

Getting the Website you need

A Consumer Guide to commissioning a website



Getting the website you need

In order to ensure your new website meets your needs exactly, the following must exist:

- ☺ An understanding of precisely what your requirements are.
- ☺ An understanding of what you should expect from a website designer/developer.
- ☺ An understanding of what information your website designer/developer will need from you.

When these key elements are in place, it is also essential that you are able to communicate your needs with the website designer/developer. For this purpose, we have included a website brief template. This can be used to document all of your requirements and will provide your selected website designer/developer with a sound understanding of what is required of them.

My Requirements

As soon as you have established that you require a website, for whatever purpose, you must decide *why* you need a website. Is it to increase sales? Raise brand awareness? Or just to have a presence? No matter the reason, you will never establish what you want from your website, until you have confirmed why you need one.

When you are satisfied that you do indeed need a website, you must select a name for your website. This is known as a domain name, and can be your business name, your bestselling product name or anything else relevant. Ours, for example, is www.ardeerdesign.co.uk based on our company name. You also, at this stage, must consider where your website will be located. For your website to be visible to the public, and your potential customers, your website must be hosted. More information on hosting is provided under "My Website Designer/Developer".

Deciding on the type of website is just as important. The type of website you need depends largely on what you want your website to do. If you wish to sell products online and take payments, you will require an ecommerce website. If you only want an online presence for your business then a static website may suffice.

At this stage it is also essential to understand what you need *in* your website, as this may change the site type. This means establishing how many pages you need (E.G Home Page, Products Page, and Contact Us Page). As well as the number of pages, you must have a good understanding of how much text will be in your site, how many images and what other content you would like.

Before you decide to speak to website designers/developers, you should compile a brief based on your outline requirements. This includes the above and other information such as colour schemes or branding to be included.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, it is important to understand and decide on your budget and deadline. Capping the amount you wish to invest is important in selecting a designer, as is setting how long you wish the project to last.

My Website Designer/Developer

As well as understanding what you need, you must appreciate the importance of selecting a good website designer/developer. Making the right choice can save your company time and money, and it is important to remember that *you* are the client. You are employing a website design company to utilise their skills and paying them for it, which means you are entitled to receive the best service possible.

When you have communicated your needs to your website designer/developer (using our brief document as a base), you could also be asking some questions to ascertain that they are up to the task of supplying your website. As a basic requirement you should insist that your designer/developer uses w3c valid and compliant html/css code. Websites should also hand coded and created with search engine optimisation in mind.

After ensuring your website designer/developer is qualified, and uses industry standard techniques to create your website, it is also important to establish what makes them different. Quality and pricing are perhaps the most important factors to consider however if there is no separating the providers then you may look for a unique selling point. For example, we aim to provide a low cost solution of the highest quality, but we also aim to be as kind to the environment as possible.

Prior to selecting the designer/developer you should also ask for testimonials or samples of previous work. This will demonstrate the abilities of the designer/developer, and provides a like for like measurement between providers.

When work has commenced, it is also industry standard to receive staged updates on the progress of the project. For example, our design process is:

- 👉 *Initial concept designs* – This is where we create 3 mock ups based on your requirements. You then select the design you would like the site based on. We can make amendments to the chosen design to ensure it meets the needs exactly.
- 👉 *Coding* – Once you are happy with how the site looks, we will use industry compliant code to create the workings of the website. The content you provide is also added at this stage.
- 👉 *Testing* – We will then upload the website to a test portal to allow you to evaluate our work and ensure you are happy with the finished article.

What my designer/developer will need from me

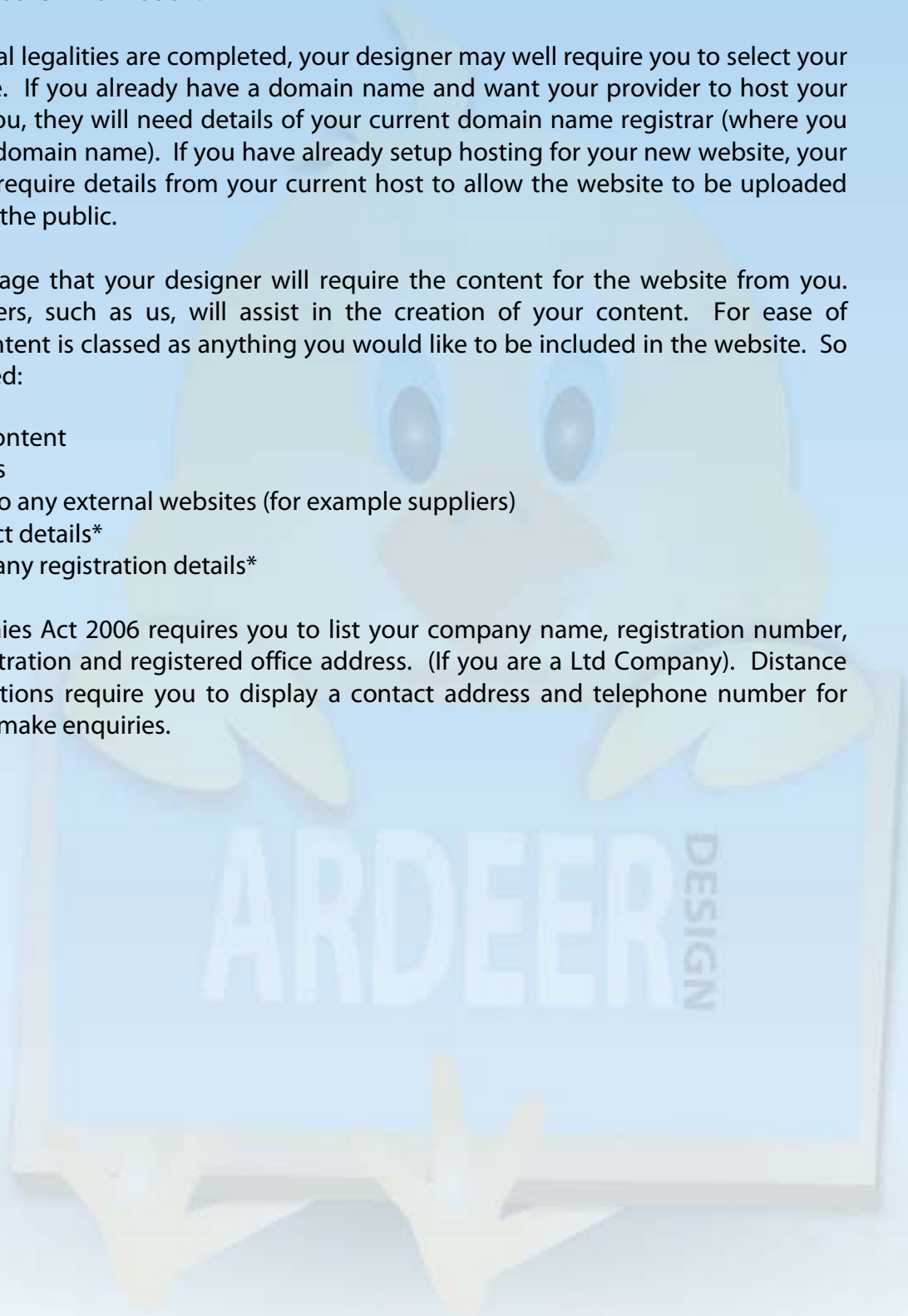
Once a designer/developer has been selected, you will be required to provide numerous elements of information and input, even before the provider can start to work on your new website. Most established website designers and developers will charge a deposit before work begins. This is to cover initial costs and is industry standard. The amount will vary for each provider; we charge 25% as an advanced payment. As well as an initial payment, you may also be asked to sign a service level agreement. This is a contract that protects you and the provider by outlining the scope of the project, and includes terms of payment and other information.

Once the initial legalities are completed, your designer may well require you to select your domain name. If you already have a domain name and want your provider to host your website for you, they will need details of your current domain name registrar (where you bought your domain name). If you have already setup hosting for your new website, your provider will require details from your current host to allow the website to be uploaded and visible to the public.

It is at this stage that your designer will require the content for the website from you. Some providers, such as us, will assist in the creation of your content. For ease of reference, content is classed as anything you would like to be included in the website. So we would need:

- 👉 Text content
- 👉 Images
- 👉 Links to any external websites (for example suppliers)
- 👉 Contact details*
- 👉 Company registration details*

*The Companies Act 2006 requires you to list your company name, registration number, place of registration and registered office address. (If you are a Ltd Company). Distance selling regulations require you to display a contact address and telephone number for customers to make enquiries.



Glossary of Terms

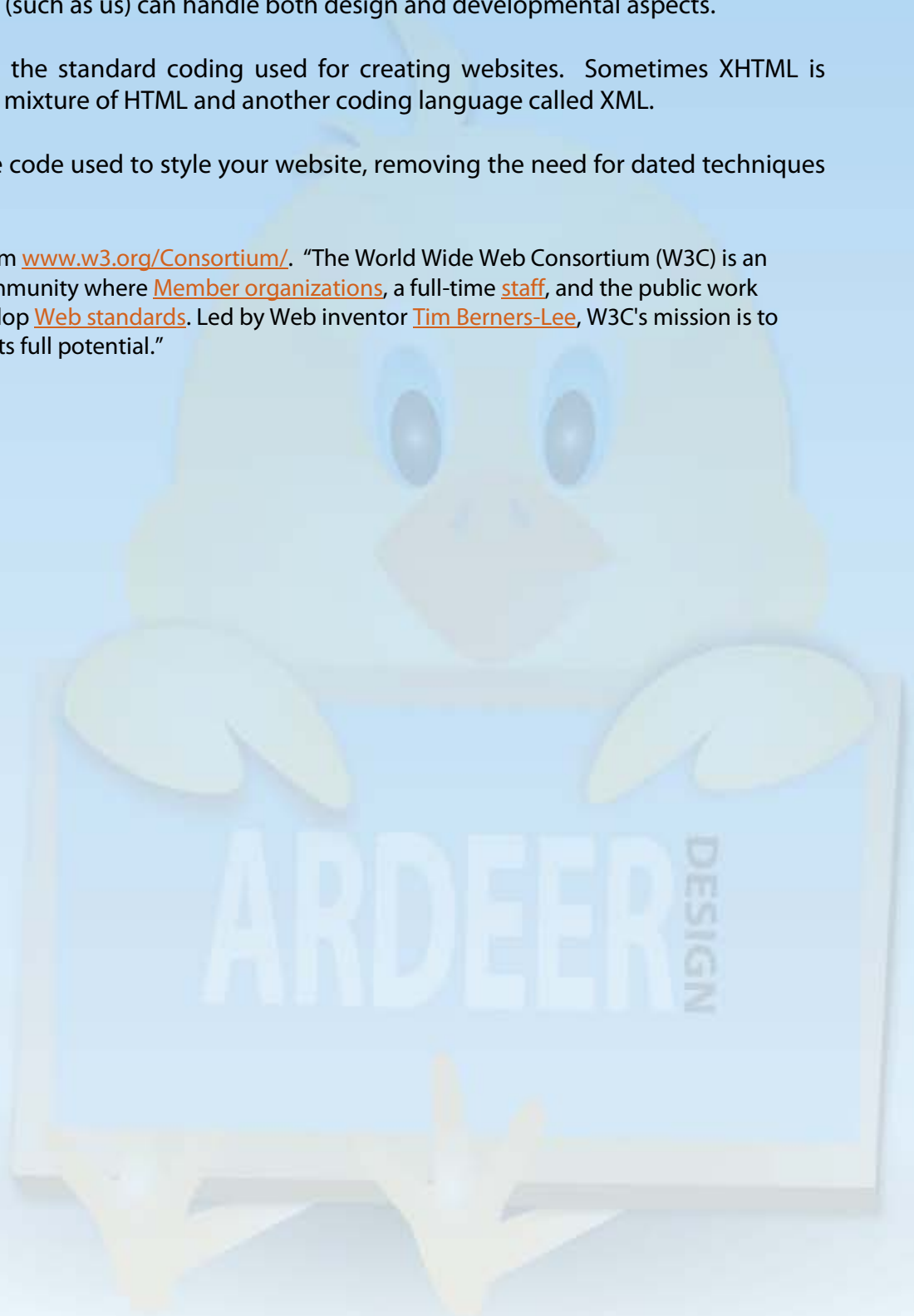
Website Designer: This is the person who handles the graphical elements of the website and will normally also deal with HTML and CSS coding.

Website Developer: A developer will normally deal with more advanced technologies. Some providers (such as us) can handle both design and developmental aspects.

HTML: This is the standard coding used for creating websites. Sometimes XHTML is used, which is a mixture of HTML and another coding language called XML.

CSS: This is the code used to style your website, removing the need for dated techniques such as tables.

W3C: Taken from www.w3.org/Consortium/. "The World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) is an international community where [Member organizations](#), a full-time [staff](#), and the public work together to develop [Web standards](#). Led by Web inventor [Tim Berners-Lee](#), W3C's mission is to lead the Web to its full potential."



Website Brief Template

Company Details

Company Name: _____

Company Address: _____

Postcode: _____

Tel 1: _____

Tel 2: _____

Mob: _____

Email: _____

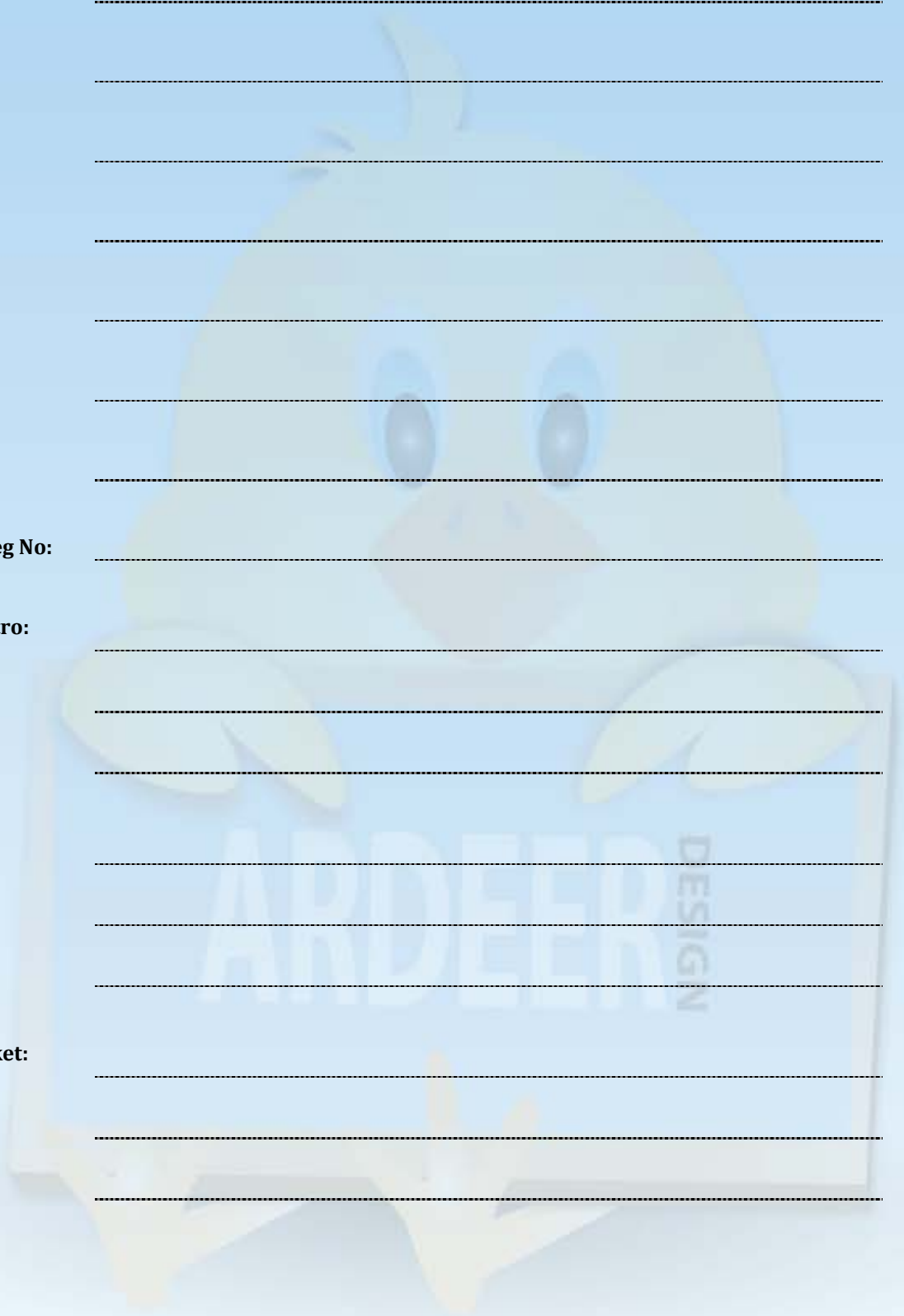
VAT No: _____

Company Reg No: _____

Business Intro: _____

Rivals: _____

Target Market: _____



Website Requirements (please use a separate sheet if more room is required)

Domain Name: _____

Would you like us to register it on your behalf? _____

Would you like to use our eco hosting? _____

Type of website (e.g. static /ecommerce): _____

**If Ecommerce-
How many Items:
How many categories:** _____

Number of pages: _____

Page names: _____

Brief description of pages: _____

Colours: _____

Logo / Branding: _____

Budget _____

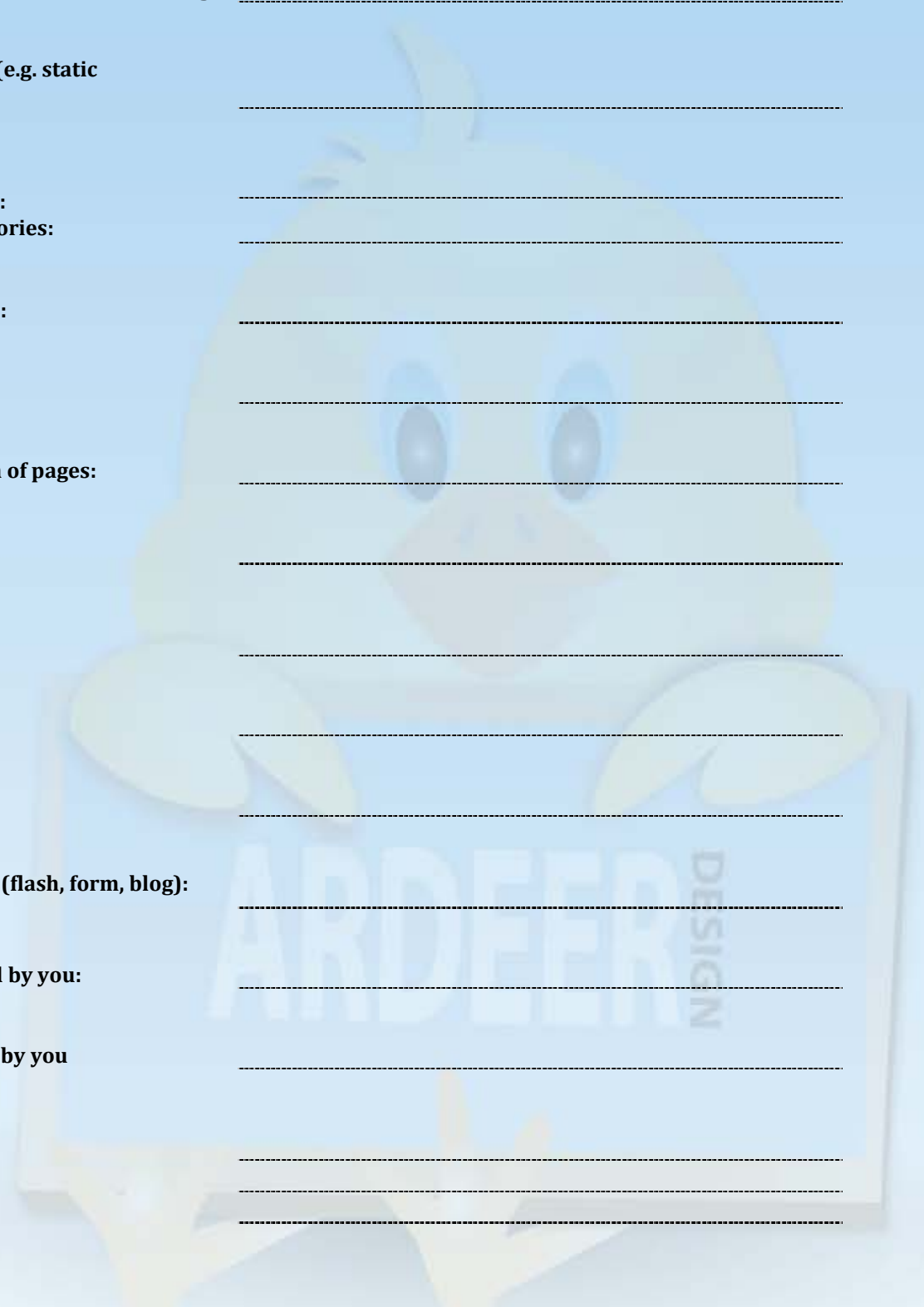
Deadline _____

Special Features (flash, form, blog): _____

Content supplied by you: _____

Images supplied by you _____

Other: _____





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