

Leveraging Web 2.0

Leverage Your Business and Your Marketing Power Using The Latest Wave Online

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Leveraging Web 2.0

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Understanding Web 2.0

You witnessed, were a victim of, or have at least heard about the bursting of the dot com bubble in the fall of 2001. Online fortunes that had been made overnight were also lost overnight.

The sky was falling. It was a very scary time for a lot of netpreneurs. Some said that the World Wide Web was just a flash-in-the-pan idea that had been over-hyped and that the crash was irrefutable proof of that fact.

There were, however, some survivors of the 2001 dot com bust. The survivors had a few important commonalities and there were those who insisted that the World Wide Web was more important than ever and had a very bright future.

One of those who saw the results of the 2001 dot com bust as a 'glass half full' rather than a 'glass half empty' was a man by the name of Tim O'Reilly. O'Reilly (of O'Reilly Media) met with Dale Dougherty of Media Live International in 2004. Out of that meeting the term 'Web 2.0' was born.

The definition that Tim O'Reilly gives for Web 2.0 is: "Web 2.0 is the business revolution in the computer industry caused by the move to the internet as platform, and an attempt to understand the rules for success on that new platform.

Chief among those rules is this: Build applications that harness network effects to get better the more people use them."

Web 2.0 can be viewed as an upgrade to the World Wide Web. It is still the web but it is a new and improved version of the web.

New technologies such as blogs, social bookmarking, wikis, podcasts and RSS feeds are just a few of the technologies that are helping to shape and direct the new pulse of the internet - Web 2.0.

The Web before the dot com crash is often referred to as Web 1.0 but only since the coining of the term and the wide adoption of Web 2.0 principles.

Some of the more obvious differences between Web 1.0 and Web 2.0 are: DoubleClick replaced by Google AdSense, Britannica Online replaced by Wikipedia, Personal Web Pages replaced by Blogs, Content Management Systems replaced by Wikis and Directories replaced by Tagging.

These are only a very few of the differences between Web 1.0 and Web 2.0 but they are major ones.

You will notice, if you look carefully that the commonality of many of the differences between Web 1.0 and Web 2.0 is that Web 1.0 was driven and controlled by the 'powers-that-be' and Web 2.0 is driven by users.

That is a huge difference and the one that is making Web 2.0 more and more user friendly not to mention more and more profitable for the average person. You might even call it a power shift of seismic proportions.

Web 1.0 contained websites that could be accessed on the Internet, were built and controlled by only a few, and were certainly not interactive. Today anybody with an idea, a few dollars and just a little know-how can build a Web 2.0 website that is completely interactive and turn it into a money-making enterprise if they choose to learn some business basics.

The technology is accessible. It is easy to use. It is relatively cheap. Some of it is even free.

Those that thrived through the dot com bust - sites that started out as static one way communication - are now adding features like blogs and forums and propelling themselves into the future of Internet commerce. Those websites who continue to be 'old hat' are falling further and further behind.

Everyday surfers expect to be able to ask questions and get answers from websites, and they expect websites to be interactive – if not with all of the other users, then at least with the site owner. In a sense, the Internet has always been

and still is a platform for information but Web 2.0 has added participation to the platform.

Let's look at just a few of the innovations of Web 2.0 and how these innovations have changed the way that all of use the World Wide Web:

Blogs: Blog is a term that is derived from the blending of the two words 'web' and 'log'. Fairly early in the history of the World Wide Web people could build personal web pages although most did not.

These personal webpages were static websites. The owner of the website could post information about himself or his interests but others could only read that information. He could keep an online journal that he could allow others to access but the pages were one way communication.

Then technology met demand. Blogging software was developed. Now those who had personal websites could not only post about themselves, but they could allow their visitors to comment on what had been posted or ask questions. This was a huge advancement.

Because of that technology, blogging is very big business today. People visit and post to blogs all over the Internet about any and every subject they are interested in and the owners of these blogs have learned ways to make their blogs profitable.

Social Bookmarking: Social bookmarking is a by-product of blogging but it is based on the same basic technology.

Social bookmarking sites such as Delicious, allow their users to upload their own favorite site bookmarks so that everybody else in the world can see, share, save and visit those websites.

When a user uploads his favorite site bookmarks into his online account, a backlink is created to that site. When enough people click on the link, the site that has been bookmarked gets indexed and gain rank and credibility with the search engines.

These bookmarks are a form of user driven advertisements that is far more successful than any kind of paid-for advertising can ever be. After all, aren't you more inclined to take action on a recommendation from friends or associates than a television commercial or magazine advertisement?

There are a great many social bookmarking sites on the Internet now and new software is being developed all the time that makes these sites more productive as advertising and website traffic driving tools.

Wiki: A short definition of Wiki is "...a piece of server software that allows users to freely create and edit Web page content using any Web browser. Wikis support hyperlinks and has a simple text syntax for creating new pages and cross-links between internal pages on the fly."

In short Wiki technology allows editing of material posted on a website by the poster or by others.

The best example of Wiki technology in action is Wikipedia.com. In the old Web 1.0 way, the owner of a website had full control over all material that was posted to the website and only website owners could edit material posted on the website. With the advent of Web 2.0 that idea has gone the way of the horse and buggy.

RSS Feed: The acronym RSS stands for Really Simple Syndication and is yet another Web 2.0 feature that allows the web to be driven by people rather than by the powers-that-be. Those who use RSS content use reader or aggregator technology.

Users subscribe to these feeds. The reader or aggregator then checks the feed and when the site has new content, it is picked up and sent to the user. That is a rather simplified explanation but basically how it works.

A client based reader or aggregator is a stand-alone program that may be attached to an existing program such as a web browser or an email reader.

A web-based reader or aggregator makes the user's favorite feeds available on any computer with web access.

Podcasts or Webcasts: As broadband internet connections and wireless networks become more and more common throughout the entire world, the podcast or webcast is gaining in popularity.

While people do still read, many prefer looking at or listening to information. Hence, the advent of podcasts or webcasts.

You can find and tune into podcasts or webcasts on almost any subject imaginable today. Those who have blogs are making use of this technology to sell products and to promote their websites in record numbers.

Conclusion

Web 2.0 is definitely here to stay and those who are still trying to do things the old Web 1.0 way are falling behind this wave of today and of the future.

Will there be changes to Web 2.0? Well, of course, there will be. Web 2.0 is fluid and it is every changing. New technology will be developed and as it is developed people will use it. People are, after all, the driving force behind the internet.

And, you might ask, just who will benefit the most from Web 2.0? It will be those who embrace the new technologies as they become available.

The internet no longer belongs to the few and the privileged. Big business has lost its edge. The Internet and Web 2.0 has leveled the playing field.

All of us (you, me and all those who have access to the Internet) can now compete and win.

Blogging

Blogging is hot right now. It might even be called a buzz word. But it is also the wave of the future for Internet marketing. 'Blog' is a term that is actually a combination of two common words 'web' and 'log'.

Blogging is the result of the use of the new technology that collectively makes what is known today as Web 2.0. You will see the term "Web 2.0 websites" used frequently but what exactly does that term mean?

Back in the murky, dusty past of the Internet (a few years ago) in 2001, there was a happening that is now referred to as the dot com bust. People who had a great deal of technical know-how built websites, promoted them and made millions on speculative ideas that were not founded in reality.

The internet was a one-way street. Those who had the technical know-how to build websites posted what they wanted their readers to know and nothing more. The Internet was a relatively new thing and people bought into this one-way communication but only for a short few years.

Fortunes were made and lost overnight. There are those who blame the dot com bust on nothing more than technological break through....and it could be that they are right.

As technological advances made building websites easier, more and more jumped on the Internet marketing bandwagon.

They began sending out millions and millions of unsolicited marketing emails daily. These emails were known as SPAM.

SPAM got so bad that the Congress of the United States actually passed the CAN SPAM act in late 2001 and it became the law of the land in early 2002. This was actually the final puncture to the already deflating Internet bubble that let the rest of the air out.

Internet marketers were required to get permission from recipients before they could send out marketing emails and many of the companies couldn't survive the blow. Those who did began building opt-in lists.

Opt-in lists are a big part (maybe the biggest part) of all successful Internet marketing operations that are alive and well today and that need for an opt-in list is not ever going to go away but it has been supplemented.

It has been supplemented by blogs. Now Internet marketers who have blogs can give potential opt-in list members the one thing they all want...a voice.

Blogs are now discussed in the same breath and given equal weight among successful Internet marketers as opt-in lists.

You can, of course, have one without the other but it is of far greater advantage to have both and a blog is one of the best ways available to build a long and impressive opt-in list.

People have been keeping journals of course for centuries but the Internet version of journal keeping that we call blogging is far different. Rather than it being just the details of a personal life or the musings of a single person, blogging is more a source of shared information today.

Blogs are dedicated to specific topics. These topics are as varied as the people who have blogs. Let's make up a fictional blog website and see how it works.

The owner of this travel blog might post the details of trips that they have taken, invite questions but those planning on making similar trips, and provide information about products and services for which they are affiliate marketers.

We all know that website traffic is one of the keys that unlocks successful Internet marketing. The secret of creating an astounding amount of traffic to a blog website is social bookmarking.

There are many social bookmarking sites on the Internet. These sites allow users to upload their favorites to lists where others can click on the links in those lists.

Users are able to categorize their lists and create tags for each link within their lists.

Each time another user clicks on a link in a user's list a back link is created. As the back links multiply, indexing is accelerated.

Many of those who have created very successful (and profitable) blogs make use of such Web 2.0 advancements as RSS feeds, podcasts and webcasts to enhance and promote their blog websites.

Blog software is often part of web services but it can also be purchased separately at very low rates.

When a blog is created by a user there are many choices that must be made. The first and most obvious choice is the topic of the blog. For those who plan to monetize their blog, the choice of topic is a very critical one.

If a user is already an active Internet marketer in a particular niche market, then the choice is easy but if a user is only just beginning in Internet marketing, the choice of a topic can be a lot more difficult.

Research is necessary. It is important to choose a market that is viable. There simply will not be much money made from a topic like under water basket weaving.

One of the better ways to research and find a viable topic is by visiting other blog sites and forum sites on the Internet.

You might consider going to one of the social bookmarking sites like Delicious to find out what others are concerned about or topics for which they are seeking information.

Once a topic has been selected the next step is to actually build a blog. There are many web hosting companies out there and many of them offer blogging capabilities.

There are even web hosting companies who specialize in blogging websites. One of the better known ones is Word Press but there are a great many others out there.

There was a time when only gurus could build websites. It was necessary to be proficient in the use of HTML among many other things but that is simply no longer the case.

Web 2.0 technology now allows even novices who have never even thought of building their own website to do exactly that and to do it very quickly and very efficiently.

There are, of course, some things that one needs to know but these are things that are very easily learned and there are even blog websites that teach you how to build a blog website.

Once a blog website is up and running, then it is important to get the search engine spiders to visit the site so that it can become indexed and appear in searches made on search engine sites. This is the place where social bookmarking comes into play.

There is software that makes it very easy to list your site with many social bookmarking sites all at the same time. It can be done quickly and easily.

Owners of blog sites have learned to help each other in a sense. They can ping one another's sites and create back links for both sites that are picked up by the search engine spiders.

Web 2.0 websites are user driven unlike the old Web 1.0 sites. The owner of the blog does have control of content but he also allows visitors to his blog website to add content and some even allow content to be edited by users.

Where Web 1.0 websites were constructed so that information and ideas flowed only one way (from the website to the visitor), Web 2.0 websites allow for information to flow two ways.

Many even brand new blog website builders use RSS feeds, podcasts and webcasts to enhance their blog websites. Of course people still read but people also like to get information via audio and video.

Bloggers don't even have to record their own audio and video products. There are websites out there which will supply audio and video products...some of these are even free of charge.

The old idea that a blog is simply a web log or a journal are a little behind the curve. Blogs today are far more than that. Today's blogs are rich with information that is constantly changing.

You can find very active blogs that discuss controversial topics like politics and religion and you can also find blogs that are dedicated to nothing but pure pleasure like travel, fishing, hunting, gold, sewing, needlecraft, boating, etc.

There are blogs that are devoted to business concerns. There are blogs about blogs. It would not be likely that you could think of a topic that holds any interest for human beings in general and not be able to find more than a few blogs that are currently discussing them.

Yes, blogging is a buzz word and it is a 'hot' topic of today but it is also the wave of the future where Internet marketing is concerned.

Find a topic that you are interested in...even passionate about....and go out there and start your very own blog. If you construct the site well and if you pursue social bookmarking, you can begin to create your own online empire.

Social Bookmarking

What is Social Bookmarking?

According to Wikipedia, social bookmarking is defined as: “Social bookmarking is an activity performed over a computer network that allows users to save and categorize a personal collection of bookmarks and share them with others.

Users may also take bookmarks saved by others and add them to their own collection, as well as to subscribe to the lists of others - a personal knowledge management tool.”

Actually, the idea was first launched back in 1996 as ‘itlist’. Other similar sites quickly followed but that all went belly-up with the dot-com bubble bust in 2001. The idea is new again now with the advent of Web 2.0 and this time around it is thriving.

Who is Using Social Bookmarking?

In a word....everybody! Researchers have found social bookmarking sites to be an invaluable tool as they conduct research and find the need to share information about research with their colleagues.

Professionals like doctors, lawyers and engineers are using social bookmarking services in record numbers.

But social bookmarking is far more than simply a tool for research. People from all walks of life are using social bookmarking.

Users of popular websites like Friendster, FacE-Book and MySpace have found that it is very easy to share information about websites that they find to be of mutual interest.

Networks of friends can be set up so that whenever a new posting is made to a social networking site other members of the network are notified immediately by RSS feed.

With all of this instant communication happening, you can see why those who are involved in Internet marketing are very much in touch with social bookmarking sites.

These innovative marketers join such sites as Friendster, FacE-Book or MySpace and while they are having a lot of fun, they are also selling their products and services.

They are getting visitors to their websites. They are improving their PageRank. They have found that social bookmarking is one of the very best search engine optimization tools that have come along in a very long time.

How Does Social Bookmarking Work?

The basic concept of Web 2.0 is that it is user-directed and social bookmarking is a part of Web 2.0 so it is, of course, user directed. Social bookmarking is a way of organizing and categorizing information with the use of 'tags'.

Tags are user generated and are based upon key words that identify the bookmark so this is a true user-directed way that information is organized and categorized.

When a bookmarked site is clicked on, the social bookmarking site identifies the person who created the bookmark and provides access to other sites that the same user has bookmarked.

Now, the person who created the bookmark and the tag is also provided information about how many times the link has been clicked on as well as who clicked on it.

This system makes it very easy for like-minded people to make social connections and to identify others who have the same interests. Over time a community of users develops.

As a community of users develops, they sometimes develop a very unique set of key words that define resources of common interest. These unique sets of keywords have come to be referred to as 'folksonomy'.

Wikipedia defines the term, folksonomy as: "Folksonomy is a neologism for a practice of collaborative categorization using freely chosen keywords. More colloquially, this refers to a group of people cooperating spontaneously to organize information into categories.

In contrast to formal classification methods, this phenomenon typically only arises in non-hierarchical communities, such as public websites, as opposed to multi-level teams."

How will Social Bookmarking Impact the Web?

Actually, it is pretty clear right now that social bookmarking is having a huge impact on the way that information is being classified, categorized, stored and exchanged.

It is impossible to believe that in the future the impact will be even stronger. Web 1.0 was static but Web 2.0 is fluid. The face is ever changing.

The technology that social bookmarking is based upon is really rather simple...there isn't anything complex about it. It is user friendly. The level of knowledge needed to gain huge benefits from social bookmarking is low.

People do not have to be computer gurus to make use of the technology at all. The technology is so simple and the system is so easy to use that it will continue to grow in popularity into the foreseeable future.

Because of this inevitable growth of social bookmarking and the easily used tagging of such things as multimedia files, it may well be just as inevitable that the design and function of databases themselves will also change drastically.

They may have to change just to be able to accommodate this new way of managing information.

How is Social Bookmarking Affecting Education?

Teaching and learning are the two components of education. The objective of transferring information and knowledge from one person to another person or a group of persons is being greatly affected by social bookmarking.

The exchange of information and the coming together of like-minded individuals into loosely knitted online communities are both impacting education as a whole.

For so many centuries education suffered from slow communication. Today the internet itself has greatly sped up communication and social bookmarking has doubled that speed in the last few years.

Social bookmarking has created a method whereby bibliographies, papers, etc. can be easily and quickly shared and accessed by multiple people at the same time. These same resources can be altered or edited in real time.

Why is Social Bookmarking Important to Internet Marketing?

There are several ways in which social bookmarking is having an affect on internet marketing. It would be hard to determine just which effect is having the greatest impact.

The ability to create tags using key words which social bookmarking sites allow is very attractive to internet marketers.

It didn't take the internet marketing community long to figure out that these links and the backlinks that are created when the links are added to other favorites lists cause search engine spiders to visit websites and that PageRank can be dramatically increased along with the number of visitors to a website.

The more visitors, as any internet marketer worth his salt knows, means more sales of products and services.

So social bookmarking sites provide free advertisement, increase the number of visitors to a website and are a great search engine optimization tool to boot.

Another asset that internet marketers quickly became aware of that social bookmarking sites provide is that they are great research tools in and of themselves.

For example: a website owner might find that a 'sailing' tag is also associated with a 'boat repair' tag. That information can open doors for business expansion.

Is There a Down Side to Social Bookmarking?

If there is an up-side, you can bet there is always a down-side for anything and everything and social bookmarking is not the exception to that rule.

The very fact that social bookmarking is user driven is one of the potential down sides of it. Users are not professionals. Users are just people and the ability to use social bookmarking sites for fun as well as for profit does not require a great deal of technical knowledge.

As a matter of fact, it requires almost none. And because users are 'amateurs' (for lack of a better word), key words used in tags are not consistent. The information is sometimes scattered and key words that seem logical to amateurs don't necessarily lead to related topics.

Yet another potential down-side and one that is happening more and more frequently is that users are abusing the system. Since it is a user driven system it is more susceptible to abuse and misuse.

There are spammers out there that are bookmarking the same site multiple times.

The idea, of course, is that the more times the link appears the better the search engine spiders like it and the more apt the link is to be clicked on and the more apt it is that the site will be visited.

More visitors always equal more sales of products and services.

What is The Bottom Line of Social Bookmarking?

The bottom line is that social bookmarking is here and it is here to stay. People are using social bookmarking sites to make social connections as well as to form communities.

From the internet marketing point of view, social bookmarking is a tool that can be used to increase search engine optimization, the number of website visitors and ultimately increase sales but there is also the possibility of the system being abused.

Like everything else...the more social bookmarking is abused, the less effective it will become.

Social Networking

Social networking isn't a new phenomenon. It wasn't invented in the twenty-first century. Every Elks Lodge, Lions Club, Chamber of Commerce, Church, Sewing Circle, Book Club, etc. that ever existed afforded an opportunity for social networking. Some social networking groups are secretive.

They have passwords and secret signals that help one member identify another member. Others may be more open but they are aware of who is and who is not a member in good standing of the social networking group.

The members of any social networking group identify with and help other members of their group. They provide information to one another that is mutually beneficial.

They tell each other when something of interest or something of concern is happening that is interest to or a threat to their particular social network and the members collectively pursue the interest or ward off the threat.

These social networking groups can be either very close knit or very loosely organized or even have no apparent organizational structure at all. The organization is of a great deal less importance to the members than the benefits that each gains from it.

Many times social networking groups are work related.

For example: you have very likely heard of the way that law enforcement personnel stick together and 'watch each other's backs' so to speak.

This social networking group is often referred to as 'the long blue line'.

Another work related social networking group is long distance truck drivers. By using their CB radios, they stay in contact with one another and warn each other of road hazards. If one of them has a problem, others go to his or her aid.

No, social networking was not invented in the twenty-first century and it didn't come into being with the advent of the personal computer.

It has been around probably since the beginning of time in some form or another but the advent of the personal computer certainly put a new spin on social networking. Web 2.0 has really kicked social networking up several notches.

No longer is social networking limited to people who work at the same jobs or who live in the same communities. Social networking is now world wide and easily accessible to everyone who has access to a computer and an internet connection.

It all started with the advent of instant messaging technology but it has grown far beyond that limited ability. With instant messaging it was necessary to let others see your email address and so you lost much of your anonymity.

In today's Web 2.0 world, social networking and complete anonymity are both possible.

The online dating sites are a very good example of this compatibility. People can register and pay for memberships on online dating sites and conduct an entire relationship for many months without either party knowing the other party's real name, ISP email address or the name of the city in which they live.

All communication is conducted on the online dating website itself thus affording both social networking and anonymity.

There are Web 2.0 websites that are dedicated to nothing BUT social networking. One of the better known ones among the younger set is MySpace but there are at least a hundred different social networking sites on the internet and probably a lot more than that.

Web 2.0 social networking sites are divided in many different ways.

There are social networking sites that are dedicated to specific ethnicities; BlackPlanet.com is for African Americans, Babbello is for Australian teenagers,

FaceBox is for European young adults, Gronco.net is for Poland, iWiW is for Hungary, Migente.com is for Latinos, Mixi is for Japan are just a few examples.

Social networking sites are also divided sometimes by interests. For example you can find such social networking sites as CarDomain for car enthusiasts, Flickr for photo sharing, Gaia for gamers, Gopets for virtual pets, Joga Bonita for football or soccer, or Last.fm for music.

These are only a very few example. There are a great many more.

Most social networking sites, however, are not dedicated to a specific group. They are general membership sites and the members themselves divide themselves into appropriate groups according to interests and compatibility.

Almost all of the social networking sites are free to join. There are just a few that have membership fees. The site owners make their money from advertisers rather than from users. A few sites are only open to those who have been invited to join by other members.

Most of these social networking sites provide you with your own blog when you join the site. You can make posts to your blog and you can invite others to post to your blog. The trick here is to also use the social bookmarking sites and upload links to your blog posts into them with the appropriate tags containing key words.

The blogs on social networking sites are in addition to and not a replacement for blogs on your own website if you are an internet marketer and the social bookmarking sites should be used to upload links to both blogs.

Social networking is easy and it is fun. It is a way that you can enhance your online business and have a lot of fun in the process. You can meet some of your very best potential customers on social networking sites. You can make friends and influence people as well.

It has long been a well established fact that more business is actually conducted in social settings than in offices.

More deals are made on golf courses than in board rooms in the real world and more sales are made through the use of social networking sites on the Internet than through all of the paid-for advertising combined.

People HATE commercials but they don't mind hearing their friends recommend a product or service. Not only do they not mind...they even go to a lot of trouble to seek out that information.

In addition to being a great way to advertise a business social networking sites are also a great research tool and one that should never be overlooked. Rather than having to conduct a lot of expensive and time-consuming surveys for example, you can simply look through a social networking site and find out exactly what people are thinking about.

You can find out what their problems are and what measures they are taking to solve those problems. You can find out what their interests are and how they go about pursuing those interests.

By using social networking sites as research tools, you can likely get more and better information in a single hour and for free than you could get by spending hours on sending out surveys and trying to decipher the results.

One very interesting social networking site is called 43 things. That is the name of the site. On this social networking site people list their goals and then other people with similar goals discuss how to best achieve those goals.

Some goals that have been listed are 'learn a foreign language, be a good parent, improve my memory, get in shape, lose weight, be a better gardener and the list just goes on and on.

As a research tool it would be hard to beat 43 things to find out what people are interested in and concerned about.

Web 2.0 is great! It is driven by those who actually USE the internet and not by people who are sitting behind desks at large companies and who are out of touch with the real world.

Social networking is simply a group of like-minded people exchanging information that is of mutual interest. That is all it is and all it has ever been.

It is important that when you are using social networking sites that you remember this and conduct yourself accordingly.

If you join a site and start just posting blatant advertisements, you are not going to be doing social networking.

You are simply doing advertising...which people hate. If you establish yourself as part of a group, then you are social networking and you will find that those who are members of your online social circle are the best help you can find anywhere.

Social networking is valuable in and of itself but it can be made doubly valuable by using social networking in conjunction with social bookmarking.

Join a social networking website. Find a group of people who are interested in the topic of your website but don't start out advertising that.

Make posts to your own blog on the social networking sites as well as to the blogs of others. Add those links to your social bookmarking account. Be certain that you use the appropriate key words in those tags otherwise they are worthless.

Altogether this is an excellent marketing strategy. It is a way to market your website and your products or services and have a lot of fun at the same time. You will meet people that you really do like and even admire and respect.

Friendships are not made for the purpose of profiting from them but they usually are profitable.

Audio/Video/Podcasting

Why do I Need Audio, Video or Podcasting on My blog?

Successful internet businesses all depend upon one common factor. That common factor is traffic. Traffic equals sales. Sales equal profit.

It doesn't take a rocket scientist to figure out that a successful business must make sales and a profit and in order to make sales and profit it is essential that there are customers.

Getting website traffic is exactly what all the fuss is about when marketers are discussing SEO (Search Engine Optimization).

The higher a site ranks in the search results that search engines provide to those using key words to find products and services, the more visitors will visit. More visitors = more sales = more profits. It is just as simple as that.

Blogs have proven themselves to be very, very useful tools in the drive to creating more and better website traffic. People love blogs. Web 2.0 is built upon the idea of a user driven web and users want a voice.

Blogs give them that voice. It is a simple technology and it can even be found free on the internet. If you don't have a blog site or a blog on your website, you are simply missing the SEO boat.

The popularity of blogs has, of course, increased the number of blogs on the Internet many fold over this last year or so.

With the increase in numbers of blogs online comes an increase in competition for visitors to those blogs and, of course, stiffer competition for PageRank by search engines.

So, the question, “Why do I need audio/video/podcasting on my blog?” is one that can be answered rather easily. You want visitors. You want a high PageRank. You want sales and profits. That’s why.

Successful blogs are all about content. You’ve been told a million times that, on the internet, content is king and it is true. Search engine spiders consider content as one of the factors that determine page rank and there are two parts to content that are considered.

The first is how often the content changes. This is why it is very important that posts be made to blogs every single day...multiple posts are better than one long post. Key-work density is the other content factor that is considered by search engine spiders.

Links found on the Internet to your website by search engine spiders is another factor that determines PageRank. That is the reason you should always make use of social bookmarking sites and add the links to your blog posts.

Each time you make a post the search engine spiders count it but the number of links to that post is even more important.

You can create one link but when others pick that link up and add it to their own favorite’s lists more links are created for search engine spiders to count.

You probably already knew those things but did you know that the duration of visits to your site is also considered? Most visits to websites last thirty seconds or less. You can even actually see this statistic in the web-stats for your blog or website.

Search engine spiders like for visitors to websites to stay longer than thirty seconds and you like that, as well. The fact is the longer a visitor stays on your website, the better the chance is that he will make a purchase.

That begs the question, ‘how do I get them to stay longer than thirty seconds?’ The answer to that one is audio/video/podcasts. It is a very simple calculation.

If a visitor is watching a video that lasts for say two minutes, how long will they stay on your site? Two minutes! Videos and podcasts are mesmerizing.

When a visitor begins to watch either, they will stay awhile. Search engine spiders love that and the longer they stay, the longer they are exposed to your advertisements for products and services that you sell. The longer they see the advertisements, the more likely they are to make a purchase.

Now you should be aware of the fact that search engine spiders cannot 'read' audio and video content.

That is audio/video is not going to aid you in search engine optimization but it will help with the length of the visits made to your website.

The fact that search engine spiders can't 'read' audio and video content also eliminates the duplicate content problem.

How do I get audio and video for my blog?

Just to set your mind at ease right away, you don't have to shoot your own video or record your own audio.

You can do that, of course, if you want to and if you have the equipment and the know-how but you really don't have to.

There are an abundance of sites on the internet that will happily (and freely) provide video and audio for you. All you have to do is download them, upload them to your site and tag them. That is pretty much it.

Google has videos that you can use. The link is right there on the Google search page. Recently Google purchased YouTube for a reported one point six billion dollars.

You can find free videos there on almost any topic that you can imagine and likely a few topics that you would hope to never imagine.

You can find videos on topics that are related to the topic of your website or your blog that will be of interest to your visitors and when visitors are watching videos they aren't surfing away from your site.

How Do I Get Podcasts For My Blog?

Now, podcasts you do have to create yourself. The good news is that is a fairly simple process that can be done without a lot of technical knowledge or ability.

The term 'podcast' was actually coined by Ben Hammersley in the Guardian on February 2004. The word is a blend of the two words, 'ipod' and 'broadcast' but you don't have to have an ipod to see a podcast or even to create a podcast.

Very simply; podcasting is a way to publish audio and video online which lets software automatically find and download new broadcasts over a period of time by using RSS feeds that contain a link to the multimedia broadcast file.

You can create and publish your own audio program or video program or audio/video program and feed them to your audience who can then listen to or view them when they have to time or are so inclined.

With nothing more than a personal computer, some software and a webcam if you are doing video, anybody can create a podcast and publish it. It isn't rocket science.

What Will My Blog Visitors Think About Audio, Video or Podcasts?

The short answer is that they are going to love them. A term that is sometimes used is 'User Enhancement Optimization'.

You know what SEO (Search Engine Optimization) is but it is possible that UEO (User Enhancement Optimization) is equally or maybe even more important.

Remember...it is all about content. Content is what keeps a visitor on your website and content is what makes them make return visits to your website. It is a well known fact that purchases are seldom made on initial website visits.

A customer will likely return to the website up to seven times before he actually drags out his credit card and buys something.

You have to get them to come to your website for that first crucial visit but keeping them making return visits is just as important.

I can't really think of a better way to keep them coming back than giving them something as attention getting as audio or video or podcasts. Can you?

While it is true that people do read blog posts, we are a nation that is more geared toward audio and video than toward the written word.

We watch television...a lot. One picture really is worth more than a thousand words in today's technologically centered world.

Web 2.0 has created an internet that is user driven. The users are the ones who determine the success or failure of an internet business.

They are the determining factor of the way that websites are constructed. It once was said over and over that 'the customer is always right'. That is still true but in the Web 2.0 world of internet marketing, the user is not only right, he is in charge.

Web surfers no longer simply go to websites to read information. They go to websites to GET information and the love for that information to be delivered in audio and/or video formats.

Your blog website has got to be outstanding. It has got to be original. It has to give the user a reason to visit in the first place and a reason to return often.

Think content, content, content and SEO as well as UEO and you can make your blog website successful. Audio, video and podcasts are the quickest, easiest and most efficient way to reach that goal.

Recommended Resources

1) How to Get A Domain Name

- [GoDaddy](#)

2) How to Get A Hosting Account

- [Hostgator – InstantInstaller.com for Fast Blog Setup](#)

3) Autoresponder Account

- [Aweber – Best Delivery Rate](#)

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