web byte

Fall 09

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what's new & renewed : web design classified section

from the editor

Welcome to the premier issue of Web Byte—and congratulations! Within these pages, you'll gain access to a wealth of information to help you increase the impact—and the revenue—of your online business.

After years spent running a web production company, we recognized the need for a clear, easily accessible resource for industry professionals. We created Web Byte to benefit business owners, marketing managers, website owners, and anyone who relies on the power of the Internet to build their businesses and fuel their career aspirations.

When planning the content for our newsletter, we don't just choose the topics we think are important. Instead, we turn to our own clients and prospects to find out what they want to know, and then our staff creates well-researched, informative articles packed full of valuable tips and information. In addition to our team of experienced Internet writers, we also seek out some of the industry's most respected professionals to contribute their insights for the benefit of our readers.

In upcoming issues of Web Byte, you'll get an abundance of information to help you:

- Understand the basics of the Internet and how it ties into your business
- Boost traffic to your site through the best SEO strategies
- Find the right web designer and effectively manage the design process
- Set up and monitor online marketing campaigns (PPC ads, Google Adwords, sponsored search engine placements, and more)
- Choose a content management system (and use it effectively)
- Plan, launch, and monitor a successful email marketing campaign
- Support your online business with first-rate customer service
- Choose the web host and package that's right for you
- Stay abreast of industry trends, statistics, and news, and understand how they pertain to you
- Create a blog and make it more visible to your consumers
- Monitor your website's performance and traffic with a quality analytics tool
- Build a social network for your business on sites like Facebook and Twitter
- Stay on top of constantly changing Internet technologies, and avoid getting left behind
- And much, much more!

The main goal of Web Byte is to provide you with the information you need to achieve success as an online business—without the tedium. With a strong belief that honing your craft should be just as much fun as it is work, we pledge to provide you with relevant, timely, and accurate information that's just as enjoyable as it is informative.

Web Byte is a quarterly publication, available in both printed and online formats. In the constantly changing and growing Internet world, we hope you'll find us to be a steady and reliable resource. And feel free to contact us with your comments, questions, or suggestions for future articles.

We hope this is the start of a long, mutually beneficial relationship for both of us!

Warm regards,
Minell Eberdt
editor@webbytenews.com
Web Byte Newsletter

Elements of a
Website

These days, it seems everyone with a computer has a website. From mom-and-pop corner stores to Fortune 500 corporations, an online presence has become the virtual calling card of businesses across the country. With the bevy of affordable (or free) site publishing tools readily available, anyone can have a website up and running in less time than it takes to order lunch.

While it may be easy in theory, the fact remains that all sites are not created equal. To turn yours into a polished, professional branding tool that will build credibility in the eyes of your target market, start by focusing on these essential website elements:

a wide range of requirements, web design often overlaps into graphic design and programming tasks. After helping you plan the basic layout and structure of your site, a web designer will usually develop "mock-up" pages for you to review before back-end

programming begins. Good web design is a critical factor in ensuring a polished, professional site.

Web Hosting
Once your website is designed and developed, you'll need to find a web host. Web hosting providers have a network of servers that are connected to the Internet. All of the files associated with your website—HTML pages, graphics, style sheets, and so on—are stored on those servers, allowing them to be published on the web. There are thousands of hosting services available, many of which are very low cost or even free. Be careful, though: while it can be tempting to save money by going with the cheapest option, you may wind up sacrificing on quality of service. A good web hosting provider will ensure that your site runs quickly and reliably, and will address any issues in a prompt manner to minimize downtime.

Graphic Design
When it comes to maximizing your website's visual impact on visitors, no single factor is more important than graphic design. You might have the best sales copy ever written, but if it's not presented in an exciting, eye-catching manner, you'll be harder-pressed to turn browsers into buyers. Whenever possible, pair your online text with great imagery, logos, colors, and banners (without going overboard, of course). To prevent an amateurish site, it's a good idea to invest in a talented graphic designer with a trained eye and a proven track record.

Web Design
Anything that contributes to the front-end presentation of a website (the page that is shown to the consumer) falls into the web design arena. Encompassing

Programming
Content and graphics may be the first thing people see when they visit your website, but without the necessary programming, they won't be able to do anything once they get there. Programming uses behind-the-scenes coding languages (HTML, PHP, ASP, and JavaScript are some of the most common) to give your site all of its functionality, telling it to display content in certain ways, link pages to one another, and run various applications. Once you've solidified the layout and design of your site, the programming work begins. Many web designers and graphic designers have programming skills, and vice versa.

Web Address (Domain Name)
The domain name of your website can be likened to your house's street address—it designates where your site lives on the Internet and how consumers can access it. Choose a web address that clearly conveys your product or service, and that supports your branding identity. Avoid lengthy domain names, as these will be harder for consumers to remember. Keep it short, sweet, and clear. If possible, try to incorporate some good SEO keyword phrases—this can help give your site a boost in search engine rankings when potential customers are seeking the product or service you offer.

Emails
One of the most powerful and widely used marketing mediums, email
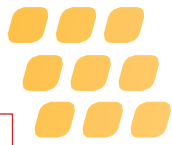
Elements of a *Website*

can be used to announce the release of a new product or service, offer a special promotion, provide editorial or instructive content, or gather important demographic information from consumers. But it goes both ways—your website should also provide your visitors with a mechanism to contact them with questions or suggestions. Your web hosting provider can activate an email account based on your domain name (i.e. info@amazon.com or sales@yahoo.com). Most hosting packages offer multiple email accounts for the same domain. If you include an embedded contact form on your website, it should route directly to your default email address.

SEO

Search Engine Optimization is one of the most important factors to consider when planning and designing your website. There are dozens of ways in which you can improve your site's rankings in Yahoo, Google, and other major engines. Some of the most effective strategies include keyword research, competitive analysis, paid search marketing (PPC), paid placement, search-friendly web design, and strategic link building.

E-Newsletters

As a cost-effective supplement to your online marketing efforts, an e-newsletter is a great way to establish a point of point of contact with customers who visit your website. Although the primary goal of electronic newsletters is to inform, they also double as highly effective sales tools, especially when you include subtle up-sells throughout the content. Because of the instructive nature of e-newsletters, they also help boost the credibility and reputation of your business. ◨

China vs. *the Internet*

With the world's largest population of Internet users, China has been instrumental in the popularity of social networking and media websites. In recent years, online communities have grown in power and influence, serving as a major source of entertainment, information, and collaboration among Chinese citizens.

The prevalence of web usage in China made the events of June 3, 2009 all the more shocking. As the country approached the 20th anniversary of the infamous Tiananmen Square conflict of 1989, the country's government took drastic measures to silence potential dissenters. In addition to physically deporting known dissidents and putting certain controversial writers under house arrest, China has shut down a large number of websites—among them Twitter, Flickr, Hotmail, and Microsoft's new search engine, Bing—to minimize online discussion of the bloody events that occurred on June 3-4 twenty years ago.

The shutdown isn't limited to the major user-generated sites—the government has also restricted access to a large number of specific web addresses that could potentially encourage the sharing of controversial or rebellious discussions. Thousands of online message boards have been blocked for college students, as have dozens of blogs written by political commentators who oppose governmental policies. YouTube (along with other major sites) has been restricted in China since March.

Why go to such extremes to limit access to user-generated sites? Many believe that this electronic censorship demonstrates the Chinese government's concern about the widespread impact of technology. With more than 300 million users counted at the end of last year, the Internet has provided an unprecedented opportunity for the Chinese population to share content, opinions, and media files—a collaboration that flies in the face of the government's tight control of information.

Since the Tiananmen Square events in 1989, China's government has for the most part refrained from commenting on the military's violent suppression of protestors, which resulted in the deaths of thousands of activists, students, and innocent citizens. The country has not permitted any independent investigation into the notorious conflict.

China's blocking of some of the most prominent social networking sites marks the significance of the Internet in the sharing of information. Web technologies have made it much easier for critics to voice their dissent, and more difficult for the government to ignore opposing viewpoints. The Internet has also allowed citizens to learn about prior corruption and conflict that might otherwise have been swept under the proverbial rug.

For their part, Chinese citizens aren't willing to take this latest wave of e-censorship lying down. Already, web users are using their ingenuity to find alternate means of collaborating. ◨

Marketing Tips
for *Websites*

You might have the slickest, snazziest website ever designed, but if your target consumers don't know about it, it will never see the light of their monitors—nor will it boost your business' bottom line. The planning of your site's marketing strategy deserves just as much attention as its design and development. Below are some time-tested tips for increasing exposure and qualified traffic for your online business.

Go for quality, not quantity.

When crafting your site's copy, keep in mind that it needs to appeal not only to customers, but also to search engines. Resist the urge to cram the pages with long blocks of copy—for optimum scannability and "spiderability," short and sweet is best. Be sure to weave in strategic keywords tailored to your target market. And don't neglect the Meta content—although much of it doesn't display prominently on your site, it can have a measurable impact on your Google and Yahoo rankings.

Advertise in other channels.

Multi-media promotion can be a highly effective—and surprisingly economical—way to expand your audience. Take out an ad in a newspaper or trade magazine with your URL prominently displayed. If your budget allows, you might even consider a radio or TV spot.

Cary business cards with your URL.

You never know when you might run into potential customers. For those impromptu chats at trade shows, bars, or bookstores—or just whenever an acquaintance asks what you do—handing over a clean, polished business card is a great way to spread the word and build credibility for your site.

Become a social butterfly.

Online networking is hotter than ever, with millions of people logging onto Facebook, LinkedIn, and other community sites every day. By establishing a presence for your online business on these social media sites, you'll stir up some buzz among potential customers. As an added bonus, the inbound links to your site will help increase your SERP (Search Engine Results Page) position.

Keep it fresh.

By regularly updating your site's content, you'll help promote its visibility among search engines, boosting your ranking in organic search results. Adding a blog is a great way to feed your site with dynamic, keyword-rich content, and also infuses your online business with a sense of community and personality. You might even consider adding an RSS feed so visitors can sign up to receive notifications of new posts.

Approach affiliates.

Brainstorm ways to benefit from the success of other companies serving your same market. For instance, if you sell pet obedience training services, contact online sellers of pet products and offer to "trade links" with them. By adding a banner or link from their site to yours, you'll increase the flow of qualified traffic while boosting your inbound linking strategy for SEO purposes.

Getting your website parked and running is just the first step toward achieving success as a web-based merchant. There are countless ways to boost your site's visibility and earning power. By starting with these basic tips and supplementing them with your own creative tactics, you'll be just a few clicks away from your own online success story. �«
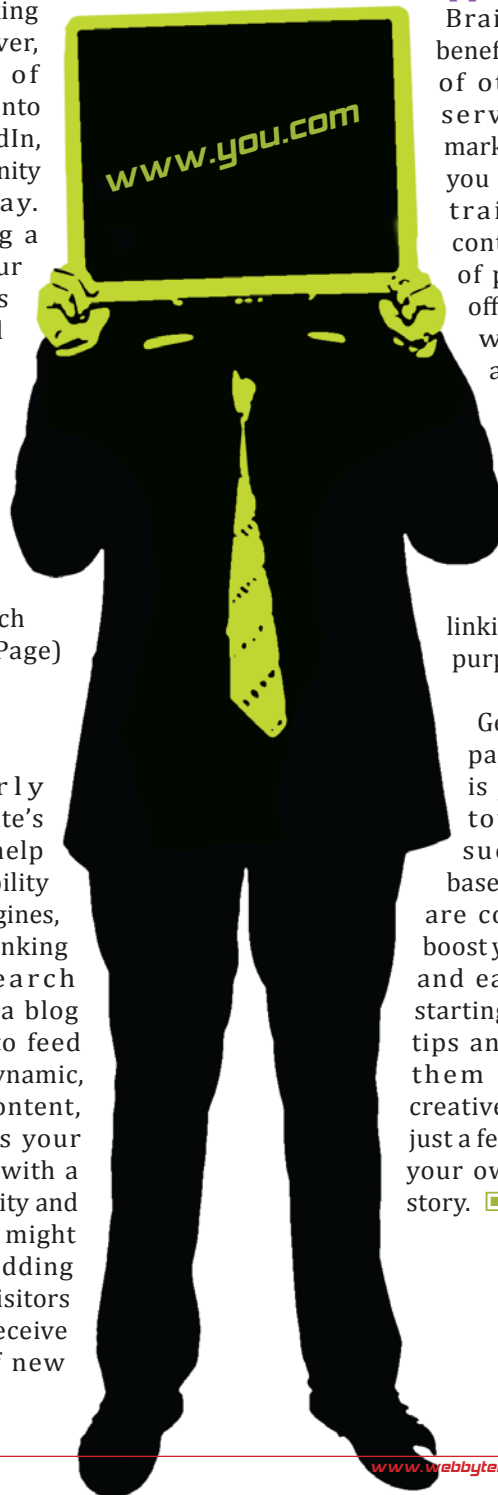
Google is Not the*Internet*

Some marketers might claim the "verbing" of brands as the ultimate measure of their success. Case in point:

"I'll send you an *IM* when I get home."

"I *Xeroxed* a bunch of copies for you."

"I *FedExed* the package yesterday."

"I'll *skype* you later."

Google is perhaps the most universally recognizable example of this phenomenon, as in "Let's *Google* 'baby stroller reviews' before we buy one" or "I *Googled* the company before the job interview."

The larger-than-life search engine was originally launched in 1998 by two Stanford students whose mission was "to organize the world's information and make it universally accessible and useful." Today, Google is the world's most lucrative online marketplace, racking up annual profits of $17 billion.

For less-than-savvy web surfers, the distinction between Google and the Internet may not be immediately clear. Below, we take a stab at clarifying the difference.

What is the Internet?

The Internet can be thought of as a massive network of millions of computers and servers located all around the world. All of these computers are connected by various forms of transmission, such as satellites, phone lines, wireless signals, and coaxial cables. Any information that is posted online is transmitted to all of the computers in the network, and can be viewed by any of the hundreds of millions of people who have access to an Internet connection.

The Internet uses a communications technology called TCP/IP (Transmission Control Protocol/Internet Protocol) that defines how all of the millions of computers will "talk" to one another. Internet surfers use a Web browser (such as Internet Explorer or Firefox) to access millions of published web pages.

Those who have access to the Internet can perform a multitude of functions, including visiting interlinked websites on the World Wide Web, sending email, making web-based phone calls, and uploading and downloading files to and from the Internet.

What is Google?

Although Google has many other facets and initiatives, the company is most widely known for its search engine, Google Search. Each day, Google Search receives several hundred million search queries, making it by far the biggest search engine on the web.

Google Search works by compiling all of the content from the Internet's millions of published web pages into one massive database. This index is constantly updated whenever information is added or changed.

When a user enters a keyword or phrase, Google Search uses a complex algorithm and certain syntax rules to rank the order in which search results are displayed. Many website administrators use Google as the benchmark for the success of their Search Engine Optimization efforts.

What's the Difference?

While Google is the web's largest platform for online searches, communications, and technologies, it's not synonymous with the Internet. The Internet can be thought of as what Google feeds on: the search engine indexes all of the millions of public web pages and then serves them up to Internet users in an organized and accessible manner.

In other words: the Internet could exist without Google, but Google couldn't exist without the Internet. ▣
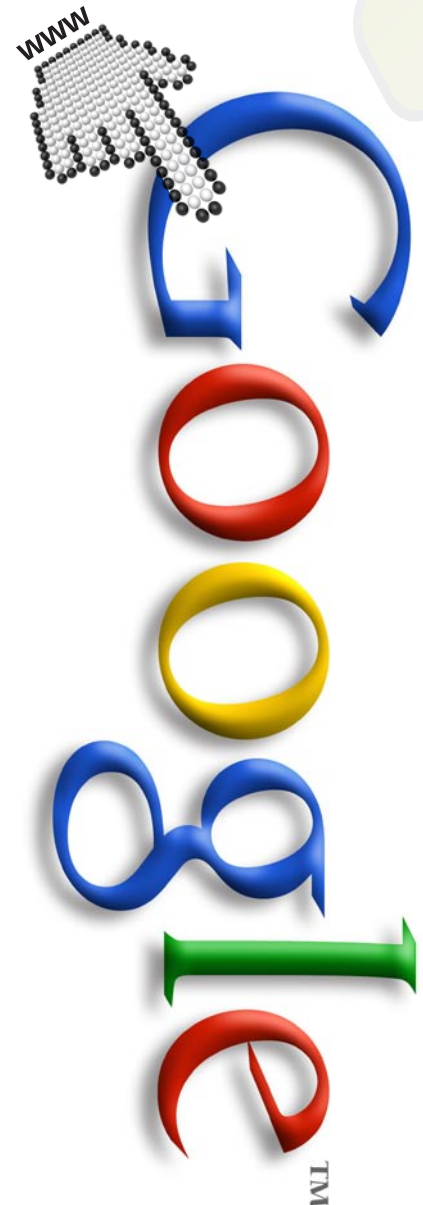
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New Websites

American Material Handling
www.amermaterial.com

Arkansas ACEP
www.arkansasacep.org

Central Security Distribution
www.buycsd.com

Central Termite & Pest
www.centraltermite.net

Exit Realty Select
www.selectyourexit.com

Mossy Oak Properties of Stuttgart Land and Auction Company
www.farmandhuntingland.com

Plastic Surgery Institute
www.edwardjlovemd.com

Pleasant Ridge Town Center
www.pleasantridgetowncenter.com

Redesigned Websites

Arkansas Foodbank Network
www.arkansasfoodbank.org

Arkansas School Psychology Association
www.aspaonline.net

Collector's of Wood Art
www.collectorsofwoodart.org

Hank's Fine Furniture
www.hanksfurniture.com
Home Place Furniture
www.homeplacefurn.com

Kircher Architecture
www.kirchnerarch.com

Little Rock Children's Clinic
www.littlerockchildrensclinic.com

Mossy Oak Properties Investment Realty
www.mossyoakpropertiesir.com

Nabholz Construction
www.nabholz.com

Ozark Outdoor Supply
www.ozarkoutdoor.com

Roberson's Fine Jewelry
www.robersonsfinejewelry.com

Southern Early Childhood Association
www.southernearlychildhood.org

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