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**Websites and Newsletters**

**By Michael LaRocca**

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If you are selling anything, you should have a website. If you are selling ebooks, you should consider it mandatory. How many people do you know who read ebooks but don't access the Internet? None come to my mind.

The best thing about having a website is that you can quite probably do it free. Later, once you know what you're doing, you can choose to buy a domain name and pay a hosting service if you want.

You can pay someone to design a gorgeous site for you, loaded with graphics, complete with a secure server and the option to buy right there, but I didn't. My publisher does the selling. Writing a site yourself, loaded with information and a place to click to send someone to your publisher, is simple.

For the actual mechanics of web site construction, send a blank email to [website@sendfree.com](mailto:website@sendfree.com).

So let's talk strategy.

"Hi, I'm Michael LaRocca and these are my books." This approach will guarantee that anyone looking for Michael LaRocca will find my site. But when we consider that no one's heard of Michael LaRocca, how many people will seek out my site?

Here's a possible solution.

Let's say you've written a book where most of the action happens on a snowmobile. Put together the best damn snowmobile page in history. Everything that anyone wants to know about snowmobiles should be on your site. Make it the kind of resource that any snowmobiler will go visit again and again. Then slip a little note in there mentioning your fiction book. People will find your site, and during one of those repeat visits they'll buy that book.

Basically, fill a need. Give folks a reason to keep coming back even if they think they'll never buy your book. And please, put more on there than just your book. In my case, I kept a high-traffic site running for almost a year without a single product

to sell. My site is a reference source for readers and writers. More writers than readers, probably, but writers read too. Maybe not the most original approach, but I write in so many genres that I haven't come up with anything better yet. I might later on.

Being helpful is my "sales gimmick," but I just so happen to enjoy it. People don't log onto the Internet with the purpose of spending money. They log on for information or entertainment, then maybe make an impulse buy while they're at it. Give them information and/or entertainment and they'll keep coming back.

If you throw in just a little soft sell, and do it right, they'll eventually make that impulse buy as a favor to you. Hopefully after they read one of your books, you'll hook them and they'll come back specifically to buy the rest.

### Search Engines

The single most important and effective way to bring traffic to your website is to place it in the search engines, in the appropriate categories. You want to place it in the top ten or twenty slots.

The best way to learn how to do this is to send a blank email to [tamswriteangles@sitesell.net](mailto:tamswriteangles@sitesell.net). You'll receive a free five-day course by email, over 200 pages long in all, that will tell you more than you ever wanted to know.

Also, visit Search Engine Watch and subscribe to the free newsletter. <http://www.searchenginewatch.com>. Useful advice on a

monthly basis.

### Newsletter

Why do I have a newsletter? To tell you when my books are for sale, of course. To announce each new book as it becomes available. It also comes in handy whenever I change the address of my website, as a way to tell folks I've moved.

But of course, almost nobody will subscribe to a newsletter just for that info alone. Just groupies. I've got over 600 subscribers, and certainly they're not all groupies. Nope, I'm actually providing useful info and filling a need again. And slipping in occasional the "read my book" message while I'm at it.

If you don't feel you can write a newsletter, you can use the "free content" sites to get someone else to do the writing.

Instead of paying contributors, you simply allow them to include their URL. They'll appreciate the free advertising, and you won't have to write for your newsletter unless you feel like it.

But really, why have a newsletter? There are ways to promote web sites (search engines) and there are ways to promote newsletters (announcement lists). Each generates a different type of traffic.

Your newsletter can mention your website, your website can mention your newsletter, and you will gain more users in both areas.

### Newsletter Promotion

One quick and easy trick for promoting your newsletter or discussion group is to take advantage of the free announcement lists. It'll take you about two minutes a week.

What is an announcement list? Put simply, the Internet has users who enjoy receiving newsletters, and receiving regular announcements of what newsletters are out there. These are people with some time on their hands, probably the same people who will be the most receptive to buying your books.

The way I've set things up on my computer is, I've written an ad for my newsletter. I send the same ad to the announcement lists

as often as they'll allow it. In the same file with my announcement, I have a "monthly list" and a "weekly list" of email addresses that I send this ad to. Also in the file, I record when I last sent my announcement to them.

Once a week, with a two-minute copy-and-paste job, I'm advertising. Every time I do this, more subscribers arrive. Apparently different people are always joining these announcement lists, and some of them are joining my newsletter subscriber list.

You have to join any announcement list before you can announce on it, but you don't have to receive the announcements yourself. All the major newsletter/discussion group hosts will allow you to set your options to "No Mail/Read On The Website."

Visit <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/michaellarocca/files/> and pick up a copy of the file I use. It's called NewsletterAd.rtf. All typed in and ready to go, except for the "signing up" bit. (If you're not receiving my free newsletter, you might want to join while you're there. \*grin\*)

Once you join each group --- that might take you an hour or two ---

you'll be ready to send out those weekly emails.

To join the SmartGroups lists, log onto <http://www.smartgroups.com>. Each group address is <http://www.smartgroups.com/groups/{listname}>

{listname} refers to the part of the email address before the @

To join the Topica lists, log onto <http://www.topica.com>  
Each group address is <http://www.topica.com/lists/{listname}>

To join the YahooGroups lists, log onto <http://groups.yahoo.com>  
Each group address is <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/{listname}>

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/PublishInYours> is a good starting place. Also in Yahoo Groups are [articles\\_announce](#), [articles\\_archives](#), [Free-Content](#), and [publisher\\_archives](#).

You can also look in any search engine for "free content" and find some more.

I recommend Media Peak (<http://www.mediapeak.com>) and Nerdworld (<http://www.nerdworld.com>).

### Newsletter Unveiling

I'm not going to list all these sites in my article. You can find them at [http://free\\_reads.tripod.com/websitenewsletter.html](http://free_reads.tripod.com/websitenewsletter.html). There are 31 of them. When I visited them all, I watched my subscriber base grow by about 200 in a month. I don't know which sites should get the credit.

Most of them allow you to list your newsletter for a month. I may or may not visit them again at some point, because they take a lot longer than the two-minute job I mentioned before.

### Conclusion

Okay, that should keep you busy for a while! Set up your website, set up your newsletter, and do some announcing. If you have any questions along the way, write to [michaellarocca@lycos.com](mailto:michaellarocca@lycos.com) and I'll do what I can.

Michael LaRocca is the author of four published novels and an EPPIE 2002 Award finalist. He is an

American living in Asia, and he's been a full-time author and editor since December 2000. His website is designed to help you find the best free and low-cost quality reads, and to help you improve/publish/promote your own writing free and avoid scams. [http://free\\_reads.tripod.com](http://free_reads.tripod.com)

## **Tips For Finding More Coupons**

### **By Gabriel Adams**

If you're one of the many people who collect and use coupons to save money, here are a few ways to find even more money saving coupons. In this article, I'll list many sources you can check to find coupons.

**Your Local Newspaper** Subscribe to your local newspaper, and then check it each day for useful coupons. The Sunday or weekend edition paper will often have an especially wide selection of coupons.

**Magazines** Many magazines will feature coupons within their industry. You can even check your library to see which magazines have coupons that would be of use to you.

**Newsletters** Join the mailing list of your favorite companies. Companies will often include coupons in

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their newsletters. You can sign up for most newsletters on the companies website or at your local store. Some companies will automatically put you on their newsletter when you get a discount shoppers card. Of course, a discount shopping card is another great way to save money.

**E-newsletters** Just like paper newsletters, email newsletters often contain coupons or special deals. Just join the email news list of your favorite companies.

**Online coupon sites** There are many sites on the internet that contain archives of online or printable coupons. Visit these sites to find some great money saving coupons.

**Local coupon sites** There are also many local websites that contain coupons for businesses in your local area - you can usually find these sites listed in your yellow pages, or call your chamber of commerce.

**Shopping papers** Many shopping newspaper type publications, such as Thrifty Nickels, will contain numerous coupons.

**Grocery Store** Don't forget to get coupons from your grocery store. Many stores have coupons various places throughout the store. Other stores print coupons on the back of your receipt. Either way, your grocery store is a great source of coupons.



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