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Your technology partner

A Guide for Travel Agencies

# Going Online

## A Guide for Travel Agencies

By Amadeus Asia Pacific

# Develop a successful online business in just seven steps.

1) Planning for your website

2) Creating your website

3) Registering your domain name

4) Connecting your web site to the booking engine

5) Making your website easy to find on the Internet

6) Monitoring and improving your website

7) Promoting your website



# 1) Planning for your website

It is always best to define your website and develop the content before you start creating it. Otherwise, you may choose the wrong host, pay more than you should, or end up with a website that is difficult for your customers to find. Below are some questions to help you in the planning process.

## > Would you like to use your own domain name for your web site?

**A Domain name** is a hostname that appear as a component of a web site's URL e.g. [www.example.net](http://www.example.net)

**A URL** (Uniform Resource Identifier) consists of a string of characters used to identify a resource on the Internet e.g. <http://www.example.net/index.html>

Using your own domain name is always a good idea, but there is a cost involved. However, choosing a good domain name can contribute to your brand identity and in some cases improve the rank of your website on search engines. See more detail in 'Register your domain name' section.

A free domain name is another option if you don't mind having your company name followed by the service provider name e.g. 'AAATravel.terapad.com'

## > Would you like your customers to search for flights directly on your web-site?

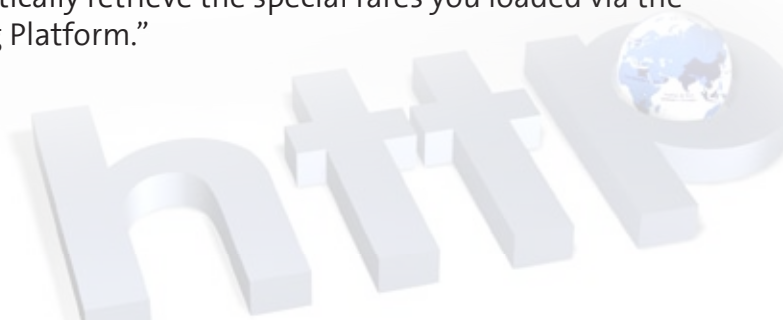
Some travel agencies may only want to establish a page on the internet where you can provide your business information, contact number, operating hours and such, so that customer can find out how to contact you for your services. In this case, there are a lot of good quality free services available. See more detail in 'Create your web site' section.

If you also want to allow your customer to search and book flights directly on your website, you can connect your site to the Amadeus Agency Internet Engine (AAIE-Asia). See more details in the 'Setup and connect your web site to the booking engine' section.

## > Would you offer special fares on your web site?

If you plan to offer special fares on your web site, you may consider utilising AAIE's 'Special Fare' module that allows you to load promotion fares on your website.

The AAIE will also automatically retrieve the special fares you loaded via the "Amadeus FareXpert Filing Platform."





## 2) Creating your web site

If you decide to use your booking engine page as your home page, you can skip this step. See more detail in 'Setup and connect your website to the booking engine (AAIE)' section.

If you want to invest in setting up a comprehensive and highly professional website, you may consider hiring a web master to develop your website for you. Alternatively, for a simpler site, there are a lot of free platforms available where you can create your website yourself and have it up and running in just a few minutes.

You may now question whether these free websites will allow your customers to make a booking over the internet. The answer is yes, if you are utilising a professional booking engine such as Amadeus' AAIE. See more detail in 'Setup and connect to your booking engine' section.

**Listed below are some of the most popular free web site services:**

1. [www.terapad.com](http://www.terapad.com)
2. [www.webs.com](http://www.webs.com)
3. [sites.google.com](http://sites.google.com)

**Listed below are some of the criteria you should consider when selecting a free website service:**

1. Reliability and speed of the access
2. Data transfer (traffic/bandwidth)
3. Disk space
4. Technical support
5. Ease-of-use of the control panel

In general, these free website services provide easy-to-follow instructions, allowing you to set up a functional website in just a few minutes.



### 3) Registering your domain name

You may skip this section if you are not planning to register for your own domain name.

Your Domain Name can be your company name or any other name that you would like to use as a brand identity for your service. A good domain name should be:

- > Easy to remember
- > Not too long
- > Relate to your core business or business name
- > Hard to misspell

Now that you have decided on the name that you want, you will need to confirm whether the name is still available. Log on to [www.whois.net](http://www.whois.net) and type in the domain name that you want to register.

Whois domain name lookup, available domain names, domain keyword search, deleted domains:		Explanation of Tool:
WHOIS Lookup	<input type="text"/> .com <input type="button" value="Go!"/>	Lookup registration data for domains.
Search by domain or keyword	<input type="text"/> <input type="button" value="Go!"/>	Search domains and lookup whois information. Research and protect trademarks.
Domain Lookup	<input type="text" value="my-travel-agency"/> .com <input type="button" value="Go!"/>	Find available domains.
Search through deleted domains	<input type="text"/> <input type="button" value="Go!"/>	Find previously registered domains that are now available.

Registering your domain name is easy and inexpensive. You can register with one of the major companies like [www.register.com](http://www.register.com) or [www.networksolutions.com](http://www.networksolutions.com), where the charge is around \$30 to \$35 per year for one domain name. You may consider trying to register with a local service provider for a lower price. Search for them in Google by typing the key words “domain name registration”.

After you have your domain name registered, don't forget to link your domain name to the website that you created in previous step. In general you can contact your web hosting provider to link your domain name to your website. In some cases, when you choose a host that does not provide such services, you can contact the company that you have registered your domain name with.

#### Tip for registering a domain name:

Protect your name by registering multiple extensions (.com, .net, .org,)

## 4) Connecting your web site to the booking engine (AAIE)

You may skip this step if you do not want your customers to search and book on your website.

By connecting your web site to AAIE, your customers can easily search and book on your website. In many cases they may search on your website, but then contact you for bookings at the phone number and address you provided on your site.

If you do not have your own website, you may consider using the booking page as your home page.

Connecting your website to AAIE is very simple. Following the steps below, you can get your website connected to the booking engine in two to three weeks:

1. Contact your Amadeus sales representative to request an internet office-id
2. Fill in the "AAIE site set-up questionnaire document" and submit to Amadeus. Once the questionnaire is completed, Amadeus will setup and send you the URL of the test site.
3. You can start loading fares and testing the system to make sure it works correctly.
4. When you finish the testing, send an email to request for production upload. Within approximately three business days, Amadeus will send you the new AAIE Production URL for you to test.
5. When you are ready, link the AAIE Production URL to your website.

**If you use the booking page as your home page, you only need to link your domain to this URL.**

6. Your website is now ready to service

There are two basic options to link your website to the booking engine:



1. Place the search box on your home page. See the sample in picture below.



2. Place a link to the search page on your home page. See the sample in picture below.

## 5) Making your web site easy to find on the Internet

Making your website easy to find is the same as putting your business address and phone number in the Yellow Pages. When you have your website you need to make sure that the 1,000 Million internet users can find you when they look for the services you provide.

In the worst case scenario, if your web site is not registered with any search engine and there is no other website that contains a link to your web site, there will be no chance that anyone can find you unless they know your exact URL. In the best case, when a user searches for some keywords that are related to your services, your website will be listed on the first page of the search results.

To make sure that your website can be found, the follow FREE actions are recommended.

### > Register your domain name with search engine or search directory

In general, a search engine or search directory will take many weeks or even months to get to know your website. To speed up this process, you can go directly to a search engine and register your website with them.

- For Google go to: <http://www.google.com/addurl/?continue=/addurl>
- For Yahoo goes to: <http://submit.search.yahoo.com>

### > Exchange URL (Exchange link)

The exchange link is one of the most common ways in online marketing. It is an easy way to increase the number of visitors to your site, and can be done at no cost. Simply send an email to a website that you would like to exchange a link with. If they agree, the other website will post a link to your site, and you will post a link to their site in return. When selecting a suitable partner site, please keep in mind that just one link with a high-ranking website in your industry is much better than 100 websites that are not in the same line of business as you.

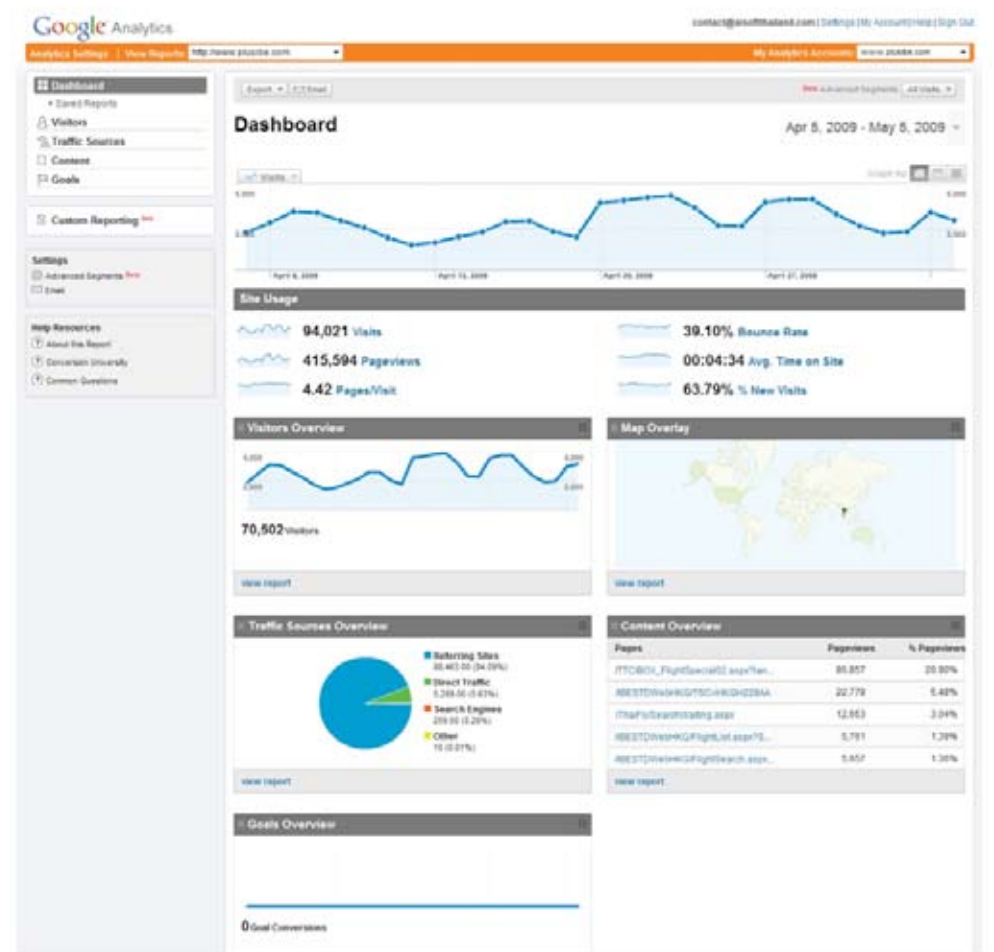
### > Banner Ad Exchange Service

This is one of the most cost-effective web marketing tools, and many of them are actually FREE. You simply build a web banner and exchange it with other websites. You can directly contact your target website and ask for a banner exchange, or you can use the third-party websites that specialize in Banner Ad exchange services, such as [www.Click4Click.com](http://www.Click4Click.com).

## 6) Monitoring and improving your website

Would you like to know how many people visit your web site each day? Where do they come from? Are they your target customers? We recommend you continually monitor your website's performance in the same way you would review your operational reports.

To monitor your website's performance, you can utilise the basic tool that is provided by your web hosting service provider. The tool is usually available even with a free web hosting service. Let's take the Terapad's tool as an example. You can view your website's statistics as shown in the picture below:



There are also a lot of other free and commercial analytic tools available such as Google Analytic. You can obtain more details from <http://www.google.com/analytics/index.html>.

To improve your website's performance so that it is easy to find, one mandatory action is to make sure that your pre-selected keywords for your site match the keywords that your target customers may use when searching for your services. Also, make sure the content on your web site is spelt correctly and contains as many of your pre-selected keywords as possible.

## 7) Promoting your web site

You may consider more promotional activities to market your services on the internet. The following options can be very effective and can be implemented at quite a low cost.

### > Direct E-mail/Newsletter Marketing /Online Press Release

Direct Email and Newsletters are among the easiest ways for you to communicate with your customers. But please note that in some countries junk mail or spam mail is against the law. Provided that it is a legal activity in your country, you can start with your current customer database if you have one. Alternatively, you can buy more contact names from third party companies such as [www.listkingpro.com](http://www.listkingpro.com).

Online press releases are another option to support your marketing on the internet. You can write a press release about your product, campaign or upcoming event, and submit this information to a press release website such as <http://www.massmediadistribution.com>.

### > Banner Advertisement

To place a banner advertisement, you first select a popular website and then pay that website to put your banner in the position that you want. You need to design your banner to be attractive and easy to read.

### > Pay-Per-Click Advertising

This is one of the most popular online marketing tools. First, post your advertisement and key words in a search engine like Google Adwords, Yahoo Search Marketing or Microsoft adCenter. When somebody clicks on your advertisement and makes a purchase on your website, you will pay a fee to the site that hosted the advertisement. In some countries this is also known as “Pay for Performance Marketing”.

### > Affiliate Program Advertising

This is another way to implement “Pay for Performance Marketing”. The concept is to let other websites who already have traffic (visitors) to sell your products. When they make a sale or secure a sales lead, you will have to pay that website a commission.

There are many websites where you can find more information such as Commission Junction ( [www.cj.com](http://www.cj.com) ), Link Share, ClickXchange, or ClixGalore.

As online travel sales continue to grow at an explosive pace in Asia Pacific, it is essential for travel agencies to create a presence on the Internet, no matter how big or small your operation. Ideally your website should allow customers to search for travel options and even book travel online. This can be done very easily with the Amadeus Agency Internet Engine (AAIE). By following the 7 simple steps outlined in this document, you can ensure that your online business is professional, user-friendly, and can easily be found by your customers and prospects. This will allow your company to keep up to date with modern business trends, and generate more profits and customer loyalty.

