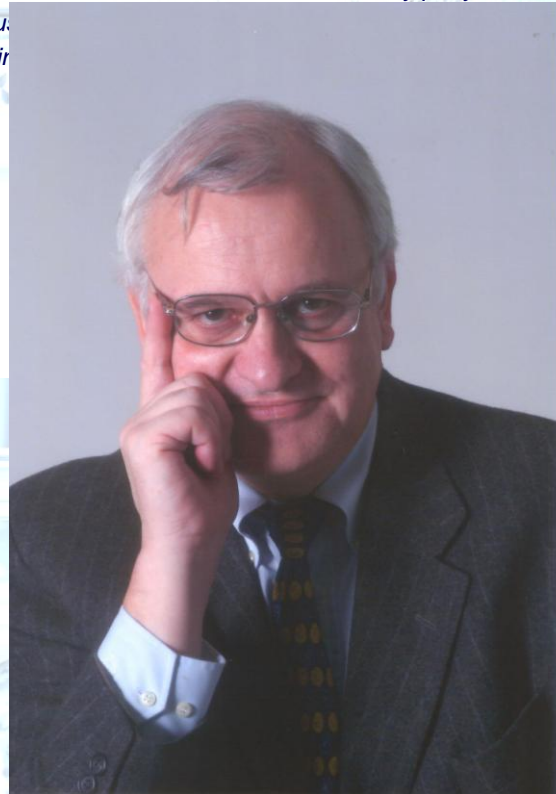


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ITMatters

In this regular column Charles Zealey of ITSolve covers all aspects of business and personal computing. If you have a question about IT matters, email it to Charles on itmatters@itsolve.co.uk



Getting the most from your web site

If you are running a business you probably have a web site. Right? And it has probably not been updated for a while. Right?

So what do you have a web site for?

As with most things in life, knowing your objectives is the most important part of owning a web site. You need to be clear about what you want it to achieve? Do you want to raise your profile as an expert? Do you want to sell product? Do you want to generate traffic, for yourself or someone else?

How you find ways of getting more of the right kind of visitors to your site is a complex and rapidly changing subject. However, in essence there are three things to which you should pay attention:

Links from and to other sites.

Search engines.

Non-internet promotion.

Getting Linked

The more links you have from and to your site the better, especially if they are high-quality links. A link from, say, the BBC web site is worth much more than one from a free internet directory. Try to build up a network of links, perhaps using customers or suppliers., perhaps using sites specific to your specialism or industry. Always look to

exchange links. These links will not only generate traffic they will, more importantly, improve your search engine rankings.

Searching Questions

There is no space here to deal with search engines in detail. However, the keys to getting found and rated by search engines are *content*, *links* and *structure*. Make sure you have large volumes of useful, relevant, unique content, and keep it updated. Get as many high-quality links as you can. Make sure you structure your site correctly – a good web designer will do this as a matter of course – the search engines prefer sites where the information is well laid out.

Paper?

Don't neglect the old fashioned means of promoting your site. Make sure that your web site address appears in print as often as possible. Include your web address, or better still links to your content, in as many different places as you can.

Keep going

By taking a few simple steps you will find you can increase traffic to your site. But don't stop asking yourself "is it achieving my objectives?" Go back and check. Above all, developing a web site is a never-ending process. Keep at it. Frequently!

Charles Zealey is a consultant working with business professionals helping them to improve their organisation's productivity and effectiveness with the use of Information Technology. Typically a return on investment can be achieved with 6-12 months. To access help sheets go to www.itsolve.co.uk/HelpSheets/. For a free half-hour consultation on business IT issues phone 01635 869863 or email lisa@itsolve.co.uk.

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