

Rented vs. Owned: The Real Math on Storage Websites

A plain-English guide from The Storage Owner's SEO Guy · storageownerseoguy.com

I own seven storage facilities in Minnesota and Wisconsin. I've paid for the rented website. I've paid the marketing guy. Then I learned to build it myself — and this is the comparison I wish someone had shown me first. It's honest in both directions.

The rented apartment vs. the house you own

A software-company website (StorEdge, Storable, SiteLink and similar) is a rented apartment: decent walls, but you can't renovate, and the rent never ends. An owned website is a house — built once, keys handed to you, and your only ongoing bill is about \$12 a year for the address.

What the rented website does well — credit where due

- **It exists by Friday.** Fill out a form, get a site. No decisions, no builder to find.
- **Rentals are wired in.** Unit inventory, online move-ins, and payments connect natively, because the website and the management software are the same company.
- **Someone else worries about it.** Hosting, security, and updates are handled, and there's a support line.

What it costs you — and not just in dollars

	Rented (template) website	Owned website
What you pay	\$100–\$300 every month, forever	Built once; then ~\$12/yr for your domain
10-year total	\$12,000 – \$36,000	Build cost + about \$120
Who owns it	The software company. Stop paying and the site vanishes the same day.	You. The code, the domain, the hosting account — all in your name.
Google ceiling	Low and locked: no schema code, no custom pages for nearby towns, no size guides with your real measurements — you can edit words, never structure.	None. Every ranking tool available: structured data, town pages, real specs, honest content Google hasn't read 10,000 times.
Sameness	Thousands of facilities run your identical template with near-identical text.	One of one — built around YOUR units, YOUR town, YOUR story.
Online rentals	Native	Same rentals — your site links straight into the rental portal you already use. Nothing about how tenants pay changes.
Upkeep	Vendor-handled — but nobody checks that your phone, hours, and prices are right. Misconfigured template sites rot quietly for years.	A static site: nothing to hack, no plugins to break, nearly nothing to maintain.
If you sell the facility	Website isn't yours to sell.	The website transfers with the business — it's an asset.

The honest caveat about custom websites

A custom website is only better if it's built and maintained by someone competent. A bad custom build — the web guy who disappears, the site you don't control — is the worst option of all. I know because I lived it. That's exactly why my builds work the way they do: **you get the code, the accounts are opened in your name, hosting is free, and the site is static — there's nothing to break, nothing held hostage, and no bill that can lapse.** You keep your management software (StorEdge, CC Storage, SiteLink — whatever you run) exactly as-is; the site just plugs into it.

The three questions to ask any website provider

- If I stop paying you, does my website still exist tomorrow?
- Can you show me the code that tells Google my prices, hours, and location — and can I take it with me?
- When someone searches for storage in my town and in the towns around me, which page of yours ranks — and can we build a page for each?

A rented-template provider answers no, no, and no. That's the whole conversation.

Scott Swenson · The Storage Owner's SEO Guy · storageownerseoguy.com · Free visibility report for any facility — no catch, no subscription pitch.