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**Matrimony In The Digital Age: Wedding Web Sites**

**By Kirsten Hawkins**

There's a new method of keeping your wedding memories alive that is gaining popularity among the young couples of today: the wedding web site. Wedding web sites are an online collection of images and stories detailing every facet of a wedding. Everything from choosing bridesmaids' dresses to ordering the cake and hiring the band is recorded and included on the wedding web site. Many couples keep their wedding web sites up and running after the wedding to serve as a sort of interactive online wedding album, hosting pictures from the ceremony, reception, and honeymoon.

One of the nice things about creating a wedding web site for yourself is the flexibility that the process offers. You can include as much or as little information about your wedding as you like. The site can be used as an electronic go-between, keeping family and friends updated and informed about the tasks you're completing in preparation for your wedding day, informing your guests of any last minute changes in planning, and letting everyone know details such as where you're registered for wedding gifts. The site can include a "blog" that you can update as often as you like, allowing you to share every detail of your wedding experience if you so choose. You can also offer your guests the ability to R.S.V.P. online, put up guest lists so everyone knows who's coming to your special event, and post an interesting history that describes how the two of you met, how long you dated, how he "popped the question," and any other amusing or romantic anecdotes you desire.

If you choose to create a wedding web site there are a number of ways you can go about it. There are web hosting sites online that specialize in setting up and hosting wedding web sites. Most of these offer easy to use do-it-yourself web site building tools. If you're proficient in web design or own web design software like Front Page or Dreamweaver, you can get even more flexibility by designing the site yourself. You can also hire a professional web designer to create your wedding web site for you.

The wedding web site concept is just one more way that weddings are stepping out of the realm of ancient traditionalism and into the information age. Modern technology has created a wonderful way for you to be able to share your wedding memories anytime, anywhere with anyone that has a computer and access to the Internet. Now you don't have to worry about whether Aunt Edna in Sioux City will ever be able to see your wedding photographs. You can just send her an email message and give her the URL of your beautiful wedding web site. Your wedding web site is timeless too. As long as you

keep paying the hosting (prices for web hosting vary greatly, but can be very low for this type of site), your wedding web site will remain online forever, allowing you to look back many years from now and remember your wedding like it all just happened yesterday.

Kirsten Hawkins is an event planner from Nashville, TN. Visit

<http://www.wedding411.net/>

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event planning tips, strategies, and resources.

### **Choosing Stunning Wedding Graphics**

#### **By Kirsten Hawkins**

Our modern technological age has changed the ways in which we do numerous things in our lives. One thing that has changed drastically in the new millennium is how we present and preserve our weddings and the photographs, videos, and other memories from those events. Even just five years ago it was almost completely unheard of for people to create interactive and graphical web sites announcing their weddings, stating where they're registered, and then uploading the photographs and videos to the site after the event so Great Aunt Agnes can see the wedding pictures without having to leave her trailer in Duluth. Today it is so common that everyone's doing it and the practice is being popularized even further by celebrities like Star Jones. Additionally people are now using their computers to cut wedding costs by designing their own invitations and thank-you notes and printing them at home. It's fun, cost effective, and allows a person to really let their creativity shine. It's easy to jump on the do-it-yourself wedding bandwagon if you have a PC and a connection to the Internet. To do so one of the things you'll definitely need to get a hold of are some impressive wedding graphics.

The Internet can be your best friend when searching for wedding graphics. There are many sites that specialize in low or no cost graphics. Most of these feature wedding graphics and include directions on downloading the images to your own PC, allowing you to get to work immediately being a computer wizard.

In order to start producing your web site or invitations you'll need a decent graphics editing software. Adobe Photoshop is the application of choice for most digital artists and graphic designers, but if you're not expecting to launch a graphic design company of your own you may find Photoshop's cost a bit on the high end at approximately \$800.00. There are many other graphics editing programs available, however, with price points ranging from about \$50.00 to \$100.00. Any of these will help you get started in editing and designing your wedding graphics without breaking your bank account.

Once you learn the ins & outs of your chosen application and have gathered some wedding graphics that you're pleased with, you're ready to get started. If you're designing a web site about your wedding, it can be done without any knowledge of HTML (the computer language that web pages are written in) by choosing a web host that includes page design features. There are many of these on the Internet

and once you've found one, designing your web site is as easy as uploading your graphics to your new host and designing the page using their tools. For invitations, flyers, thank you notes and other printable items, all you need to do is visit your nearest office supply or computer electronics store and pick up a set of the appropriate printable material for your printer. You'll be making your own items with the beautiful wedding graphics you've chosen in no time.

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