

# How to Create a Small Business Website That Kicks



This is the “dummies consultation” on how to create a small business website that kicks. The one thing you have to know is that the web is rapidly changing. If I had written this last week, I might have learned something this week that makes it a little bit different. Many of the things I am going to tell you are broad-stroke principles that don’t really change that rapidly. When you put some effort into what you read, you can expect to get some returns on it for quite a while, so you don’t have to worry about it changing every two seconds.

As soon as I make such a statement, something major will change, or I’ll learn something new that will help you, so I’m setting up an update web just for you that will have all kinds of new tips and tricks. Visit <http://www.UltimateGuideToEMarketing.com> and register to get all the new tips and tricks as soon as they come about.

## Benefits of a Kickin’ Website

The benefits I have received by putting effort into my website, electronic magazine (e-zine), and electronic marketing are many. Let’s look at some of them.

### Benefit 1: More Money

You will have more money by learning the information in this book and doing some of the work yourself. The time I spent learning how to do my website updates is the best single investment I have made in my business to date.

Previously I was going to networking meetings and paying \$35 to shake hands with a bunch of people who had no clue as to what I did, and frankly couldn't care less. Now I reach people around the world who want to know me, and for a lot less money and time.

### **Benefit 2: Increased Product Sales**

Going online and doing it correctly generates many product sales. If you've read some of my past e-zines (<http://www.antion.com/ezinebackissues.htm>), you may remember that the combination of my electronic magazine and website brought in about \$25,000 in a couple days while I was just sitting here.

### **Benefit 3: Goodbye, Expensive Information Kits**

I cannot remember the last information kit I sent out since I designed a killer website. Many people have hired me directly after looking at the website and seeing the credibility I have established on the site.

### **Benefit 4: Sayonara, Printing Costs**

I do a lot less printing since I have the website. When someone wants to have something sent to them, I tell them I'm simply going to send them the same thing that is on my website and almost all of them take the website option. They get the information quickly, make their decision, and hire or don't hire me. I don't spend a nickel on them.

That's at least four major benefits from having your own website. Let's consider what you can do to develop your own kickin' site. The first thing you need to consider is a name for your site; this is extremely important to your success.

## **Developing Your Site**

There are many different levels of Internet knowledge among the people reading this book, so I'm going to start out on a basic level. Advanced Internet and web development people can skip to Search Engine Strategies on page 13.

For those of you who are new to this subject, I suggest spending a little time every day at <http://www.newbieclub.com>. Since I'm self-taught when it comes to computers, I missed a lot of the basics that can be found at the Newbie Club.

**TIP:** Don't buy anything there until you finish reading this book or e-mail me for an opinion. I may have better options for you.

## Should You Have Your Own Domain Name?

This is a question I get all the time. A domain name is [antion.com](http://antion.com). You don't want to get something like [Geocities/ImTooCheapToGetMyOwnDomain-Name/joeblow.htm](http://Geocities/ImTooCheapToGetMyOwnDomain-Name/joeblow.htm) even though it's free. All your promotional efforts will be wasted if Geocities makes some small change. People won't be able to find your site anymore. If you have your own domain name, you can move and be hosted anywhere, and people will still be able to find you through all your promotional efforts. In addition, having your own domain name gives you greater credibility.

For now, check out domain names using the free tool available at <http://www.KickStartDomains.com>. You can purchase domain names there, too.

**TIP:** Here's an up-to-date reference on buying and selling domain names: <http://hop.clickbank.net/?powertips/open4sale>.

Want to find out who owns a site so you can make an offer to buy it? Go to <http://www.whois.sc> and <http://www.whois.org>. These sites also show the deleted and expired domain names that are available.

## Subdomains

Having keywords in your domain name can be very helpful in getting you high rankings in search engines. What if you can't find a regular domain name with the keywords in it that are beneficial to your business? Get a variation of the domain name and then add subdomains as needed. For instance, I couldn't get [publicspeaking.com](http://publicspeaking.com) so I got <http://www.Public-Speaking.org>, which has great keywords for my business in the domain name. If I wanted to I could now add [humor.public-speaking.org](http://humor.public-speaking.org) and [storytelling.public-speaking.org](http://storytelling.public-speaking.org) and so on.

Your web host will advise you on making subdomains on your site. (Some don't have them available so check first.)

**TIP:** Here's a great article on using subdomains: [http://www.webmarketingplus.co.uk/seo\\_positioning/tutorials/subdomains.html](http://www.webmarketingplus.co.uk/seo_positioning/tutorials/subdomains.html).

## What Name Should I Use?

It's better not to use your own name. If I had to do it over again, I would not use my name as my main site. I would still have <http://www.antion.com> but I wouldn't have developed it as deeply as I did. In fact, I just bought three other domains that include important keywords in the name:

<http://www.dynamicspeaking.com>

<http://www.greatspeaking.com>

<http://www.speak4money.com>

The highest ranked one I've got is <http://www.Public-Speaking.org>. (Notice: It's got a major keyword phrase in the domain name.)

If anybody knows my name, they will easily be able to find me on the Internet. I want the people who never heard of me to be able to type in something in the search engines and find me.

## How Much Should It Cost?

When registering your domain name, you can easily find websites that charge \$15 per year or less. One place is called <http://www.KickStartDomains.com> where \$15 is the actual fee for the domain name. A lot of people that have contacted me are paying \$200 or more because they don't know how to fill out the form. If you pay anything above \$15, you're paying the company to fill out the form for you and submit it.

**TIP:** You can easily check if a domain name is available. Visit <http://www.KickStartDomains.com> and type in the domain name. If the name you want isn't available, you can see who owns it by visiting the "who is" link and then making the owner an offer. I bought <http://www.dynamicspeaking.com> for only \$119. So, don't feel that all is lost just because the domain name you want is not available. Make an offer and see what happens.

**TIP:** Make sure your name or your company name is listed as the administrative contact for your website. Some people will do everything for you including listing "themselves" as the administrative contact. This gives THEM total control of your website. You'll be stuck dealing with them every step of the way, and if you want to move to a different host, they may make it very difficult or even impossible for you to do so. In effect, they own your website. And it will be even worse if they go out of business and disappear.

I get asked all the time, "Once you have the domain does that name automatically go up on the web?"

The answer is no. You can find places that "park it." This means if you just get the name and you're not ready to use it, you can store it somewhere for almost nothing. When you're ready to use it, you have to pick a Web Hosting Service. There are thousands of those around. However, you can park it for almost nothing if you buy it now. Later, it may not be available.

Here's a general rule about domain name selection: If someone has to remember it or if you are saying it on the radio or printing it somewhere, you want the shortest most memorable dot-com you can get. If people only have to click on it because you do a good job of search engine positioning or you are driving traffic to the site with pay-per-click search engines, then any domain name is okay. Having dashes in your domain name is okay and is actually better for search engines like <http://www.Public-Speaking.org>.

## What Is an ISP?

ISPs are the companies that give you an e-mail address and access to the Internet. That's about it. This does not necessarily mean they host websites. That is called a *web hosting service*. In some cases, they do both functions, but not always. There are thousands of ISPs you can read about at the links listed next. You might want to ask a few questions before you pick an ISP.

Some ISPs may give you website space, but you must be sure you can use your own domain name. Look for ISPs at:

<http://www.isp.com?antion>

<http://thelist.Internet.com>

Monitor your Internet connection speed:

<http://hop.clickbank.net/?powertips/absolutefy>

## What about AOL?

AOL is its own online network. You have to pay to use it, although you can send e-mail "to" AOL members at no charge. AOL has all kinds of features and web pages that are only available to AOL subscribers.

I would not recommend using AOL to do serious Internet business. It is simply not set up for it. Trying to send large amounts of e-mail through AOL will more than likely get you kicked off of their service.

Another important thing about AOL is that if something goes wrong at AOL, which is not unheard of, all the members are cut off from the Internet. If you are depending on your Internet operations to bring you business, you certainly don't want that to happen to you. AOL is simply not designed for the commercial applications we're talking about in this book.

## What Is a Web Hosting Service?

This is a place that has one or many computers that store your website and make it available to the Internet. Your website is housed on a *web server* that is basically a specialized computer.

Web hosting services typically have many more services than a simple ISP. You can get e-mail through them, some provide you with shopping carts (that are usually pieces of junk), web authoring software (again very low level software), statistics, automatic backups, and tons of other things that are website related.

The problem with web hosting services is that in many cases they go through a continual porpoise cycle, that is, they provide really good service so all their customers who brag about them, and they get a good rating in an Internet magazine. Then they get a rush of new websites to host and everything slows down because they don't have enough computer space and tech support to handle the surge in business. As a result, your website slows down, and you can never get anyone on the tech support phone. Six months later, they start to improve and add new equipment and hire more people and everything is fine again until the next rush.

Avoid freebie hosting and hosting offered by your ISP (they do too many things and have too much demand on their bandwidth to do a super great job at web hosting). Get good solid hosting because you will be crying big tears if your site loads as slow as molasses or never loads at all.

## Picking a Web Host

Here is a checklist of points to consider when selecting your web host (you may not understand some of these terms yet, but you will by the time you finish reading this book):

- ✓ If you are using Microsoft Front Page to create your website, do they have Front Page Extensions installed to make all the different parts of Front Page work?
- ✓ Do they give you autoresponders?

**TIP:** You'll learn all about what these are later.

- ✓ Can they handle multimedia and CGI scripts? Do you have full access to the cgi-bin? You may want to have things like Real Audio and Real Video. Or you might want to put some custom functionality in it, like a "recommend me form," or something like that. If they can't handle it, you can't have it on your website.
- ✓ How about backups? Do they have a reliable system? How often do they back up? How long will it take to restore your site from backup if something goes wrong?

**TIP:** This doesn't relieve you of the necessity of doing your own backups.

- ✓ What statistics packages do they make available to you? Do they just have a bare bones package, or maybe none at all? Do they make really advanced packages available? Do they have "real-time" statistics? Is there a monthly cost for the advanced packages? Do you have access to the "raw server logs"?
- ✓ What kind of connection do they have to the Internet? Do they have superfast T-1 or T-3 lines or something slower?
- ✓ Are there limits on file transfers? Will you have to pay more soon after you sign up and your site starts getting busier?
- ✓ Do they have secure server capability for your e-commerce efforts?
- ✓ How much space do you get? How much does extra space cost as your website grows? My site has grown to nearly 300 megabytes in 2.5 years.
- ✓ Do they provide web-based administration. This allows you to operate your server from a web page with no technical experience.
- ✓ Do they have complete e-mail services like Pop 3 mailboxes and the newer IMAP? Do they give you unlimited e-mail aliases?
- ✓ Do they require a long-term contract. Avoid them if they do. What will you do if their service is poor?
- ✓ What is their uptime? A good web host should be up and running 99.9 to 100 percent of the time.
- ✓ Is their tech support any good? They should have support by phone and e-mail 24/7. You might want to test them out on this before you sign up.
- ✓ Watch out for ripoffs. You should never pay extra for autoresponders, e-mail aliases, CGI bins, statistics, and POP mailboxes.

You can find a directory of web hosts at <http://www.webhostdir.com>.

## Changing Web Hosts

This is usually a massive pain in the neck if you have a complex website, and only a very large pain in the neck if you have a plain website.

Why would you want to move? Well maybe the web host has old and slow server computers, or maybe they have a slow connection to the Internet. Maybe they can't handle Front Page websites, CGI scripts, and streaming video. Maybe they are just jerks and never return your calls or e-mails. Whatever the reason, think long and hard before you make the move and plan for disaster. Here are some tips to help you reduce the size of the pain that you are definitely going to suffer:

- ✓ Don't quit your old web host until the new site is up and running perfectly.
- ✓ Before you do anything, make sure your new hosting service can do what you want it to do. If moving a complex site is a massive pain in the neck, then doing it twice would be considered massive, colossal, and you're-a-big-dummy-for-not-checking-the-new-place-out-first pain in the neck.
- ✓ You must make sure you have a copy of every single file that will be transferred to the new web host both on your hard drive and backed up to a floppy, zip drive, or CD. This list of files could include graphics, text files, web pages, and whatever else you have cooked up that is included in your website.
- ✓ You must stay organized. Match all of the directories and folders on your hard drive to the ones you have on your website. Example: If you have a folder for "images" on your website, then make a folder of the same on your hard drive and keep all your images in that folder.
- ✓ Once you have your entire website organized on your hard drive and backed up, then upload the files to the new host.
- ✓ If you have forms, CGI scripts, secure servers, shopping carts, and similar advanced functionality, someone (probably not you, unless you are a techie) must make the appropriate coding changes to get everything working again.
- ✓ Test everything thoroughly over a couple of days and have some of your friends test things, too. Make sure everything is working perfectly before you actually make the switch.
- ✓ After you're thoroughly satisfied that everything is working properly, go ahead and authorize the new web host to make the changes needed for the Internet world to find you at your new home. This step could take a few days and you may have some down time on your site while the change is occurring. Be prepared for the fact that you will probably not get much cooperation from the host you're leaving. Get the new host to advise you on the steps you need to take. For security purposes, you might have to jump through a few hoops to get the change made.

## **Dedicated Servers**

Dedicated servers are designed to give you more control of what happens with your web hosting. You have a complete computer "dedicated" to doing your bidding. Now this doesn't mean you buy a computer and put it in your basement. In fact, you will probably need a technical person to help you operate your dedicated server, which will be located in a hosting service somewhere.



When your hosting fees for individual websites exceed the cost of a dedicated server, you might want to start thinking about getting one.

## WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW



You have to have a name for your website. You have to have some way to access the Internet when you are at home and also when traveling, and you have to have a really reliable place to store your website so the world can see it. Getting a dedicated server gives you cheaper web hosting when you have many websites.

## How Do I Make a Website?

There are lots of ways. I'm only going to concentrate on one method that I know works. I used to try to get people to do their entire website from scratch because they could save the most money. After seeing the results of this advice, I have totally changed my mind. Almost all of those sites look homemade, which doesn't represent you well professionally. Here's the method I now use. The people who follow these six steps usually have fewer headaches and actually stay motivated because things get done quickly:

1. Search the web and find pages you like and generally try to get the feel of what is already out there in your industry. Bookmark and save these pages in your favorite places so you can get back to them easily.
2. Get a plain paper tablet and start a diagram. What will be on the home page? What buttons (navigation system) will it have to lead people around the site? What content will it have?
3. Start collecting keywords you think will be appropriate for your site. These are words that someone might type into a search engine or directory when they are trying to find the service you offer. You'll learn very specific techniques for finding keywords later.
4. Get a professional to design the basic look of your site and handle all the technical details of getting the site up and running on the Internet. This will save you an enormous amount of frustration. I recommend, without reservation, Saeler Enterprises in Tucson, Arizona: <http://www.saeler.com>. Jason is very familiar with the way I do things and makes a special effort to please the clients I send. Another recommendation is <http://www.HaroldHingle.com>.

Your website should be created to allow you to update it yourself if desired. I highly recommend this. Your ability to add page after page after page of content to your site will have a direct correlation to your ability to use many of the techniques taught in this book.

**TIP:** For this to work smoothly, your site should be created in the program you plan on using to update it. Don't worry if you already have a website that needs to be redone. The major web authoring programs can import it and convert it, if necessary.

5. Purchase and install a web authoring program on your computer (see discussion that follows).
6. Learn the basics of the web authoring program. You can do this while your site is under development. I strongly suggest having some telephone coaching, or better yet, some tutoring at your office, both to help with the basic install and to teach you the simple things you need to know for updating your site.

After you have the basic site up and running, you need to know how to do four simple things to start. How to:

1. Add a new page with all the navigation buttons from the last page.
2. Add text.
3. Make a hyperlink.
4. Add a graphic.

These four things are done over and over again and can really make your site grow into a force to be reckoned with on the web.

**TIP:** You can learn this in about an hour working with a coach directly or within a couple hours on the phone.

As you get more comfortable working on your website, you will start to learn a little bit more about how to use tables to keep things firmly in place. You'll learn a little bit about HTML (the behind the scenes coding language of the web) to help you make little improvements here and there to your website.

**TIP:** When you are ready, see Chapter 7 for some basic HTML tutorials.

During this step, you'll also be getting used to the idea that making a web page is not like printing something on your printer. When you create a document to print on your laser or inkjet printer, you pretty much know exactly what it is going to look like. Items you've put on the page are exactly where you saw them on the screen. Web pages are different. They can look completely different depending on the web browser used, such as Internet Explorer, Netscape, and AOL. As you create pages for your site, you want to check how they look in those different systems. You might even ask friends with older or newer versions of the different browsers to tell you how it looks to them. You may be very surprised at what they see.

Here's an Internet tool that will help you if you don't feeling like running all over town to see what your site looks like: <http://www.anybrowser.com>.

Here's a quick tip on picking fonts for your website. In most cases, you want to use standard typefaces like Helvetica and Times Roman that are installed on virtually everyone's computer. That way you can be sure your text looks about the same everywhere it's seen.

I highly recommend that you purchase the book *The Non-Designers Web Book* by Robin Williams (Berkeley, CA: Peachpit Press, 2000). You'll learn many details to turn your site from an amateur hack job into a polished, professional-looking, and functioning site.

And don't try to get too fancy. It will hurt your sales! You'll find out why later.

## Website Authoring Programs

Get a highly supported professional program. That way you'll always be able to find someone who knows how to use it when you get in a jam.

Website authoring programs are designed so you don't have to write all the HTML code from scratch. In fact, you don't have to write any at all if you don't want to, although learning a little as you go along is a good idea. Here are three options:

1. Microsoft Front Page (<http://www.microsoft.com/frontpage>): This is the program I use. You can pick up this product as a stand alone program for about \$150, or it may actually be already included if you use some versions of Microsoft Office.
2. Macromedia Dreamweaver (<http://www.macromedia.com/software/dreamweaver>): Dreamweaver is a much more complicated program that excels in really advanced web creation techniques that are counterproductive for the purposes of this book. (keep it simple!) It's harder to learn and it's quite a bit more expensive, too.
3. Adobe GoLive (<http://www.adobe.com/products/golive/main.html>): This program is available for both the Mac and PC.

For help with any of these programs, simply type in the name of the program and the word "tutorial" in any major search engine (for example: "Front Page Tutorial").

## WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW



You probably need a web designer to start off your site with the least amount of hassle. You need to pick a web authoring program, so you can make updates yourself. The program you pick should be well supported around the world and match the one your web designer is using. My suggestion is Microsoft Front Page.

## **What Is a Search Engine?**

We are now going to cover some details on page design and search engine marketing. First, I'm going to tell you about some of the programs I currently use to manage search engine marketing. Since these are always subject to change, be sure to check the updates on my site regularly. I'll also give you a list of reference materials and books I use to increase the number of visits to my site.

Dealing with search engines is the biggest pain in the neck you will face when designing your website. Why is it a pain? Because you need to integrate strategies in the design of your site so that search engines can find your pages. It shouldn't be an afterthought. You can put a lot of work into making your website beautiful, but it's all for naught if no one sees it.

A search engine has electronic robots or spiders that go and look for information on the web, including your site. Some of the strategies to get those robots and spiders to do what you want. Some of it may be on the edge or slightly controversial. We're going to avoid spamming the search engines at all costs. There are two kinds of spamming and they're both bad. Most people have heard of spam e-mail. That's where you send bulk e-mail to someone who has not agreed to receive it. Spamming a search engine is a little different, but the consequences can be just as severe. See the following section for techniques that are not permissible with search engines.

### **Spamming a Search Engine**

- Don't make your text the same color as the background of the site in an effort to hide extra keywords. Just making it the same color can get you banned, even if you aren't stuffing in extra keywords. They'll even nab you if you use a text that is just slightly different in color from the background.
- Don't use a keyword or keyword phrase over and over again in your keyword META tags, anywhere on your page, or in any HTML areas.
- Don't stuff a bunch of keywords way down at the bottom of your page where you think no one will click on it. The search engine spider police will get you.
- Don't create a highly optimized page to get a high ranking and then switch the page on your server to another one.
- Don't use automatic redirects. If you have a legitimate reason, use javascript and make the redirect time as long as possible (none of this is recommended if you want to get high rankings).
- Don't submit the same page over and over again or try to trick the engines by simply renaming the same page.
- Don't submit nonsensical sentences that are stuffed with keywords.

- Don't submit more pages per day than a particular search engine allows.
- Don't put too many keywords on any one page (you'll learn about this later).
- Don't put a tremendous number of transparent GIF files on the page with the same alt text. When using transparent GIFS, don't put the height and width tags.
- Don't put multiple title tags in your HTML code. This used to work, but alas no more!

## Search Engine Strategies

I'm going to give you the strategies I use, although I don't totally depend on them. I have managed to reach the number one and two positions on Alta Vista and Google by using a certain keyword. That means I am more likely to get an increased number of visits to my site. It's been a struggle to do this, but I made it and it is paying off. You do have to keep at it, though.

**TIP:** In the last paragraph, I used the term *visits* instead of the term *hits*. I need to tell you that the term hits means absolutely nothing. An interesting definition of HITS is "How Idiots Track Success" ©. A *hit* is a file downloaded from the Internet. So if you visit a page that has 10 graphics on it, your visit counts as 11 hits—one-page downloaded and 10 graphics. If the page has 20 graphics, your visit would count as 21 hits. So, you can see hit totals are meaningless. If you hear somebody bragging about the number of hits on their site, look a little further.

The number of hits (files downloaded) can determine how much it costs to host your website. Be very careful about where you host your site. Ask them about their costs for going over your allotted amount of web hosting usage.

I define the terms *individual* or *unique* visitors as individuals that have come to my website. *Page views* is defined as the number of pages they actually visited.

One person visiting your site would be a *unique visitor*. That means that a person has come to your website. If they came back a day later (or some other time period that your statistic package is set for) that would be two unique visitors, although it's the same person. Although these numbers will be close to the actual number of people that visit and the number of pages they look at, it's not exact.

**TIP:** For a really comprehensive discussion visit [http://www.webtrends.com/support/hits\\_views\\_sessions.htm](http://www.webtrends.com/support/hits_views_sessions.htm).

The other term *page views*, is when somebody actually downloaded a whole page, including the graphics. The web automatically downloads the page to their computers when they visit a site (you do the same when you visit a site). It does not mean they looked at it, but it means they “pulled it up.”

### **WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW**



Don't let anyone talk you into trying to cheat the search engines. It could get your website banned. Don't be impressed when someone tells you how many hits they got.

## **Keywords: The Critical Component**

There are two critical methods used by search engines to find pages. The first is by *keywords*, and the second is *metawords* or *META tags*.

An extremely critical part of this whole mix is the keywords and keyword phrases you select that match the services and products you offer. A keyword is the term someone uses when they look for information. What they type would be the *keywords* that the search engine uses to look for the information.

If you kill yourself designing your site based around certain keywords that you think are great, but the searcher uses other keywords, then they'll simply find your competition who did a better job of picking out keywords.

Each page of your site may have different keywords associated with its content, or you could have a site that has every single page optimized to the same keyword. The important thing is that it must be the *right* keyword or your site will never be found.

For example, let's say someone goes to the search engine Google and types in the keyword phrase “presentation skills.” Google has cataloged millions and millions of pages, so they can find the pages on the Internet that are most relevant to that particular keyword phrase. Their goal is to return the proper list to the person who is looking for information on “presentation skills.”

### **What Makes a Good Keyword?**

General keywords are not very useful. Here's why. Let's say you are a professional speaker and use “speaker” for your keyword. Go ahead and try typing it into a search engine and see what you get. For the most part, you get information on stereo speakers. Yes, some public speaker related stuff comes up, but using a general keyword like that gives you incredible competition fighting for the top 10 results. And that competition isn't even from other public speakers. It's mainly from stereo speaker companies. Yes, you should use the word, but it should not be number one on your list. There are much smarter words to use.

Let's say you sell office furniture and you're based in Los Angeles. Some keyword phrases for you to use would be "home office furniture," "used office furniture," or "discount office furniture."

You could add the city name to any of these keyword phrases to make them more specific. There will be less people typing this in, but they will be highly targeted people who are more likely to be interested in your site. The only exception to this is if you use a keyword phrase so specific that no one is using it.

Okay, okay, I hear you saying, "But Tom, we sell office furniture all around the country or the world. Using this technique would eliminate me from all business other than in Los Angeles." No, it won't! Here are some more keyword phrases that might make you start getting the idea: "office furniture San Francisco," "office furniture Seattle," "office furniture Las Vegas," "office furniture New York."

"WAIT A MINUTE TOM. I'M NOT BASED IN ALL THESE AREAS!"

Tom's answer: "So what?" When someone finds one of these pages in a search engine, the top of the page could read, "Special Discount to Buyers in the Las Vegas Area" or something like that. You make a special deal for these people. The Las Vegas people won't know or care that you make the same deal for someone in Miami or San Antonio. Remember: We're playing the search engine game here. Someone searching for office furniture in San Francisco is never going to see the page that says office furniture Detroit. You'll at least get a shot at the business even if they aren't in your home city.

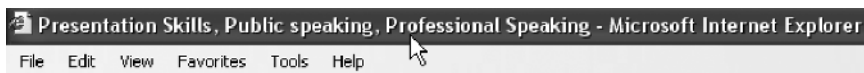
## **Regional Keywords**

People in different parts of the world use different terminology for the same product. Where I come from, they use the term, "pop." In other areas of the country they might use the term "soda." You can seek out and use these alternative keywords by checking with friends or colleagues from different parts of the country. You can do the same for other countries as well.

## **Where to Place Keywords**

I'm going to give you lots of places where keywords can be put on your page. That doesn't mean that every page you create will have keywords in all of these places. You can put too many keywords on the page and do yourself more damage than not having enough.

One of the main places that a search engine looks for the keywords is in the "Title Bar" of your web page (Figure 1.1). The title bar is usually a blue bar across the top of each one of your web pages. It is also the link that someone clicks on when they receive the results of a search, and it is also the text used when someone "bookmarks" your site or puts it in their favorite places.

**Figure 1.1    Title Bar**

Many people put their name in the title bar or use “home page.” All of this is meaningless. What you want to do is put keywords in the title bar.

**TIP:** Go though your website and make sure each page has keywords in the title bar. Using keywords in the title bar tells someone what’s on that page. If you look at my home page, for example, <http://www.antion.com>, it does not say, “Hey this is the big shot professional speaker Tom Antion.” My keywords in the title bar say “presentation skills,” “speeches,” or “public speaking.” Use something relevant to the search engines and your topics. The title bar is weighted very heavily when the search engine is looking for the page.

The next place you want to put keywords is near the top of the page, within the first visible screen if you can. Why? First, you don’t want people to scroll too much on your main pages. You want it to pop up and give them the information. Second, search engine spiders read your page from the top down. Therefore, you need to put these keywords above any graphics that you have, especially because the spiders have a tough time with graphics. If you go to my home page, <http://www.antion.com>, you’ll see that I specifically write text at the top of the page so I can stuff keywords in there (Figure 1.2).

**Figure 1.2    Keywords in Text at the Top of the Page**



When I say “stuff,” I’m not saying spamming or cheating. I made up two little sentences and put them near the top of the page to direct people to different parts of the site, but I used keywords in them.

Don’t forget to put your keywords in the text of your page, especially near the top and toward the front of paragraphs. This can increase your *keyword prominence*, which is yet another factor many search engines look at before they give you a high ranking.

You can put some keywords near the bottom of your page, too, so the search engine sees a theme to the page.

## Keywords in Graphics

Another place you could put keywords, which many people and web designers don’t know about, is in the alternative description of graphics. This is also called the *alt description* for short. Sometimes you see little descriptions come up when you run your mouse over a graphic. It might say “JPEG 2000 bytes.” You can take every graphic on your page and, instead of it having a worthless JPEG label, you can use keywords. If you do this, don’t put your keyword a hundred times in a row. That is spamming and you will be kicked out of many search engines when they catch you. You can hide keywords in the alternative description of your graphics, for example:

```
<td width="50%"></td>
```

**TIP:** If you work with the government, the alt description of graphics must fall within its guidelines of usability for sight-impaired persons. A sight-impaired person has software that will read these alt descriptions to tell them what the picture or graphic is, since they can’t see it. It’s not a bad idea to combine keywords with accurate descriptions so that any sight-impaired person can use your site.

Search engines are getting so sophisticated now that you want to take advantage of any little boost you can get to beat the system. You can also name your graphics with keywords. Instead of making the file name of a photo “joe.gif,” you would name it “presentation-skills.gif.” Anything you can do to boost yourself without spamming is a good idea.

## **Keywords in Link Text**

Anchor text is the actual clickable part of a link. Putting keywords here gives you a boost in the search engines. The closer you put the keyword to the front of the link the better. For instance—Public Speaking Tips is the link or anchor text even though the link actually takes people to antion.com.

## **Keywords in Heading Tags**

Heading tags show the search engine that particular words are to be emphasized on a page. They run from <H1> to <H4>, <H1> being the most prominent. You can use multiple heading tags, but I wouldn't use more than one of each. You can use the <H1> tag toward the top of the page and then maybe use <H2>, <H3>, and <H4> on the subheading as you go down the page.

For instance your <H1> tag might look like this at the top of a page.

Public Speaking: How to Use Humor in  
Your Speech

Your <H2> tag would be on one of the subheadings and would appear smaller:

Public speaking is great for your career.

Your <H3> might look like this:

Public speaking doesn't have to be hard.

And your <H4> tag would appear the smallest:

Public speaking sometimes makes you nervous.

### **Summary of Keyword Placement**

Keywords can be put in:

- Title tag
- META description tag
- Keyword META tag
- Heading tags
- Alt description text
- Naming of graphics
- Link text
- Body text

## Finding Keywords

How do you find out what people are using for keywords when they find your site? This is where you get into the field of statistics. Statistics are another thing that your ISP might provide for you. You should ask your ISP, “Do you provide a statistic package? If you do, what does it tell me?” Statistics tell you what hours of the day people are coming to visit you, where they’re coming from, and how long they stayed there.

The more sophisticated programs have the keywords that people typed in and the search engine they used. These are critical pieces of information. The most advanced programs tell you this and a lot more. Verify exactly what you get in the way of statistics before you sign up with a web host.

If your own service provider does not have the kind of tracking you need, there are other companies who will do the tracking for you. Here are some paid and free places to get statistics. I use the first one, but you can check out some of these other places:

<http://www.clicktracks.com/entrypoint.php?a=46673>

<http://www.idstat.com/counter/index.html>

<http://www.statpak.com>

<http://www.extremetracking.com>

<http://www.webtrends.com>

The keywords you find through your statistics package are great to have. The only drawback is that you are getting only those keywords people are typing in that actually find your site. What are the keywords people are typing in that don’t find your site? If you find out what those keywords are, you can design pages in your site that are optimized for those new keywords.

One of the best tools for finding other keywords is a free tool at <http://www.Overture.com> (formerly goto.com) called the *Keyword Selection Tool* (see p. 33). It can be found by visiting Overture.com by clicking on “advertiser center,” then clicking on “tools,” then clicking on “keyword selector tool.” Don’t be surprised if this method doesn’t find the tool. It is so popular that Overture moves it around frequently, so it doesn’t get overrun with usage.

This tool gives you all kinds of variations for terms that people are actually using. If you can’t find it anywhere, then Overture may have shut this down as a free service. The way to get around it is to sign up as an advertiser and put up a \$50 deposit. Believe me, it’s worth it to get to use this tool.

There is another site (<http://www.Wordspot.com>) that has both a paid and a free service. In the paid service, you can enter your keywords. They will search the Internet and find out where those keywords come up and how often they are used. With that information in hand, you design your site and

specific pages in your site around specific keywords because more people type them in.

You can also take a free trial at <http://www.wordtracker.com>, another service that has tools to help you pick the best keywords for your product or service:

Here's an e-book that will help you with WordTracker: <http://hop.clickbank.net/?powertips/wtmagic>

Here's a tool to help you find keywords for niche markets: <http://hop.clickbank.net/?powertips/renio>

Here's another great program to help you find keywords: <http://www.xybercode.com/ezGaffurl.php?offer=powertips&pid=1>

Using these tools can keep you from wasting effort and money. A client of mine wanted to build his site around the keyword "Value Added Selling." I found out for him that no one was typing that phrase when they were looking for "sales training." Knowing this saved him a great deal of time and money.

Want to see exactly what people are typing into the Internet right now in real time? Visit <http://www.metaspy.com>.

Google's pay-per-click program called "adwords" will also help you pick keywords. You have to sign up for their program before you can use their tool.

If you find a keyword that applies to you that doesn't get searched much, don't discard it. Always keep in mind two things: (1) the big target theory and (2) time management. Work on your most popular keywords first because obviously they will bring in the most traffic the fastest. After you have worked on the most popular words, start making pages based on the words that are not as popular. People are still typing them in all around the world, and they add up to increased, targeted traffic.

An opposite theory is to work on the less popular keywords first because it's easier to get high rankings on them since the professional optimizers your competition is using most likely will try to work on the more popular keywords. This gives you a better chance to get good results quickly even though it won't mean massive amounts of traffic.

**TIP:** When you get a list of terms from the keyword selector tool, highlight the entire list including all the numbers next to the terms and copy it. Paste the list into your word processor so you can work on the list and eliminate any terms that don't really apply to your business. For instance, if you put the term *training* into the keyword selector tool, you'll come up with a list that includes "potty training" and "dog training."

It is very difficult for you to be totally objective when it comes to your own site. It's hard for you to know what people sitting at their computers in

the middle of the day, or the middle of the night, will type in to find your service. Remember—don't put your name as a main keyword unless you are a celebrity!

## **Counting Keywords**

You can use the “page critic” function of Web Position Gold to help you with this, but I have found another tool for quick and dirty analysis. It's called the *Keyword Density Analyzer* ([http://www.grsoftware.net/search\\_engines/software/grkda.html](http://www.grsoftware.net/search_engines/software/grkda.html)). It checks the keyword density (ratio of keywords to total number of words on the page) instantly and saves me lots of time.

## **Ethically Spy on Your Competition's Keywords**

Here's a great idea. Why not let your competition do lots of work for you and you reap the benefits? You can find out what keywords your competitors are using by opening their websites in Internet Explorer browser. After the site you are spying on is open, click on “view,” then click “source.”

A window will open, and it will show you all the behind-the-scenes HTML coding of the site. This most likely will include the keywords that site is using to try to grab traffic.

Some very sophisticated webmasters can hide this information from you or even feed you false information, but that is very rare. For the most part, you will see what words they are using.

Just because you find these words don't assume the webmaster for the site you are looking at knew what he or she was doing with them. Your job is to look for words that you may have overlooked and take them to the Overture keyword selector tool to see the popularity of the keywords you find.

Here's another great spy tool to find out what your competition is up to: <http://hop.clickbank.net/?powertips/seospider>.

## **Ethically Spy on Your Competition's Traffic**

While you're busy spying on your competition you may as well spy on their traffic. Although there are lots of factors at play, you might be better served by emulating sites that have lots of traffic.

One way to check on traffic is to use the free Alexa toolbar (<http://www.Alexa.com>). You can download and install this toolbar in seconds. It will tell you how much traffic a site is getting and also its rank among all the other sites it looks at on the Internet. You can compare your traffic to another site, and you can even look at an archive of how websites looked in the past.

Don't forget to take your competitors' e-mail addresses out of your database so they don't see what promotions you're sending out.

## **Avoid Frames on Your Pages**

The frame is the fixed part of your web page while the rest is variable. Why shouldn't you have frames? Search engines have a tough time with them. They're supposed to be getting better, but you're safer not having them on your site because the last thing you want to do is make it tough on a search engine.

Don't let your designer talk you into having frames. They are only interested in the look of the site. None of the top marketers in the world who are actually making money and getting top search engine rankings use frames.

## **Usability of the Website**

One of the biggest mistakes beginners make is haphazardly throwing their site together without evaluating how a typical user would navigate through the site. You must pay attention to this, or you will frustrate your visitors, and they will promptly leave.

Although I don't think our government knows too much about selling things on the Internet, they have an entire website that is devoted to usability of websites: <http://www.usability.gov>.

Also check Jakob Nielsen's site out. He's really into usability and has some really great articles: <http://www.useit.com>.

## **Accessibility of Website to People with Disabilities**

One consideration you should not ignore is the accessibility of your website to persons with disabilities. The following link will give you some food for thought: <http://www.access.pdx.edu/workshops/myths.html>.

### **WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW**



You need to put a great deal of effort into locating keywords that apply to your products and services. These keywords need to be worked into the design of the site. Most designers don't know about this. You must demand that they either learn, or you should find someone who does have this kind of knowledge. If you don't, it is unlikely your site will be found by someone searching for your product or service. You can ethically spy on your competition's keywords. You also can't let fancy designers talk you into design elements that will hurt your chance of being found.

## Multiple Domains

While we're on the topic of keywords and domains, getting more than one domain (website) is another strategy. It gives search engines a bigger territory in which to find you. I personally bought:

<http://www.dynamicspeaking.com>

<http://www.greatspeaking.com>

<http://www.speak4money.com>

<http://www.public-speaking.org>

<http://www.public-speaking.net>

<http://www.wedding-toasts.org>

<http://www.wedding-speeches.org>

<http://www.InstantEulogy.com>

As you can see, each domain name has a keyword or keyword phrase in it. The domain name is not the heaviest weighted area that a search engine looks for, but every little bit helps.

Another benefit of this is that I can use many of the same side door (see next section) pages over again (with minor changes to the pages because exact duplicate pages are frowned on) on those sites, but since they have a different domain name, they're considered different pages. Let's say I have 200 pages on my website. With three domain names, I have 600 pages ( $200 \times 3$ ) all attracting traffic and sending them back to my main site.

A third benefit of having a domain name with keywords in it is that it helps you out in the very important directory listings. You don't want to give directory editors any excuse to put you in the wrong category.

My multiple domain strategy at this point is to have many of the other domains feeding traffic to one sales site: [antion.com](http://antion.com). You could have all the sites selling their own products if you wanted.

Also, multiple domains in your control are great for manipulating inbound and outbound links that contribute to your link popularity as we'll see further ahead when we get into link trade strategy and megalinking.

Some people think that another domain means an *alias* of the same site. This is incorrect terminology. An alias is part of an e-mail address. For instance, I could have [orders@antion.com](mailto:orders@antion.com) or [customerservice@antion.com](mailto:customerservice@antion.com). "Orders" and "customer service" are the aliases.

**TIP:** I used to let anything at [antion.com](http://antion.com) come through, but spam is so bad now I only let very specific aliases come to my inbox.

Another point of confusion is that some people think that having another domain name that forwards visitors to the same place is a side door.

This is called *pointing* and is not what we are talking about here. You must have a separate domain actually hosted somewhere for this particular side door technique to work. If the search engine sees that the domain is just “pointing” to another domain, it will not index a complete new set of side door pages.

## **Modern Day Side Doors**

A *side door* (splash page, gateway, doorway) page is tuned to a specific search engine in an effort to get you a high ranking in searches.

My friend Steve Epner explains this best: Many magazine publishers put out the same magazine but use different covers to please different markets or to test which cover gets the most newsstand sales. *TV Guide* is aggressively doing this (not to mention selling more *TV Guides* to collectors, but that’s a different story).

I look at side doors as different covers on your website designed to please a particular search engine. Each page is designed to have just the right number of words in the right places to get a high ranking in a particular search engine.

The reason I call this section “modern day” side doors is that in the old days you could put up pages that made no sense in an effort to “fool” the search engines. Today, this will get you banned from the search engines. Modern day side doors must be readable by the public.

There are links on the page that direct the visitor to your home page or to other subpages of your site. You can have hundreds of these side doors for a single website, each one custom-tailored to suit different search engines. (Once you create these side doors, you can change them slightly and use them on other related websites. This multiplies the value of your work in creating the pages in the first place.)

How does this work? Let’s say there are 100 words on your homepage and 5 of them are keywords. Therefore, you have a 5 to 100 ratio or 5 percent of the words on the page are keywords. This ratio is called the *keyword weight* or *keyword density*. Maybe the old Alta Vista search engine loves 5 to 100. Maybe another search engine doesn’t like that; they want a 7 to 100 or 7 percent keyword density on a page.

You create individual pages that have the right keyword density and submit them to the search engines. (You’ll see how to submit them later.) Basically, you have many different covers to your website. You could end up with hundreds of these pages as you continue to develop your website. By doing so, you give the search engines a bigger target to try to hit.



Also, it's important to have many different pages on the same topic with different keyword densities. When the search engines change what they like about a page to give it a top ranking, some of your pages will reduce in ranking and others will improve. Since I have so many of these pages out there, I don't have to sweat the search engines that much.

Side doors can be housed on your main website or on a different website under your control. They are just different content pages that, when found in a search, allow someone to click to your homepage or another page in your site.

**TIP:** In the old days, these side doors used to be created generically with a template. You just put in any old words and the right number of keywords and submitted them to the search engines. You would have put an *automatic redirect* script on the page so the person clicking on the link listed in the search results would never even see the side door page. They would be automatically “redirected” to your real website.

This will not work anymore for two reasons: (1) The search engines are looking for template pages and refusing to give them high rankings, and (2) the search engines are looking for any pages that have an automatic redirect script and refusing those pages high rankings because it knows that the page is a “fake” designed to beat the system.

Side door pages now must appear to be a normal page in your site. I think it's dangerous to use an automatic side door generator like you would find in older versions of a program called Web Position Gold (although this is still a great program to own for other web promotion tasks as you will see later). Search engines are pretty smart and have a tendency to ignore pages that appear to be automatically generated. And don't even think about using a redirect script. You can find Web Position Gold at <http://www.webposition.com>. Just don't use the page generator (unless you know what you're doing) or automatic submitter (you'll see why soon).

**TIP:** You can automatically generate pages if you really know what you're doing and have the appropriate software. Those of you sophisticated enough to do this already know what software to get.

## Robots.txt

Sometimes you will not want certain engines to look at certain of your side door pages. You may also not want other pages that you have created for certain clients to show up in search engines. You can avoid this by placing a robots.txt file in the HTML code of your web page that tells certain robot spiders from the search engines to simply ignore your page. There is a good

article explaining this more advanced technique located at <http://www.1stsearchranking.com/robots.htm>.

### **WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW**



Side doors are content-rich pages added to your website to give you a better chance of being found. Besides having good information, they are constructed with just the right number of keywords to please search engines. They should not be automatically generated unless you really know what you're doing because search engines may ignore them.

### **Creating Side Doors**

I previously used the Web Position Gold program for creating side doors, but now I simply make articles or mini articles and make sure they have the right keyword density for the particular search engine.

**TIP:** Making a really fine-tuned side door page is somewhat tedious and time consuming. What I do is go for volume instead of extreme fine tuning. I create a ton of pages with a keyword density of between 2 and 8 percent. This is pretty much the range in which modern day search engines work (this doesn't mean you won't find keyword densities outside that range). The idea is that if there are less than 2 percent of the words on the page that are keywords, then the page isn't really that relevant to what the searcher was looking for. If there are more than 8 percent then it looks like you are trying to spam the search engine. With enough pages out there, even when the search engines change what they like about top ranking pages, I can still have a certain percentage of my pages ranking high somewhere. When one page drops out of favor with a search engine, another one at a different keyword density picks up. This really smooths out my search engine ups and downs.

### **Web Position Gold**

The program Web Position Gold does more than one thing. It actually has seven different functions. I don't recommend all of them, but I still highly recommend the program.

First, the Reporter is a very handy tool you can use to tell where you show up on all the major search engines for particular keywords. It is a very handy thing to keep track of how you're doing. Because there is so much delay on many of these search engines when you make a change today it might be a couple weeks or more before something happens. It is hard for you to keep track of it. Web Position Gold does that for you.

The Scheduler function allows you to set the program to run the above report automatically at regular intervals such as once or twice a week.

I do not recommend the Page Generator and Submitter functions. As explained previously, template side door pages have fallen out of favor with the search engines. I'm never in favor of automatic search engine submitters for the following reasons:

1. It is too easy and common for the search engine to refuse automatic submissions, and
2. If they do refuse the submission, you are virtually never notified that the submission was refused, so you sit around waiting to show up in the engines when your pages were never actually submitted.

**TIP:** Just when I say “never,” a new submitter program comes out that submits very slowly. It's called Search Engine Commando.

The Web Position Traffic Analyzer can be helpful if you don't have a really sophisticated statistics program, and the Upload Manager helps you put side doors on your website (but you don't use it if you are using a program like Front Page).

The Page Critic is one of the most valuable parts of the Web Position Gold program. It will analyze the top sites that come up in a particular search and report back to you what you need to do to give your page the best chance of getting in the top 10.

I concentrate on the Reporter and the Page Critic functions of Web Position Gold. Those two parts of the program more than justify the cost of the entire program. Don't let it worry you that you aren't using some parts of the program. This is typical of many programs. They usually have many more functions than you'll ever need or want to use.

## **WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW**



There are programs that help you automate the tracking how well you are doing. There are many programs and companies on the web that specialize in helping you get high rankings in search engines and directories. You don't have to do it all yourself, but you do need to understand what needs to be done.

## **Basic HTML Structure**

Behind your web page is a hidden language called HTML, which is the language of the web. Until programs like Microsoft Front Page were developed

to make it easy to create web pages, web designers had to do programming behind the scenes.

You need to know a little about the behind-the-scenes area of your website even if it is just to check up on your web designer. Web pages need to have the following basic structure:

```
<HTML>
<HEAD>
<TITLE></TITLE>
<META name="description" content="">
<META name="keywords" content="">
</HEAD>
```

Some search engines may totally ignore your page if it has unusual HTML tag sequences. Don't worry if this doesn't mean much to you now. Later, you'll learn how to check every page of your site by looking at the HTML code.

**TIP:** There are other types of web pages like asp and php. No doubt that there will be many more ways to make web pages in the future. All you need to worry about right now are plain old HTML pages and be wary if some techie tries to talk you into some higher level, newer, and cool way of making web pages. It just could be that the search engines will not index your pages.

## **Use META Tags**

Before I talk about this, let me give you an analogy that might help you understand what HTML coding is. Have you ever been to the theatre? What you see on stage is the actors, the furniture, the scenery, and so on. Behind the curtain is all the rigging that makes the play work. What you see on stage is analogous to your web page. What you see behind the curtain is analogous to the HTML code. Your browser (most likely Internet Explorer or Netscape) interprets all the crazy looking HTML code from "backstage" and makes it look like a web page.

So, now that you know what HTML is, let's look backstage and see how META tags apply to your site. META tags are being used less and less, and you certainly shouldn't depend on them to get high rankings. However, you should know how to use them as long as search engines are still using them.

If you want to see some samples of META tags, open your browser (either Internet Explorer or Netscape) and click on "view." Then click on "source" in Internet Explorer, or "page source" in Netscape (Figure 1.3). A new window will pop up and you can look at all the behind-the-scenes HTML pro-



**Figure 1.3** Click on Source for a Backstage View

gramming of just about any web page. You can also see the META tags of other web pages if they have them.

**TIP:** The <TITLE> Tag should be the first thing after the <HEAD> area of the page and then comes the “description” META tag and then the “keyword” META tag.

### **SAMPLE META TAGS**

```
<HEAD>
<TITLE>Customer service training</TITLE>
<META name="description" content="Customized customer service training at your
location by the person who 'wrote the book' on customer retention">
<META name="keywords" content="customer service speaker, training, trainer,
client retention">
```

### **Description META Tags**

These META tags are a place where you can put a description of your web page and your keywords. On the search engines that use these META tags, when your site comes up in search results, it will have the description that you wrote, which is really nice because that means you can control what’s being said about your site and entice people to click on your link.

You should do your best to write descriptions that are compelling. It would be a shame to come up as number one in a search but have no one click on

your site because your description was so poor. Search the web to see descriptions of other sites. Try to evaluate the techniques they use to entice you to click on their link. Incorporate the same techniques when writing the descriptions to entice people to click on your link.

The concept of site popularity is another reason having compelling descriptions is becoming more and more important. Some search engines give a boost in the rankings to sites that are clicked on more often (i.e., the rich get richer). Let's say your site starts out as number five in a search. After a week, 100 people clicked on your site and 600 people clicked on the site that was number six in the original rankings. The number six site will now pass you up for a higher ranking because it was clicked on much more than your site. This sends a message to the search engine that the number six site was better than yours.

Don't try to beat the system by constantly clicking on your own site. The engines are too smart for that, and you'll get caught and banned.

If you don't have description META tags when the search engine spider comes to visit, it would crawl down your page from top to bottom. If it saw a graphic or some goofy stuff and could not interpret it, you get nothing. The person that's sitting there at his or her computer thinks to him- or herself, "Well, I'm not clicking on that site because I don't know what it's about."

That's one type of META tag (description) and they're very simple to create. In fact, there are sites out there on the Web that will create your META tags for nothing. Therefore, you can go out there and type META tag generator into a major search engine and follow their instructions. Then all you have to do is cut and paste what they give you into the HTML (behind the scenes view) of your web pages.

## **Free META Tag Generators**

There are many places on the web that will generate META tags for free. This link is one of them: <http://www.anybrowser.com/MetaTagGenerator.html>. The new version of Microsoft Front Page makes the META tags easy for you.

## **Keyword META Tags**

Then there are the keyword META tags. You should not put the same word in there over and over again because that is spamming and many of the search engines are catching on to this. If they do, they'll kick you out totally and could black ball you from the search engine. They are getting strict about this, so be careful!

In addition, some sneaky devils out there put Tony Robins in their META tags. I've even seen and heard of people putting the phrase, "endorsed by Tony Robins," which is fair if Tony Robins has actually endorsed you. If you are just using his name to get visitors, you can be sued over that, and there is plenty of case law on that issue. It is definitely cheating.

One good trick is to put common misspellings in the META keyword tag. Many people are tired, in a hurry, or just can't spell that well and end up misspelling words. If you have the misspelling in your keyword tag, there is a good chance your page will come up in the search. You can use the Keyword Selector Tool at [Overture.com](http://Overture.com) or one of the other keyword tools to help you find the most common misspellings of words.

You probably don't want to have these misspellings on the visible page because people might think you are not too smart.

Unlike the description META tag, the keyword META tags are totally behind the scenes. The public does not see them, but the search engine spiders do. This is the area where you place your appropriate keywords and their synonyms. Some search engines only want your synonyms and will penalize you for putting your main ones in that area.

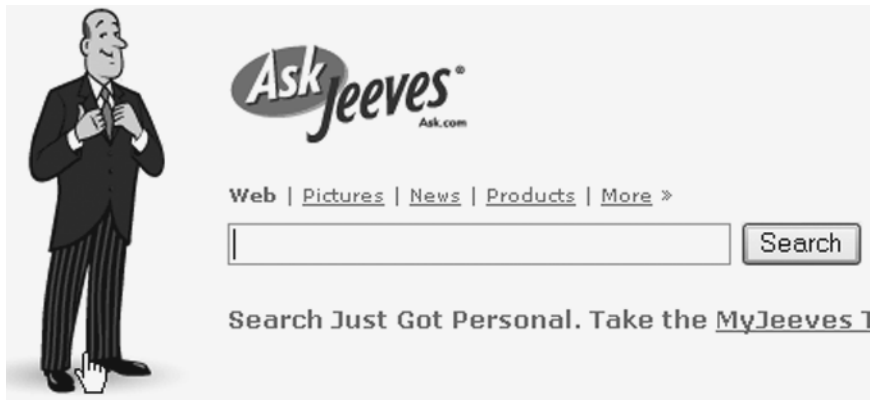
**TIP:** This is another reason search engines are such a pain. Everything is changing all the time.

In general you should use the plural version of keywords. One example is using "dogs" as a keyword instead of "dog." If someone searches for the word "dog" when you have used the word "dogs" they will still find you because the word "dog" is included in the word "dogs." But if you use the word "dog" and they search for the term "dogs," it's likely you won't be found because the word "dogs" is not entirely included in the word "dog." This trick will not work for a word like "company" because the plural word "companies" is spelled completely differently.

Worrying about this is becoming less important because search engines are getting smarter all the time and can recognize word stems, but it never hurts to use the plural.

Some people confuse a META search engine with a META tag. A META search engine is a search engine that will do a search of many different search engines. For example, a search at <http://www.Askjeeves.com> (Figure 1.4) searches many other search engines for you and reports the findings to you all at once. You can also use simple queries if you prefer, such as, "How do I build a deck?"

So, let's not get several issues confused here. META search engines simply search many other search engines at once for you. That is a totally separate issue from META tags that are parts of your web page.



**Figure 1.4 Example of a META Search Engine. META Search Engines Search Many Search Engines at One Time: This One Allows You to Type Questions instead of Keywords**

### WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW



There are some important areas behind the scenes at your website. You have to make sure the proper keywords are there. You also have to make sure a very good description of your website is there so people will be compelled to click on your site rather than someone else's site when they see it in search engine results.

## Buy Your Way to the Top with Paid Search Engines

There are certain search engines where you can actually guarantee yourself a first place position. This is commonly known as pay-per-click or PPC. One of the most prominent of these search engines is <http://www.Overture.com>.

When you do any kind of search there, you can jump through a few of Overture's little hoops to see the advertiser's maximum bid. You might see \$0.13, which means that the website owner was willing to bid up to 13 cents on a keyword. When that keyword is used in a search, their site comes up high. If you bid 14 cents on the same keyword, you beat them and your site comes up higher than theirs in a search for that keyword.

Typically, in pay-per-click search engines, you write the description the searcher sees when they type in a keyword you have bid on. The beauty of this is that you don't pay unless someone clicks on your description "ad," hence the term "pay-per-click."

Overture still must supply search results even if no one has bid on a keyword. You might even get a number one ranking if you have an obscure key-



word or keyword phrase. So, you don't have to bid anything to be listed in Overture, but if you want to guarantee a top ranking on a particular keyword, then bidding is the way to go.

When you use Overture.com, real people review your keywords to make sure they land on pages in your site that are relevant to what the searcher was searching for. If the keywords don't match the content of the page you are sending the searcher to, you will not be allowed to have your ad show. In Overture.com, this can take from several days to as much as a week.

## **Keyword Selector Tool**

Overture.com also has a cool function to help you research different keywords. It will also tell you how many times a keyword has been searched on the Internet. It is called the keyword selector tool. If I put the word "presentation" in, it comes up 945 times. That means that in the last 30 days people searched for the word "presentation" 945 times on the search engine Overture.com and its affiliates. It also shows all of the variations of the word "presentation" and how many times they were used in searches in the past 30 days. Keep in mind that the numbers only reflect searches done on Overture.com and their affiliates.

In the search I did, I noticed one of the variations, "presentation skills," came up only 206 times. That tells me that the term "presentation" is searched four times more than "presentation skills."

How do we interpret this, and what do we do about it? The people searching for "presentation skills" are more targeted and are obviously looking for a particular thing. The people searching for "presentation" could be chefs searching for food presentation. If I create pages in my site based only on the term "presentation," I will probably pull in more traffic. Admittedly, some of the traffic will be the chefs who will probably leave my site immediately or never click on me in the first place, but a percentage of the people will want what I have to offer.

What about the fact that the term "presentation" is included in the phrase "presentations skills?" Won't the people searching for "presentation" find the "presentation skills" page? Not necessarily, since there are lots of factors at play. What you need to keep in mind is that you should use any excuse to create additional pages in your site that provide a bigger target for searchers.

Overture has deals with other major search facilities. If you are willing to bid high enough to stay near the top of their rankings, Overture puts you as a "sponsored or paid listing" on these other search engines. This is a quick way to get a high search result on other search engines, especially Yahoo who now owns Overture. Sometimes staying in the top five at Overture is good enough, but staying in the top three is the most important now.

The keyword selector tool is also wonderful for checking if a keyword or keyword phrase you think is great is being used by anyone. It's very discouraging to kill yourself getting a high ranking on a keyword that no one uses.

Go in there and play with Overture until you find a keyword that suits your topic area.

Overture.com is the largest and most successful paid search engine to date. They are always making deals to expand their influence. All the search engines and directories are changing so fast that this book would be out of date overnight if I tried to get too specific. That's why you should bookmark <http://www.searchenginewatch.com> and <http://www.searchengine-news.com> to keep up on the latest developments. They'll also send you a regular e-zine to make it easy to keep up.

## **Google Adwords**

Google has its own pay-per-click program. It's run a little differently than Overture. Google's Adwords program actually rewards you for writing better advertisements to go with your keywords.

Most people say that Google's rise to dominance in the search engine arena was because of their obsession with giving searchers relevant searches (i.e., when you put search terms into Google's search engine, you get results you can use).

Google carried this obsession to their pay-per-click program. They actually reward you for writing descriptions that get more people to click on your ad. They figure if more people are clicking, you must be writing ad descriptions that are relevant to what the searcher was looking for.

For instance, if you and I are both willing to bid up to \$1 per click for a particular keyword, and you write a better ad than me that gets more people to click on it, you will pay less for your clicks. This is really important! You might only have to pay 10 cents per click while I'm paying \$1 per click. Or, looking at it another way, you could get 10 times as many visitors as I get for the same amount of money.

Google Adwords program is one of the main tools savvy marketers use to test ideas. The reason is that when you use Google Adwords your ads can show up on the Internet in as little as 15 minutes—almost definitely within a couple of hours. This means you can test ideas quickly to see if anyone is interested in your idea. One of the main rules of successful marketers is that they want to test quickly with the least effort and expense. Time is definitely money, and you don't want to spend months or even years developing a product or writing a book only to find out that no one wants it. Google Adwords can give you some good information quickly to help you make the decision whether to proceed with a project or not.

You should make every effort to become an expert in the use of Google Adwords. I suggest specific books that totally focus on Google Adwords so that you can really learn the nuances of getting the most from the program. Perry Marshall has a great primer that you can download immediately at <http://www.1shoppingcart.com/app/aftrack.asp?afid=133415>.

## **Business.com**

I have had good preliminary success with <http://www.Business.com> in their pay-per-click program. At Business.com, you get an account rep who helps you formulate your ad and find the appropriate places to put it. You can't really hype things up as you can in Google and Overture. Test it out and see if it pays off for you.

Are paid listings worth it? It depends. You will certainly get more traffic if you have a high placement, but whether it's worth it or not depends on your ability to turn those visitors into paying customers. I didn't have any luck with the expensive keywords that were sometimes as much as \$3 per click. Terms like "motivational speaker" and "professional speaker" got clicks, but no speaking engagements. I dropped those terms in favor of many more 10 to 60 cent keywords that get people to sign up for my e-zine and buy my products. I'm sure I'll be able to convert a good percentage of those people into sales.

## **Bid Tools**

Keeping track of all your bidding can be a hassle and can lose you lots of money if you lose track. I speak from experience here. There are programs that help you keep track of your bids and keywords, for example:

<http://www.clixGalore.com/PSale.aspx?BID=4953&AfID=79282&AdID=547>

## **Google AdSense**

This is as good a place as any to show you the flip side of the coin of a particular pay-per-click search engine. You'll see throughout this book that I want you to make money when people are coming to your site and also when they are leaving your site. Google's AdSense program helps you entice people to leave your site, and you get paid when they do.

When you place a pay-per-click ad with Google, it shows up on the Google website, and it also shows up on other people's websites.

Example: You sell dog collars. You purchase a pay-per-click ad from Google to promote your dog collars. When someone types in your term “dog collar” your ad shows up on Google’s results page as a *sponsored listing*.

What you may not know is that your ad is also showing up on many other websites related to dogs. A visitor to a page of dog humor on my website might be shown an ad for your dog collar. This is because I joined Google’s AdSense program and put a small piece of code on my dog humor page.

By putting the code on my dog humor page, I am telling Google to go ahead and show any pay-per-click ads they think are appropriate for my dog humor page. If someone clicks on the ads, I get to share the click revenue with Google.

Google might show dog food ads, ads for dog leashes, or just about anything they think would make sense to show on a dog humor page. Sometimes you may not think what they are showing makes sense for your page, and you do have a “very limited” say in what kinds of ads should and shouldn’t show.

## **Good Deal or Bad Deal?**

Most top marketers will tell you that if you are the person paying for the clicks, you don’t want your ads showing up on these pages that are supposedly related to your ad. (Google’s advertisers finally realized this, so Google is trying to improve the situation.) The conversion and click-through rates from these ads are notoriously low. They are so low in fact that Google will not kick you out if your ad falls below their normal cutoff point of 0.5 percent click through.

When you are the person placing the pay-per-click ad, you can turn off this function (it’s called the *content network*) so that your ads only show on the Google website and other search facilities where Google has relationships. This is called the *search network*. Also, when you turn off this function, your ad will only show when someone is actually searching for the term you bid on instead of your ad showing just because someone visited a related page.

If you are a website owner and have pages that are getting traffic, you look at the Google AdSense deal from an entirely different perspective. Since you are on the receiving end of the money, you want to place ads on pages of yours that aren’t critical to selling your stuff but that can bring in money when other people click on the ads.

For example: I do have a dog humor page at <http://www.antion.com/humor/speakerhumor/dogs.htm>. I don’t really care much about this page and the other humor pages I have. They are just a service to the speakers who do business with me. Pages like this are great places to put affiliate links to other companies *and* the Google AdSense program.

You can see some of the Google generated ads. Google actually ignored the dog humor on this page and made most of the ads speaking related. Do I

care? Not that much unless I am losing lots of sales of my speaker products, which I'm not.

It took me about two hours to figure out how to use the program and put up the links. With the checks I've been getting from Google for my share of the clicks, I figure my time was worth about \$500/hour and that's only if the program runs for a year. If Google keeps the program running, I'll keep getting paid.

So, if you are paying for the clicks, don't let your ads be shown on "content pages." On the other hand, do participate in sharing in the revenue from other advertisers that don't know any better than to let their ads be shown on low click-through/low conversion pages.

Here's the link to the AdSense program: <https://www.google.com/adsense>.

Here's a link to a book that will help you figure out Google AdSense: <http://hop.clickbank.net/?powertips/1insider>.

Some Pay per click search engines are:

<http://www.Overture.com>

<https://adwords.google.com/select>

<http://www.Business.com>

<http://www.payperclicksearchengines.com> (list of over 600 pay-per-click search engines)

<http://www.epilot.com>

<http://www.findwhat.com>

<http://www.kanoodle.com>

<http://www.cleansearch.com>

All kinds of deals are emerging from search engines and directories that involve having the website (advertiser) pay. Some of the deals are pretty obscure. Again, keep in touch with <http://www.searchenginewatch.com> and <http://www.searchengine-news.com> for the latest news.

## WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW



You can start getting highly targeted traffic immediately from pay-per-click search engines if you are willing to pay for each lead.

## Submitting Sites to Search Engines

I either do this myself, or have someone do it for me. You submit each page of your website that you want to be seen. Some people, and even some search

engines, say, “Don’t submit each page.” As long as I am only submitting an occasional page here and there, I go ahead and individually submit important secondary pages from my websites. You can decide if you want to bend the rules a little bit.

The big search engines are not going to know or care about it. Eventually their spiders will hit your homepage and find some of these pages themselves anyway, but you just can’t count on it. Therefore, if you create a page that’s important to you, go to the search engine and find the “add URL” page. It might say “add a page,” “suggest a site,” or something similar (Figure 1.5). You simply type in the URL of the page (URL is your address to the page, e.g., <http://www.antion.com/speakervideo.htm>) and hit submit. That way you know it’s in there. You’ll have to submit the page separately for each of the major search engines. That will give you a much better registration response time, and you’ll be sure that the page is listed for each of the search engines.

For a current list of the biggest search engines, visit <http://www.searchenginewatch.com>.

If you have many pages to submit, take all of your pages, link them to another page, and submit that page. You might even get a higher ranking because of this. This main page could be your home page or a page you call a site index. The theory is that if the spider finds you first instead of you submitting the page yourself, you could be ranked higher. The jury is still out on this, but it certainly helps you get away from spamming the search engine by submitting more pages per day than they allow. Many of the search engines are asking you to only submit one page per domain per day. This method, which is also known as a *hallway page*, allows you to submit only one page. But since you could have it linked to many pages, you would be in effect submitting multiple pages under the guise of one page.

Don’t fall for all the *auto submit* offers you either see on the web or receive by e-mail. Some offers say “we’ll submit your site to 2,000 search engines for \$29.95.” What you’ll really get is 1,990 pieces of spam e-mail from all the worthless search engines they submit you to and nothing from the few engines that you really wanted to get into. Why? Because many of the top search engines won’t accept automatic submissions. So just make sure you type in your page(s) and submit them to each major search engine yourself. . . . You’ll be happy you did.

Go to the important search engines (that you identify on <http://www.searchenginewatch.com>), find their “add page,” and bookmark it. It’s a fast

### **Submit a Site**

**Figure 1.5    Sample Submit Link**

cut-and-paste thing to put in your address so that you can submit your pages. I advise you to do it regularly. Don't go for months at a time and leave your website static. Change something on the page and resubmit it. However, if you're getting a high ranking, don't resubmit it. If the search engine has changed what it wants to see in a page to rank it high, you might actually go down in the rankings.

It's important to know if and when you fall off the ranks. I'm number one right now on Alta Vista, but tomorrow this listing could disappear (and it will because Alta Vista is being closed down). If I was not checking it regularly, I would never know it and hence would not take the proper steps necessary to remedy the situation. There would be a big delay in putting the resubmission process in motion if I did not have the Web Position Gold program checking my listings for me regularly.

## **Paid Inclusion**

Some search engines will accelerate your efforts to get into them by charging you a fee. Paying this fee does not guarantee you will get a high ranking from that search engine. It just means you will be put into their index.

One last thing on search engine strategy: I highly suggest the book *Maximize Website Traffic* by Robin Nobles (Holbrook, MA: Adams Media, 2000). Even though much of the material is slightly dated, it is still a good reference especially with regard to placement of keywords and writing titles and descriptions for your site. You might also want to take her 16-week intensive online course at the Academy of Web Specialists (<http://www.academyweb-specialists.com>).

For a super simple guide to better search rankings, try reading "Totally Non-Technical Guide to Better Search Rankings" at <http://hop.clickbank.net/?powertips/tntguide>.

There is very little free submission left to search engines. This is good and bad. It's bad because we now have to pay, but it's good because it gets rid of the riff raff who used to submit thousands of pages that just muddled the water for everyone.

## **Submitting Sites to Directories**

Submitting a website to a directory requires an entirely different strategy than submitting it to robot-driven search engines. Remember, a real person will be looking at your website in its entirety and deciding whether it is a good enough site for their directory and where in their directory it belongs.

You don't have to worry about this too much anymore because the granddaddy of all directories (Yahoo) has just turned into a pure search engine.

With directories, you don't submit individual pages like you might do with a robot-driven search engine. You are submitting the entire site by means of a submission form.

Directories don't care about META tags, keyword density, or much of anything that is critical in robot-driven search engine placement. But they do have a few critical needs when it comes to keywords and some other criteria you must attend to before you get accepted and receive a good placement. We will discuss these shortly.

One valuable directory site that is still free is called <http://www.dmoz.org> or more commonly known as Open Directory Project. If accepted in this directory, it may take three weeks or so to get your site listed. Since it's operated by volunteers, they get backlogged sometime. If you don't see it listed in the reasonable amount of time they tell you about on the site, you can then resubmit.

The reason dmoz is a really important directory is that they provide supplementary search results for many other search engines that also have directory sections. So, by being listed in dmoz, you are automatically available to many other search engines.

The procedure for submitting your site can vary between directories, so always use the latest information about the submission process listed on the actual directory to which you are submitting. Most directories will have an "add a site" or "submit a site" link somewhere on their site, usually right next to each category.

Here are some general tips to getting listed in directories:

- ✓ Make your site look as professional as possible before submitting to a directory. Remember, a real person will be looking at your site.
- ✓ Having an impressive looking logo that matches your company name appears to be important for new submissions.
- ✓ All parts of your site must be functional. No broken links or under construction signs are allowed, and make sure all images load correctly and quickly.
- ✓ For the English version of a directory, your site must be in English.
- ✓ Your site must be available 24 hours a day 7 days per week.
- ✓ Make sure your contact information is obvious on every page of your site and phone numbers and e-mail addresses are working.
- ✓ In most cases, the title on your home page must match your company name.
- ✓ Take great care to search out and choose the appropriate category for your site. This is actually where you will click on "submit a site" and submit your site directly to that category (this is called *drilling down* through the directory). It is very difficult to get your site listed in more than one category, so make sure you pick wisely.



**TIP:** There is no guarantee that the directory will agree with your choice. They may put your site somewhere else.

**TIP:** Even though directories don't really use META tags, you should still make sure that all areas of your site are consistent with your suggested category. Causing an editor to wonder about the legitimacy of your site may just make them pass on accepting your site.

- ✓ Don't use any "hype" in your site description. The editors of directories have heard it all and will delete your submission if they see any self-aggrandizement. For example, don't say, "Most dynamic speaker you'll ever have at your meeting." Say, "Motivational speeches for the tourist industry" or something like that. The editors may still change your description after reviewing your site.
- ✓ If you have a regional or international product, most directories have regional and international versions. Submit to them.
- ✓ Don't attempt to use automated submission tools to submit to the directories.
- ✓ Consider renaming your company to start with a word beginning with the letter "A." To a certain extent, the directories are alphabetical so this will allow you to be listed more toward the top, which can mean much more exposure for your site.

Do whatever you can to get into the directories because it can lead to a massive amount of traffic, and business! Also, a link from a major directory can mean a big boost in link popularity and can be very valuable to you.

## **Banner Advertising**

We've all seen them either consciously or subconsciously. Some are animated, and some are extremely simple. They used to cost a fortune, and now they are relatively cheap. They come in all shapes and sizes. Should we use them to promote our small business?

**TIP:** Images are much clearer when displayed on a website.

As with many of the techniques you will learn in this book, you must test to see if they work for you. I have been against them for a long time because people tend to gloss over them. I'm now taking a new look at using banners because if done to resemble a headline that looks clickable they can be very effective. Figure 1.6 shows some examples of fake hyperlink banners.

**Make \$5500.00 Every Time You Speak**

*This is the "secret" successful professional speakers DON'T want you to know  
Amazing System teaches you how to make \$5500.00 per speech.  
How many speeches dp ypou want this year? [Click Here](#)*

**Professional Speaker Secrets**

Learn how to earn:

**Figure 1.6   Here Are Examples of a Headline Banner with a Fake  
Hyperlink Underline, a Plain Text Banner with a Fake  
"Click Here" Link, and a Fake Drop Down Box**

In all the examples, anywhere you click inside the area of the banner will take you to the landing page you have designated. The standard size for this type of banner is 480 pixels wide and 60 pixels high. Many new sizes are available.

If you don't have the skill yourself, you'll have to have a graphics person create your banners, or you can use one of the free banner creators that can be found online by simply typing in "free banner software" in any major search engine.

You need to do a good job of tracking your banners to make absolutely sure they are paying off.

**TIP:** Keep this in mind: Placement on specific sites relating to your field will probably do better than banners being displayed on any random site.

Here are a few places you can buy banners:

<http://www.microsoft.com/smallbusiness/products/online/bannerads/detail.msp>

<http://www.valueclick.com>

<http://www.247media.com>

<http://www.fastclick.com>

<http://www.tribalfusion.com>

## **WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW**



Your site as a whole and important pages in your site must be submitted to search engines and directories. The strategy to submit to a search engine is much different than the strategy to submit to a directory where a live person will review your site. Simple banners can be effective.

## Website Optimization and Graphics

When I first started doing my own website, one of my weaknesses was photo and graphic optimization. You want your website to really come up fast. People don't like to wait around for sites to load.

While high-speed Internet access is becoming much more widespread, this topic is still important. You should always think about speed of loading instead of fancy graphics and slow loading special effects.

As an absolute last resort when you do have a large photo or graphic that must be shown, put a phrase at the top of the page that loads immediately that says, "Please be patient. This page may take a short time to load."

If you just drag the corner of a picture on your website to make it smaller, it may look smaller, but it really isn't.

The whole reason to make a photo or graphic smaller is so that its file size is small, and it loads and displays fast. I thought by simply making it display "smaller" that it would also display "faster." I was wrong about that. The photo or graphic is actually the exact same size in bytes. It's only being shown smaller. While it looks smaller, the file size is just as big. You need to learn how to make the file sizes of the graphics and the pictures on your site as small as possible (as long as they still look nice), so they will load quickly. You can get a free trial of a web graphic optimizer at <http://www.webopt.com>.

To complicate things even more, you want the image to still look good. The bottom line is that you want the best looking image you can get that has the smallest file size.

### GIF or JPEG

These are abbreviations for compression formats for graphics that help make the small file size I just mentioned. The whole idea is to show graphics that look good, but don't take long to load or send over the Internet. GIF is better when your book cover is going to be reduced to 1½ inches high on a web page and you still want to be able to read the title. JPEG is better when you have graphics or photos with continuous tones of gray or color, and there are no text or sharp edges involved.

### Get Help

Get help if you can't do some of the things you want for your website. I really believe in investing in your own education. That way you don't have to depend on others, and you don't have to pay high hourly rates for things you could easily do yourself if you just knew how to do it.

The man who helped me is Darrin Gravier. I interviewed him about our topic of website optimization and graphics, and here's what he had to say:

**TOM:** I'm going to ask you a few questions about some of the things that you helped me do. We all want our graphics to look great. In traditional print mediums, the print is at a very high resolution. You said, "No, Tom your web graphics should only be 72 dots per inch." Can you tell us about that?

**DARRIN:** Well, if you have a really good-looking graphic that takes forever to load, people won't be willing to wait for it to come up on the browser. You just need as good as you can get, as fast as you can get. Speed is more of a plus to the Internet than looks are.

**TOM:** So, instead of using 1,200 dpi [dots per inch], which would take forever, do you scan it at 72 dots per inch, or how do you get the smaller file size?

**DARRIN:** Tom, if you wish, I'll go through the steps. First, you want to scan it in or develop it at about 300 dpi. That way you have enough color so that you can go into the picture, play with it, knock some pixels out, and have better control over your graphics.

**TOM:** All right, so scan or develop it at 300.

**DARRIN:** Yes. Then the second step that you want to do once you have the image in Photo Shop, or whatever you are using to manipulate graphics, is to crop all the extraneous information.

**TOM:** So just make it a nice tight, full frame of whatever you are showing, right?

**DARRIN:** Yes, get rid of any extra pixels you can because they are really killing you on the load time. Third, you want to resize the graphics to a size that you want to display on the web. Typically, what I will do is I'll open up Internet Explorer or Netscape at the same time I am working in Photo Shop, and I'll simply save it as a few different sizes and see what size I like best. Once you get accustomed to pixel dimensions, then you will be able to judge what size you want the graphics to be.

**TOM:** Okay, You told us something about the load time of pages and setting the height and width for all your graphics. Can you explain what you mean by that?

**DARRIN:** Once you've cropped and resized the image, the fourth thing you want to do is knock out as many colors as you can. Try to use the web palette index colors, which will save it as a GIF. If not, then go to JPG. JPG has a good compression and it will knock out the colors for you and then finally, no more than 72 dpi. If you don't put the tag in your HTML that actually tells the HTML the dimensions of your graphic, then your page loads twice, or more times than that. Every time it has to determine how to place a new graphic into the page, it reloads the whole page and your pages can take up to 10 times longer to load.

**TOM:** Okay, I know that some of our readers are beginner level and they're freaking out right now. What you are saying is that you take your picture after you've scanned it, and you put it into Adobe Photoshop or some of the other popular graphics program. Many popular programs now have an "optimize for web" function that will make your work lots easier. You either learn to reduce file size yourself, or you get your Webmaster to do it. However, you do it to make sure all of the optimization things that we mentioned are implemented so your pages will load fast.

**DARRIN:** What setting the height and width boils down to in real life is that if the page knows where the graphic is going, it can save the space and load the text very fast. People can be reading and having something to do while your pictures are loading. If you don't do the optimization, they will probably leave because the pages are taking too long to load.

**TOM:** Page loading time is why optimizing graphics for the web is important for your site. Tell us about sites that need to be very graphic oriented. Tell us about *preloading graphics* and how that little trick can help you.

**DARRIN:** Yes, a couple of things. Number one, you don't want to use a graphic image unless it's something that's necessary.

It must be something that is better said with an image than with a word. If you do need an image, make it as small as possible. One of the things that I do is try to put the images down low in the page so the user doesn't even see them loading. The user is reading at the top part of the page and by the time they are finished and scroll down, the images are already there.

## **Super Trick: Preloading Graphics**

**DARRIN:** Another thing that you can do is the trick called *preloading graphics* and it is something that even advanced webmasters don't consider. It is so simple. Your browser has a state called *cache*. When you view a web page, it is temporarily downloaded to your hard drive. Then you go view a few more web pages, if you come back to the first page that you viewed, instead of going back to the server to get those graphics, it gets them off of your own hard drive. What you can do is trick the system into thinking that it has already seen those graphics by putting them on a previous page. I like to load the page heavy with content to stall the user.

Let's say on page eight I want to hide some graphics that I want to show on page nine. What I will do on page eight is to put the same graphics that I want people to see on page nine, but I will make them 1 pixel high by 1 pixel wide so they are actually invisible. What that does is preload the image into the visitors cache and then when they go to page nine, it shows up immediately. You're showing the same exact image on both pages. However, on page eight you show the picture at 1 pixel high by 1 pixel

wide. The user doesn't even see it on page eight because of the extremely small size.

**TOM:** When they go to the page where you actually want them to see the graphics, bam, they'll pop right up.

## **Transparent Graphics**

**TOM:** If you go to Darrin's home page, <http://www.graviet.com>, you see Darrin just standing there out in the middle of nowhere. This is called a *transparent graphic*. Tell us about it, Darrin, because it really looks professional and nice.

**DARRIN:** Well, the best way to get a transparent graphic is not by using the transparency graphic capabilities of your graphics program. It's by making the background of your graphic the exact same color as you use on your page. So it looks like I'm standing there with nothing in the background of that image, but really the background of the image is white, just like my page. I always use a white background because it loads faster.

## **WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW**



If you are going to have pictures and other graphics on your website, you must make sure they load extremely fast, so people don't leave while waiting for them to load. They should also look as good as possible even though their file size is small. If you don't want to learn all the tricks of how to achieve these goals, simply hire the work out to a competent graphics person and make sure they read the previous section.

**TIP:** Tables are great for design purposes, but you will suffer some trade-off with search engine positioning. Anything you do to junk up your code could cost you.

## **Tables and Table Widths**

**TOM:** Another thing you mentioned was table width. Tables are little boxes that you put on your website, and when you are making a table, you can pick either a "percentage" width or a certain "exact size" for them. Tell us about that.

**DARRIN:** Yes, there are a few different things to do with tables. Number one, I like to make sure that everything that I put on a web page views at 100 percent of the viewer's width. You go to a lot of web pages, and what you see is either a bunch of white space on the right, or you have to scroll to the right, which is even worse. It is dumb to do it that way. HTML is set up to be flexible. If you design with tables, all you have to do is tell the

table to be 100 percent of the width of the user's screen. Go to my website and resize your browser. You should be able to resize it down to 600 pixels wide and still not have to scroll to the right.

In most of today's web design programs, all you do is click into the table with your mouse. Then right click, which will take you to "table properties," and you choose "100 percent width."

**TIP:** The 100 percent width setting is not that great for text because really wide lines of text are hard to read. I try to constrain my text especially on long sales pages so the text is easier to read.

**TOM:** When I first started doing this, I thought I would be cool with the buttons on my page and make them a Java Script. I found out, to my horror, that on AOL none of my buttons showed up at all. In addition, the Java Script caused troubles with some of the other browsers. Tell us about the special scripting and what that does to your site.

**DARRIN:** Well, if you use Java Script, you're actually cutting off a percentage of the market that doesn't have the capability of reading Java script.

**TIP:** This is not that big of a problem today, but you still don't want to junk up your coding.

## Use Old Technologies in a New Way

**DARRIN:** What I like to do is use old technologies in a new way and that's the best way to make sure that people can be able to view everything that you create. I do use Java Script on my buttons, but that's because there are not many people who hire me who are using AOL to browse. Corporate environments are up to speed and have their own high-speed lines coming in, and so on.

**TOM:** So in other words, you have to be careful about where your market is. If you were all graphics people, you would probably have Shock Wave, Flash, and all kinds of crazy stuff. However, if your market is a consumer market, many of the people may not have the capability of seeing your fancy design, and you're cutting them out.

If you are doing any international business that we just can't make any assumptions, corporate or otherwise, as to people's bandwidth, their machinery, and software. We still have to work down to a very low common denominator.

I was in Morocco speaking and the browser was in French, and the keyboard was something I couldn't even decipher. They could just barely get on the Internet. This is a global marketplace. You also want to make sure everything is fast because they're worried about getting on and off the Internet faster because it costs them more.

**DARRIN:** Let me add one last thing, Tom. You were telling me that one of the problems that you had was trying to get your book jacket to be a smaller image on your page.

**TOM:** I could easily make it smaller, but then the text was not readable.

**DARRIN:** One of the things that people don't remember to do is turn off their "anti-aliasing," which is the thing that sometimes ruins your text. So, make sure you either do it yourself, or get your designer to do it for you.

**TOM:** Yes, and please, ask someone for help who can help you through this and teach you. It is a very inexpensive way to save yourself a lot of money because when you can do this yourself, you don't have to pay designers to do it. It is a very good investment.

### **WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW**



The use of tables as a design tool is good and bad. Used correctly, they can really help align your text and graphics for a nice look. Too much use can junk up your HTML code, which hurts your chances of high rankings when a search engine spider looks at your page.

### **Why Does It Look Funny?**

In regular word processing, if you put something on a page and print it on a printer, things print out exactly where you expect them to be. It's not the same in web page creation. Everybody is looking at your web page in a different browser, with different screen resolutions, and different default fonts. You're not exactly sure what it's going to look like. Therefore, it does take a little bit of a learning curve, and it's never going to be perfect. You just have to get it out there. You should test it in Internet Explorer, Netscape, and AOL. If the page is okay in those three browsers, then that's good enough.

Here's the link to check your site in different browsers:

<http://www.anybrowser.com>

Free Optimization Sites include:

<http://www.gifwizard.com>

<http://www.netmechanic.com/accelerate.htm>

<http://www.netmechanic.com/GIFBot/optimize-graphic.htm>

<http://www.webreference.com/services/graphics>

Graphic Search Engines include:

<http://www.ditto.com>

<http://www.google.com>



Graphics Optimization Software is available at <http://www.webopt.com>.

Many main line graphics programs like Adobe Photoshop are adding web optimization as one of their functions.

Here are some sites that allow you to create some cool buttons:

<http://www.buttonland.com>

<http://www.freebuttons.com>

<http://www.web-buttons.net>

## **Electronic Clipart and Animations**

Don't go crazy with this, but once in a long while you may need a little extra emphasis. Keep animated GIFs small and please use only one on a page, or your site will look like a circus act. Make sure any "free" graphics you use are really free or copyright free. Some may actually require a small fee. Check out available graphics at:

<http://www.anrdoezrs.net/click-1464114-10357251> (Animation Factory)

<http://hop.clickbank.net/?powertips/fbcom>

<http://www.barrysclipart.com>

<http://www.free-clip-art.net>

<http://www.fg-a.com/gifs.html>

<http://www.gifart.com>

<http://www.arttoday.com>

<http://www.quickbanner.com> (free banner and button creation tool)

<http://www.Corbis.com> (photographs, these are not free)

## **Web Safe Colors**

If you stick to simple basics and don't try to get fancy, you will have no trouble with the colors you use on your website. All you need to know is that some colors look terrible and some look fine on just about everyone's computer.

I don't advocate lots of graphics anyway, so my advice is to simply get a professional web designer to make any custom graphics for you, so you won't have to worry about this issue too much.

Some people waste lots of time and money trying to match their web colors to some fancy custom brochure they have. It just doesn't work that way. Monitors cannot accurately or even consistently display colors as well as printing can.

If you really want to learn a lot about color, visit the following sites:

[http://www.webdevelopersjournal.com/articles/websafe1/websafe\\_colors.html](http://www.webdevelopersjournal.com/articles/websafe1/websafe_colors.html)

[http://www.masternewmedia.org/2003/01/23/make\\_your\\_web\\_site\\_accessible\\_for\\_color\\_blind\\_people.htm](http://www.masternewmedia.org/2003/01/23/make_your_web_site_accessible_for_color_blind_people.htm) (Use this massive link to learn about making your site accessible to color blind people.)

## **Readability and Text Attributes**

This topic never ceases to amaze me. I guess some people don't bother to try to read their own website, or they are just so happy to have one, they don't care whether anyone can read it or not.

This is not rocket science. Simply make sure that you can easily read the text on your website both on the page and in graphics. Don't let your passion for color override your common sense. People have to read your site before they buy.

### **Text**

There's a really large and clear explanation of this topic in the book *Web Pages That Suck* by Vincent Flanders and Michael Willis (San Francisco: Sybex, 1996). This book has lots of other very good information and I highly recommend it. They also have a sequel out *Son of Web Pages That Suck* (San Francisco: Sybex, 2002). Here's a discussion of what to look for with regard to text.

### ***Italic***

*Italic* is used for titles and to emphasize words. The problem is that italicized words are really hard to read on computer monitors and look terrible. To overcome the problem on web pages, bold the ***Italic*** to improve its readability.

### **ALL CAPITAL TEXT**

ALL CAPITAL TEXT IS CONSIDERED POOR NETIQUETTE (IT'S AS IF YOU WERE SHOUTING) AND IS REALLY HARD TO READ. IT IS OKAY FOR EMPHASIZING A WORD OR TWO, OR FOR SHORT HEADLINES.

### **Initial Caps**

This Is When The First Letter Of Each Word Is Capitalized. Again, this is okay for short subheadings, but not for long strings of text.

## **Underlined Text**

This is really bad for web pages and e-books because it makes people think they can click on the word and be hyperlinked somewhere else. Please don't use underlining in web pages.

## **Centering**

Don't center all the text on a page. It looks amateurish. Do you know why? Because it is. Headlines are okay to center.

## **WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW**



You can't get so wrapped up in making a beautiful masterpiece of a website that you forget the limitations of the web. Certain colors simply won't work. People that see your page see it in different screen sizes with different browsers, different fonts, and different screen resolutions. Also, don't make formatting choices that don't work on the web.

## **Entry and Exit Strategies**

Before we leave website optimization, a brief discussion of traffic patterns going in, out, and through your website is in order.

### **Entry**

You might not realize that a visitor may enter your site at just about any of your web pages. This happens because, hopefully, each of your web pages is optimized to get a high ranking in a search engine. When a particular page gets that high ranking, people clicking on it go directly to the page and bypass your home page. This is a good thing because you want the person to feel they found exactly what they were looking for.

It's not a good idea to try to show them everything you have to offer in hopes they will buy it all. What you are doing is totally confusing them, as well as annoying them too. They hit your site because they were looking for something specific, and you gave them something general. When you do that, they move on to someone else's site quickly.

What you want to do is make sure that when they do hit one of these secondary pages on your site, they can still navigate easily around the rest of the site. Send a friend of yours who might not be too familiar with your site directly to a subpage of your site. Ask them to try to get around in your site.

Take their feedback and use it to make sure there is no doubt what to do when a visitor wants to explore the rest of your web.

## **Lead Them Around**

The worst thing you can do is confuse your visitor. They will leave immediately when they start to feel lost. Most people have far too many choices on their pages. You must lead them through your site and introduce them to your information in a logical sequence and in digestible bites. And always give them a bailout home button so they can start over again if they do get lost.

You might say, “Tom, I think you’re crazy. Some of the most successful sites in the world like MSN have a million choices on every page.” Forget trying to compare your small business site to sites that have enough money to advertise on the side of every bus in America. The biggies can get away with things that would be suicide for your small business site.

Think about where you want your visitor to end up and what action you want them to take when they get there. Then work backwards to the most likely place they enter your site. Review each page they will encounter along the way and make sure it doesn’t send them off in the wrong direction.

## **Exit**

You may not believe it (Tom says sarcastically), especially after all the work and money you’ve put into your website, but people will leave your site. A good statistics package will tell you exactly where most people are leaving. This is a handy thing to know, and I’ll show you some desperation tricks to do something about it later. For now, we’ll try to control where people go when they leave your site.

If you own more than one website, you could put links to it on top of your exit pages and invite people to visit your other site. You might not even want to mention that it’s another site that you own. This is something you have to test. If they are leaving your present site because they thought it was lousy, they are not going to click to another site you control.

If they are leaving a page because they have seen everything you have to offer, that means they probably would like more. Then, by all means, let them know they will find more good content at, “Our sister site,” or “Our partner site,” or some other similar phrase.

Another strategy would be to join other associate/affiliate programs (we’ll talk about them shortly) and put the links on your top exit pages. That way when people leave your site you still have a chance to profit from them if they buy something at one of the sites you send them to.

You can use pop-up boxes as a great exit strategy. Despite the dire warnings from propeller heads around the world, pop-up boxes used judiciously still are very profitable in promoting e-zine sign-ups, affiliate programs, pick

your price promotions, and finance options. I use the program <http://www.amazingpopups.com/power>.

Where do you send your buyers? Don't forget the confirmation page from your shopping system. Heck, they already have their wallet out from buying your products. This would be another great place to put affiliate links so you can earn more commissions on whatever they buy from other sites.

I'll discuss these exit strategies more when I discuss the website sales process a little later.

## WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW



Real people are visiting your website one at a time. They all must find their way through your site to find the information they want. Always try to think like a first-time visitor that never heard of you when you are putting things on your website. Also try to think like the least technically savvy person who is likely to visit your site. Get others to help you figure out the most logical way to lead visitors from page to page. Use pop-up boxes and other exit strategies to profit from those visitors who are leaving your site.

## Link Trade Strategy

The next topic is the strategy that I love. It is called the *link trade strategy* where your site and another site are *hyperlinked*. If you can click on a link and go somewhere else, that is called a *hyperlink*. I suggest we all trade links. Doing the actual trade now is quite different than it used to be.

In the old days, I would trade links with anybody that wasn't a porn site. Now you have to be more careful about your linking so that it gives you the most benefit.

One thing about links is that it's a much more stable, dependable, and reliable method of getting people to come to your website than depending totally on search engine traffic.

If any one of you and I trade links, unless we just close up our sites, that link will be there forever. Therefore, it's a very stable thing. If I make a deal with someone and we both trade links, great, we help each other out. I don't have to be checking every day as I do with the search engines, and hoping that, "Oh, I hope I did not lose a position today." It is there forever.

My philosophy about this is that I really hate the people that want to guard everything they have. They think, "I created this information, and I'm going to guard it the rest of my life and never create anything else." I'm not like that. I want to link with you. But I must tell you, I'm not going to put your link right up at the top where my picture is. I'll put your link on a links

page or even a hidden page on my site. If you learn what needs to be learned in this section, you pretty much won't care where I put the link because you know it will be benefiting you wherever I put it.

Link trading is mostly about getting higher search engine rankings. You must get that to be successful with this. Don't obsess about where the link is on someone else's site.

**TIP:** The exception to this is that if the link page on the other person's site is buried in several subdirectories, then it's probably not worth trading links with that site because the search engines won't give a link buried that deeply much weight.

Example of a good link: <http://www.antion.com/links.htm>.

Example of a bad link: <http://www.joeschmoe.com/others/colleagues/links.htm>.

It's a bonus if you actually get some traffic from the other person's site. Again, I'm very open about this. I don't try to protect my traffic with a machine gun. I figure if I haven't sold the visitor on my great site and what I do, I would be happy to send them to my friend in Fort Washington, Paul Radde. I don't want to give Paul my business, but I don't mind giving him a shot at business that did not want me. For the same reason, I don't want to take Paul's business. I want a shot at the business that did not want him. A link trade strategy is designed to help both parties.

There are three major areas to address when linking:

1. Link popularity
2. Link reputation
3. Page importance

Here's some linking software: <http://hop.clickbank.net/?powertips/link101>.

## **Inbound Link Popularity**

There's an extra benefit to linking that is becoming more and more important every day: the topic of link popularity.

This topic is really important. If you did a good enough job getting appropriate links coming into your site, you could probably do a terrible job of keyword placement and all the other things we've talked about to get high rankings and still do okay in the search engines.

Let's say someone in Massachusetts and I both do presentation skills. We both have the same keyword density and our sites are pretty much equal. My site is going to beat hers because I have more links coming "into" my

site. The conventional wisdom is, that everything else being equal, if there's a lot of links coming into my site, the search engines think it is a good site. Therefore, I'm going to beat her out in the search results because I have more links coming "into" my site. I make every deal I possibly can to have people link to my site.

Remember the main goal with links at the beginning is not to get immediate traffic to your site through the link from the other site, although that would be a side benefit. The goal is to get so many links coming into your site that you get higher rankings in the search engines, which bring massive amounts of traffic to your site.

This is the biggest problem I have in my link trade strategy. It's hard to get people to understand the last paragraph. They have been scared by ill-informed webmasters and pseudo experts who told them it is bad to trade links. All of you out there reading this who want to be smarter than your competition, take heed and get a link strategy implemented on your site.

### HOW THIS HAS CHANGED

Definition of link popularity: Measure of the number and quality of the links coming into your site.

It used to be that search engines would just count up the links coming into your site. The more you had, the better. That has all changed now. Now it is important that the actual link text coming from the site linking to you has keywords in it that are meaningful to you (link reputation). This is called *anchor text*. It's also important to you how important the site that links to you is.

For instance, if you want to trade links with me, you must put the words that I want in the clickable text on your site. If you simply put <http://www.anton.com>, I won't trade with you. You must put something like Public Speaking Tips, which is the clickable part of the link. Yes, the link can still go to Public-Speaking.org, but the clickable part of the link must be a keyword that I designate.

To make this as easy as possible for those wanting to link to you, it would be a good idea to simply give them the entire code to make it easy for them.

Here's an example:

```
<A HREF="http://www.Public-Speaking.org">Public Speaking Tips</A>
```

When they pasted this code in their website it would look like this:

[Public Speaking Tips](http://www.Public-Speaking.org)

Doing this will give you a much greater chance that people linking to you will do it in a fashion that is most beneficial to you.

## **How to Find Who Is Linked to Your Site**

Use Alta Vista Search Engine, <http://www.av.com>. (This search engine will be disappearing soon.) Type in the search box link: antion.com (of course, you substitute your website for mine).

If you want to check an individual page add the complete page URL: link:antion.com/ezinesubscribe.htm.

If you don't want to see any of your own pages listed use this string: link:antion.com/ -url:antion.com (note there is a space between the forward slash [/] and the hyphen [-]).

If you want to have this done automatically and e-mailed to your regularly go to <http://www.linkpopularity.com>. It handles Alta Vista, Google, and HotBot.

You can also use the very handy tools at:

<http://www.LinkPopularityCheck.com>

<http://www.MarketLeap.com/publinkpop>

For HotBot (<http://hotbot.lycos.com>) there are two ways:

1. You can use the previously mentioned site: <http://www.linkpopularity.com>.
2. You can use this string in the search box: linkdomain:antion.com, or if you don't want links from your own domain to show up in the results, use this string: linkdomain:antion.com -domain:antion.com (there is a space between the .com and the hyphen [-]).

In HotBot, I show over 1,000 incoming links. In many of the others, I'm over 500. This is becoming more and more important for high rankings, so do whatever you can to get those links coming into your site. The bad part for me is that many of the links I had coming to my site did not have anchor text that were keywords, so the value of my links dropped considerably.

**TIP:** For some unknown reason, the number of links you see coming into your site can vary considerably from day to day, minute to minute, and search engine to search engine.

**TIP:** You can build link popularity for individual pages on your site that are important to you. You don't have to concentrate only on your home page.

## **Outbound Link Popularity**

In the past, the number of links going out of your site didn't matter to the search engines. Now the search engines have gotten so sophisticated that



many of them tally the outbound links that go to related sites that have similar keywords. So, if you have many links going to related sites, your site looks like a very valuable resource on the topic being searched, and it gets a boost in the search engine rankings.

On the other hand, if you have lots of links going to unrelated sites, it could hurt your rankings. So be careful who you link to:

**Link Supertrick 1:** Make sure every outbound link that is visible to the public is put in a “new window.” You don’t have to know how to do this yourself, but it is fairly easy. This means that when someone clicks on a link that takes them out of your site, a new browser window opens and your site is still running in the background. The visitor never actually leaves your site. This new window can be set to open slightly smaller than a regular window, which alerts the person that your site is still available in the background.

**Link Supertrick 2:** This is a really cool trick that takes advantage of outbound link popularity. As stated earlier, outbound links leading to other related sites give you a boost in the search engines, but who wants to give their visitors more and more chances to click out of their website? Nobody, so here’s what you do. You make pages comprising of links to other sites that have the same keywords as you do. You put it up on your website, but you don’t link it to the main site, so no one but the search engines know it’s there.

Many people don’t realize you can have hidden pages on your website. Since this page is hidden, no one will ever have a chance to click out of your site to go to any of these links, but the search engine will see them and think, “Wow! What a great resource site this is!” and give you boost in the rankings. Chalk one up for the webmaster.

**TIP:** Some search engines consider pages that have only links on them as spam. To avoid this issue, put some text on the page that relates to your topic and don’t put too many links on one page. You don’t want to be considered a “link farm,” which will cause you trouble with search engines.

## Link Reputation

A link coming into your site is more valuable if that link says something related to your site. This anchor text is actually clickable on someone else’s site.

For instance, since I sell so much public speaking stuff, I want links on other people’s site to have the term “public speaking” in the clickable part of the text. The link can go to <http://www.antion.com>, but I want the link “text” to actually say something like “public speaking tips” or something like that.

The reason many search engines give link reputation a greater importance is that it is generally harder to manipulate what other websites would say about you. It's harder because you are trying to control what is done on a different website.

This doesn't mean you can't play a better game than the next webmaster by linking your own sites together to your best advantage. You can also educate those linking to you in the strategies that will help you both out the most.

## **Page Importance**

Since Google's "PageRank" is the standard by which most people gauge the importance of your page, we will use Google's terminology when we discuss the rating of the importance of a page.

You can determine the PageRank of any page on the Internet by downloading and installing a free tool from Google called the *Google Toolbar*: <http://toolbar.google.com>.

If you want to be a rocket scientist, understanding the entire way PageRank is calculated would be a good start. I don't want to be a rocket scientist. I just want to sell lots of stuff on the Internet so our discussion will be brief and easy.

PageRank is like a vote from all the other pages on the Internet. If they link to you that equals a vote for you. The more "votes" you have the better when it comes to the final determination of how important your page appears to the search engine and who shows up higher in search results.

When it comes to the value of an incoming link to you, one vote doesn't necessarily mean one vote. You can "stuff the ballot box" in your favor by getting pages with a higher PageRank to link to you. For instance, I just checked Yahoo and it has a PageRank of 10 out of 10. This is as high a score as you can get. I checked CNN also and found it to have a PageRank of 9 out of 10. A link from either of these sites to your site might be worth 20 or 30 links from sites that have no PageRank.

Here's what Google's site said about PageRank:

PageRank performs an objective measurement of the importance of web pages by solving an equation of more than 500 million variables and 2 billion terms. Instead of counting direct links, PageRank interprets a link from Page A to Page B as a vote for Page B by Page A. PageRank then assesses a page's importance by the number of votes it receives.

PageRank also considers the importance of each page that casts a vote, as votes from some pages are considered to have greater value, thus giving the linked page greater value. Important pages receive a higher PageRank and appear at the top of the search results. Google's technology uses the collective intelligence of the Web to determine a page's importance. There is no human involvement or manip-

ulation of results, which is why users have come to trust Google as a source of objective information untainted by paid placement.

Bottom line: Put lots of effort into your link trade strategy because as the competition gets stiffer (there's a zillion web pages a day coming out) you want to be ahead of the game. So that's another reason why I suggest to everybody, let's correctly trade links. Figure out how to do it, or get your Webmaster to do it because it's going to help all of us. If you want some instructions to copy, feel free to go to <http://www.antion.com/linktrade.htm> and copy the text I've written for you. Put your description in, but it isn't necessary. If you want to leave mine in the space, it's fine with me!

Just copy the instructions, put in your description, and then use it and put a button on your website to say, "Want to trade links with us? Click here." Try to get more people to trade with you and it will make your site more valuable.

Now here's a way to get inbound links without having to put any more outbound links on your site.

## Articles and Link Trades

I write articles and give them to people to put on their websites. I made about \$11,000 from *Sales Doctors Magazine* alone. Somebody did not find my site directly, they found Sales Doctors site. They liked an article I had written for them, linked to my site, and hired me without a video or any other promotional materials. I never would have had a shot at this job had it not been for my article on Sales Doctors website.

We want to give people every opportunity to find us even if they don't find our website directly. Articles are a great strategy. Get your articles placed on other people's websites. It helps them by providing content. It helps you because you get the links that will pay off forever.

You're going to hear a lot about the value I put on article writing. Here are a couple tips. If you hate to write, but love to talk, you can get voice recognition software. Here are two programs that will take a load off your fingers:

1. Dragon Systems Naturally Speaking (<http://www.dragonsys.com>)
2. IBM ViaVoice (<http://www-4.ibm.com/software/speech>)

The next tip is to simply carry around a mini tape recorder and then get a college student to ghostwrite for you. Try the English or journalism department of your local university or community college.

Here's an e-book on using ghostwriters: <http://hop.clickbank.net/?powertips/ggmine>.

The way you get your articles placed is to look for sites that are in your field or complementary to your field. When you find a site that looks promising, you

send them a personal e-mail. Here's how it will go: "I really liked your site. I was surfing the Internet, and I'm in a related field." Warning: Make sure they know you actually visited their site, or they might accuse you of spamming them.

You might say, "I especially liked the resource section you have and the article on so and so." I get this stuff all the time and it's spam. People send out a million of them, and they have never been to my site. So, if you make a personal letter (e-mail or regular mail), give them enough details so they know you visited their site. Tell them that you searched on the search engines for their types of sites. Send them a personal letter but don't send them the article right away. Let them respond and build a little relationship before sending them the article. Bam, you got a winner because they're never going to take it off. They're going to put it on there and archive it and your link is going to be there forever, and you did not even have to give one up a link in that case. Some of them might come back and say, "Well, we have articles. Maybe we can put them on your site." Then you have to decide if you want to deal.

The same strategy works with electronic magazines. People submit articles to me and in exchange they get a link back to their website, their e-mail address, or something, and that's their payment. Articles in other e-zines can bring you a lot of traffic and many potential customers, which is what you want. You suck them into your website and then get them to sign up for whatever you're selling.

One of the ways I use to draw people is to put articles on the site. I have not solicited articles from anyone else for my website. I have for the electronic magazine, but for the website, I have taken my *Wake 'em Up!* book, excerpted it all over the place, and made articles. I have special articles for meeting planners. I have all kinds of freebie things that are information oriented. That is what is getting many people to my website . . . all the free stuff. If they like my style, I build my credibility. If they like me, there's a very high chance they will eventually buy something, which is the reason I want them there. I want them to either buy or recommend me or a product. I want to get them to "opt-in" to my electronic magazine, which we will cover later.

So put your articles on the website. You're writing them for other sites anyway, or you're writing them for your own site. Writing articles is a fast way to make yourself an expert and get your name all the way around the world.

Here's a link for article writing help: <http://www.soaringprofits.com/writing.htm>.

## **Make It Easy on Them**

You can buy a simple software program that will make you very attractive to people who want regular content from you to put on their site. Programs like

Master Syndicator allow you to have the website to which you are providing content put a simple piece of code on a page in their site. When you write an article and submit it to your control page, all the sites in the world that have the piece of code on their site will get the updated article instantly. What a way to multiply yourself. You can be a syndicated columnist on the Internet tomorrow if you want. Check it out at <http://www.mastersyndicator.com>.

## **Keeping Track of Link Trades**

You can certainly do it by hand, but as in most things Internet-related someone has figured out a better way; <http://willmaster.com/master/rlinks/index.shtml> keeps track of all your link trade requests but also finds out who's cheating by taking your link off after you have put theirs on your site (linking software: <http://hop.clickbank.net/?powertips/link101>).

## **Link Considerations**

Since everything you do on your website eats up a little or a lot of your time, it makes sense to evaluate the potential payback from your efforts. Here are some things to consider when working with links:

- ✓ Will the link be permanent? A permanent link will be far more valuable in the long run for both potential click throughs and link popularity evaluations. The exception would be a prominent short-term link to a high traffic site like CNN that could send tens of thousands of visitors to your site. Don't waste your time on free-for-all link deals. These are places where anyone can place a link. Search engines look unfavorably on them.
- ✓ A few links from really high traffic sites will most likely produce more for you than lots of links from low traffic sites.
- ✓ When granting an outbound link you will get more mileage out of the link if it goes to a specific related site. Outbound links to unrelated sites could hurt your overall ranking. But if it's an unrelated site that is giving you a reciprocal link, it is still very valuable to you. You will not be penalized because it is unrelated.
- ✓ A link to your site with related text located near the link will get more click throughs than a link by itself.
- ✓ A link buried among many others will not get many click throughs, but will still be valuable for link popularity reasons. Don't turn such a link down, but try to negotiate for a top or exclusive position in your category.
- ✓ Links in articles about the same topic get lots of attention and a good click-through rate.

**WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW**

A good link strategy can get you high search engine rankings. If anyone tells you that it's a bad idea to trade links, don't believe them. Just make sure you do it properly, or you will either be wasting your time or hurting your chance at high search engine rankings.

**Is a Shopping Cart Necessary?**

The answer is technically "no," a shopping cart is not necessary if you're willing to handle each order individually. But remember, your regular forms on your website generally do not calculate shipping fees or tax, and they don't take credit cards automatically, which will kill your sales.

At my site, they're buying all kinds of things. My store, The Speaker Shop (<http://www.antion.com/speakershop.htm>), takes seminar admission fees and sells books, tapes, CDs, and downloadable products all designed to help speakers. The system that I have installed allows you to put your credit card number in and buy the product. It will send the order to a credit card processing company, and in about 15 seconds, you'll have an authorization. It will e-mail a confirmation to whomever I want to ship the product without me touching a thing. This is also great for me when I'm on the road because I don't actually have to be here in my office to make money.

Previously, I had to type the credit card number into the system. If I was on the road, things were delayed, or I had to depend on an intern to do it right. The shopping cart will save you many of those hassles. Also, many of your digital product or e-book sales will come from the immediate gratification factor. If you make people wait even an hour or so, they will most likely not buy.

We'll get into how to select a shopping cart on page 123.

**How Will I Ever Get This Stuff Done?**

If you are going to invest in a website marketing strategy, you need to do at least part of all the work I have outlined so far to have a chance of the site showing up in a search.

I don't do all the work on these sites myself. I use a combination of methods. However, I'm a firm believer that you should learn how to at least update your site yourself so that you have a fast "speed to market." It took about a month and a half part time to become competent working on my website. I don't know some of the simplest things like how to put an icon on

my desktop, but I honed in on the things that are necessary for me to know how to make money.

With some help, you can learn how to add pages to your site in about 10 minutes. I'm able to do most of this myself. If it is too complicated, I hire someone who trains me to do it or does it for me.

I recently hired an eleventh grader to run my entire computer system. He built a new computer to my specs and keeps everything running smoothly. I learn tons from him every time he comes over. I've got a ninth grader running part of the technical side of my new association: <http://www.NetAim.Info>. You can recruit a similar helper from any of the big computer stores, or just ask around at your local high school.

You can do this all yourself if you want to. The more you do yourself, the less it will cost you.

Even if you can afford to pay to have your website done for you, you should still learn how to update it yourself. There is too much delay if you have to depend on someone, and you'll miss opportunities.

Let's say you are a restaurant or a hair salon and you notice on Wednesday that the coming Friday is very short on reservations or appointments. You simply put up a special discount page on your website (that will take about two minutes). Send out a quick e-mail to your e-mail list of customers driving them to the web page (another two minutes) and watch the reservations and appointments pour in. You could never depend on a webmaster to react for you this quickly, which means you would not be able to fill up that slow Friday.

You don't have to know that much to do what I just described. However, it's up to you to manage your website operations. Otherwise, you can pay a fortune to a designer and nobody will come to your site. It's time to get over the excuses that you can't learn website stuff or "I don't have the time." Getting a little tutoring on this can most likely make you a fortune in less time than doing the things you have been doing.

Even though this isn't specifically about getting web pages done, the software at this link helps you organize your entire website business: <http://www.promobuddy.com/cgi-bin/affiliates/clickthru.cgi?id=antion>.

## WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW



If you can get a grasp on the big picture of what is available to you on the Web and how you want to use it, you can get others to implement it for you. Being able to do simple things yourself knocks out lots of frustration, saves tons of money, and adds lightning speed to getting things done.

## **Getting People to Your Website**

Let's talk about ways to get people to return to your website. That's a lot different than getting them there in the first place. Here are some ideas, although I don't do all of them. I could not possibly do all of these things. Different ideas will suit different people.

### **Discussion Boards**

You've probably seen them. People can post questions, and other people visiting the site who are interested in the topic, service or marketing idea, can answer the questions or jump into the discussion.

There are moderated discussion boards and unmoderated ones. Unmoderated ones are a little more risky. They are risky because someone can get on there and start cursing, writing nasty things, or saying all kinds of crazy things. Unless deleted, it would be broadcast to all the people that stopped by. Therefore, that could be dangerous.

A moderated discussion board is controlled by you or the moderator. The questions come in to you and then you forward them to your members and filter out any ridiculous stuff. You could also change this slightly to be an "Ask the Expert" section of your site. You invite questions and then answer them as the expert.

The Internet has been notorious for offering free things, so you really have to give a lot to get the kind of money that I'm getting back. I'm always happy to answer simple questions for people, and I get e-mails by the zillions on many topics. I try to respond graciously and as fast as I can, so many of these people turn into customers or hire me.

Some web design programs like Front Page have their own instant discussion boards. You can set it up yourself from the program. If you want an outside solution here are some possibilities:

<http://www.multicity.com>

<http://www.vbulletin.com>

<http://www.GreatInternetMarketing.com/forums> (This is the one I use.)

<http://www.wowbb.com>

<http://www.thinkofit.com/webconf/forumsoft.htm>

<http://www.acromediainc.com/chatterbox.htm>

### **Classified Ads**

You can run classified ads. There are many free sites, and there is software that will submit them to these free sites. I'm not sure there is a big value



to them because there are tons of them, and they're gone so fast. I don't know how many people see them, but that is a viable way to tell people about your site.

Some of the paid ones, like America Online, can be very good because America Online has over 30 million subscribers. CompuServe (now owned by AOL) also has many subscribers around the world. So if you have a product, you might try very inexpensive electronic classified ads to drive people to your website. I don't use any classified ads yet on other sites, but I do use them in my own publication *Great Speaking*.

I get people to visit my website with little ads in my electronic magazine and then I hit them with the strong advertising copy on the website. The little classified ad is not going to be able to sell too much, but when you get them to the website, you can put a lot more ad copy about yourself and your product. The whole idea is to get them to your website, and classified ads are one way of doing that.

## Chat Rooms

You can have lively discussions going on right at your website while you're sleeping. Or you can announce your presence there at certain times and allow people to interact with you, ask questions, and generally get to know you and your expertise better.

A good idea to drive traffic to your site is to invite other website owners that do not have chat areas to use your site. They'll bring in new people that will be exposed to your site, and you can usually put ads around the chat area for them to see.

Simple chat rooms are not too difficult to install. Here are some possibilities:

<http://www.tucows.com> (search for chat rooms)

<http://www.multicity.com> (free chat and they even have instant translation chat for your global visitors)

<http://www.freecenter.com/chat.html> (includes a whole bunch of free chat room providers)

## Streaming News

Another way to get visitors to return is to have news. There are places out there that will send news directly to your site so people can simply check your website for their news. There are many different industry news feeds. Many of these news feeds use Java Applets. Just make sure you don't junk up your important search engine pages too much with the code necessary to make these news feeds display. Some sites are:

<http://www.7am.com>

<http://www.tickerland.com> (Puts your news on other sites.)

<http://www.anaconda.net>

<http://www.wunderground.com/about/faq/weathersticker.asp> (weather)

<http://www.weatherbyemail.com> (weather)

## **What's New and Stuff**

You can have a “what’s new” portion of your website. A more valuable item is, “What’s new in your industry?” You can have forms on your website so people can register for items or any events or “special sales” you might be holding. That gets them to come back. You might also include an ad for a new product or service on the registration form.

Once you get them there for any reason, you want to hit them again with something else to sell. It’s very easy to put little links and little ads in among what people are already using from your site in order to keep your name and products in front of them all the time. For instance, when you register for the TeleSeminars at my site, I’ll probably have ads for the next 10 seminars coming up. The idea is to have something else to sell them once you get them coming to your site.

## **Surveys and Polls**

You can do surveys and polls as a means for getting people to come to your site. Then you can spit the survey results back to them because people like to know the final results as a benchmark.

You can also do live polling with this type of software. People like to come back and see the current results appearing on your site as more and more people respond to the poll.

## **Survey and Polling Resources**

For polling try:

<http://www.infopoll.com>

<http://www.7am.com/polling/index.htm>

For surveys try:

<http://www.perseus.com>

<http://www.zoomerang.com>

<http://www.surveymonkey.com>

<http://www.willmaster.com>

Or type “survey software” or “polling software” into any major search engine, and you’ll have lots of choices.

In the travel industry, the reservations link up various airlines, rental car companies, and hotels all over the world. One of the strategies the rental car companies use is having daily updates of your horoscope and the soap operas on their websites.

## Free Horoscope Content

Here’s a couple sites that have free horoscope content for your website:

<http://www.luckyfortune.com/webmasters.html>

<http://free.horoscope.com>

There are many ways to have recurring information to get people to return. These sites would not hit my target market, but for many of you they might. For example, if you had a sporting goods store, you could have football and basketball scores and all types of sporting news fed directly to your website. You don’t even have to update the feeds once you put them on your site. They update themselves. Get a webmaster to find the feeds and put them on your site for you.

## Contests and Sweepstakes

A contest requires that people compete in some fashion, and a sweepstakes is similar to drawing a winner out of a hat. Contests and sweepstakes are great, but you have to be careful. You can easily violate contest laws. There are sites on the Internet if you want to know all the ins and outs about this. Just type in “contest laws” and a bunch of sites will come up that will tell you what cautions to take. Make sure you get the proper legal advice if you do this. You need to be extra careful with sweepstakes and similar programs. As long as there is no money involved, you might be okay. For instance, I did the Valentine’s Day “Tom Is Single” contest in my electronic magazine, and people are still talking about it.

In the contest, you had to count the number of times the phrase “Tom Is Single” was in the *Great Speaking* e-zine. The winners won a free copy of *Wake ’em Up Business Presentations*, which I was promoting and the losers won a date with me. It was hysterical. The contest was designed to push people to the website and then they won a book and one of my other products. I gave away five books, but no one accepted the date option. It cost me 10 bucks plus shipping to do a major promotion that people are still discussing. So these are all ways you can do this electronically with very low cost.

**TIP:** Don't accidentally run a lottery. When you have a prize involved as well as consideration (usually money) and winning is a matter of chance, you are running a lottery, which is pretty much illegal without the proper government authorization.

**TIP:** Give the grand prize to the winner. E-mail everyone else who participated that they were second place winners and can thus get a substantial discount on the purchase of the same prize. What a deal!

Here is a good article on contest law: <http://www.howstuffworks.com/question541.htm>.

Here's a great contest site: <http://www.mlaw.org/wwl>.

Be careful where you post your contest. If a large contest site gets hold of your offer, you may get thousands of entrants that try every single contest they can find. This is traffic, but it is not the kind of traffic you want.

## **Frequent Visitor/Buyer Plans**

You could start a program just like the airlines and lots of other companies. Even Radio Shack has a Frequent Battery Buyer's Plan to encourage you to buy all your batteries at Radio Shack: They give you some free batteries after you buy so many.

## **Signature Files**

The next topic is signature files, which are found at the end of your e-mails. I have a bunch of different ones. Check your particular e-mail program.

I use different signatures depending on to whom I'm responding. If I'm responding to a speaker I don't know, I'll send one with "free electronic magazine," and "buy my speaker video," and my name and other information. If I'm responding to a client, the signature will be different. Therefore, I have a bunch of different ones so that I can just click on the one I prefer, and it pops right in at the bottom.

You can't make it so massive that you say, "Hi, Joe," and then there is three feet worth of signature, but it is a legitimate way to have an advertisement on every e-mail you send.

Sample 1: This sig file is appended to e-mails going to people that I know are not on my e-zine list:

Get your FREE subscription to "GREAT SPEAKING"  
Visit <http://www.antion.com/ezinesubscribe.htm>

New Speaker Video <http://www.antion.com/speakervideo.htm>

Tom Antion Communications <http://www.antion.com>

A Rare Mix of Business and Entertainment

Keynotes/Seminars and Advanced Presentation Skills

Voice 1-757-431-1366 Fax 1-757-431-2050  
Box 9558, Virginia Beach, Virginia 23450  
Trade Links with Us  
<http://www.anton.com/linktradeinstructions.htm>

Sample 2: This sig file is appended to e-mails going to people who I know are on my e-zine list. The top of it promotes something that I haven't sold them yet:

New Speaker Video <http://www.anton.com/speakervideo.htm>  
Tom Antion Communications <http://www.anton.com>  
A Rare Mix of Business and Entertainment  
Keynotes/Seminars and Advanced Presentation Skills  
Voice 1-757-431-1366 Fax 1-757-431-2050  
Box 9558, Virginia Beach, Virginia 23450  
Trade Links with Us  
<http://www.anton.com/linktradeinstructions.htm>

Sample 3: Here's an example of my sig file capability used to send routine correspondence without retyping everything. In this case, all I have to do is change the person's name and adjust the date. This saves me a tremendous amount of time and is another step in automating my business:

Dear Sally:

Your Butt Camp CD will ship Monday, July 31. You will have plenty to do once you see all the electronic marketing possibilities available to you at no cost or very low cost.

Because you bought the CD, if you want to see the live seminar, you get \$100 off the current price at the time you register. You must call or e-mail to get the discount. Here are the upcoming dates:

## **Signature File Resources**

[http://www.marketingterms.com/dictionary/sig\\_file](http://www.marketingterms.com/dictionary/sig_file)  
<http://www.vipgo.net/ab/network-marketing-mail.html>  
<http://www.theallined.com/webmasters/webmasters-039.htm>  
<http://www.tech4speakers.com/marketing/yoursignature.htm>  
<http://www.chris.com/ascii/index.html>

Some people add ASCII artwork to their sig files if it matches their business purpose. Be careful and don't overdo this.

For a source of funny or profound sayings at the bottom of an e-mail: <http://www.siglets.com>.

## **Bookmarks**

You should encourage visitors to your site to bookmark your page. Text could be placed on all your important pages reminding the visitor to do so. "Please bookmark this page now."

This is also known as adding your site to their "favorite" list. In both Internet Explorer and Netscape you can advise them to hold the control key down (Ctrl) and hit the "D" key. For Macintosh it's Cmd plus "D." In most cases, this will automatically bookmark your page in their favorite sites list.

You can also use a pop-up box to remind people to bookmark your site. For pop-ups, I use the software at <http://www.amazingpopups.com/power>.

## **Autoresponders**

Another thing to use is called an autoresponder (infobot or e-mail on demand). Many of the places that host your website give them to you for free. I get 30 of them for free just from my hosting service. Here's what they do for you: If I told you to send an e-mail to <mailto:sponsor@antion.com>, you're going to get an e-mail back from my website giving you the details on advertising in *Great Speaking* e-zine. So this is an extremely valuable time and money saving tool. It only takes a few minutes to set up once you know how to do it.

These are the ways you can automate your promotions and keep them selling for you. You will not be sitting here in front of the computer all day long. Autoresponders are a great way to get the information out to your market.

If you have the shopping cart system <http://www.KickStartCart.com>, you have unlimited regular autoresponders and sequential autoresponders (advanced autoresponders that follow up with multiple e-mails).

It's a good idea to have a copy of the original e-mail sent to the autoresponder forwarded to you. Some people don't understand exactly what to expect from the autoresponder, and they put a message inside the body of the e-mail. If you don't at least take a peek at these e-mails, you may accidentally ignore a question from a prospective customer.

Autoresponders can handle many more e-mails than you could ever process manually. Also, you can send a 10-page e-mail just as fast and easily as sending a two-paragraph e-mail.

Don't forget to let people know that you won't sell or give away their e-mail address to other parties. It's okay for you to send them a follow-up e-mail, but people really don't want to be spammed because they took you up on your offer for information.

When writing the messages that will go out on your autoresponder, try to write them in such a way that you don't have to change them too often. If you do this, the autoresponder will work quietly behind the scenes with little or no attention.

The first place I would check for autoresponders is the place that hosts your website. Many give them to you, and though you don't even know about it, you may have them already. If not, just type in "autoresponder" in any search engine or see the links listed in the next section. They are often cheap, like a dollar a month, but most of the time they're just given away free. For example, the <http://www.KickStartCart.com> shopping system has them included for free.

## **How to Pick an Autoresponder**

- ✓ They must be automatic. The person sending an e-mail to the autoresponder should not have to type anything specific into the subject or body of the e-mail for it to work. Many people would misspell whatever they were supposed to type, and the autoresponder would not work.
- ✓ You should be allowed an unlimited number of hits to the autoresponder.
- ✓ You should be able to make an unlimited number of changes to your return message, and you should be able to do this yourself any time, day or night.
- ✓ You should be able to capture the e-mail address of the person requesting permission.

**TIP:** This doesn't mean you have the right to put their name on your e-newsletter list.

## **Sequential Autoresponders**

Inexpensive autoresponders are available that also send follow-up messages at intervals you specify. I just did a free seven-day minicourse on electronic marketing. The person would send an e-mail to <mailto:MiniCourse@aweber.com> and immediately get the first lesson and then another lesson each day for the next six days. I had 1,200 people sign up for this course in about five days, and they spent about \$7,000 the first week after determining I knew what I was talking about when it comes to e-marketing. One month of this service was only \$19.95, and it goes as low as \$14.95 if you buy a whole year. You can check it out at <http://www.aweber.com/?23558>.

The way I do it now is totally integrated with my shopping system, and the autoresponders can be tied to a specific purchase, which is an extremely

powerful sales and customer service technique. The way it works is that when customers buy products, they automatically subscribe themselves to follow-up e-mails. The e-mails can be used to give additional tips on how to use what they bought, or to sell them more products. Customers can unsubscribe themselves anytime if they don't feel your e-mails are of value.

### *Companies That Have Sequential Autoresponders*

<http://www.KickStartCart.com>

<http://www.aweber.com/?23558>

<http://www.getresponse.com>

<http://www.biz-e-bot.com>

## **Electronic Magazines**

An electronic magazine is a simple e-mail. It's called an e-zine or electronic magazine, or some people call them an electronic newsletter. I call mine a magazine because occasionally I'll drop in what's happening in the industry. Most of the time it's in a "how to" format: "how to be a great speaker," "how to market yourself," and so on. It also gives you some free speaker humor.

An electronic magazine is easy to create using the simplest word processor. It takes no graphic design. I'm able, if I'm in a hurry, to slam one together and send it out to over 90,000 people around the world, all in one day. Sometimes I use excerpts from my book, so I don't have to write new articles for each issue.

I've also used articles from big-name speakers, as well as some lesser known ones who happened to have good information, so that's why people stick with it. This is what I call *push marketing*. I suck them into the website, or get people to sign up after they see me speak. Once I get them signed up on this electronic magazine, I can market to them repeatedly for free. I put a sign-up button on every important page of my website, so just about wherever you go on the website, you can sign up for my electronic magazine.

It's very cost effective to do an e-zine. What you do is find your target market and your regular customers. It's a good way to keep them updated and it costs virtually nothing. You have to be careful not to spam people because some will get irate. I've had some people turn into total monsters because of an e-mail that slipped up and went to them by mistake. You need to be careful, but the benefits are just outrageous. In normal face-to-face sales, it is five, six, or seven contacts before you make a sale. On the Internet, it can be 20 to 30. E-zines let you make these contacts extremely inexpensively.

I always recommend the following site: <http://www.e-zinez.com>. If you read the entire site and follow all its links, it will give you everything you need to know, and it will even e-mail you a template.



There's nothing fancy in these e-zines. The only creative part is picking what kind of divider bar you want between sections. You either get a template from <http://www.e-zinez.com>, or you can take any one of my back issues at <http://www.antion.com/ezinebackissues.htm>. Just erase the template information and put in your material, and you can have your own e-zine today. I can tell you clearly, it's made me a fortune in the past six years. In the first week, it brought in \$3,000 in consulting clients and a \$2,000 barter deal on my next book cover. Just yesterday, I had a literary agent call me, and the e-zine was responsible for landing me my lucrative spokesperson contract with CBS Switchboard.com.

Many people ask me how I built my e-mail list? Was it primarily from the website, or did I do other things?

I got a jump start because I have been speaking for some time. Therefore, people see me with some frequency. Live appearances will get you quite a few subscribers if you make sure you mention it's available and collect business cards because that's what we call "opting in." They're saying, "Hey, I want to be on your list."

The best way to do this at a live event is by holding a drawing. You must tell the people that they will begin getting your e-zine unless they write "no e-mails" on their business card. If you are a good speaker and if you wait until at least halfway through your speech, you will have very few people refuse to receive your e-mails.

If you have a store, you can do some kind of fishbowl promotion where people put their business card in a fishbowl to win weekly or monthly prizes. Put a note on the fishbowl giving them the chance to write "no e-mails" if they don't want to hear from you.

We'll get into more of the e-zine stuff later. For now, I just wanted you to know that it is an excellent way to get people to return to your website.

## **Online Malls**

I'm against them. I think they are a great idea for the organizers and a dumb idea for the merchants. The online mall people want you to think that it's like a real mall. Well, when you are in a real mall you can't snap your fingers and be in a different mall halfway around the world. In an online mall, your customer can click away in an instant. I wouldn't waste my time or money.

## **Search Engines**

Most of the search engines are begging you to put a link to their site from yours. Some even give you the code to put the actual search box on your site.

I'm not a big fan of this, but you could have people coming to your site more often if they knew they could also do some searching while they are there.

## **Your Own Search Engine**

I am in favor of providing your own search engine so people can search your site quickly. Indirectly this will make them want to return because they know they can find what they want quickly. Some of the web authoring programs will do this for you, or you can find free or paid programs to help you for example:

<http://intra.whatuseek.com>

<http://www.searchbutton.com>

<http://www.searchtools.com>

<http://www.atomz.com>

<http://www.freefind.com>

## **Other Cool Stuff**

There are all kinds of useful and fun things you can put on your website to get people to return. I've provided links to quite a few of them earlier. You can put links to interactive maps, phonebooks, and all types of online conversion programs (metric, time, etc.). Just make sure you don't distract people too much from the business of buying your products. You could even use your e-zine and website to promote a big party in your chat room.

## **Viral Marketing**

Viral marketing is a science in itself. It's a method where other people pass on your message to someone else who passes it on to someone else, who passes it on to someone else, and so on. Lots of people have gotten rich with viral marketing and even more have tried and failed.

Viral marketing can be as simple as giving out a free e-book about your topic that you allow other people to give away or sell, or it could be as complex and big as Hotmail that began as a small, free e-mail service that eventually sold for many, many millions of dollars.

Jimmy D. Brown is a super expert at viral marketing and has a great e-book on the subject. Check it out at: <http://profitavenue.com/x.php?adminid=52&id=2592&pid=99>.

Here are some other interesting sites where people have created things that are passed around in a viral fashion. Warning: Some are really offbeat, risqué, ridiculous, and downright disgusting:

<http://www.viralmeister.com>

<http://www.viralbank.com>

### *Checklist of Electronic Ways to Get People to My Website*

- ✓ Discussion boards
- ✓ Ask the expert
- ✓ Electronic classified ads
- ✓ Chat rooms
- ✓ News
- ✓ What's new
- ✓ What's new in the industry
- ✓ Surveys
- ✓ Contests and sweepstakes
- ✓ Frequent visitor/buyer plans
- ✓ Horoscopes and other content
- ✓ Signature files
- ✓ Bookmarks
- ✓ Regular autoresponders
- ✓ Sequential autoresponders
- ✓ Electronic magazines
- ✓ Malls
- ✓ Search engines
- ✓ Your own search engine
- ✓ Other cool stuff
- ✓ Viral marketing

### **WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW**



There are a tremendous number of online tools that you can use to drive people to your website over and over, which hopefully turns them into loyalists who eventually buy from you. You could pick several items from the above list and devote a week each to implement the idea. Don't try to do everything at once. Your traffic will steadily increase if you are diligent in implementing and using these ideas.

## **Offline Marketing**

We are going to discuss offline marketing of your website, which means all the things that really aren't electronic. They're going to sound like no-brainers, but I want you to go back and look through everything about your business and see if it is pushing people to your website.

### **Business Cards and Stationery**

The first thing would be your business cards. Is your website listed? Is it readable? Does it have letters like the letter "L" that when printed in the lower case "l" looks like the number 1? Is the print large enough to be easily seen? Also check your stationery and make sure your website is mentioned there, too.

### **Voice Mail**

What about your voice mail messages? If it's voice mail, then somebody is calling you that wants something. . . maybe information on your services. And they usually want it NOW because that's the way the world is. So if you don't mention your website, they're going to wait and get frustrated, or they're going to call your competitor. So go to your voice mail message and make sure your website is mentioned on it. Also, spell it out so it's very clear. I say, "antion.com, THAT'S A, N, T, I, O, N, DOT COM."

Something like that will make you money because it's out there advertising for you and letting the people get the information they need while you're busy speaking or simply sunbathing on the beach.

I also mention my website on virtually every phone call into my office. When I get done talking I say, "Don't forget, go to the website and check out our free stuff. I have lots of free articles for speakers, lots of speaker humor, and all kinds of good stuff on the website." Of course, when I get them to the website, they are going to be exposed to many things that they can buy from me.

### **Stickers and Labels**

I do a lot with stickers and labels. They are an inexpensive way to promote your sites and jazz up your packaging. Everything that goes out of my office has a sticker on it with my website address. So whenever I am shipping a product, I have the website sticker on it. If I'm paying a bill, I send my bill with a sticker on it. I figure they get plenty of my money, so maybe somebody will trip on my website and decide to buy something.

My shipping label has my photo on it. I usually do a cute thing and put a little balloon and say, "Hi" to you personally. It has the website address on it, too.

## **Promote at Programs and on Handouts**

If you use speaking or special events to promote your business, make sure your handout materials drive people to your website. These programs are used frequently by attorneys, CPAs, realtors, and even plumbers to prove their expertise and gain clients. Just about any kind of store can promote a special event. Toy stores could have a Frisbee expert give lessons, pet stores could give free dog training classes, and so on.

## **Signage**

You could have magnetic signs if you have promotional vehicles. You could also have a custom-made license plate frame with your website on it:

<http://www.autoplates.com>

<http://www.traffictalk.com>

I've even thought about doing a billboard or bartering with the theaters to get a slide up while waiting to watch the movie. Wouldn't it be cool to have your name pop up? "Visit [antion.com](http://antion.com) for free popcorn."

## **Print Ads and Packaging**

Your print advertisements, products, and product packaging should all have your website referenced. When you look at my books and tapes, the website is on there. You want the website on your products because phone numbers change. However, if you have your own domain name, they can always find you anywhere you move in the world, so you don't have to worry about updating your phone numbers, and so on. If they can go to the website, they'll find you.

## **Advertising Specialties**

Mouse pads, mugs, pens, monitor screen cleaners, and all kinds of things can be printed with your web address listed and given away. I'm not sure how well these items pay off. If I were to use this method, I'd want something that was designed to be near a computer, so when someone looked at it, they could immediately go to the web and visit my site. I get lots of my stuff at <http://www.stamonline.com>.

## **Free Publicity**

You can get tons of website visitors by writing articles for trade publications and doing radio and TV interviews. Don't overlook this very powerful way to get people to visit your site. I coauthored a book on this very subject with

Joan Stewart (*The Publicity Hound*.) You can check it out at <http://www.antion.com/ebooks.htm>. The title of the book is *How to Be a Kick Butt Publicity Hound* (Lanham, MD: Anchor, 2001).

### *Checklist of Offline Ways to Get People to Your Website*

- ✓ Business cards and stationery
- ✓ Voice mail
- ✓ Mention website on every phone call
- ✓ Stickers and labels
- ✓ Promote at programs and on handouts
- ✓ Signage
- ✓ Print ads and packaging
- ✓ Advertising specialties
- ✓ Free publicity

### **WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW**



Put your website address on traditional forms of promotion that have nothing to do with the web.

## **Website Reference Materials**

You're going to learn a ton from any reference you buy if you're a beginner. One excellent book is *101 Ways to Promote Your Website* by Susan Sweeny (Gulf Breeze, FL: Maximum Press, 2000). Others are *Marketing with Newsletters* by Elaine Floyd (St. Louis, MO: Newsletter Resources, 1997) and *Increase Your Web Traffic in a Weekend* by William Stanek (Rocklin, CA: Prima, 1998). This one gets a little technical because it talks about the log files and learning how to read them.

Here's a good starter book. It's a little bit old, but it is still worth reading: *Getting Hits* by Don Sellers (Berkeley, CA: Peachpit Press, 1997). This is the book that started me thinking, "Hey, I better get busy and promote this website, or it's going to just sit there for another two years." One book that I already mentioned is called *Web Pages That Suck* by Vincent Flanders and Michael Willis (San Francisco: Sybex, 1996). These guys are great at hype. The information is good, and it shows you many of the mistakes even big companies make. For example, they show you many of the frame-constructed web pages that are gorgeous, but they take 30 or 40 seconds to load and people just won't wait.

One of my favorites is called *The Non-Designers Web Book* by Robin Williams . . . not the comedian . . . and John Tollett (Berkeley, CA: Peachpit Press, 2000). It's a full-color book. It talks to you about the colors you can best use on websites. It talks to you about when to use JPEG photos and GIFs

and lots of different details about your hyperlinks and where they should go. A tremendous book—I strongly recommend this one.

Two others are *Making More Money on the Internet* by Alfred and Emily Glossbrenner (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1996) and *How to Build a Successful International Website* by Mark Bishop (Albany, NY: Coriolis Group, 1998). You've probably never considered many of the details included in this reference. I think globally in my presentations, but I must learn to think globally on my website since I get product sales from India, Australia, New Zealand, Brazil, and about 35 other countries.

Oh, another one of my favorites is called *Poor Richard's Internet Marketing and Promotion* by Peter Kent and Tara Calishain (Lakewood, CO: Top Floor, 1999). It was such a surprise to me because it has a whole section on publicity and reaching the media.

Those are the resources I have handy, along with the Internet marketing course by Corey Rudl that I sell on my site: <http://www.marketingtips.com/t.cgi/12273>. In fact, this is the course where I started learning how to make large sums of money on the Internet. Those of you who know me, know I don't recommend anything that is not great.

Although I will discuss e-mail marketing in a different section, Corey's new e-mail marketing book is great, too: <http://www.marketingtips.com/emailsecrets/t.cgi/12273>.

Here are some web guys who are competent and have worked for me: [jason@saeler.com](mailto:jason@saeler.com) and [harold@haroldhingle.com](mailto:harold@haroldhingle.com).

Don't forget. Think globally. You don't have to be located anywhere near people who can help you in this business. We're all around the world. First, realize that none of these people are perfect, but the two guys I just mentioned do a very good job. The work they've done for me has meant a lot of money both earned and saved.

Janet Hall is a long time associate of mine, and she can tutor you on using Microsoft Front Page: [janet@overhall.com](mailto:janet@overhall.com).

A good site that teaches you how to make your website user friendly is <http://www.useit.com>.

## **White Paper: Tom Antion's One-Page Website Method**

I have identified a method to create inexpensive websites that have an extremely high and ongoing return on investment. The method involves making one-page websites on tightly niched topics and selling digital products (e-books mostly) from these sites. You need little or no knowledge about the chosen topics.

**TIP:** This method is absolutely *not* meant to replace my method for creating deep, content-rich sites to enhance your existing product

line. It is simply a credible way to get a regular profit coming in from the Internet.

Here is the exact method I use for creating one-page sites and some figures on my first three sites: <http://www.Wedding-Toasts.org>, <http://www.Wedding-Speeches.org>, and <http://www.InstantEulogy.com>.

The Wedding Toast e-book has taken in approximately \$26,790 in 2003 and \$31,544.55 in 2004. The Wedding Speech e-book took in \$25,705 in 2003 and \$28,213 in 2004, and Instant Eulogies took in \$32,165.40 in 2003 and \$43,247 in 2004. The \$9.95 add-on product I developed for the Instant Eulogy e-book is called “101 Nice Things to Do After the Funeral.” It took only eight hours work to create and took in \$2,219 in 2004. These figures are what actually went through the shopping cart. Several more thousand dollars came in by fax and phone orders for all these products.

This amount of money came in with very little effort or attention paid to these projects.

In this section, I will cover the following steps:

- Topic selection
- E-book creation
- Site creation
- Dedicated hosting
- Pay-per-click search engines
- E-book delivery

## **Topic Selection**

You can certainly pick topics that interest you, but that is not necessary for this idea to work. The important thing about the topic you select is that the numbers work out.

For the least risk and highest return you need to pick a topic that has a very high number of searches and a very low cost per click if you were to bid on the keyword or keyword phrase associated with the topic at a pay-per-click search engine.

If you are willing to bid high enough at the most popular pay-per-click search engine, Overture.com, you will show up at the top of Yahoo, Alta Vista (while it still lasts), Lycos, and many other popular search engines. This is generally called a *sponsored listing*.

It is important to stay in the top bids so that your listing shows up on all these other popular sites. Also, when you use pay-per-click search engines, you have little or no delay before traffic is reaching your site. Using the free submission area at regular search engines could take months to get your page indexed, if they ever get around to indexing it at all, and there is no guarantee of a high ranking.



To determine the popularity and cost per click for keywords I use an Internet tool called the keyword selector tool at the same <http://www.Overture.com> mentioned earlier.

I play with the tool until I can find words that have 20,000 and up searches and cost per click of less than 15 cents.

Skill and equipment needed to do this: nothing much but a computer, Internet connection, and a little time.

## **E-book Creation**

Here's what I did on my <http://www.Wedding-Toasts.org> site. I put out a bid on <http://www.Elance.com> for two e-books. One for wedding toasts and one for wedding speeches. In the bid I also said I wanted two sales letters. In two days I had a contract with a writer from Ohio who had been in 12 weddings in the past two years. Total cost for two books and two sales letters. . . . Are you sitting down? . . . only \$550.

My contract with the writer required the documents to be created in Microsoft Word because I knew I would want to put in my own material and tweak everything before converting it to the downloadable format I use. I spent about five hours adding material and formatting the toast book nicely for conversion to Adobe PDF for distribution. I spent another couple hours improving the sales letter. My college intern finished off the wedding speech book.

I won't bother putting the exact figures here because they will be obsolete tomorrow, but the toast book by itself brought in about \$2,000 the first month with a profit, after considering the pay-per-click costs, of about \$1,000 (i.e., the entire project was paid for, and made a profit, in the first month and actually self-financed the pay-per-click costs because they were only incurred as sales came in).

So far I've identified another 12 topics that we are developing, and soon I'll probably put several staff people on this full-time shooting for about \$1,000 per month profit on each new project.

Skill and equipment needed for the previous section: You probably will want to get the Adobe Acrobat program to create PDF files so that you can make changes to the Microsoft Word document before you convert it. With a little help, you'll learn what you need to know about converting to PDF in about 20 minutes.

## **Site Creation**

Knowing how to make a web page yourself cuts out virtually all the site creation costs. This simple skill is invaluable. If you have enough need, doing it yourself will save you a fortune. I had an intern that made me 200 websites in two weeks using the technique that follows. I could have easily done it myself, but my time is now better spent on other things.

**TEMPLATES**

If you visit <http://www.Wedding-Toasts.org> you will see a lovely wedding theme with the entire site shaped like a heart. This template cost me \$15. I searched the web for “FrontPage Templates” and then searched the sites that came up for “Wedding Theme.”

**HEADER SITES**

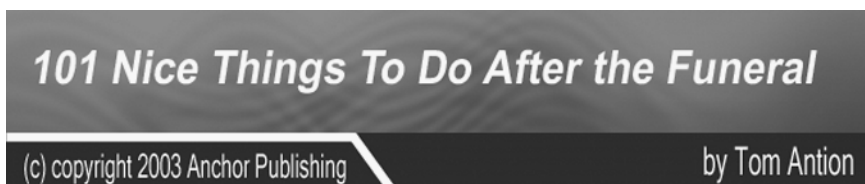
This little program makes the entire deal cheaper yet. I bought Armand Morin’s header generator: <http://www.ecovergenerator.com/x.cgi?adminid=814&id=22663&pid=2160>. Figure 1.7 shows a sample. We used it to create beautiful headers for the top of each of the other 300 websites we are developing (Figure 1.7). We put the header at the top of the page. Then we put a box underneath it to hold the sales letter, and in less than five minutes a new money machine is born.

Skill and equipment needed for the previous section: You will need either someone to do this for you or the willingness to learn the basics of website creation. What is being proposed here is the lowest possible level of expertise.

**Dedicated Hosting**

My first one-page site is hosted on a high-speed server, which is overkill and costs about \$24 per month. When you get several websites going, it’s much more cost effective to get a “dedicated server,” which means it only has your websites on it, and you pay a monthly fee. This does not mean you keep it in your basement. The machine is housed in a regular hosting company and maintained by them. They do the data backups, they provide the battery backup and generators to keep the thing running if the electricity goes out, and so on. It costs me \$150 per month for up to 200 websites.

I’ll probably never get all 200 sites on that server because I have made myself a personal rule: When the income from sites on that server exceeds \$10,000 per month, I will get another dedicated server somewhere else. This is so that all the income does not stop in case of a catastrophic failure on the first server.



**Figure 1.7    Example of a Header**

Skill and equipment needed for the previous section: You will need the ability to follow directions. Do not get a server unless it has a no-brainer interface. Many companies expect that a person getting a dedicated server is a webmaster and technically capable of doing all the complex functions. Do not use this type of company unless you have such a person available to you! Make sure your host company includes training or get someone who knows what they are doing to run the server for you.

You could e-mail [mailto:jason@saeler.com](mailto:mailto:jason@saeler.com) for a quote.

## **Pay-per-Click Search Engines**

There are over 600 pay-per-click search engines, but at the time of this writing only two dominate: Overture and Google.

I suggest you don't waste your time on too many of the others because most ask for a deposit to be used against your clicks, but many of them are so small they will never deliver all the clicks. One exception you could test out is <http://www.Business.com>. They have a pay-per-click program that is run a little differently than either Google or Overture and they have quite a bit of traffic.

**TIP:** Google does not allow pop-up boxes, so I make a separate sales page for them that doesn't have any pop-up boxes.

Another way to circumvent their "no pop-up boxes on a landing page rule" is to split your sales letter into two pages. The first page you drive them to from Google is the first part of your sales letter. You then entice them to the second page of your letter with some curiosity technique like "Click here to see the three biggest mistakes people make while giving wedding toasts." When they click on that link and go to the second page of your sales letter you can have a pop-up box on that second page.

## **E-Book Delivery**

You can't forget this very important part of the deal. You must be able to deliver the e-book in real time. Much of the fascination with e-books is the "immediate gratification factor." You will lose most of your sales with this kind of thinking, and your costs to drive traffic will most likely exceed your sales, making this a losing proposition.

What I'm talking about here is selling electrons. The customer decides to buy your e-book from your good sales copy. He or she purchases it through your automated shopping system, downloads it, and the money automatically goes into your checking account. You have no printing, no shipping, and no postage.

If you are not already set up for e-commerce with digital delivery, you will have to make this happen. The nice thing about it though is that now you can run an infinite number of websites off of one e-commerce system. The more sites you add, the cheaper your costs are per site, and you can still run your entire store, if you have one, off the same system.

Skill and equipment needed for the previous section: minimal skill in learning how to add products to your website and shopping system. Make sure your shopping system includes training. <http://www.KickStartCart.com> gives you an extensive audio training orientation on how to set it up and also how to use the advanced sales strategies to sell more to the same number of visitors.

### **Break Even with This Method and You've Got a Winner**

Some of my students have been discouraged because they didn't get a wildly successful winner on the first try using only pay-per-click methods. I disagree with them. If they can get the book to break even on pay-per-click search engines, they can then take further steps to make the book profitable.

Don't get lazy. Once you create this intellectual property you can explore many other ways to sell it and make it profitable.

These additional revenue ideas include:

Find affiliates to sell the e-book for you on their websites. You give them 50 percent of the money, but you only pay if they sell one, so your costs are fixed at 50 percent.

Join related affiliate programs and add affiliate links in your e-book. Then when someone clicks on one of the links in your book and buys a related product from someone else, you get a commission.

Consider printing your book or putting it on CD and selling it through regular bookstores and specialty stores.

One other thing you can do is use the book as a free bonus when you are trying to sell another product.

Consider giving the e-book away for free to create demand for your other products.

Good luck and contact me if you have questions about making one-page websites happen for you.

## **eBay**

Another way to make money quickly is with eBay, the famous auction site. There are many auction sites, but eBay has the most action.

There are also plenty of resources to teach you how to do this. You can either sell your own products on the site, or you can join their affiliate program, which is very generous and pays you for sending them auction bidders.

Here is a great DVD on learning how to sell on eBay: <http://www.auction-secrets.com/ebaytricks?t2id=16270912>.

Here is a collection of e-books on eBay selling: <http://hop.clickbank.net/?powertips/vnotions>.

Wow! We really covered quite a bit so far. I hope by now you are excited about all the things you can do to improve your website so you can beat your competition. We covered all the basics of domain names, website creation, web hosting, the importance and use of keywords, search engine and directory strategies, pay-per-click search engines, website optimization and graphics, link strategies, getting traffic, one-page websites, and plenty of references.

Now we're getting to my favorite part. In the next chapter, we are going to discuss all the powerful techniques that make your website sell.