



Need a new website? Check out Weebly!

Like many media teachers around the country, I started a website years ago for my program to improve communication with my students, their parents and our community. I used iWeb on the Mac, Edmodo, Word Press, and Edublogs as these programs became available. Each time I switched it was because the new program either made improvements over the last one or offered something that wasn't available previously. About a year and half ago, a colleague of mine introduced me to Weebly and I once again, made the switch. If you are looking for a free, easy to use, feature rich, education friendly website for your class and students, Weebly is your answer (until the next thing comes along!).

When looking for a website builder, if you can find something that's free to use, that's usually a good place to start. Weebly has both free and paid accounts, but their free accounts have pretty much everything you need to get started. If you open a free education account, many of the paid features become available, but we'll get to that in a bit. Weebly even hosts your site for free!

Weebly is extremely easy to use. It's web based so there are no programs to install and keep updated. You simply log in and you can edit your website from any computer connected to the web. Weebly uses WYSIWYG (what you see is what you get) where you drag and drop items onto your page. It's very simple to use and figure out.

Weebly is also packed with features. Using an education account, besides basic text and photos, you can also add audio files and videos to your site. For a media program, that's exactly what you need. If you already have a YouTube or Vimeo account, you can easily embed your videos into your Weebly site. You can also create slideshows, blogs, polls, and password protect certain pages if you need to. Worried about how your site will look on a mobile device? Weebly has that covered too! They automatically redesign your site to fit better on a mobile device. Do you like to use widgets or HTML coding to spruce up your site? Weebly allows you to do that too. Do you want to sell items like DVDs online? Weebly can set you up with an online store. There really isn't anything that Weebly can't provide.

Finally, Weebly is also great for teachers to use. Signing up for an education account unlocks 40 free student accounts that you can give to your students. The best part about this is that you have total control over these student accounts. You can go in and edit or disable an account if a student misuses it in some way. Education accounts also unlock features that are normally found on a paid account, such as uploading a video. Do you have your own domain? You can use it with Weebly education accounts, another unlocked feature.

I've heard that WIX allows you to do many of the same things as Weebly but I haven't had the chance to try that out on my own yet. For my needs at the moment, Weebly does everything that I want and more. If you're in need of a new website for your program or class, check them out at www.weebly.education.com. If you'd like to see how I'm using Weebly for my program, check out www.cktv-mediaproductions.com. If you really want to be impressed, check out www.seariderproductions.com, home to my good friends out in Waianae, Hawaii. Their teacher John Allen is a true Weebly master!

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