Preamble

If you would like a website for yourself or your organization but are not sure where to start, you are in the right place to find the answers you need. Our goal at McReal Online is to help you from start to finish and we are happy to answer any questions you may have.

This useful and easy to follow guide is written in a straightforward and easy to understand format without any unnecessary technological jargon and was created specifically to help you gain a clearer understanding of how web hosting services work. Let’s start with the basics.

OK! First thing! If you want your website to be visible to the world, through the Internet, it has to be hosted on a web server.

In this document we shall be providing an overview of what exactly, web hosting is and why you need a robust and reliable web hosting provider like McReal Online.

Now, let’s continue…

What exactly is the World Wide Web or WWW?

The World Wide Web (www or the web for short) is a network of computers all over the world which can communicate with each other. Of course! To foster communication, all the computers use a common communication standard called HTTP. HTTP in full means Hyper Text Transfer Protocol.

How does the WWW work?

Information to be accessible through the World Wide Web is stored in documents called web pages, which are simply files stored on computers called web servers. Computers reading the web pages are called web clients. Web clients view the pages with a special program (or software) called a web browser. Popular browsers are Internet Explorer, Netscape Navigator, and the very recently released FireFox.

How does a Browser Get a Web Page?

Before a browser can fetch any page from the web, the browser needs the address typed into its address bar. In other words a browser fetches a page from a web server by what is called a request. A request is a standard HTTP request containing a page address. An address may look like this: http://www.yourdomain.com/pagename.htm.

When such an address is typed into the address bar of a browser, the browser through the web client (or the computer being used) sends an instruction to the web server through the HTTP communication standard to retrieve the content of the page.
How does a Browser Display a Web Page?

All web pages contain instructions for display. The browser displays the page by reading these instructions and interpreting them. The most common display instructions are called HTML tags. HTML (short for Hyper Text Markup Language) is a very common language for preparing web pages. HTML tags for a paragraph look like this:

```html
<p>This is a Paragraph</p>
```

What is a Web Server?

Now when all the web pages of a particular individual or organization are put together, they are referred to as a website.

Please note that to let others view your website, on the web, you must publish your web site. To publish your website, you must copy your website from wherever you have it (on your laptop, CD or diskette) to a web server.

A web server is simply a computer appropriately prepared for the purpose of storing websites (and other features such as email, cgi scripts, etc) and permanently connected to the Internet, 24 hours a day and 7 days a week (or 24/7).

What is Web Hosting?

Web hosting basically means the storage of your website (and other features such as email and cgi scripts, etc.) on a web server.

Web servers are owned and maintained by companies that specialize in providing this service, otherwise known as a Web Hosts or Web Hosting Companies. These invest or partner in highly secure, fault-resistant facilities (also known as data center or network operations center), which allows them to provide much quicker and more secure connections to the Internet.

That’s where McReal Online comes in. Our commercial web servers are housed in a high speed, secure facility which is connected to the Internet through 3 separate bandwidth-on-demand connections, who each run fiber optic cable into the data center through two separate entry points. In the event of a failure with one provider, we’ll still be operating and connected through our other upstream providers. This probably explains why for close to 2 years now our web servers have virtually not been down or inaccessible.

What Are Domain Names?

A Domain Name is a unique name for your website and are usually of the form yourcompanynname.com. It is the Internet address for your website or your ‘corner’ of the Internet.
Domain names must be registered with an International body called Internic, usually through Registration Service Providers, Web Hosting Companies or Registrars.

McReal Online provides FREE domain name registration for all her hosting and reseller plans. This means that once you order and pay for any of our web hosting or reseller accounts, the domain name you have selected for the account will be registered and annually renewed for you FREELY. Further details of the McReal Online’s hosting plans are here: http://www.mcreal.net/host.php.

When domain names are registered they are added to a large domain name register called WhoIs. and information about your website - including your internet IP address - is stored on a DNS server.

DNS stands for Domain Name System. A DNS server is responsible for informing all other computers on the Internet about your domain name and your site address.

Your web host's Domain Name Server (such as ns.mcreal.net and ns2.mcreal.net for McReal Online) stores the IP addresses and domain names of all of the websites located on their web servers and when the DNS receives a call to an address on a server, it then sends an acknowledgement to the master list server which then directs the request or “call” to the Web Host’s server that the website is located on.

Registering a Domain Name

The first step to registering a domain name is to check that the domain name has not been registered by someone else.

Any credible hosting company’s website will come with the tools to search and check that your preferred domain name is available. At McReal Online, we have ensured that every page of our website comes with this tool, to facilitate your domain name checking wherever you are on our site.

How to Choose Your Domain Name

OK! Clearly, choosing a domain name is a very important step for any individual or organization. Yes! It is.

We will provide you shortly with the guidelines to follow when choosing a domain name, but it is important to think through the purpose of the domain name, which is to provide people an easy way to reach your web site.

The following are the guidelines to bear in mind before making a choice of the domain name to use:

- Short

People don’t like to type! The shorter your domain, the easier it is to reach and the less are the chance the user will make a typographical error while typing it.
Meaningful

A short domain is nothing without meaning, 12f7r45.com is only 7 characters long but would not be easy to enter or remember. Select a domain that relates to your site in a way that people will understand.

Typically you may want to select a name that identifies with your company legal name, your products and services, and what you do generally.

Clear

Clarity is important when selecting a domain name. You should avoid selecting a name that is difficult to spell or pronounce. Also, pay close attention to how your domain sounds and how effectively it can be communicated over the phone.

Exposure

Just like premium real-estate on the ground that gets the most exposure, names that are short and easy to remember are an asset.

How Do I Get Started With McReal Online?

Very simple! Once you’ve decided on the domain name you want, get on to our website (click here: http://www.mcreal.net/host.php), select the web hosting or reseller plan that is appropriate for you, and order it.

Once ordered, our automated system will set up your account within 10 minutes of your order and once the related payment for the order is confirmed, will be sent an email which contains all the information you need to use your account. We will also register your domain name, once we’ve confirmed your payment.

Furthermore, we back our web hosting service with a 30-Day Money Back Guarantee! This means that we will refund your payment within 30 days of your order if you are not satisfied with our service.

Why not take the time out right now and put your business online. We would be pleased to welcome you aboard McReal Online. Click here: http://www.mcreal.net to get started, right away.