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10 Free Business Resources I Wish I'd Known About When I Started Out

By Richard Adams

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The impression that you need large sums of money to set up a successful (and profitable) website is totally wrong.

Indeed, the longer that I do business on the Internet the more I find that there are numerous free resources out there that can be amazingly helpful.

I thought therefore that I'd put together a list of my ten favourite free business-building resources and exactly what they can do for you.

Ready?

1) Link Checkers

Visitors to websites hate "dead links" – links that don't got anywhere.

And because visitors hate it, so do search engines. They'll penalise you for dead links.

Therefore, by just making sure all your links work properly you'll look more professional, get better rankings in the search engines and build better rapport with your visitors.

> <http://validator.w3.org/checklink>

2) Alexa

Alexa ranks websites by traffic. The smaller the number of their ranking, the more traffic they get.

You can use it to keep a running tab of whether your traffic is increasing or decreasing – and compare it to your competitors.

Another useful feature is to check out potential link partners. Someone emails you and asks for a reciprocal link. But if you're getting more visitors each day than they'll get all year then it's not a fair deal – you'll send them tons of traffic and get virtually nothing back in exchange.

> <http://www.alexa.com>

3) Google Toolbar

The Google toolbar has two particularly useful features.

Firstly by installing it on your browser, whenever you visit a website it'll tell you their Google PageRank. PageRank is Google's measure of how "important" a site is. A PR of 1–2 is typical for new sites. 5 is reasonable and 7+ is very impressive indeed.

By only linking to high PR sites (5+) Google will see you in a better light.

Secondly, is that the Google Toolbar effortlessly lets you check "backwards links".

That way, you simply surf over to each of your main competitors, and use this feature to see which websites are linking to them. Then assess each website based on their PR and Alexa ranking to quickly come up with a powerful list of potential link partners. Easy!

> <http://oolbar.google.com/>

4) BetterWhois

You've got a list of potential link partners with high quality sites. Next visit each one to check for the quality of the site and that it's theme is closely related to yours.

Then find some way to contact them.

But what if you can't find one anywhere?

Just visit BetterWhois, type in the domain name, and up will pop all the information – including their email address.

Sorted.

> <http://www.betterwhois.com>

5) Link Partners

Done all of that, and still want more link partners? Well how about a website that lists dozens of websites, all actively looking for link partners?

> <http://www.linkpartners.com>

6) The Warrior Forum

Probably the greatest internet marketing discussion forum of all time, run by a select group of very helpful and successful internet marketers.

Together with links to tons of free articles, ebooks and special offers for visitors to the forum you'd have to be mad not to become a regular.

> <http://www.warriorforum.com/forum/>

7) Internet Marketing Index

The real strength of this site is that it is a **huge** database of marketing products and services.

All the links are categorised under dozens of headings – search engine optimisation, running a newsletter, writing ebooks etc.

So if you have a problem but don't know where to start – you just find the relevant heading and follow all the links to see masses of ebooks, programs and member sites that'll tell you everything you need to know about that topic.

> <http://www.internetmarketingindex.com>

8) GetResponse

The very least you should be doing with your website is gathering email addresses of your visitors. You can then use this information to market to them time and again.

You may decide to run a full-blown newsletter, and you might even like to use an autoresponder to distribute useful articles or sales letters to your prospects.

Whichever of these you decide to do, GetResponse will do it for you.

> <http://www.getresponse.com/index/40039>

9) HyperTracker

Produced by the same people as GetResponse, HyperTracker is an ad tracking service. If you place adverts anywhere on the

net HyperTracker will let you keep on top of the results.

> <http://www.hypertracker.com/index/40039>

10) Sitesell's Free Ebooks

Sitesell have made some free "trial" copies of their ebooks available – which are a fantastic introduction to their company, and e-commerce in general.

You'd have to be mad not to try them all out if you're new to e-commerce.

> <http://freetrial.sitesell.com/buynow.html>

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Computer Running Slow?...Here's One Reason

By John Evans

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Just the other day, my computer started running a little slow. Kind of puzzled me. And I put up with it for a while.

But then it got a little irritating. While trying to surf the web, I noticed that web pages were taking much too long to load. This is always an irritant. And, Internet Explorer was also taking its time coming up.

Now, I'm no novice on the computer, but, sometimes we humans can get a 'lapse of memory'. Anyway, that's my excuse for forgetting one of the basics of computing; and that is that the computer uses up SYSTEM RESOURCES.

Every program on the computer, including icons, uses some SYSTEM RESOURCES.

Whenever a program is started, it loads into your computer's memory. Memory is a resource. Some programs will release the memory it was using, when you quit the program, and some will not. So, part of a resource is not being made available to you. Get enough of these, and guess what? Slow Downs! Hang-ups (freezes).

I'm not an expert on the subject, but I did a little experimenting with this. Here's what I found (remember, this is only my computer, and yours may vary): After about 3 hours of operation, I checked my available resources; down to 58% free. So, from the right-hand end of my taskbar, I exited the Resource Meter;free

resources now up to 60%. Exited the Pop-Up Stopper; 63% free. Closed Windows Help; 64% free. Closed Windows Explorer; 66% free. Exited Download Accelerator; 71% free.

So, from 58% to 71% is a saving of 13%. May not sound like a whole lot, but it gives you a good idea as to why your computer may be slowing down.

How do you check your free System Resources? Just go to Control Panel>System>Performance. If you want to check it often, then just right-click on the System icon, choose 'Create shortcut'. It will appear on your desktop, and you can drag it down to the left end of your taskbar. Now it's available for quick use. Or...

Use the System Resource Meter. Go to Start>Programs>Accessories>System Tools, and click on Resource Meter. The meter will pop up in your task bar (right side), and you can keep an eye on it. When it starts to turn red, then your resources are getting low. But remember, it also is using up some of your System Resources.

When you restart your computer, these resources will be returned to you. But, as you again use the computer, your computer will again use up the resources.

It really is a 'never-ending' story, and something we all have to live with. But, if you'll restart your computer every once in a while, you may find that it runs a little bit faster.

Worth a try.

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