

WHY EVERY WRITER NEEDS A WEBSITE!

by

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If you're a writer and don't have your own website to advertise yourself, you're missing out on a lot of opportunities. How do I know? Well, I've had my own site for about seven years now, and during that time it's brought me dozens, possibly hundreds, of work opportunities. Here are just a few which came my way as a result of people seeing my site...

- * Hamlyn Publishing (UK) wanting me to write a couple of two-page spreads for a proposed book.
- * A retired gangster living in Ireland wanting me to help write his memoirs.
- * A local video company, wanting my help scripting a training video.
- * A US publishing house wanting me to ghost-write an exposé of malpractice in the insurance industry.
- * A UK publisher, wanting me to quote for producing a series of city guides for publication on the Internet.
- * And, not least, White Cliff Computing Limited, whose interest in my work led to me writing two courses for them, "[Write Any Book in 28 Days – Or Less!](#)" and "[Quick Cash Writing](#)".

I didn't actually take up all of the opportunities mentioned above. Sometimes I was too busy with other projects (and I must admit the retired gangster scared me a little...). However, the point is that none of these approaches would have come my way without a website.

There are other benefits as well. If I'm applying for a new writing project or commission, I can simply suggest that the potential client refers to my website if they require any further information. It saves constantly sending out weighty CVs or résumés, and makes me look like a technologically aware, up-to-the-minute sort of guy (this becomes more important when, as in my case, you are no longer in the first flush of youth). The website also helps me keep in touch with readers of my books, and it provides me with an additional (if small) income stream through advertising.

OK, I hear you saying, you've sold me on the benefits of having a website, but I'm a writer, not a tech-head. I don't know how to create my own site, and I don't have the spare cash to hire someone to build one for me.

Let's take the latter point first. Getting a website built for you need not be hugely expensive. Freelance writers really don't need whizzy, cutting-edge designs with Flash animation, online databases, shopping trolleys, and so forth. A basic site which showcases you and your work should be more than sufficient. Try entering "website designer" in your favorite search engine and you'll get hundreds of potential designers. Approach a few with details of your requirements and see what responses you get. You may well be pleasantly surprised by the quotes you receive. Website design is a very competitive field – and, of course, the designer you use can be based anywhere in the world.

However, if at all possible, I do strongly recommend that you consider building and maintaining your own site. This has all sorts of advantages. For one, you can update it yourself quickly and easily, and you can also create it exactly as you wish. You can add bits, take bits away, try out advertising, start your own newsletter, etc. etc. This is the route I have taken, and although my site is never going to win any awards for its design, it suits my purposes very well.

In my time I've used various programs to create and maintain my website, starting with a program called the CompuServe First Web Page Designer (now, I'm sure, residing in software heaven). If I was starting again today, however, I would definitely invest a few bucks in the Newbie Club First Website Builder. This is a four-volume guide to creating, writing, designing, automating, uploading and promoting your own website, in fully illustrated e-book format. As well as the four beautifully written e-books, you get loads of free software, including the Super Easy Mini Site Wizard, which will build a basic site for you in literally minutes. Check out everything on offer in this product at <http://tinyurl.com/2syw8>. I guarantee it'll blow you away.

Even if you decide to hire a professional designer to create your site for you, the Newbie Club First Website Builder will show you everything you need to know in order to take over the running of your site and maintain and update it yourself.

Incidentally, the Newbie Club, which is aimed at people new to computing rather than IT specialists, also produces a free email newsletter packed with hints and tips for newcomers to computing – you can sign up to it at <http://tinyurl.com/2zgy2> if you wish. Although I've been using PCs for quite a while now, I still subscribe, and regularly pick up useful hints and tips I hadn't been aware of before.

Nick Daws is a best-selling author living in Staffordshire, England. You can discover his exciting course "How to Write Any Book in 28 Days – OR LESS!" online at <http://www.writequickly.com/>