

# Websites make home projects a breeze

By Kim Komando

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Owning a home is both a blessing and a curse.

I'm sure you can think of a dozen things that need to be done at your house right now. From cleaning out gutters to fixing dripping faucets, it never seems to end.

Here are some web-

sites that will help you become smarter and more efficient about home maintenance. They may even help you reclaim a few of lost weekends.

» **Personal Color Viewer:** Inside or out, painting your home is a major burden. We've all seen houses painted colors that were poorly chosen, sometimes we won-

der if an extended trip to the bar was involved before the paint-buying began.

How many times have you gone to the paint store, returned home and taped a mishmash of color samples to the wall? Then, after a few days of painful indecision, you pick a color. You head back to the paint store to buy a quart,

drive home and brush it on a wall and it doesn't look anything like you expected!

This website at [www.benjaminmoore.com](http://www.benjaminmoore.com) brings paint selection into the 21st century. You can download stock photos of houses or, even better, actual photos of your own home. You'll see the colors displayed on

your home's exterior or on the walls of the room you are painting. Once you make an informed choice, you'll print out the color codes and head to the store, ready to buy and get started.

» **How to Clean Anything:** Dust happens. The need to clean is never going away. Fortunately, cleaning is more time-consuming than difficult — most of the time.

Once in a while, though, you run into a stain or an odor that mocks your most vigorous efforts. When that happens, visit [www.howtocleananything.com](http://www.howtocleananything.com). As its name promises, it will tell you the best methods and tools to clean anything, from your makeup brushes to your barbecue grill.

» **HomeSpotHQ:** When life becomes crazy, it's easy for home maintenance to fall by the wayside. Or in a flurry of cleaning, you might have thrown out the manuals for your appliances.

This site ([www.homespotohq.com](http://www.homespotohq.com)) tackles both problems; it's like a control center for your house.

It stores important manuals, part numbers and paint colors. The site also helps you schedule important maintenance tasks and plan improvement projects. Need to hunt down a part or supplies for your project? HomeSpot can even point you to the best deals in your neighborhood.

» **Roomle:** Rearranging furniture can make a room seem fresh again. However, it can take a toll on your back when you try several layouts and none of them work.

This site ([www.roomle.com](http://www.roomle.com)) helps you create a floorplan and fill it up with virtual furniture. Move pieces around until you find just the right arrangement all without breaking a sweat or

scratching your grand piano. Click a button to see your design modeled in 3D.

» **DIYorNot:** Can you save money by doing that remodeling project yourself? Not always.

This site ([diyornot.com](http://diyornot.com)) gives you an estimated cost and timescale for any project. It also offers thousands of tutorials so you can see the effort that a potential project will require.

You might decide that a professional will cost less, in both money and aggravation, in the long run.

» **EnergySavers:** Making your home more energy efficient can result in significant savings for the long term.

This site ([www.energysavers.gov/your](http://www.energysavers.gov/your)), hosted by the Department of Energy, walks you through a do-it-yourself energy audit to help pinpoint where your home might be leaking dollars. Then you can read up on how to install insulation, apply sun shading film or tackle other easy-to-do energy-saving projects.

Kim Komando hosts the nation's largest talk radio show about consumer electronics, computers and the Internet. To get the podcast, watch the show or find the station nearest you, visit [www.komando.com](http://www.komando.com). E-mail her at [techcomments@usatoday.com](mailto:techcomments@usatoday.com).

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# TBA TODAY

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## Four TBA Builders First to Earn CIP Designation

In order to raise the level of professionalism in our industry and community, the Tallahassee Builders Association recently implemented a "Construction Industry Professional" designation program where qualified builders earn "CIP" status as an indication of their commitment to construction quality, continuing education, and customer service.

The Association began with and is still accepting applications for a CIP "grand-fathering" process in which experienced builders achieve the designation by documenting their track records of performance and provide consumer and client references to the quality of their work.

TBA is proud to announce that the first four CIP designees are Doug Barton, Jerry McFarland, Larry Wayne Strickland, and Mark Worley.

Each of the four CIP recipients boast stellar performance records. Barton won the Best of Show in the 2012 TBA Parade of Homes™ for his entry in Southwood. McFarland is serving with distinction as TBA's President in 2012 and won a Remodelers Showcase Award this year. Strickland is TBA's reigning Builder of the Year and a four-time winner in the Remodelers Showcase Awards. Worley chaired this year's successful Parade of Homes™ and recently recruited 21 new members into TBA.

Look for future CIP designees to be highlighted in TBA Today and know that the Tallahassee Builders Association and all its members are dedicated to the highest levels of service to customers and our community.



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Construction Industry Professional