Check out Netregistry's Custom Website Design. 

RELATED ARTICLES

- eBay announces new mobile app for Google Android phones
- Making images web-worthy
- Online stores reduce junk mail
- Shoe fetishists scoop triple-win ORIAS
- Why a professional image is important 

RELATED BLOG POSTS

- Ask the expert: A great website in 5 pages
- Your website is your best sales person | How well are they prepared?

Starting your own small
business just got simpler.

[Find out more](#)



[FINANCE](#) [TECHNOLOGY](#) [MARKETING](#) [PEOPLE](#) [STARTING OR SELLING](#) [WEB & ECOMMERCE](#) [GOVT. & LEGAL](#) [EXPORT](#) [LATEST NEWS](#)

[Blogs](#) [Sitemap](#) [Subscribe](#) [RSS](#) [Privacy](#) [Contact Us](#) [Q&A - Ask A Question](#) [Competition Terms](#) [Advertise with us](#)
Copyright © 2010. Nett magazine