Suggested Technology Resources

Blogging
Electronic Publishing
Screencasting
Video
Podcasting
Design
and More!

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Suggested Technology Resources

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INTRODUCTION

At some point, hopefully sooner than later (maybe even prompted by this document), a "light bulb" will go off and illuminate the path before you. You are already empowered by virtue of technology tools that are widely available to create viral marketing media, messages, and businesses.

Realize that there's nothing stopping you from (individually or collaboratively):

1)   Developing Blogs.

2)   Writing more eZine articles.

3)   Creating eBooks.

4)   Recording/posting Podcasts, Screencasts, and Video.

5)   Conducting (more) interviews with entrepreneurs (and with permission, posting those

interviews on your own Blogs).

6)   Creating joint venture projects.

7)   Expanding your network well beyond anything you may have previously imagined!

PODCASTING

The technical capabilities for creating a "Podcast" (MP3) file entail hardware, software, and some degree of skill, but all of these are easily met by anyone who is willing to follow procedures, which are detailed in widely available tutorials that can be found by searching the Internet. One of the best of these tutorials (with streaming video lessons) is available here: http://www.how-to-podcast-tutorial.com.

The software we recommend is called Audacity, and it is free. Instructions for using this software as well as information about where it can be downloaded – in Mac, Windows, or Linux versions – are given in the aforementioned tutorial. Do note that you will need some of the "plug-ins" (these are basically add-ons to an existing program that increase its functionality) discussed in the tutorial, especially the one that allows you to export a website-friendly "MP3" file from the Audacity software program. The plug-ins are also free (and their installation and use are thoroughly covered in the tutorial).

Besides a computer, the only other hardware you must have is a microphone. We do suggest a combination microphone/earphone headset, and one of "good" quality can be found at any office supply or electronics "big-box" retailer for around $20 to $30 (unless you want to spend a lot more to do "pro" and get something like one of these:

http://www.rodemic.com/microphone.php?product=Podcaster.

Should you decide to add "bells and whistles" to your podcast production, the tutorial also provides a discussion and helpful links to resources pertaining to acquiring royalty free background music, etc. (the audio equivalent of clip art – this typically costs $15 to $20 for a "sound clip").

As a rule of thumb, when a written script is converted into an audio recording, "a little text goes a long way" (and the opposite is true, if you have ever had a voice recording transcribed into a text document). Approximately two to three pages of text could easily run five minutes in a podcast recording.

E-BOOK PUBLISHING

eBooks are also extremely powerful viral marketing tools. Thus, background information on eBooks in that context can be found here:

http://www.davidmeermanscott.com/documents/Viral_Marketing.pdf

As an example of a very successful eBook, you might also visit this link (select the "Get It!" tab on the site's home page):

http://www.sethgodin.com/ideavirus/

The following link provides an example of an existing eBook created by Cohort 6:

http://paws.wcu.edu/rjlahm/teaching/graduate_entrepreneurship/Entrepreneurial_Marketing_eBook.pdf

SCREENCASTING

Screencasting provides a way communicate creatively and expand your audience in addition to increasing your productivity; there are many possible approaches. Here is a link about screencasting software in general. I would also recommend a guide entitled *Screencast Videos for YouTube* (which is popular option as a place to post finished screencasts). Our recommendation (some faculty have Camtasia, which is excellent but not cheap) would be of course to research on your own and compare. To help you get started, see:

http://thescreencastinghandbook.com/

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Comparison_of_screencasting_software

One of the more popular programs that you should be able to use is one called Jing, which is free, by the makers of Camtasia.

Another free alternative is a FireFox (Internet browsing software) add-on, Capture Fox Movie.

For Mac OSX users and if you wish to purchase, other than a possible upgrade to JingPro (or Camtasia, both of which are multiplatform), we recommend that you take a look at SnapzProX or ScreenFlow. Regardless of your choice, keep in mind that all software has its pros and cons, so our suggestions are not an endorsement, merely an effort to indicate some popular and well reviewed alternatives.

The Camtasia blog (Visual Lounge) provides some excellent suggestions. For example, see the list of tips here.

Here's another link to demonstrate how one leading creative firm is also having fun with Jing!

DESIGN

Serious graphic designers use tools and techniques to develop unique identity programs for their clients. They may study and practice for years to develop their skills and talents, and when they master these the result will be called "instincts." Hence, although we will discuss some software tools, tips and tutorials, you should be advised that identity (like legal and accounting practice) is an area where you either need to be very good at rendering messages through graphic symbolic imagery, or get professional help.

The YouTube link here makes it all seem simple (we would respectfully submit that contrary to the creator's remarks at one point, it's not always as quick and easy as he suggests, but you can watch one designer's process as a screencast).

Here is a link to a Webpage which lists "100+ Incredible Sources for Logo & Identity Inspiration."

Here is a link to another "freebie" tool that some of you may wish to download. The program is useful for editing graphics for websites, eBooks, and other applications that are associated with assignments of late (and things you need to do as entrepreneurs)

WEBSITES: DOMAIN NAMES AND HOSTING

Lessons Learned the Hard Way

Over the years I have learned many lessons the hard way, such as with hosting companies that "nickel and dime" account holders to death with add-on fees for things like extra email accounts (all of the account-types discussed above in the "Hosting" section have unlimited emails and unlimited databases).

I hate to say it, because the domain name registrar that I have used very happily for years (I have owned over 150 domain names; see further discussion under "Domain Name Registration") has been excellent for domain name purchases and management, but the services such as hosting plans and email accounts I have tried are *not* what I desire (judge for yourself). As you have observed (if you clicked the previous link), the company I use for domain names, only, is associated with the GoDaddy Group.

One other warning: Wherever you get your hosting services, and wherever you buy your domain name, do keep these **_SEPARATE_**. If you own and control a domain name, you can always move your site to a different hosting company. But, when you get your domain name, even supposedly for "free" in combination with a hosting plan (an arrangement that is often offered by hosting companies), then you can experience a "gotcha" when you want to arrange for your hosting services to be moved to another hosting provider.

Domain Name Registration

Don't forget the "Lessons Learned the Hard Way" above: Buy your domain name from a domain name registrar, and keep your hosting separate, even if the domain name is suggested to be "free"—maybe *especially* if it is supposedly free. You do realize that you're going to pay for it anyway (it's going to be built-into the cost of the hosting plan).

I have used DomainVolcano.com for years (almost a decade). I own enough domain names such that I have wondered if the excellent telephone and other support I have received has been based on my status as a volume purchaser. However, based on experiences where I have referred others (including complete novices), telephone support has consistently been effective at problem solving as well as answering basic questions. A domain name is about $10 per year (or less with volume pricing). The first time I bought a domain name in 2003, I paid a whopping $35 per year—now that was a price difference that was worth my time to do some research and make a switch, especially when I wanted to buy more and more domain names. But at or around ten bucks a year, my biggest concern is making sure I get good service, which I do.

What happens next?

Once you have a domain name secured (and I would recommend several variations if you are planning a significant site and Internet presence), then you need a hosting plan.

Upon establishing a hosting account (discussed below), then you will need to come back to this section and use the screencast that I have developed in order to demonstrate how to "set nameservers." Nameservers refer to locations on the Internet where sites exist, and specifically, where your site is hosted—this can be likened to a change of address notice that is given to your local postmaster.

Your hosting services provider will tell you (typically in a welcome email for your hosting account) what the server address will be for your specifc hosting account. [Watch the screencast for more detail and step-by-step instructions](#).

Hosting

A host computer provides a place where files are stored and executed, and "served" to a Website's visitors. Hence, the alternate term for a hosting computer that one often encounters is a "server." For instance, you might see usage such as our servers are "fast," "slow," "up," "down," "secure," et cetera.

For our EntrepreneurshipInterviews.org site (initially created by Drs. Lockwood and Lahm), after doing some homework we selected Hostgator and have been using its "Business Plan" hosting option. At the time it was identified as our preferred choice, one of the things that attracted our attention was *Inc.* magazine's list of fastest growing private companies; the company has won a number of other awards. (I also have other sites including those of my own and those that I have been involved with developing).

FYI, I like the "Baby Plan" or the "Business Plan." They are both multi-domain accounts, which means that the number of sites that can be hosted is unlimited by using the aforementioned "addon" feature (as compared to the "Hatchling Plan," which only allows for hosting one website).

Important: I have found that hosting plans with the extra features and telephone support that come with more robust plans like the "Business Plan" to be well worth it.

CPanel

In my opinion, at a minimum a decent hosting plan should have a cPanel interface (short for "Control Panel," an icon based interface for configuring and operating a site). Current versions of cPanel include an automatic installer for WordPress (and other software). I am familiar with these features and can often help other users with them (there is a demonstration for cPanel on the cPanel.net site. If you've clicked on the links above, by now you should understand that this software runs on a hosting computer and allows users to manage a number of functions such as setting up email accounts, making backups, viewing usage statistics, installing software, and the like.

BLOGGING

WordPress ("Free" versus installed with a hosting plan)

Do understand that I STRONGLY RECOMMEND a blog that you pay for and control, as compared to one of the many free ones (where you have no control). There are a lot of reasons, including security. I recently witnessed a nightmare scenario which involved a case of identity theft. The legitimate blogger was expelled by the hijacker/hacker from the site; then porn was posted; the legitimate owner was then at the mercy of the free hosting company's support staff to take the site down. You know, when it's "free," support is not exactly in a hurry to help you!

> Also be aware that with the free sites (which I don't use), there can be little (or NO!) support from me. There are just too many different kinds, each with different systems and methods for getting things done.

I am pretty comfortable with WordPress.org blogging software, installed on a site with a hosting plan that you (the user) would pay for. These hosting plans are really inexpensive, about $5 to $10 a month is typical.

People are often confused by Wordpress.org versus WordPress.com. WordPress.org provides the software used by "pro" bloggers, whereas WordPress.com provides "free" accounts (similar to free Blogger accounts, and others). This video provides a further explanation regarding WordPress.org professional software.

WordPress (blogging software)

An excellent video on "Widgets" (important for managing what is shown in the sidebar of typical sites, e.g., advertisements, RSS feeds that pull in content)

From the same site above with the "Widgets" video, here is an index to several more training videos.

This video explains "Plug-ins," and this one explains "Themes." Most content management systems (CMS) use the logic behind a plug-in type of system; WordPress, i.e., the software from WordPress.org, is a type of CMS. Drupal.org, for example (a far more complex CMS than WordPress) uses an equivalent called "modules."

Spell-Checker

On my Windows machines (I use both Mac and Win-doze), I have a nifty little program that allows me to run spell-check when I am entering text in a box, like the ones used on message board, blog posts, comments and other forms. I would point out the program has an "add word to dictionary" feature. Once installed on your machine, you can "right click," to select all text, and then initiate the spell-checking feature.

The program is free for personal use.

FTP (File Transfer Protocol)

This is the FTP (File Transfer Protocol) software that I use: FileZilla. There are others. This one is free, but it also happens to do anything I need.

FTP is the way that one gets site files from a personal computer, to the other computer on the Internet where his/her site exists. This other computer us also known as a host; when a visitor on the Internet visits the files that are on that host computer, it "serves" the requested files to the "guest/visitor." A host computer is also sometimes called simply, a server. On a password protected site (or certain pages), the server will "deny" access to the requested files (in other words, it will tell you to log in if you try to see something/access files that you are not authorized to be "served").

The way the FileZilla interface looks, is not going to be unfamiliar to anyone who has ever copied files from one folder, by dragging and dropping those files, to another folder. Folder A = your computer; Folder B = the host-server-computer.

Perhaps the above will help with some of the techno-jargon for those who are brand new to this. Here is a link to a video that explains file transfers via FTP.

Making Money With Blogs

You will not get rich quick, and it requires work, strategy (and probably partnerships and working with other bloggers), but it is possible to make money with blogs (e.g., advertising placements, consulting, affiliate networks, joint ventures). This section is associated with money making techniques and information.

Here's a link to get you started. Yaro Starak of Entrepreneurs-Journey.com has also recently published a post on this topic, which includes several case studies. Yaro is very successful and

has a free ebook entitled *Blog Profits Blueprint* for more on the subject of professional blogging for profit.

VIDEO

http://rapidvideoblogging.com/resources/

http://gideonshalwick.com/which-camera-is-best-for-rapid-video-blogging/

COLLABORATION

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_collaborative_software

SOCIAL MEDIA

Here's a concise but excellent article from Mashable.com that you might start with as an introduction to social media, defined by the author as "relationship and conversation media": 10 Steps for Successful Social Media Monitoring.

Radian6 is a social media monitoring firm that provides numerous free resources, along with paid "listening" and analysis tools for organizations (ranging from several hundred to several thousand dollars per month). If this sounds expensive to you, then you need to consider the cost of other forms of connecting with customers (or worse yet, failing to connect with customers or being unaware and not addressing social media feedback). You might note that Radian6 is in effect "practicing what it preaches" by using its blog, e-books, white papers, and videos as viral marketing tools (and very likely, you should be pursuing a similar strategy).

COMMUNICATION

A Skype account is an excellent way to communicate for "free" using an individual account for IM, video, and/or audio (you get to choose what other parties see/receive from your end, and vice versa). Skype runs on Windows and Mac OS and also has additional "Skype for Business" accounts (for a nominal charge) designed with more features.