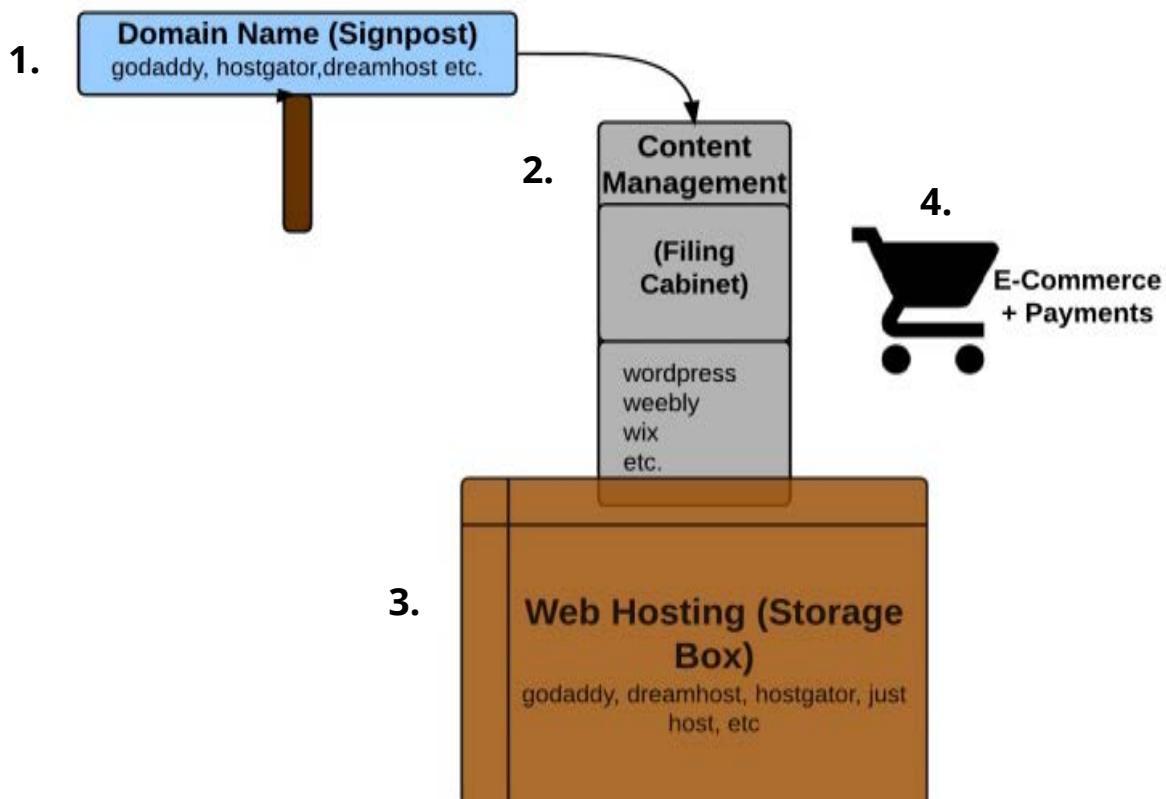


WEBSITE COST

This is an important thing to consider BEFORE you design your website. There are four common components to a website that may or may not have costs associated with them.

1. **Domain Name:** This is the web address for your website. (www.yourwebsitename.com) It is like a virtual sign post. Domain names can be purchased on their own from many retailers, however, a domain name is NOT the actual website.
2. **Content Management:** This is how your website information is organized. It is like a filing cabinet. Content management systems are online programs that help you design and set up a website. Without them, all content would have to be added via code.
3. **Web Hosting:** This is where the information and data from your website is actually stored. Web Hosting is like a box in a storage locker. Web hosts have large servers that keep your website data secure and are often priced by the amount of storage space you need.
4. **Ecommerce + Payments:** The Store, if applicable, this component can have its own costs and options. For more information see www.vc2.org/resources



ASSOCIATED COSTS:

The three components above can be purchased separately, or from one company that may combine any of them. Many website providers will or can provide all four. Also, there can be many different ways of combining services to make a functional website. When choosing services, be sure to check that they can work with the other services you choose, and keep track of the total cost.

1. **Domain Name:** Domain names are usually not very expensive. Depending on the name you want and its availability cost can range from \$2-\$35.00/year with an **average yearly cost of around \$10-14/year**. Depending on the company you may be able to find starter specials, or discounts for registering for more than one year.
 - a. Other notes on Domains:
 - i. Some content management and hosting systems offer free domains with their software. Generally, it is recommended to purchase your domain independently in case you wish to change management systems in the future. Remember, the Domain name is like a signpost for your website, if its purchased with a particular Content Management system, it may be more difficult to point it to other ones.
 - ii. It is good practice to set up your account for auto renewal. Even if you have a website built and hosted, if your domain name expires, customers will not be able to find and visit your site.
 - b. Common domain companies
 - i. GoDaddy.com
 - ii. [Namecheap](#)
 - iii. [Gandi.net](#)
 - iv. [Dreamhost](#)
 - v. [Hover](#)
 - vi. [Name.com](#)
2. **Content Management Systems:** The prices and options on content management systems are extensive. Many offer discounts for yearly payments vs. Month-to-month. ****NOTE**, many content management systems include the hosting cost – be sure to check. Here are a few different types of options

- a. **Free-Hosted:** Some are free but may only offer limited domain options without an additional fee (ie. www.yoursite.theirsite.com would be free, but with additional payment you could point your domain (signpost!) to the same site). Additionally, free sites may require more work on your part for the design, and have limited options for design/templates/colors and may not allow a store. Additionally, many free websites will post advertisements on your page depending on the provider.
- b. **Free-Open Source:** This option requires web and some coding knowledge. Some open source programs like Wordpress.org, Joomla, etc. can be installed on any host directory. This option is only recommended if you are familiar with and comfortable with computers and web design.
- c. **Low-cost \$4-\$15/month (\$48-\$180/year):** Many website providers offer a low-cost option. For most small businesses, farms, and organizations, this will be the recommended range. Key features often offered are attaching your domain, a small store (sometimes with product limits), usually limits to ads, and some advanced analytics.
- d. **Medium-cost \$15-\$35/month(180-\$420/year):** There are often middle-range plans available for sites that need more functionality. Unless your business/organization is doing large volumes of online sales, this range may be more than you need. Often these will provide more advanced tracking, more customer service options, larger storage(web hosting) and bandwidth, and a variety of other services.
- e. **Premium cost >\$35/month:** There are many website options that have more services at higher prices. For the purpose of this handout we will not spend time on them. If your business is ready for this level of investment you should consider working with a web company to find your best option.
- f. **Common Content Management Systems**
 - i. Weebly
 - ii. Wix
 - iii. Wordpress.com
 - iv. Squarespace
 - v. Wordpress.org (free – opensource- requires hosting)
 - vi. Joomla(free – opensource- requires hosting)

3. **Webhosting:** Web hosting prices also vary dramatically. The prices can be between \$4-\$15/month. Note that if you use any of the main Content Management Systems that they include hosting and you do not need to pay for a separate fee. Web hosting will be your primary option if you have a site designed with one of the Free-Open-source Content Management Systems. Some web hosts also provide free domain names.
 - a. *Note: If you have a website designed from scratch and NOT on one of the common web-provider frameworks. You need to be sure that your designer is able to host your site on the webhost of your choice. Some web designers can host sites themselves, but you should check with them on the cost before they start.
 - b. Common hosting companies
 - i. [Siteground](#)
 - ii. [Bluehost](#)
 - iii. [Dreamhost](#)
 - iv. [Hostgator](#)
 - v. [A Small Orange](#)
4. Ecommerce + Payments: This subject is too broad to cover in this handout. Please see www.vc2.org/resources and find the e-commerce section. The costs for online stores can vary widely based on your preferences. Just be sure that the store template you need works with your chosen Content Management System, Online payment options (ie Stripe, Paypal etc) and any shipping software you may need (ie. Stamps.com)

IN A NUTSHELL: APPROXIMATE WEBSITE COSTS/YEAR

- **Free:** Nothing to a few dollars for hosting – Simple website
- **Low cost: \$58 - \$190/year** – More versatile website, Store options
- **Medium: \$200- \$435/year** – Website, advanced store options
- **High: Over \$435** –Complex website, Large store (suited to large online retailers)

ONLINE FARMERS MARKET PLATFORMS

A new service being offered by many different companies is that of an online farmers market. These programs offer the hosting/content management system/store and sometimes mailing lists and payments.

There are many options and cost options associated with these services as well. Some may be suitable for a larger farm. But generally, due to the costs associated they are most appropriate for groups, associations, cooperatives, CSAs or buying clubs.

1. Common online farmers market software
 - a. [Local food marketplace](#)
 - b. [Locally Grown](#)
 - c. [Local Orbit](#)