

Save money: How to host your professional acting website on the cheap



Photo by Mark Wilson/Getty Images



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Many actors shy away from creating their own website for fear of annual hosting fees, html coding horrors, or dealing with an elusive web designer. Let's face it, most of us are artists, not techies, and we're already paying a ton of fees to casting sites, CD workshops, trade magazines, photographers, and our unions, in addition to the regular cost of just being alive with a roof over our head in LA. We don't need web hosting and web designer fees to add to the mix.

No longer an extravagance, having your own dot com is a necessity for any professional actor. It's the hub around which all of your marketing tools (headshots, resumes and reels) and social networks (Facebook, Twitter, instagram, Pinterest) are centered. It's how directors, agents and casting professionals can easily find you, and your professional resources, at a moment's notice. Bottom line: it helps establish and solidify your brand.

Forget registering with a so-called Actor web hosting site, or hiring a web designer. The last thing you need is another bill, and another person you're waiting on to update your current events, and fix that 404 html error. No one is more invested in your career than you are. You

can host your actor website yourself for about \$10 a year. Here's how:

1. **Create your own blog.** I recommend using tumblr or WordPress for your blog, two of the most common and easiest to use out there. Using your stage name in the blog address you choose is a good idea (i.e, <http://JaneDoe.tumblr.com>), as it's another way for search engines to easily find your page.
2. **Format your new blog.** Choose one of the free template designs offered, keeping in mind that you want one that will display photos nicely, such as new headshots and any industry candid photos you want to share, along with your **social networking** links (Facebook, Twitter, etc.) and basic contact information. It's really a matter of personal preference, but it's your career you're putting a face on so you want it to look professional.
3. **Register your domain name.** Your domain name is **www.YourName.com**. Once you register the name, you have to pay to keep it every year for as long as you want it. There's no getting around this annual fee entirely, but it makes sense to shop around: FXDomains and GoDaddy are two of the cheapest places to register a domain name I've seen, and include free email addresses with your registration. This means you can create the domain name of **www.JaneDoe.com**, and also the email **Jane@JaneDoe.com** to put on your photo business cards, website and resume. When you register your domain name, be careful not to choose any web hosting options as they will cost additional fees. The final cost should be around \$10.
4. **Point your new domain name to your blog.** Now that you own JaneDoe.com, you can call the domain name registrar you chose (i.e., FX Domains) and ask them to 'forward' JaneDoe.com to your blog address (JaneDoe.tumblr.com). That means when someone types 'JaneDoe.com' they will be taken automatically to the blog you created, and won't know that you aren't paying insane hosting fees for the privilege.

That's it!

Blogs are designed to be continually and easily updated, with entries automatically listed in chronological order, newest first. Since you're working within a blog, that means you can easily update your actor site yourself with any new information relevant to your career and brand, such as screenings, show airings, or jobs you've booked, just by creating a new blog post.

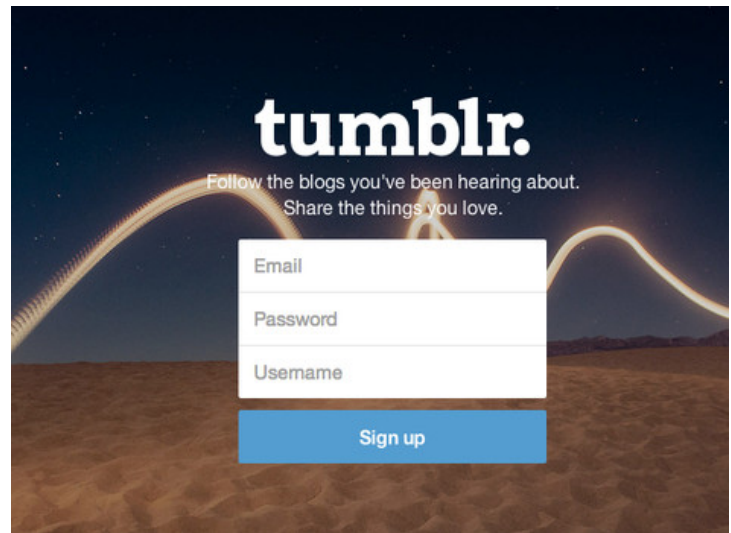
It also allows you to benefit from the blogging site's SEO support system (Search Engine Optimization). This means your site will rank high in search engines without you having to pay

extra fees for it to do so.

Blog templates also typically offer ‘static’ pages, which means the content on those pages doesn't change. To add some bling to your new actor website, you might create a static Contact page, one called Resume with links to your online casting profiles, one for Headshots, and one linking to your demos on YouTube: all for free.

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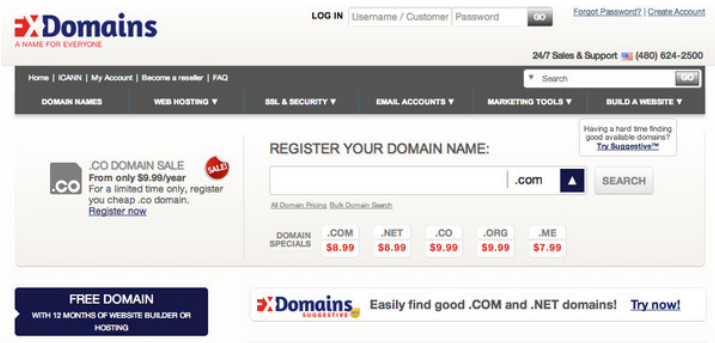
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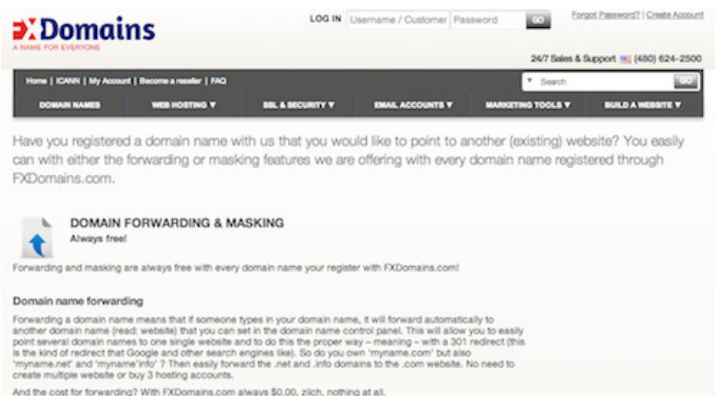
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