

# RED HOT INTERNET PUBLICITY

Penny C. Sansevieri

An Insider's Guide to Marketing  
Your Book on the Internet



New York

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## An Insider's Guide to Marketing Your Book on the Internet

By Penny C. Sansevieri  
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# BUILDING A BILLBOARD INSTEAD OF A WEB SITE

*“While modern technology has given people powerful new communication tools, it apparently can do nothing to alter the fact that many people have nothing useful to say.”*

*– Leo Gomes*

**D**id you know that most authors get a web site because they feel they have to? To many authors, it’s sort of a fad along the lines of torn jeans or that faded Stones t-shirt. Many times in fact, authors will put up a web site and then act surprised when people actually visit. Isn’t that the point? Well, sort of. Going back to why authors put up a site (because they have to) it then makes sense that the site they put up quickly gets forgotten.

In my line of work, I refer out web site designers but more often than not, authors will ask their nephew or son to design it for them. Now this is fine if your relatives are actual designers, but most of the time they have just bootlegged a copy of Dreamweaver and tinkered with it a bit, enough so they know their way around a little. Not enough to make them a full-fledged designer, but certainly enough to make them dangerous. They probably won’t start blowing up small countries just because they hit the wrong button on Dreamweaver, but a poorly-designed site could cost a ton of sales.



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## Why We Hate Pop-ups and Why You Should Have One on Your Site

*Everyone says they hate pop-ups, but statistically they’ve been proven to be effective. Pop-ups are particularly good*

*for 1) getting mailing list sign-ups; 2) giving away a free report; and 3) offering a special on the page visitors are about to leave.*

*An important point, though, is to create a visually interesting pop-up, and one that offers something for free. If people are willing to give you their name and email, you need to be willing to give them something of value, too.*

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Do you remember that old game, Operation? I loved playing it as a kid but I always kept touching the sides of the openings to pull out the patient's organs. It never failed, that darned buzzer would go off and I'd have to start again. I played and played and played that game until I could pull out that guy's brain in my sleep. So listen, if you ever have to have surgery of any kind, I would like to perform it for you. I mean, I'm an ace at this stuff, right? I can pull plastic kidneys and hearts out of a smiling plastic victim with little or no buzzer anymore.

I'm betting money despite my talent with this game, you'd never let me operate on you. You'd at least want to hire someone with a degree, right? In fact, I'm betting you wouldn't even want a new doc, fresh out of grad school, would you? Now while web site design might be a long way off from brain surgery, if you're sinking a lot of money into a marketing campaign and have a site that looks, well, like it needs surgery, then you might be losing money. The kind of money that could feed future marketing efforts.

If I sound preachy, it's for a reason: I once used to design my own web site. Yes, I confess. I am guilty of this. I thought: "I don't need no stinkin' designer," but I learned and I learned the hard way. I had a site that wasn't converting and basically looked like a dog had designed it after a three-day tequila bender. Some days I

look at old web shots of it and wonder if I hadn't been influenced by one too many adult beverages. Thankfully it's gone, burned to the ground and rebuilt in a site that can stand the test of effectiveness and conversion. It only took me four years to get there.

Yes, site design is a process. I'm not saying that you need to spend four years tinkering with your site. This section alone will save you at least three years and ten months. But you do need to hire the right people for your site, and hire people who don't just put together beautiful sites—because beautiful sites don't convert. I'm not saying that your site needs to be ugly or look like your first car; there's a line between effectiveness and attractiveness.


We're going to cover that line in this chapter as well as all the pieces you need to put together a site that's exactly what you need. No more, no less. In fact, we'll even determine what you need with our handy-dandy questionnaire. The only thing you'll need to do is hire the right person to build your site, and we've got that covered, too, in our "Ten Questions to Ask Before Hiring a Designer." So now sit back and grab that highlighter. We're ready to send you off on the super highway of web site success!



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## The Secret to Getting a Higher Listing on Google

*Trying to get Google to notice you? Well, there might be a solution. There is a quick process you can go through to get a higher listing, some even say a very high listing, but Internet experts will caution you that your category can often determine where you fall in the ranking. Still, it's worth a shot. Head on over to: <http://www.smartzville.com/google-homepage.htm> more information.*



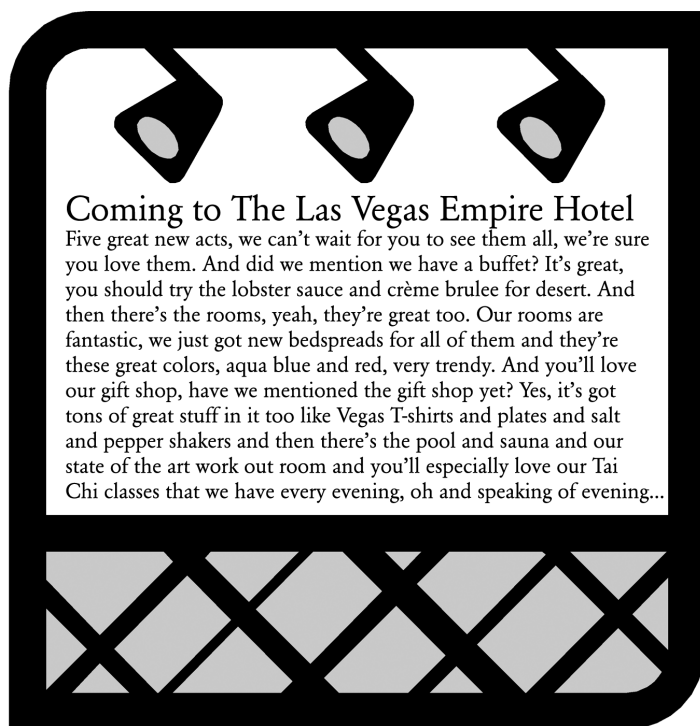
## Building Billboards

Have you ever taken the drive to Las Vegas? If you have, you know that there's a stretch on the 15 freeway that's just barren desert with you, sand, a cactus or two, a vulture hoping to get lucky and billboard after billboard. You're anxious to get to Las Vegas and hit the blackjack tables so you speed down this stretch of highway as fast as you can, passing billboards at probably eighty-five miles an hour. Most of the billboards you see will be fairly simple and easy to read. Like this one:





Now that was easy, right? Fairly straightforward, not too much to read. Then you pass another billboard:



Now if you've tried to read this going eighty five miles an hour, you've probably rammed your car into the billboard and made some vulture very, very happy.

## Think of Your Site as a Billboard

If you think of your web site as a billboard instead of a web site, you'll be much further along than most people. Why? Because at the rate people surf these days, you might as well be speeding to Vegas. Studies have shown that the average surfer used to spend

seven seconds on a web site before deciding whether or not to click off; now they spend an average of one fiftieth of a second. That means that you have a snippet of time to prove to your visitor that your site is worthy of their visit.

As surfers, we don't read, we scan, and the further we get down the road, the more we're finding that web copy (the words on your web site) isn't about writing; it's about writing less. We don't want to think, we just want to click, and preferably, we want to be told what to do. A well-designed site is not just one that's light on the copy, it's also uncomplicated and very obvious. Have you ever heard of the seventh grade education rule? Well, on the 'Net it's about a fourth grade education level. If you aim lower, you'll hit much higher in your conversion. Now I'm not saying that surfers are stupid, not even close. In fact, surfers know what they want and won't be fooled or lured into something they're unsure of. The key to remember is that web surfers aren't short on smarts, they're short on time, hence the shrinking window of opportunity to catch someone's attention on the 'Net.

When we're getting a site designed, we have a tendency to want to push everything onto our home page. We cram it full of every piece of everything we've ever done, from writing a book to the time our little league team took first prize in the nationals. Just like that billboard crammed with stuff, we want to fill every inch of our home page with words and pictures and all the kinds of things that will send surfers scrambling for the exit button. I call it surf shock: when you land on a site that seems to scream at you from your monitor. The kind of site you can't wait to leave.