

Step-by-Step Guide to Starting Your Own iWATCH Police Department Webpage

Introduction

This is a basic step-by-step guide on how to set up your own iWATCH Police Department webpage, from choosing a name to putting web pages live on the Internet.

Each step will offer you a basic idea of what is required. However, you may decide to research further into certain areas to broaden your understanding as needed. We have provided our Department link to LAPDONLINE.org if you wish to email requests for assistance.



Step 1: Choosing a Domain Name

A domain name is the web address of your website (i.e., www.anytowniWATCHLA.org). All websites must have a domain name before they can go live on the Internet.

It is beneficial to choose a domain name that is the same name as your Department or City, making it easy to remember: www.anytownIwatch.org, www.anyPDiWATCH.com, or www.iwatchanytown.net.

After you have chosen a domain name, you need to make sure that it is still available. There are many websites where you can check availability and purchase domain names: www.123reg.com, www.godaddy.com, www.namecheap.com, or www.networksolutions.com are just a few.

If you decide to use a hosting company (covered later), it would be ideal to purchase your domain name(s) with them.

The cost for domain names range from \$12.00 per year to over \$70.00 per year depending on the domain - .info domains being the cheapest, .com/.net/.org domains costing slightly more.

Arguably, you should purchase all three of the common domains (i.e. .com/.net/.org) to prevent other people from acquiring them.

If your domain name is not available, try different letter/symbol variations: www.yourbusinessname.com or www.your-business-name.com

Step 2: Finding or using your current Web Hosting Company

When you access a web page on the Internet, the page is sent (electronically) to your computer from a server. Servers are capable of storing thousands of web pages and sending out web pages to many people at the same time.

More often than not servers are owned by a web hosting company that rents out space on their servers to store other people's web pages. Consequently, you need to use a web hosting company to store your web pages (details of how you transfer web pages from your computer to the web host's servers will be detailed later).

Web hosting companies charge from \$4.00 to over \$48.00 per month depending on how much space you require, security levels, whether you require database support, and many other variables. Web hosting companies include Networksolutions.com, Yahoo.com or Register.com.

NOTE: The above names are not a recommendation - just a guide.

You should ensure that your web hosting company is reliable and reputable. If a server goes "down" (i.e., not working due to technical issues), your website cannot be accessed online for the duration. The above companies are known as being very responsive. However, if you look beyond these firms, make sure you can assess their reputation/reliability.

Step 3: Designing & Building Your Webpage

a) DIY Webpage

If you have knowledge of web design and a keen eye for design, it may be worth designing the webpage yourself or use a skilled employee within your Department.

Always remember that people may perceive the quality of your website to reflect the quality of your Department, City or agency.

Many people build webpages using Macromedia Dreamweaver or Adobe Photoshop. Dreamweaver is perhaps more advanced.

b) Outsourcing to a Webpage Design Company

Those who do not have the skills or/and time to design a website may consider outsourcing the design process to a professional web design company (costs will vary). A web design company will either:

i) Design a webpage and deliver it to you on completion, where upon you will administer the webpage from then in (i.e. no further contact with the web designer).

ii) Design a webpage and continue to work with you on a long-term basis to make changes when necessary and suggest future web solutions.

Ideally, point (ii) is most effective, so long as the long-term relationship will allow the web design company to continually devise new solutions to push/develop your webpage to new heights. Even if you would prefer to have the webpage back in your hands once completed, it may be worth maintaining a relationship with the web design company in case you need alterations in the future.

Step 4: Sending Your Web Pages to the Web Host Server

'Download' is the process where you *receive* information onto your computer (i.e. view a web page online). When you *send* information (e.g. your credit card details when purchasing online), the term is called 'upload'.

Similarly, when you are 'sending' pages to a web hosting server, you are 'uploading'.

Uploading is done with FTP (File Transfer Protocol) software which can be downloaded from many different vendors online. Some downloads may be free, but by using FTP software that is purchased you will often be guaranteed a better quality product.

Step 5: Points to Remember!

From reading these steps, you should now have a good idea of what it takes to set up your own iWATCH webpage. **However, you also need to keep on top of the administration. Failing to do so can have disastrous consequences.** The following are points to remember throughout the life of your webpage.

- **Re-register Your Domain Names**

When you purchase a domain name, you will have to re-register the name after a certain number of years (usually 2) – otherwise the domain name will be made available for others to buy. When you purchase a domain name, the name is usually registered for a minimum of two years, although you can often register them for up to 10 years at a time. Consult your domain name vendor for more details.

- **Don't Let Your Web Hosting Expire**

Web hosting companies charge either by the month or by the year. You should be mindful of your expiration date to ensure that you extend your web hosting in good time. Most web hosting companies will send you a reminder when your expiration date gets close.

- **Update Your Webpage Regularly**

If new agencies and popular web links are available, update your iWATCH webpage. You should regularly add/update content to keep your webpage current – failing to do so will reflect badly on the image of your department, city or agency.

- **Maintain a Good Relationship with Your Web Designer**

If you decide to outsource your webpage design to a web design company, you should make regular contact with the designer(s) to foster a good relationship and to come up with a way that projects the iWATCH focus and ways to further enhance your webpage.

To link a social network to your iWATCH;

FACEBOOK (City of Los Angeles: [iwatchla](#))

To register for FaceBook, visit www.facebook.com. Once there, the initial sign up page is their homepage. Follow the self-explanatory directions to sign up with the name you would like to use and also provide an email address for verification.

Once you have successfully registered, you are ready to use this social networking web site to set up an iWATCH page.

TWITTER (City of Los Angeles: [iwatch_la](#))

To register for the social networking site Twitter, visit www.twitter.com. Once there, click on the green “sign up now” icon. This will take you to their sign-up page. Follow the self-explanatory directions to sign up with the name you would like to use and also provide an email address for verification.

Once you have successfully registered, you are ready to use this social networking web site to set up an iWATCH page.

MYSPACE (City of Los Angeles: [iwatchla](#))

To register for the social networking site Myspace, visit www.myspace.com. Once there, click on the sign up icon. This will take you to their sign-up page. Follow the self-explanatory directions to sign up with the name you would like to use and also provide an email address for verification.

Once you have successfully registered, you are ready to use this social networking web site to set up an iWATCH page.

A **QR Code** is a two-dimensional bar code, the “QR” is derived from “Quick Response,” and the intended code allows its contents to be decoded at high speed.

QR Codes storing addresses and URLs may appear in magazines, or signs, buses, business cards or just about any object that users might need information about. Users with camera phone equipped with the correct reader software can scan the image of the QR Code causing the phone's browser to launch and redirect to the programmed URL.

To generate your own QR code you can visit different websites such as Kaywa or BeeTagg. The QR code generator sites have cell phone download applications and a list of supported phones.



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