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Summer Vacationing With Family

By Charles Cater

So your family has decided to make a family reunion out of that yearly summer beach trip. Uncle Ed and Aunt Edna are coming in from Timbuktu. The cousins are driving in from Eastern Michigan. Your brothers and sisters are planning on traveling in by car with their requisite families. Somehow you have been nominated to coordinate this spectacular event. So where do you start.

Where do you plan to make this spectacular event happen? What type of housing do you plan on? What is the budget for all of the parties involved? What is the date of the event?

While to some these seem very simple in reality they are difficult and often times contentious issues. If Ed and Edna just want to go to the Mexican Riviera, that may make it difficult for those that are less well off to attend this event. A compromise must be reached. As you are the organizer this is your primary job. You should elicit suggestions from all the primary parties involved on the location. Then make a decision and inform everyone where you will be having the event. No negotiations at this point. You make the decision to have everyone in Hilton Head, SC and do not waver from this decision.

Now that the where geographically is decided it is time to determine the housing type that will be used. Under most circumstances you have several different options available:

Time Share Rental (Typically a 2 or 3 bedroom unit) – Each Family unit will need their own unit. Great for privacy.

Joint Beach House (Can range from 2 bedroom up to 15 bedroom) – Each family unit will have a room. Great for joint living spaces and getting the most out of group synthesis.

Hotel Stay (One family unit per Room) – No food prep. required as all meals will be eaten at restaurants.

Present these different selections and go with the group consensus. Make sure to outline the pluses and minuses of all the different scenarios. Then sit back and let democracy run its course. By this time you are more than likely 3–4 weeks into the planning stages.

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Now the final decision to be made. What is the budget for the rooms and units. This will limit the exact location. It would be advised to have researched this item slightly when presenting the unit type to the group and possibly utilizing this as a bracketing system for the different types of accommodations. Take everyone's feelings and concerns into consideration. Just because you are well off doesn't mean that the cousins are so well off financially. Once everyone has agreed on the budget you should begin working with a local rental company in your choice of location. Describe the situation in detail and let them know that you will be allowing the different family units to book their own accommodations. Never book the accommodations yourself. Doing business with family is highly not advised. You do not want to be mad at Uncle Ed the rest of your life because he stiffed you \$1000 deposit on the summer beach rental.

Now that all the necessities are taken care of make sure that everyone is kept up to date utilizing online correspondence. Make sure everyone knows everyone's arrival times. Finally relax and enjoy your

hard-earned vacation. Take some time during the week to spend with your family.

Charles Cater

Charles is an avid traveler. He loves to travel with his wife and two children. This article may be reprinted freely as long as all links remain active.

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Summer's Internet Traffic Jam

By Rob Young

Summer is finally here, and while for many, summer implies barbecues, school-break, vacations and trips to the beach; for most Internet businesses, summer implies slower traffic.

For an online business, traffic is paramount. Without it, conversions drop off, ROI's dwindle and businesses can fail. In the United States, netScore reported that seventy-four percent of the top 50 Internet properties experienced less traffic between May and June of 2001. A big reason for this huge reduction is the decrease in at-school Internet traffic. Visitor traffic from at-school computers, which represented almost 8% of U.S. Internet traffic in May, began declining as summer vacations started and decreased 40.5% in June compared to May. Traffic doesn't see an increase until mid-August.

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This means that for nearly four months, online sites are not seeing the traffic they so desperately need.

International Web usage is seeing declines in the summer months as well. Between mid-May and July of 2002, Russia reported a twenty-percent decline in summer Internet usage. Sweden saw its summer traffic stifled by eighteen-percent as early as July 1999, and many other countries around the world are feeling the hit of summer traffic reductions as well.

Seasonal traffic fluctuations are a recent phenomenon. The first few years of Internet usage saw such rapid growth in both the number of users and the number of pages visited, that seasonal variations were hardly noticeable. In recent years, however, Internet growth rates have slowed dramatically as the United States and the rest of the world crawls towards the user saturation point.

While most sites see drastic reductions of traffic from May to August, certain summer-oriented sites tend to be protected from the summer burn. May, June and July kick off the blockbuster movie season, drawing millions of visitors to Cinema sites. According to

movietickets.com

, traffic to their site

rose 66% to 600,000 visitors and Twentieth Century Fox Film reported that web site traffic jumped 26% to 372,000 visitors. For the lucky few online Cinema sites, summer's heat fires up traffic.

Weight loss and travel sites have also seen increased summer usage in the past as people try to slim down before venturing to the beach.

As noted above, Internet traffic regains strength beginning in mid-August. E-commerce and apparel site usage increases dramatically with back-to-school sales, and by September, vacationing begins to decline and general Internet usage rises to normal levels.

The important thing to note for online businesses is that decreased traffic doesn't necessarily have to mean decreased profits. Make the most out of summer Internet traffic and prepare your site for fall and winter traffic increases. Now is the perfect time to update and optimize your site.

Rob Young, Manager of Natural Optimization and Creative Director of full-service interactive marketing and advertising agency UnREAL Marketing Solutions, has been with the company since its inception in 1999. Young oversees the Natural Optimization and Creative departments.

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