
A PLAIN-ENGLISH GLOSSARY FOR BUSINESS OWNERS

Your website, explained.

What your web designer, host and Google mean when they use the jargon, and which term to look up when something goes wrong.



POCKET ROCKET DESIGN
PRD.NZ

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What do I need to sort out?

Find what is happening with your website, and the terms to look up in the middle column.

WHAT IS HAPPENING	LOOK UP THESE	WHY
Your website is down Visitors see an error or a warning	Hosting, SSL certificate, Domain name	Most outages are an expired domain, an expired certificate or a hosting problem. Check those first.
You cannot be found on Google Searching your business name shows nothing	SEO, Sitemap, Search Console	Google has to find each page and understand it before it can show it.
Moving to a new website New builder, new host or new design	301 redirect, Staging site, Backup	Old page addresses must forward to the new ones, or your search ranking is lost.
Email stops arriving Or your emails land in spam	DNS, MX record, SPF, DKIM	Email runs on settings at your domain, not on your website. A website move can break it.
Changing who looks after your domain Moving to a new registrar	Registrar, Auth code, Registrant	A transfer needs the code, the right owner name and unchanged nameservers.
Opening an online shop Selling products from your site	E-commerce platform, Payment gateway	Costs are usually a monthly fee plus a small percentage of each sale.
The site is slow on phones Pages jump around or take ages	Page speed, Responsive, CDN, Cache	Visitors leave slow sites, and Google notices.
You want to know if it works Visits, enquiries and sales	Google Analytics, Conversion rate, UTM link	Numbers show what people do, so you can fix what is not working.
Hiring someone to build it Designer, developer or agency	Domain, Hosting, CMS, Staging site	Ask who owns the domain, hosting and logins when the job ends.

The rule of thumb

 Domain name The address	 Hosting The land	 Website The house
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You need all three, and you should hold the login to each one.

Who holds the keys?

Your registrar, hosting and website logins should sit in your business name and on an email address you control. Never rely only on the person who built the site.

Who looks after what?

If you are not technical, this is what to hand over, and what to keep.

WHAT NEEDS DOING	WHO USUALLY DOES IT	WHAT YOU DO
Domain renewal	You hold the account. Your web designer can manage it for you.	Keep the login, make sure the owner is your business, and turn on auto-renew.
DNS and nameservers	Web designer or IT person.	Never change these yourself. Ask them to do it, and send them this guide.
Business email set-up	IT person, web designer or the email provider's support.	Choose the service, tell them who needs an address, and keep the admin login.
Hosting and platform	Web designer or agency. You, if you use a builder such as Wix.	Pay the bill, and know which company it is with.
Updates, plugins, backups	Web designer, or a care plan.	Ask who does it, how often and what it costs.
SEO basics	Web designer or SEO specialist.	Provide the words, photos and services. Approve the titles and descriptions.
Google Business Profile	You, with your designer's help.	Keep it in your own Google account, not your designer's.
Analytics and Search Console	Web designer sets them up.	Ask for access, and a plain summary of the results.
Shop products, stock, orders	You, day to day.	The designer sets it up and shows you how it works.
Payments	You own the account.	Your bank details stay with you. The designer connects them.

Not sure where to start?

Send this guide to your web designer and ask them to look after the technical items for you. Most are quick jobs for someone who does them every day.

Get it in writing

Ask your designer to confirm by email who holds each login, and keep a copy. It saves a lot of stress if you ever change designer.

Domains and email

Your web address and the settings that make email work.

DOMAINS

Domain name

Your web address, for example yourbusiness.co.nz. You rent it, usually a year at a time, and it must be renewed to keep it.

Domain extension (TLD)

The ending of a web address, such as .com, .nz or .co.nz.

Domain registrar

The company you rent your domain name from, such as Crazy Domains. Your login here is one of the most important to keep safe.

Registrant

The legal owner of a domain name. Make sure it is your business, not your web designer or a former employee.

DNS

The internet's address book. DNS records say where your domain points, for the website and for email.

Nameservers

The addresses that say which service manages your DNS. Changing them hands control of your DNS settings to that service.

Auth code

A one-time password needed to move a domain from one registrar to another. Also called a transfer code.

Subdomain

A front section added to your domain, such as shop.yourbusiness.co.nz. Often used for a separate shop or booking system.

EMAIL

Business email

An address on your own domain, such as hello@yourbusiness.co.nz, instead of a free Gmail or Hotmail address.

Email hosting

The service that stores and delivers your email, such as Google Workspace or Microsoft 365. It is separate from website hosting. See the business email page.

MX record

A DNS setting that tells the internet which service receives your email. If it is wrong, email stops arriving.

SPF

A DNS setting listing the services allowed to send email as your domain. It helps keep your email out of spam.

DKIM

A digital signature added to your email. It proves the message came from your domain and was not changed on the way.

DMARC

A DNS setting that tells receiving servers what to do with email that fails the SPF or DKIM checks, such as sending it to spam.

A common trap. Moving a website to a new host or builder can break your email, because both depend on the same DNS settings. The safest set-up is a stand-alone email service such as Google Workspace or Microsoft 365, kept separate from your website. Then a website move only needs the email records (MX, SPF, DKIM) copied across. Check that email still works after any move.

Where to register a .nz domain

Crazy Domains is the best known in New Zealand, and it now includes the former Freeparking. Others include Metaname, 1st Domains and SiteHost, which are NZ-owned, and overseas names such as GoDaddy. The official list of authorised .nz registrars is at dnc.org.nz/registrars. Your registrar is where the renewal bill and the login live, so find out which one holds yours.

Domains around the world

This guide is written in New Zealand. Here is how the same ideas look elsewhere.

COUNTRY	ENDINGS	GOOD TO KNOW
New Zealand	.nz, .co.nz	Run by the Domain Name Commission. Registrars include Crazy Domains, Metaname, 1st Domains and SiteHost.
Australia	.com.au, .au	Needs an Australian presence, usually an ABN or ACN. Registrars include VentralP and Crazy Domains.
United Kingdom	.co.uk, .uk	Run by Nominet. Anyone can register a .uk domain. Registrars include GoDaddy and 123 Reg.
United States and worldwide	.com, .net, .org	Open to anyone. Registrars include GoDaddy, Namecheap, Cloudflare and Squarespace, which took over Google Domains.

Country domain (ccTLD)

An ending that belongs to a country, such as .nz, .au or .uk. Some countries ask for a local business link.

Generic domain (gTLD)

An ending not tied to a country, such as .com, .net or .org. It suits businesses that sell worldwide.

Selling to more than one country?

Many businesses own a .com and their local ending, and point both at one website. Ask your designer to set it up.

Rules change

Eligibility rules and registrars change. Check the official registry for your country before you buy.

Not sure which ending to buy?

Ask your web designer. The right choice depends on where your customers are, and where your business is registered. If you already own a domain, keep the login safe and do not let it lapse.

Please note. Information about countries, domain rules and registrars is a general guide only, written in October 2026. Eligibility rules, ownership and services change, and Pocket Rocket Design is not affiliated with any company named. Always check with the official registry or your registrar before you buy, renew or transfer a domain.

Business email

Google Workspace and Microsoft 365: stand-alone email that does not depend on your website.

GOOGLE WORKSPACE

Google Workspace

Google's paid business version of Gmail, Calendar, Drive, Docs and Meet, using your own domain, such as you@yourbusiness.co.nz. It is the Gmail you know, with business features.

Admin console

Where the account owner adds people, resets passwords and sets security. Keep this login in your business name.

Google Drive and shared drives

Online file storage. A shared drive belongs to the business, not a person, so files stay when someone leaves.

Google Groups

A group address, such as info@yourbusiness.co.nz, that delivers to several people.

Google Calendar and Meet

Shared calendars and video meetings, included with the account.

FOR EITHER ONE

Email alias

An extra address that delivers into the same inbox, such as sales@ pointing to your own mailbox. Usually no extra cost.

Verification record (TXT)

A DNS record that proves you own the domain. Needed when you set up either service.

MICROSOFT 365

Microsoft 365

Microsoft's paid business suite: email, Outlook, Word, Excel, Teams and OneDrive. Business plans range from email only to the full apps.

Exchange Online

The email service inside Microsoft 365. It stores and delivers your mail.

Outlook

Microsoft's email and calendar app. It works on a computer, a phone and in a browser.

Shared mailbox

A mailbox such as info@ that several people can read and send from. It usually does not need its own paid licence.

OneDrive and SharePoint

Online file storage for a person (OneDrive) and for a team (SharePoint).

Two-step verification

A second check, such as a code on your phone, when you sign in. Turn it on for every account.

Which should I choose?

Use the one your team already knows. Google suits teams who live in Gmail and Drive. Microsoft suits teams who use Word and Excel files every day.

Leave the set-up to an expert

Setting up either service means adding five DNS records at your registrar: a verification record (TXT), MX records, SPF, DKIM and DMARC. This is a job for your web designer or IT person, not a do-it-yourself task. Send them this page. Your part is to choose the service, give them your team's names and keep the admin login.

How it all fits together

Three separate things that all have to work, and who looks after each.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN SOMEONE VISITS YOUR SITE

1	2	3	4
A visitor types your address yourbusiness.co.nz goes into a browser or search bar.	DNS looks it up The address book says which server holds your website. Your registrar and nameservers control this step.	Hosting sends the files The server sends your pages, photos and text to the visitor, often through a CDN.	The browser shows your site A padlock appears if the SSL certificate is valid. Email follows its own route, set by MX records.

DOMAIN, HOSTING AND WEBSITE AT A GLANCE

	DOMAIN NAME	HOSTING	WEBSITE
WHAT IT IS	Your web address	Space on a server that keeps the site online	The pages, photos and text visitors see
YOU RENT IT FROM	A domain registrar	A hosting company, or a platform such as Shopify or Netlify	You own it. Your designer builds it.
EXAMPLE	yourbusiness.co.nz	Netlify, Shopify, a WordPress host	Home page, services, shop, contact
IF IT LAPSES	The address stops working and someone else may buy it	The site goes offline	Nothing, unless there is no backup
YOU PAY	A yearly renewal	A monthly or yearly fee	A one-off build, then upkeep

Find these three logins today

1. Your domain registrar.
2. Your hosting or platform account, such as Shopify, Netlify or your WordPress host.
3. Your website admin. If any of them sit with someone else, ask for them to be moved into your business name now, while everyone is still friendly.

Hosting and building

Where a website lives, and what it is made with.

HOSTING AND SPEED

Hosting

Rented space on a computer, called a server, that keeps your website online all day, every day.

Server

The computer that stores your website's files and sends them to each visitor.

Static website

A site made of fixed pages with no database behind it. It loads fast and has less to hack or keep updated. Netlify is one place to host one.

CDN

A network of computers around the world that delivers your site from the one nearest the visitor, so pages load faster.

Cloudflare

A service that sits in front of a website. It manages domain settings and helps with speed and security.

Cache

A stored, ready-made copy of a page so it loads faster next time. Sometimes it must be cleared before you see a change.

Uptime

How much of the time your site is online. 99.9% sounds perfect but still allows about nine hours offline a year.

BUILDING AND SAFETY

CMS

Content management system. The admin area where you edit pages and products. WordPress is one.

WordPress

Popular free website software, run on a host you pay for.

Plugin

An add-on for WordPress that adds a feature. Plugins need regular updates and can cause problems.

Theme

The design template of a site. A custom theme is built specially for one business.

Page builder

A tool that lets you design pages by dragging blocks. Easy to use, but it can slow a site down.

Website builder

An all-in-one service such as Wix, Squarespace, Rocketspark or Webflow, with hosting and templates included. Quick to start, but harder to move away from. See the platforms page.

Staging site

A private test copy of a site, used to build and check changes before they go live.

Backup

A saved copy of your website that can be restored if something breaks.

HTTPS and SSL certificate

The padlock in the browser. It means information between the visitor and your site is encrypted. Certificates expire and must be renewed.

Popular website platforms

The names you will hear, what each one does, and what to watch out for.

PLATFORM	WHAT IT IS	GOOD FOR	WATCH OUT FOR
Wix	All-in-one website builder. Hosting is included and you drag and drop.	Small, simple sites you want to edit yourself.	Your site is tied to Wix. It is hard to move to another platform without rebuilding.
Squarespace	All-in-one builder with polished templates. Hosting is included.	Portfolios, small businesses and simple shops.	Less room to customise. You cannot easily take the design with you.
Rocketspark	A New Zealand website builder with hosting and local support included.	Small NZ businesses that want local help and a simple monthly fee.	Tied to the platform, and the design is limited to what it offers.
Webflow	A visual builder with more design control, and hosting included.	Designer-built sites that need custom layouts.	Takes longer to learn, and pricing is per site.
WordPress	Free website software. You pay separately for hosting and a domain.	Sites that need to grow, with blogs, plugins and many pages.	Needs regular updates and care for plugins, backups and security.
Shopify	An online shop platform with hosting included.	Selling products, with payments, stock and shipping built in.	A monthly fee, plus app fees and a percentage of each sale.
Netlify	Hosting for static websites. Fast, and often free for small sites.	Hand-built, quick sites made by a designer or developer.	There is no editing screen, so changes go through whoever built it.

Ask before you buy. Check three things: can you take your content and domain with you, who owns the domain, and what happens to the price after the first year.

Please note. Company and product names are examples, not recommendations. Features, prices and ownership change, so check the details with each provider before you decide.

Search and Google

The words that decide whether people can find you.

GETTING FOUND

SEO

Search engine optimisation. Making your site easy for Google to find and understand, so more of the right people find it.

Keyword

A word or phrase people type into Google, such as "wedding cakes Auckland".

Meta title and description

The page title and short summary Google shows in search results. Think of them as your advert on the results page.

Alt text

A short written description of an image. Screen readers read it aloud and Google uses it to understand the picture.

Backlink

A link to your site from another website. Links from respected sites help your search ranking.

Google Business Profile

A free listing that shows your business on Google Search and Maps, with hours, photos and reviews.

Local SEO

Helping your business appear for searches in your area, such as "plumber near me".

Schema markup

Hidden code that labels information such as hours, prices and address, so Google can show richer search results.

BEHIND THE SCENES

Sitemap

A list of every page on your site, given to Google so nothing is missed.

robots.txt

A small file that tells search engines which parts of a site not to visit.

Indexing

When Google adds a page to the list it can show in results. A page that is not indexed cannot appear in search.

301 redirect

An automatic forward from an old web address to a new one. It tells Google the page has moved for good, so its ranking carries over.

404 error

The message a visitor sees when a page does not exist.

Canonical tag

A line of code that tells Google which address is the main one when the same page can be reached at several addresses.

Open Graph image

The picture and text shown when a page link is shared on Facebook or LinkedIn.

Page speed

How quickly a page appears. It affects visitors and Google rankings.

Core Web Vitals

Google's measures of how fast a page loads, how soon it reacts to a tap and whether it jumps around while loading.

Online shops

The words you will meet when you sell from your website.

SETTING UP A SHOP

E-commerce platform

Software that runs an online shop: products, cart, payment and orders. Shopify and WooCommerce are examples.

Shopify

A paid online shop platform that includes hosting. You pay a monthly subscription.

WooCommerce

A free shop add-on for WordPress.

App (Shopify)

An add-on that gives a Shopify store an extra feature, such as delivery time slots. Many have a monthly fee.

Development store

A free test Shopify store used to build and show a shop before it goes live or is handed over.

Subscription

An ongoing monthly or yearly fee, such as for a platform, an app or hosting.

Collection

A group of products shown together, such as all beef or all gift packs. Some platforms call it a category.

Variant and SKU

A variant is a version of one product, such as a size or colour. A SKU is the unique code used to track the stock of each one.

TAKING ORDERS

Checkout

The pages where a customer enters delivery details and pays.

Payment gateway

The service that securely takes card payments, such as Stripe or Shopify Payments.

Transaction fee

A small percentage, and often a fixed amount, taken from each sale by the payment service.

Abandoned cart

A shopper who adds items but leaves without paying. Many shops can send them a reminder email.

Minimum order

The smallest cart value allowed, for example to make delivery worthwhile.

Catch weight

Meat or produce sold by its actual weighed amount, so the final price is known only after weighing.

Shipping zone

A group of locations with the same delivery price, such as Auckland or the rest of New Zealand.

Click and collect

The customer orders online and picks the order up in person.

Design and results

How a site looks and works, and how to tell if it is working.

HOW IT LOOKS AND WORKS

Responsive

A layout that adjusts to suit phones, tablets and computers.

Call to action (CTA)

A button or link that asks the visitor to do something, such as Order online.

Above the fold

What a visitor sees before they scroll. Put your most important message and button here.

Hero image

The large image or banner at the top of a page, usually with a headline.

Wireframe

A simple layout sketch of a page, made before any design, to agree where everything goes.

Breadcrumbs

The small trail of links at the top of a page, such as Home > Shop > Beef, that shows where you are.

Favicon

The tiny icon shown in the browser tab.

Accessibility

Building a site so everyone can use it, including people who are blind, have low vision or cannot use a mouse.

Privacy policy

A page explaining what information your site collects and how it is used. Most sites need one if they collect names or emails, or use tracking.

MEASURING RESULTS

Google Analytics

A free tool that counts visitors and shows where they come from and what they do.

Google Search Console

A free Google tool that shows which searches bring visitors to your site and flags problems Google finds.

Google Tag Manager

A free tool that holds tracking snippets, such as analytics, in one place so they can change without editing the site.

UTM link

A web link with tags added, so analytics shows which post or email brought a visitor.

Conversion rate

The share of visitors who do what you want, such as placing an order or sending an enquiry.

Bounce rate

The share of visitors who leave after viewing one page. High is not always bad: a contact page may do its job in one visit.

Organic and paid

Organic results are the unpaid listings. Paid results are adverts that you pay for each time they are clicked or shown.

Cookie banner

The pop-up asking visitors to accept tracking. Whether you need one depends on the tools you use and where your visitors live.

Not sure who controls your website?

It is more common than you would think. [Pocket Rocket Design](#) can untangle your domain, hosting, email and website, so you know what you have, who has the keys, and what to fix first.

Website audit

A plain-English look at your domain, hosting, email settings and site, with a short list of what needs fixing.

Tidy-up and SEO

Titles, descriptions, alt text, sitemap and redirects sorted, so Google can find and understand your site.

Moving a website

Move to a new host, builder or platform without losing your search ranking, your email or your web address.

A new website or online shop

Designed, built and set up so that you own the domain, the hosting and every login.

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