

Who Should Read This Book

Everyone

The world is moving so fast and getting smaller as the internet weaves an invisible social and business web around us. So this book is for everyone who wants to get online for personal and business reasons.

Do you want to get online for business purposes, such as starting an online business to earn an extra income? Does your organisation or association need a web presence?

Or do you have a large, extended family scattered all over the world and want to start a project to keep everyone up to date with one website? Some topics specific to business may not interest you, but the info about how to do it yourself at hardly any cost will most certainly come in handy.

The book is also ideal for students (young and old) who want to slowly build up a profile or portfolio of their work. When I was freelancing, free blogs and easy to do yourself sites weren't around so now there's no excuse for anyone to not have an online presence.

Here's a quick list of who should read this book and why.

Artists and Creatives

Talented artists should be selling their work online. My sister's hubby is extremely talented and instead of waiting around for galleries to notice his work she set up a site for him to start selling his work to the world at large. It's a great way to show off a portfolio without dragging a bunch of heavy canvases around town. Give your local gallery the link and ask them to choose which ones they want to exhibit, if not all. Email regional and national galleries as well. And make sure you optimise your speciality with keywords, such as traditional oils or contemporary watercolours.

Associations

There are countless associations who would benefit from getting online. A site with a few pages either done with easy to use boxed software or a free blog site, is the ideal tool to direct enquiries. Also, just being 'out there' gives people the ability to find the association when someone searches.

Actors and Sports Personalities

All up and coming athletes, swimmers, runners and all sports people with an ambition to see their name in lights at future Olympics should get themselves online. A website is the ideal stage for showing off your skills as a talented sports person.

Potential sponsors will be far more impressed if you show yourself to the world at large. If you start building a following through your site, they are also more likely to sponsor you. See the topic of sponsorship where we discuss generating revenue. Similarly, actors who want to attract casting agents and film producers should have an online profile. This also goes for Amateur Dramatic Students who want to 'break' into the industry.

Authors and Writers

This is my personal favourite. Authors, writers and self published authors could do with a little peek into these pages to learn how to get visibility if they are not yet published. And if

they are, they should be building a following where their readers are able to have some kind of personal contact with them.

Before I found a Publisher for this book, I didn't have money for a grand site so I created a simple Wordpress blog with tabs to act as my pages to show off my writing material to potential publishers (paulawynne.wordpress.com). This can be converted into a full website when the need arises. I encourage all writers to give it a go.

Whether you are an established author promoting your books to a wider audience or a new writer peddling manuscripts to Publishers and Agents, having your own site will take your profile to the next level.

Emerging and new writers need to create a readership, which will help them get published. It's a superb way of introducing agents and publishers to you and your material, and if you can create a 'platform' of followers, readers and interest groups, you will be more valuable to a publisher one day.

This is my story because I established a business 'platform', which leveraged my proposal to publishers and led to me being commissioned to write this book. I aim to do the same for my novels.

Book Clubs

A simple little idea, such as a book club or reading group website invites people to share a passion for similar interests. Post quick notices about past meetings or hook newcomers with enticing future reads. So if you have a hankering for setting up a club, not just a book club, in your area, read on.

Churches

Even God is online. The obvious group to welcome new people into the fold will be a local church. All sorts of information can be posted freely through a blog or easy to use site. Some people may have the odd occasion to find a local church service to give thanks, such as Christmas. In times of grief, people are naturally drawn to God so churches can reach out to their local community by sharing details of their services and events online.

New and Established Business

Can I be so bold to say that it is a sin for any business, new and old, not to be online? I may be stretching my neck out here, but I look back at myself and crack a ruler over my own knuckles for all the time and business I lost by not getting online quicker. If only I had known how easy it was and that I could do it free! I wish I had had a book like this that showed me how to get online with quick, easy and, often free, advice.

This book is the perfect solution for anyone thinking of setting up an online business or making the transition to get your current business online and growing it to 'the next level'.

Everyone has skills that could add a little extra income to the household. Whether it's a new full time business to replace your day job or a simple, small sideline business, you should read on.

Teach yourself how to create a successful website. Grab a coffee, put your feet up and snuggle down with this book and ample paper for scribbling notes. Or, you may prefer to have your laptop or PC handy to get more specific details into a word or excel document.

Career Hunters

Use the Web to Enhance Your Career. HR experts believe that a strong online image can help job hunters to land their dream job. A web presence should be carefully managed to create an online reputation that employers will see.

Community Groups

There is a wide diversity of cultural groups and communities that have been founded through an online presence. These communities work to welcome locals, share ethnic or cultural characteristics and discuss subjects effecting the people or community as a whole.

Some local communities may want to get online and maintain a 'localised' presence. Others may want to open their arms and build a larger following. Either way, common interests can also be discussed online in a virtual community where geography has no bounds.

eBay-ers

If you currently run an eBay site, it is worth having your own site, not only to show your products, but to instil trust in your buyers.

Many eBay-ers now realise the value in having a site connected to their Ebay account so they can get the benefit of both worlds. Many thousands of users run an eBay business as their primary source of income, while cottage industries earn a secondary income from eBay. If this is you, why not take your earnings to the next level and create a site for your products. Keep your eBay account and use it to drive traffic to your new site.

Film Makers

Student and amateur film makers or indeed any film makers will get noticed and build credibility by setting up a web presence. Add all your film projects to your website and with targeted optimisation, social interaction and publicity, your films will start to gain an audience of followers.

Graduates and Students

All graduates and students should consider setting up an online presence now, while you are studying, especially if you know which career path you will take.

FOR EXAMPLE: as a training web designer you can set up a site to contain images and a portfolio of the first sites you built. Not only will this be useful as a reminder of how far you have come, but blogging and building an optimised profile could help to earn an income while studying and if you want to set up your own business one day, you will already have an established online presence.

Are you design student? How about showcasing a portfolio of your designs? They may not be well-known, but could earn a small income while at University and this could possibly become the foundation for a future design business.

A word of warning, though, be careful not to show drunken images of University life on your Facebook page. Many students upload all sorts of things without thinking or realising that future employers or potential clients may see their escapades as well!

Hobby-ists

Keen Hobby-ists are gearing up for the net. More and more people who make their own crafts are sharing their passion with browsers who find their websites. If you have a hobby that is worth showing off, why not consider creating a website for it and see where your hobby could take you?

You may have no intention of making money from it, but just think of all the other people who enjoy the same or similar hobby and how you could all help each other, trade secrets, swap tips and converse with other hobbyists.

Home Industry

If you bake cakes for your local area, maybe selling them in shops and pubs, have you considered setting up a website to show off what you do?

Craft specialists would also gain by having an online presence to act as a 'shop' window for selling hand made products. There are so many thousands of home industries, from cake making to specialist toy makers. They can all get online and work towards increasing visibility in a region.

Internet Entrepreneurs

A dead-end job, no money, redundancies, failed dreams, a failed marriage, seeing family suffer, dropping out of college and all manner of things can 'grow' an entrepreneur and turn them into a success. Don't wait for something to change your life. Get up and do change it now.

"You are not born an entrepreneur, you grow into one."

Unknown

Practitioners

All practitioners and health and beauty services should be online, especially people who feature a mobile service. When I was having physiotherapy after a shoulder operation, I chatted away telling my therapist all about my site, what I was doing, how I was doing it and generally boring her, I thought, with all the daily routines.

However, she was totally inspired by my chit chat and promptly went out and found someone to help her build a small site for her business. This type of site may only be a few pages and could easily be done through a blog's free templates, which allow you to show page tabs so it looks like a dinkum website. Practitioners can establish a local following by optimising their geographical regions.

Professionals and Freelancers

All professionals, freelancers and consultants should be building an online profile, not just with Social Media, but with your own website. It is a great way to capitalise on your expertise and generate new revenue streams for your freelance business. The same goes for anyone who wants to be head-hunted and climb the corporate ladder. Don't only show off a LinkedIn profile. With your own free website you control the areas of your CV you want to feature with its own landing page. Get found by the best employers and outsourcers - or go one better and send your ideal boss an email with a link to your website. You will WOW their socks off!

Party Plan Agents

There is a hive of micro home based businesses who work in the direct selling arena. Party plan agents and distributors who run their own home business. Show off your wares to local and regional customers and even run an online party booking service.

Retailers

The web is an obvious place for a retailer to 'open' an all day shop window, so it is surprising to find out how many are still not online.

Even if you can't afford a fancy online shop to accommodate all your products, you should at least have a small site and provide contact details to encourage people to buy your items and re-order. Rather have a small profile than none.

If you are starting a retail outlet online, you'll need a secure ecommerce shopping cart, product catalogue, web store admin tools and the all essential secure transaction protection. See the section about how to set up an online shop. Some exciting stuff in there!

Tradespeople

People who specialise in a trade, such as Plumbers, Electricians and Carpet Fitters must get themselves online pretty damn quick. Just because a 'man-in-white-van' claims his place of work is out in the field, that's no reason he can't shout about his service via a website. Most people 'Google' trade services and with all the free and easy ways to get online, there's no better time.

A to Z

No matter who you are or what your reasons are, if you need some assistance to get online, this book is for you. If you have no idea where to turn on a PC or you are 'old school' and a computer terrifies you, why not get your sons or daughters or even your grandchildren involved. Show them this book, and ask them to help you get online. Maybe gift wrap it for them with a note inside asking for help. And they can get themselves online too!

Throughout the book I may refer to the words 'your business' or 'your company', however this includes agencies, churches, associations, individuals, communities, practitioners and graduates.

If you class your website as a business and look at it that way, it will give you more focus to ensure its success. So when I say 'your business', this encompasses everyone else that I have mentioned here, even if you have more of a project than an actual business. Whatever you do, your venture will be referred to as your online business.