

# Web Technician

## **Introduction**

Websites are becoming increasingly important to local authorities, most of whom have developed their own web pages to keep the public informed of the services they provide and of any activities that are planned in the local area.

In addition, central government has stated that within the next few years all council services should be electronically available. That means, for example, that anyone on the street can go to a booth and tap in to find out about what benefits they might be entitled to.

Web technicians are central to all internal and external communications. They work closely with an editorial team and are responsible for a local authority's Intranet (internal system), and Internet sites, using their technical expertise to develop and maintain those sites.

They are employed in local authority IT departments and often work as part of a small team.

## **Work Environment**

Web technicians spend most of their time sitting in front of a computer screen.

They may attend meetings in other departments to discuss new and ongoing projects.

They normally work a standard 37-hour week from Monday to Friday, but may be required to work late occasionally in order to meet deadlines.

Local authorities usually offer the opportunity to work flexible hours.

## **Daily Activities**

The job varies slightly from authority to authority, but may involve:

- meeting the 'client' (usually a member of the editorial team or an officer from another department within the council) to discuss the content and format of a new web page, and where it should appear within the site
- advising on what is or is not possible - technically; and on the use of images, sound and video clips to add interest
- thinking about how the page is going to look and how it will work - also, how it will fit in with the rest of the website and link to other websites
- building the page using web-authoring programmes such as Visual Interdev and Microsoft Frontpage; and graphics packages, such as Photoshop

- converting text into HTML (Hypertext Markup Language) and scripting languages such as JavaScript and VB Script
- scanning in photographs and other images that will be used on the new page(s)
- testing the new page(s) to make sure that it works and sending it to the client for approval
- mapping the new page(s) into the rest of the website and uploading it to the server (the main computer which holds all the information)
- programming changes/updates into the sites as and when necessary and dealing with any problems as they arise.

Web technicians may also spend some time developing new computerised working systems for other departments within the council.

### **Skills & Interests**

This is a fast-moving environment so you must be willing to adapt to constant changes in technology and learn new skills when required. Additionally, you must have:

- a logical mind
- a liking for solving problems
- an interest in design and some creative ability
- good communication skills - in order to discuss requirements and present your ideas to clients who may have little technical knowledge
- the ability to work on your own initiative and prioritise your work in order to meet deadlines.