



M. Sullivan Web Newsletter

Newsletter 4
April 2011

Dear Mary,

If you are a small business owner like myself, you know that the best form of advertising is word of mouth. I advertised when I first moved to Lindsay in 2002, but only certain types of advertising worked for me. I advertised in a local free publication for a couple of years, but haven't advertised for a while apart from my membership in the local Chamber of Commerce for at least four years now.

I've decided to reward my friends and clients who pass my name on to others in the future. It isn't much, but if a client hires me for a website, I will give the referrer an hour's update for free (if I do your website). If you aren't a website client, I offer you an hour of my time for any computer issue or training also for free in thanks.

Thank you to anyone who has referred me in the past, and know that I am always promoting the services of people I work with and buy from.

Happy Easter,

Mary

In This Issue

[Website of the Month](#)

[Bit-ly what?](#)

[Search Engine Optimization](#)

[What is Java, and why should I update it?](#)

[Facebook & Twitter](#)

Website of the Month



Twitter & Facebook

Facebook and Twitter

Twitter is a micro blog, or mini blog. You can only use 140 characters in a single post. It is simple to set up, very public is a "one to many" platform. One post can go viral. This is done by a Tweet being re-tweeted. When you re-tweet you can have 160 characters to allow for the new address.

How do you get followers? The best way is to mention your account to people on your website, in person and on all your advertising or paperwork. And write interesting posts and they will tell others. You can also follow other Tweets and your name will show up as a follower.

What should you write? The rule of thumb for a business Twitter account is a **third sales and marketing, a third general company info** ie. General information what you do, how you can help people, about your staff, promoting other clients etc. And finally **a third industry news**. New and exciting advancements in your particular business, laws that affect your business and re-tweets by

This is a new site that I created for [The Dark Horse Studio](#). They are located in Sunderland, Ontario. This is a great shop to visit when you want to poke around and see what treasures you can find. There is a mix of antiques, newer pieces as well as featured artists. And if that isn't enough, a psychic has scheduled appearances if you want to hear your future!

Lianne Megarry has also been instrumental in adding a farmers' market to Sunderland for Fridays, increasing the spotlight on this small part of Durham Region. It's open starting May 6th from 2 - 7pm. If you are near Sunderland, I highly recommend a visit.

This website is significant for me to introduce also, as it is one of the first sites that I've partly created using [WordPress](#). I've done blogs for clients for years, but usually with [Blogger.com](#). WordPress is one of the most popular open source CMS (content management systems) or database site platforms, and I'm happy to be able to offer this service as well. It isn't for everyone, as it needs a bit more maintenance to keep it up to date, but Lianne can post to her blog and maintain that part of her site in her own time.

Bitly what?

If you use twitter or follow any person on Twitter, you will know that you only get 140 characters to say your piece. And if you want to link to something interesting that you've seen online, you can't afford the website address to take up most of those characters. Enter sites like [bit.ly](#). They shorten URL addresses (or website addresses) to short sized URLs so they don't take up as much room. This is also handy for website links or just emailing someone a link that goes over to another line and is confusing for the person to see where the link ends. There are hundreds of these sites, other popular ones are [tr.im](#), or [Tinyurl](#). For an up to date list of the ten best URL shorteners, check out the [ALL You Need is Lists](#) site.

Search Engine Optimization



I "attended" a webinar this month on SEO and tips on how to increase the traffic to your website. I say "attended" as it feels funny to say you attended anything that entails sitting at your desk listening to someone talk.

The webinar was very interesting and I came away with 10 great ideas for increasing traffic to your site.

After I watched the webinar I decided to check my own website to see how I was performing. Ouch. While I work very hard on increasing hits to my client's sites, I struggle to make time to keep my own site up to date. Add to that the fact that my site is about website design (a very popular topic), and it is hard to be anywhere near the top of the page for hits.

followers.

You should have things like free items for followers, valuable knowledge to pass on, calls to action (if they do something in a particular time, they get a bargain)

Another aspect to Twitter that larger firms are using is searching what has been twitted about themselves. It is good to keep your finger on the pulse of **how your company is being perceived** out in the world. Many large companies are now using Twitter for their customer service.

[read more >>](#)

Interesting News

Sunnybrook is now offering their patients access to their records online with a service called [MyChart](#). Perhaps a trend that may spread to other hospitals and municipalities.

Election Coverage

Read the papers, listen to the candidates and look to social media for other insight. [Rick Mercer](#) encourages the Youth Vote. If anyone can, Rick can. [Twitter account](#) #elctn41 for lots of views

What party are your views closest to?

[Take this quiz](#) to find out, you may surprise yourself with the answer.

Sites to check out

Freesound is a site that you can go to for snippets of sounds. Not music, but noises of all sorts. They say that "the [Freesound Project](#) aims to create a huge collaborative database of audio snippets, samples, recordings, bleeps, ...

However, I am going to use my own site as a guinea pig over the next couple of months as I go through the exercises, explain to you how they work, and report back to you on what, if any, increases in traffic I get after I am finished.

Tip #1

[Google's Keyword Tool](#)

Keywords or metatags, aren't used the same way they used to be. Inserting keywords into the head of your website won't really help you increase traffic. In fact, a lot of search engines totally ignore them. However, doing a search for keywords helps you to know what words or phrases you should have in your alt tags (picture names), names of pages, names of images, and the text in your site. That is what the search engines are looking at.

Go to the link above, and put in a word or a phrase that you think your potential clients would use to find you. Then it is helpful to look at the results. In my case, I put in website design. I got some great ideas for other words included in that phrase, such as business, the area I live, graphic, developer, firm and services. These need to be incorporated into the text of my site without sounding strange. **And did you know** that if you name your images something to do with your business, those are searched too? So leaving your image as DSC002 is losing an opportunity for more hits.

This month I am going to re-word my pages slightly to incorporate more of these words. Make sure all links have titles that describe the link, and create a blog that is hosted on my own site. We'll see how just those steps increase traffic.

Next month... Tip #2 - wonderwheel?

What is Java, and why should I update it?



Every so often your computer asks you to update your version of Java. But what is it exactly?

Java is a programming language and computing platform first released by Sun Microsystems in 1995. It is an open source programming language, meaning anyone can make changes to it for their own uses.

Why do I need it? There are lots of applications and websites that won't work unless you have Java installed, and more are created every day.

Java allows you to play online games, chat with people around the world, calculate your mortgage interest, and view images in 3D. These applications, written in the Java programming language and accessible from your browser, are called "applets".

I hope you have enjoyed month's newsletter. If you would like your website featured, or have anything you'd like me to introduce, please feel free to [email](#) me.

Sincerely,

Mary Sullivan
[Germars Web Design](#)

Referral Offer

Refer a client for a website, and get a one hour renewal for your own website FREE.

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Too Many Passwords?

A friend said to me a while ago that I should design a site that would save all the passwords you had to have for everything you signed into. I agreed that it was a good idea, but beyond my abilities. Well, it exists already!

[PasswordSafe](#)

is a free, open source program that you run from your computer. You set up a database with a password (a bit ironic) and then can Organize your passwords into categories like email, social, banking etc. It is safer than scraps of paper!

Cheap Flights

Is there such a thing? A new site promises to take the pain out of looking for flights, by eliminating all the worst choices (such as long layovers, or most expensive) and keeps the site simple to use. Best of all the prices are including the taxes! See [Hipmunk.com](#)

And for a funny song about cheap flights for 50p, check out [Fascinating Aida](#) on YouTube.

[Join Our Mailing List!](#)

Coming soon...



Next month I will talk about LinkedIn, another social media site aimed at business owners and referrals.

[Forward email](#)



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