

## Business Computing

Editor: Todd Reese

A free monthly publication for small business. Over 20 years experience providing computer and network solutions.

### ComputerWorkx

An ATAP Industries, LLC. Company

Covington, GA 30016

678.954.2133

[info@computerworkx.net](mailto:info@computerworkx.net)

[www.computerworkx.net](http://www.computerworkx.net)

To subscribe, send email to [info@computerworkx.net](mailto:info@computerworkx.net).

### The Learning Center

#### **Selling digital products:**

the beauty of selling digital products is the whole sales process can be automated with no input needed from the proprietor. The shopper calls at your site, browses your products and pays by credit card. The customer is then directed to a server where they can download the product via the Internet. Meanwhile your bank account has been credited with funds while you were asleep or doing some other activity. A website is like a 24 hour store working away with no staff problems or gouging landlord to pay. The credit card transactions system is a breeze to set up with no money to pay; only commissions required on sales. The great thing about digital products is you can offer a genuine money back guarantee without forfeiting any physical goods.



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## Getting the Right Mix of Ingredients for Making Money Online

There is a classic tale of a truck that got stuck under a bridge and wouldn't budge. As a crowd gathered they all debated the best way to free the truck. One group wanted to cut off the top of the truck while the others wanted to dismantle the bridge. The argument raged back and forth until a small boy at the back of the crowd said why not let the air out of the truck tires. A tough problem was solved with a simple solution. It is the same with online marketing. There are many examples of plain basic websites that generate enormous profits. Here the crucial ingredient being tons of visitors. Unfortunately it does work the other way around with a beautiful professionally developed website with low traffic. Therefore the first step of making money online is to get underway with a simple small boy solution.

The Internet has truly tilted the level playing field toward the small player. With small market segments available and waiting to be filled by entrepreneurs rather than corporate giants. The big boys don't successfully scale down to become niche players. The other vital trait of making a good income online is to do it yourself. The online operator needs to be in charge and personally manage the website. This does not suggest constructing the site from scratch - but to be able to constantly upgrade it. This means adding more pages, inserting links and improving the content. By having a hands-on approach this enables the ideas to flow out immediately on to the website without having to wait in frustration for another person to do the job. Some updates may take several revisions before a satisfactory result is achieved. The irritation and the expense

of using someone else will stall your project.

The theme of the website is another vital ingredient. This is where the big players can come unstuck. A razor blade sized market segment can pay big dividends to a small player who has a particular skill set to offer. The experts tell us to sell products that have a high level of Google searches. This may be an erroneous approach as it means more competition and maybe taking on the big boys. By checking the number of searches, gauging the opposition and looking inwards to what you have to offer, a suitable niche can always be found. The trick is to invent a remarkable website that is unique and unlike any other site.

The last ingredient is the content. The Internet is about information and that's what people search for. Pretty graphics and jazzy gizmos on your site will not generate traffic. It is the keywords that do all the work. There is software available that will discover for you all sorts of keyword phrases that people enter into a Google search. The programs will even tell you the level of competition for each particular word or phrase. Google has a free software tool on their site to help people with keyword selection. By embedding the right keywords in each page will attract more visitors.

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# How to Work Remotely at Home Using Your Office Desktop Computer

There are different ways of connecting to a remote computer. In the past you were able to dial up to an office computer by configuring the computer as a dialup server with Windows or using third party software. Using dialup modems at each end resulted in a slow communication making it unattractive for regular everyday use, not to mention the tying up of phone lines.

Today things have changed with the new fast Internet access. If you are connected at your home and office by fast Internet access you can easily use your office computer at home. Remember there are no toll or line user charges using the Internet. Also no need to lug home the laptop and mess around transferring files.

Data sent across the public Internet is not protected from prying eyes. To get around this potential problem and make your connection secure you can use a technique known as Virtual Private

Networking or VPN. VPN uses a technique known as tunneling. Data flows back and forth from your home computer to the office via a secure tunnel through the Internet. Using VPN your connection is secure as the data is encrypted and a logon and password is used to gain access to your office computer.

How do you set up a VPN? First you need to know the InternetIP address or number of your office PC. This creates a problem as you are assigned a new address each time you connect to the Internet. One way around this is to use an external router and leave it switched on, obtaining the IP address from the routers control panel. Remember if there is a power cut or the router is turned off you will need to retrieve this new address. The best method is to obtain what is known as a static address from your Internet provider. (This costs extra.) A static address means you will always have the

same connection address.

To check your connection address use the "Ping" command. Go to the DOS or Command Prompt on your home computer and Ping the address of the office computer. The command would look like this for example: Ping 203.79.99.218. The Ping command gives a successful read-out of time taken to bounce a signal off your office computer.

For Windows 98 go to Start > Settings > Control Panel and double click Network. Network Settings dialog will pop up and select Add Adapter. Scroll down to Microsoft and select Microsoft Virtual Private Network Adapter. Follow instructions on PC and you can now make a VPN connection. Go to My Computer > Dial Up Networking and select Make a New Connection. Enter in the IP address of your office computer and you can now create a VPN tunnel to your office. Next month is all about getting a remote display.

## Creating Traffic to Your Website

The first step in creating more traffic is to optimize the keywords and phrases on your website pages. When people search for information on the Web your website will be exposed as a source of information. The next step is having your site bookmarked and linked to by others. Search engines note this activity and give you a boost in rankings. Another way to generate interest is to make a video and upload it to YouTube making sure you add your website URL to the credits at the end of the video. By putting an entertainment spin on your product or service you can easily create free traffic by this method. Other ways of generating free traffic are to use the popular websites like squidoo.com, digg.com and deli.cio.us.

One way you can get the major search engines to take your website seriously is to pay for an inclusion in to Yahoo's directory. It will cost you \$300 dollars to get your site inspected by a human. Not all sites are included in the directory as a reasonable standard is required. The mere fact of being vetted by a human gives you a better standing with search engines. Also a link coming from an important site like Yahoo helps. Another way of attaining a quality link and traffic is to create a "good till cancelled" classified ad on eBay at \$10 per month.

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