

A number of people have asked me how I like our new Zen Cart web site. For those of you who are interested, here is my reply....

I did our first site a lot of years ago, before there were web programs such as Front Page. It was all done by coding HTML, with the help of Noella at [Miniature Net](#) who sent me to the right places to answer the questions that I had. And when things got really stuck, she went in and fixed problems. I owe her a large debt of gratitude.

When Front Page became available, I decided to purchase the program, and was quite happy with it for some years. Of course, my background in HTML made things easier. I don't think any of the 'helpful' web making programs are 100% and to my mind, a knowledge of HTML is really necessary to get around.

I had admired [Anne Gerdes](#)' work for some time and one day I asked her to design a template web site for me. Anne did the design and did a template for me, and I took over setting up and maintaining the site, still working with Front Page. This too worked well for a lot of years.

In 2006 I ended up in hospital for seven weeks. My son John, who had come into the business with me by that time, knew nothing about maintaining the web site and things did not go very well that summer. When I got home it took two months before I could sit and work on the computer.

I talked to Noella and Anne about this, and they suggested that if I went to Zen Cart, John could maintain the site without having to have knowledge of HTML. This sounded like the answer to our problems, and we went ahead with the new site. I asked Anne to incorporate as much of the art work from the old site as possible, and this she did.

What I didn't realize was how the Zen Cart would improve our sales! We find that we are getting about three times the number of orders that we got with the old site. We are not sure why this is, but think that perhaps it is the ease with which the customer can make out and pay for an order.

We are really happy with the way the program handles the follow up on orders. We have always acknowledged orders and told the customer when the order was shipped, but with Zen Cart these features are incorporated in the program. It not only keeps the customers happy and informed, it keeps our records clean and straight.

John can add new products as they are ready. He finds the program very intuitive and can sit down and do whatever he needs to do, instead of looking at the computer screen and finding himself completely out of his depth. His biggest job now is taking photos!

We hope that John will never be in the position he was in 2006 when I was unable to function for such a long time, but on the other hand, if I want to take a long trip to England he is going to make out just fine taking care of orders and the web site.

Joy Parker – [Swallowhill Dolls & Miniatures](#)
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