How Can I Get More Visitors?

Welcome to the final chapter in this book. At this stage, you should have an exciting website packed with features that’s ready for your audience to dive in and start using. You’ve done enough to get your fantastic-looking website functioning beautifully. Before I round off this book and leave you to your own devices, there is one more area we need to look at that’s imperative to ensuring your website is a success. We need to consider how to actually get visitors to your website (after all, a party with no people is a failure!). The fields of search engine optimization, promotion, and e-commerce are increasingly important parts of the website-building process, especially with the rise in social media—those cool places where you probably hang out like Facebook, Twitter, and MySpace. We will examine the various methods you can use to get traffic to your sites (naturally and supernaturally), how to market both your brand and your content through the medium of self-publishing, and how to approach selling goods and services at a very basic level on the Internet.

In this chapter, we’re going to cover the following topics:

- How to get a good position in search engine rankings
- Marketing with content, advertising, and social networks
- The basics of selling goods and services over the Web

Search Engine Optimization

One of the most common ways people get visitors to their websites is through the murky world of search engine optimization (SEO). This field of the web industry is filled with mystique, confusion, and downright bad information due to the shady characters who try to use all sorts of dodgy methods to try to get the edge over the competition. So what is SEO? As you already know, Google is the king of finding information on the Web, and a pretty fine job it does too,
but what if you are a website owner rather than a casual surfer? How do you ensure your website is listed, and more importantly, listed above your competition? Well, the general premise is to use SEO to try to target search engines, through the presentation of your content and the information you disseminate on the Web. With SEO, the sole aim is to be the most recommended result by placing first in the search results when a potential visitor looks for something, of course this isn’t very easy to accomplish with all the websites out there.

We will first examine organic SEO—the natural ways to get traffic. Then, we’ll move onto how to assist the search engines more directly by manipulating search engines like Google by giving some pretty definite hints about what you offer. Finally, we’ll look at some of the dirty tricks that have been played in the past in the battle for supremacy on the Web. While the information in this section is useful in getting to grips with the basics, you should remember that if your website has high-quality content and a good audience, it should have little problem finding its feet and a voice among the masses that occupy the search engine rankings. By the end of this chapter, though, you should have your site listed on various websites where people can find you for the very first time!

**Organic SEO**

Organic SEO is a healthy and natural way of getting traffic to your website without resorting to tricks or performance-enhancing tactics to improve your ranking. It generally relies on good clean markup and well-written content, which luckily you already have! Basically, you cultivate the website naturally and allow search engines to place your website as a result of how well you treated your content and source code. This leads to traffic (visitors) that naturally appear without you directly influencing the search engine. Organic traffic (those naturally occurring visitors) is the most ethical method of getting traffic, because it is entirely based on substance rather than methodology. You should consider it your primary method of getting a good placement within search engines. In this section, we look at what comprises an organic rank and dispel some of the common myths associated with SEO—a number have cropped up over the years! Hopefully, your website is already well optimized (in respect to code and content), which will improve your overall rank with minimum effort.