

germars web design



M. Sullivan Web Newsletter

Newsletter 8
September 2011

Dear Mary,

September and back to school and work again. I notice that everyone gets more serious this time of year and work picks up again. I hope the same is true for everyone else.

I've been reading a book recently called "[The Internet is a Playground](#)" by David Thorne and while it is a strange and hilarious book of emails, I love that sentiment because the internet **is** a playground, a social organizer, a shopping mall, a research portal, and a big black hole where time disappears if you let it. Here is my monthly round up of tips, sites and information about what is available in your own personal playground.

Happy Thanksgiving!

Mary

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Interesting Sites
& News

Get Human

I had to call Dell the other day. My computer crashed and I bought a new one and I was concerned with its performance.

Four phone calls later I finally got a person to help me. You know the feeling, you know the jokes as well, "dial 8 if you have now lost your will to live".

I heard about this site recently called [gethuman.com](#). It has information on short cuts to get through to an actual person faster on various company's phone system. The link above is for the Canadian section of the site.

You can also build up your own list of companies and their contact information as well as add your own tips on getting through faster.

[Join Our Mailing List!](#)

Interesting Stuff

WinMerge

I heard about a great program today that I could have used a lot if I knew it existed! It is called [WinMerge](#) and it basically takes two similar documents and

Website of the Month



I mentioned last month that I have been using WordPress quite a bit now for sites where the client wants to do the updating of their site themselves. It isn't for everyone, and I'm happy to do that for my clients.

This group [AMO+](#) (or American Motors of Ontario, Performance Plus) were printing a newsletter which was costing them quite a bit in printing, postage and they asked for my input in how they could implement a website to replace their newsletter. The group added the requirement for the entire site to be password protected apart from the front page.

They are happy with the results and I'm sorry that you can't see all the lovely content inside, but you have to join the group! However, I thought it was a good example of thinking laterally, and what can be achieved when the client and I work together to achieve a workable solution.

You Tube as a marketing tool

I've mentioned before about using [YouTube](#) to gain traffic on your site, but I recently attended a Webinar that gave some good ideas on practical ways to do it.

- People like video because
 - they don't have to read
 - they find it more engaging and in some cases, easier to understand.
- Don't worry about your video needing a director and big budget. The beauty of YouTube is the spontaneity and the roughness of the videos. Authenticity is more important than a slick video.
- Brainstorm your own video ideas by going to YouTube and typing in your business. For example, if you type in Accounting (not usually considered a profession you'd associate with video), you will find after the word "accounting" the words basics, tutorials, lessons, software.
- Offer "How to" value. **How to... something is the most searched for type of videos.** People can search for

compares the differences side by side. I often take two pages of coding for websites and try to compare them for differences when I'm trying to find an error, and this program would have been invaluable and likely will be one of my favourites.

Their fish have tales

Sobeys launches Thisfish system to track seafood from ocean to plate. When you shop at Sobeys now, you will be able to make a decision on which fish to buy based on where it is caught and the method used to catch the fish.

Customers will find a unique code to input on www.compliments.ca/madewithcare and a QR code to scan using a smartphone.

Source: [Thisfish](#)

Creative advertisements

Here are a selection of award winning print ads. Some of them are very good.

Pixel2pixeldesign.com

Missing Missy

David Thorne is an evil genius, or an idiot with too much time on his hands. His friend/ neighbour/client asks him to create a poster about her missing cat, and [this is their correspondence.](#)

QR Codes

I'm sure you have seen QR codes show up on marketing materials such as movie posters, billboards, flyers, and in the newspaper.



What do you need to use them?

1. A mobile phone with a camera and Internet connection
2. A QR code reader

anything from filling out a tax form to bathing a cat (only for the brave). For the accountant, you could offer something like "How to keep your tax paperwork organized".

- Use humour in your video.
- Use a simple hand held camera or capture software such as [Camtasia](#), that records your computer screen and your voice for lessons that involve a computer.
- Make sure your Title is very descriptive.
- Things that make a video go viral?
 - funny or pet related.
 - outrageous
 - scandalous

Now your video may not be any of those, but if you link it to your site and make it short and instructive, you could still create more traffic to your site.

- If you can anticipate a trend, that is always good. Using our accountant example, say there is a new tax deduction that no one understands, you could make a video with a chart on who is eligible, where on your tax form to claim it, and what paperwork you need.

If you think about it, there is likely an interesting aspect on almost any type of business that you could convert to a video to increase awareness of your business.

Safe Passwords

I've been reading a lot about the creation of safe passwords lately. Not only do we make them too simple, but we base them on stuff that is too personal and is pretty easy for people to guess, let alone a computer. A chart below sets out how long it takes a computer to hack various types of passwords.

	Lower Case (26 letters)	Uppercase, Lower, Digits (62 characters)	Uppercase, Lower, Digits, Punctuation (62 characters)
Length = 5 characters	19 minutes	1 day	8 days
Length = 6 characters	18 hours	65 days	2 years
Length = 7 characters	9 days	11 years	200 years
Length = 8 characters	241 days	692 years	19,000 years
Length = 9 characters	17 years	42,000 years	1.8 million years (STRONG)

Source: techmynd.com

You should have a different password for every site you visit. **HOW AM I GOING TO REMEMBER THEM ALL?** I hear you cry. I'm with you, I have trouble with the ones that I do have that are different.

An interesting way to do this is to start with a phrase that you like and will remember. So for example use

Cats have nine lives

Change any words that sound like numbers to that number and

Most smart phones have a QR reader already installed, but for some you need to download the reader and install it yourself. (first check that the reader you have is compatible with your phone)

How does it work?

After you have the reader installed, you fire up the application and snap a picture of the QR code. The software then reads the image and uses a browser to let you surf to the site it represents. If it is a VCF card, it will offer to save the contact information into your address book.

Can I make my own QR code?

Yes, you create your own using a QR code Generator (for example [BeQRious](#)). Then save the image file to use on your flyers or advertising.

Why QR Codes are the next big thing?

1. more than 5 million people had smartphones in 2010, and the number is 53 million in the U.S. And more and more people are using their mobile phones to access the web.
2. They are free to create and to use.
3. They take up very little space in print, but have unlimited capacity for the information that is linked to them.

Check out [BeQRious](#) for instructions on how to make your own QR code

Kickstarter



With funding to the arts one of the first things on the chopping block in a recession, it is nice to see a way to raise money for artistic and other creative projects.

What is Kickstarter? They are the largest funding platform for creative projects in the world (according to their website) Every week, tens of thousands of people pledge millions of dollars to projects from the worlds of music, film, art, technology, design, food, publishing and other creative fields.

You are investing in an idea, and often get something in return for your money, but only if the project reaches it's fund raising goals, and until then, no money changes hands. It is a pretty interesting concept and one that I will be watching and perhaps investing in over the next little while.

Visit www.kickstarter.com

Art Show in Kingston

then use the first letter of each word:

Ch9l

Add some special characters:

!Ch9l:

Now to make each password different, add an ending for each different site. So for your Amazon password, for example, it could be. Amzn (removing the vowels) So this password would be

!Ch9l:Amzn

Or you could just promise to use the first three letters of the company. You get the idea, after a while the first part would be simple to remember and with the key to the other section, you'd have a really strong password.

That's it for another month. If you would like your website featured, or have anything you'd like me to introduce, or answered, please feel free to [email](#) me.

Take care,

Mary Sullivan
[Germars Web Design](#)



A few of my clients have called me "artsy fartsy" in the past (with affection, of course) and I admit this. You can't design and look after websites without some artsiness in there somewhere.

In my "spare time" I do create other artwork, totally unrelated to computers and the weekend of October 15th and 16th, I will be in Kingston with my friend [Debra Tate-Sears](#) having a studio tour (her studio) of our art. Debra, you may recall from a website I featured) is a very talented watercolour artist who has been dabbling lately in egg tempera, which is one of the oldest forms of painting. Another artist called [Jamie Brick](#) is opening his studio near by.

I will be showing my whimsical sculptures, which include animals, birds as well as figurative busts (as seen above). I know it is a distance, but you are welcome if you are up that way enjoying the fall colours. See [Debra's website](#) for the address.

[Forward email](#)



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