You're listening to You've Got This, episode 410.

Welcome to You've Got This, a weekly podcast for higher education professionals looking to increase their confidence and capacity for juggling the day-to-day demands of an academic life.

I'm your host, Dr.

Katie Linder.

On this episode, I thought I would share about my recent experience working with a website developer to update my main website and also to create a new website for my project management by design training offerings that I'm launching in 2025.

Now, I'm going to link both of these websites in the show notes so you can always check them out there, but you can also navigate to drcatylinder.com or to hireedpm.com to take a look.

And I thought in this episode, I would talk a little bit about why I decided to hire a web developer in the first place.

You may know that in the past, I have always designed and developed my own website.

So this time I decided to outsource that.

So I'm going to talk a little bit about why.

I also thought I would talk a little bit about how I chose the person that I ended up working with because this can always be a tough one.

How do you find the right fit?

I'm going to talk a little bit about the process of working with the web developer.

And then I'm also going to share about the general cost.

Although I do want to point out that this can vary widely depending on your project and who you decide to work with.

And for my particular website, I wouldn't say it's overly complex, but I would say it's kind of large.

There are many pages and lots of content, but it doesn't have some of the more like, I don't know, like shopping cart features and a lot of plugins and things like that.

And so I would say that my website is complex because of its size, but not necessarily because of its features.

I'm also going to link to the specific web developer that I worked with in the show notes because I can definitely recommend her.

It was a really good experience.

And so I would be happy to pass along that information if you're looking for someone.

Okay.

So first, why did I decide to hire a web developer?

Now, I don't think it's going to surprise you to note that the number one thing I was concerned about here was my time.

I really didn't feel like I had a lot of extra time to give to this project.

And I wanted to have something that I felt really good about.

I wanted to kind of up level the look and feel of the site.

And I'm not a trained website designer or developer.

I've kind of just done this in the past by learning on my own and looking up tutorials and, you know, trying to figure it out.

And I felt like I was at a point, um, it had been about six years since I last did my latest kind of website build and my like brand refresh.

And I, it was just kind of time to kind of look at everything again, make sure everything was working.

Um, I had found some stuff on my site that was like not linked correctly.

So it was kind of like, let's just refresh this whole thing.

And also I really wanted to, um, try to figure out a way to kind of have a creative collaborator with this because I didn't feel like I had a lot of brain margin to spend on it as well.

And I wanted to make sure it was really something that again, I could be proud of.

And I knew I needed another person to kind of help me engage with that.

Now I should note that when I first went looking for someone to refresh my main site, um, that was all I was looking for at the time.

This was in the summer.

And then I added the second project management by design project after I was seeing how well it was working with the web developer that I hired.

So originally I started with one project and then I branched out to two.

So let me talk a little bit about how I found this person.

Her name is Erin.

Um, and first I had seen another site that she had designed.

So I follow somebody on social media and she had designed their website and I had been kind of keeping my eye out because I wanted to reach out to a couple of people and kind of see what would be possible.

And one of the things that really drew me in, other than just kind of the design and, and, and the look and feel of what she was already doing was that she works with WordPress and she also uses the divvy theme.

And this is something that I already have built into many of my sites.

It's something that I was explicitly looking for because I'm very comfortable working with it in terms of editing.

And so that was something that was kind of on my mind is can I find somebody that works within the divvy theme?

And when she did, that was perfect.

The other thing that I really appreciated about Erin from the very beginning is how she was very responsive to my inquiry.

And I also really enjoyed our first conversation about the project.

Um, I had actually reached out to a couple other folks and at least one of them never got back to me.

So it matters when someone is actually responding to you and Erin was very responsive.

And I would also say that her pricing was in the range of what I was looking for.

Once I got kind of the quote from her and she kind of talked through what she would be able to do.

Um, it was definitely in the range of kind of what I had in mind and that helped a lot too.

So let me talk a little bit about the process of kind of what we went through.

Um, I will start by saying this timeline, I hired Erin in like July and we are launching the sites in like right now, like mid December.

So this was about a, you know, five and a half to six month process of getting this going.

And I think that that was something just to keep in mind is like the back and forth on these kinds of projects can take a while and that's okay.

It doesn't have to be rushed.

I think depending on the complexity of your website, it could be less time.

But I, as you'll hear me talk about, I was pretty persnickety about this.

Like I really wanted to provide a lot of feedback.

Um, and so this did take a little while to do.

So we started with like an introductory meeting to discuss the overall project.

I was able to learn about Erin's process.

Um, she owns a company called Hello Rising Tide.

And again, I will link to this in the show notes and she's a creative director and a web designer there.

And I shared some early designs that I had actually like mocked up in Canva, which is like an online platform that you can do different design work in.

And I wanted to give her a sense of like the look and feel of what I was going for in the site.

I was definitely not necessarily wanting to create a site that was like cookie cutter or like too corporate.

I was looking for something that was really a representation of me, but also was kind of sharing about the kinds of things that I can do to provide support for people.

Now, since I had an existing site, I think it was also helpful for Erin to see that.

So she had a sense of the kind of content that I was sharing.

And, um, so she shared her kind of timeline and we went through a contracting process.

And once that part was done, we went through a more in depth conversation about the project and the pages and the things I wanted to update and add.

So for example, I wanted to have a more expanded podcast archive pages.

So if you've ever been to my website, you might have noticed, I do not have a podcast like episode guide for you've got this.

And now I do.

And I now have episode guides for every podcast I've ever done.

All the ones that are archived and no longer being produced.

And so it's like way easier to go in and look and see the different episode topics and to find things that might be of interest to you.

So that was something I wanted to add.

I also wanted to add a favorites page because there are many products and things that I talk about on a regular basis that people want to know what I'm using.

Now I want to be very clear.

This is not a page where I get any kind of kickback.

It's literally just things that I use all the time and that I love.

And if you're interested in kind of like what is the brand I use for my weighted blanket or for my, I've talked about using this on the blog, like this nail strengthening cream, like, I mean, just all these kind of random things.

My podcast equipment is on there.

My favorite apps are on there.

My technology that I use every day is on there.

So I wanted to create a page about that.

And I also wanted to create what is called a now page, which I think I've talked about before on the podcast that talks about my current projects.

And then partway through the engagement, I also had the ask me anything page since I launched that project in the middle of doing all of this website design.

So there were several things that were new to the website, in addition to kind of some things that I wanted to refresh.

And to kick all this off, Erin worked on my general branding first, which included kind of an updated color palette and a logo.

And I will note that the colors and the logo changed over time.

So as we were, we got, we had like a starting point, but as we got more into the design of the actual site, I had more opinions about the colors I wanted to use and about the logo and what I wanted it to look like.

And, um, but we needed to kind of get started with something.

So once we had that piece generally figured out, she started to mock up pages of the site.

And this would often happen through like sending me video walkthroughs of pages.

I might respond, you know, with my own video or with an email to share feedback.

And this was initially doing mockups in her own software.

And then later on we gave her access to a staging site that was like a sub domain of my main site for her to work in.

And that allowed her to use the divi theme and basically create like an entire site for me to look at and navigate through as a whole.

Now, one of the things that I do want to point out, and Erin was just phenomenal about this is we did go back and forth several times and she was incredibly responsive to changes that I recommended and suggestions that I had for design elements that I wanted to include.

And I will admit that sometimes, despite the fact that I wanted, you know, a creative collaborator, it was hard for me to like share creative control because I'm used to doing this design work myself.

And there were moments where I was unsure if this was really going to get where I needed it to go because I couldn't always articulate what exactly I was like trying to figure out.

Now I want to know this was all my insecurity and nothing that Erin was doing, but I also want to point out that it's normal to have that kind of nervousness when you're working with another creative person and you're trying to have something that feels very you, you want to have like really open communication with your web developer about what you like and what you want to have changed.

And there were definitely moments where I thought, am I giving too much feedback or am I asking for too much or am I being like too, like detail oriented about the kinds of things that I want?

But this is someone that you're hiring to do this work for you.

And so I kept reminding myself like, no, you don't want to end this project and not feel good about it.

You really want to keep pushing until you feel like you've gotten what you need.

And I think that for me, it took many iterations of me seeing like different color combinations and things like that to make sure that it was right.

And I cannot say enough good things about how Erin like took that journey with me and was willing to make all kinds of changes and mock up different things and make sure that I was really experiencing, um, you know, designing the site in the way that I wanted to.

Now I would guess, and I haven't asked her this, but I would guess that I'm one of the more opinionated clients that she's ever worked with because I, I had a pretty clear vision for the design, but I wasn't always sure how to execute it.

And, um, she was super patient helped me as I worked through that kind of thing.

And, and it was really helpful to see her process and to experience that with her.

So when we got further into the project and Erin had a good sense of my feedback, her development of the pages went a lot faster.

So I think we might've had one or two live meetings to kind of chat through things, make sure she had like my punch list of items that I wanted to see modified or updated.

And then as we were getting closer and closer to the end of the project, I would comb through the site, you know, multiple times, add additional tasks, like things that were just like little tiny, like, Oh, this, this was in an old brand color and we need to change the color or like this format isn't working.

Or can we change the testimonials to this way or that way?

Like just, um, you know, little things that I was seeing throughout the site.

And I think you could compare this to like a final copy edit of like a manuscript because the edits are very detailed at this point and, and they're pretty, you know, small.

Now all of that, all of that process that I just explained referred to my main site.

Um, and so I also had Erin create a full site for my project management by design courses.

And these were based off of like a color palette that I had already identified.

She did create a logo for this site.

And I would say that her design for the PM site was right from the very start.

It was way less complicated.

Um, and it was just a much faster build and kind of approval process from me because I had a lot of the content built on a page and she was able to kind of transition that into the actual site.

Um, now I did add a blog to that site.

And that's one of the things that I'm really excited about is starting to build out some content on project management and higher ed.

Um, because I think there's a lot of terminology that people just don't know, even if they're using it, they're not quite sure what it means.

Um, or what I mean is they're doing the thing, but they don't know what it's called.

Um, they're just kind of instinctually doing it.

And so I want to build out that content.

So if you go to there right now, you'll see there's four blog posts as I record this.

Um, I'm building out some of that content over my winter break.

Um, and so I'm looking forward to getting that, uh, filled out.

Um, and then in the main site, if you go there right now, you might notice on, on both of the sites, um, we're still working on speed, um, because of the, the nature of kind of the, um, the divvy theme and also the amount of information that's on those sites.

And so, um, give us a little bit of grace.

My partner and I, he's working behind the scenes to speed up the sites, but you're welcome to go check them out.

Um, and of course I always love feedback and hearing what you think.

Okay.

So in terms of timeline, as I mentioned, I reached out to Erin in early July.

We contracted, I think in mid July for the main site.

And then the PM by design site, I contracted in early fall and then bull sites launched this past week.

So that's kind of the rough timeline.

And in terms of the cost, I was trying to think about this.

I think my initial contract for the main site was about $4,500, but then I added some additional pages.

And so I expected to be a little bit higher than that.

And then I think the PM site was around $3,500.

I may be getting that slightly off and you might be thinking like, you know, how do you have this money just like lying around?

Um, so what I would say is in my business, this is a business expense because both of these sites are for my business.

We do have a savings account that is just for the business.

It is set aside from our personal savings.

And this is the kind of thing that I spend that money on.

So this is something that has been kind of sitting there and waiting for a project like this.

I build up those savings over time.

And this is also the savings account where I will buy like new technology and things like that for my business.

So, um, this is something I've been thinking about for a while.

And so we had definitely been kind of socking away, you know, some funding in order to cover this.

The other thing I would just say is given the time and energy that Erin was putting into this project, this cost is incredibly reasonable for me because of the complexity of what I was asking her to do.

And it would have taken me four times as long probably to do this work.

If I was trying to do it on my own, um, I just don't have the time or the mental energy to kind of chip away at something like this, given everything that's going on for me right now.

So, um, I'm so grateful to have people that you can hire and partner with to do these kinds of projects.

And now that the sites are launched, I'm really thrilled with how they both turned out.

And I'm equally thrilled, um, that I was able to have this kind of creative collaboration and continue to learn from, uh, someone who's very experienced in this space.

So it was wonderful to collaborate on this creative project with a true expert and who she offered such incredible ideas along the way.

So again, I will put all the information if you are interested in, in learning more about Erin services.

Um, and I am not getting any kickback for recommending Erin either.

I get no affiliation fee.

Um, I just want to mention that, you know, I think she was fantastic.

And when I work with folks and when I have products that I enjoy, um, I always like to pass along that information.

So I would be happy to answer questions.

If you have them about working with a web developer or creating a website, you are welcome to email me at hello@drkatie lindner.com.

As you know, I always love to hear from you and I do hope you'll take a minute or two to check out these sites and see what you think.

I will also mention briefly that the first project management by design training is launching in January.

This is the one for individuals and you can learn all about it at higher ed pm.com.

Thanks so much for listening.

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