

Writers on the Web

Lesson 1 Why Should I Have a Web Site?

- Who visits websites?

Lesson 2: Even the Lord has plans!

“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.” *Jeremiah 29.11*

Mission Statement = Compass = Goals. Have a plan for your site!

Goals for your website:

- Attract visitors
 - Keep visitors on your site – and keep them coming back!
 - Build relationships with your visitors, audience and other writers.
- How?
 - Social Networking
 - Create an attractive, easy to use site
 - Appeal to audience
 - Offer incentives, provide content
 - Keep your site fresh, and updated often
- Other ideas:
 - Use your Social Networking medium to drive traffic to your site.
 - Feature site content (such as blog posts) in your Social Networking
 - Post about any new “takeaways” on your site
 - Free eBooks or sample chapters
 - Giveaways
 - Free content (such as PDFs or templates)

Creating a great site!

- Create an attractive, easy-to-use blog or website.
- No music!
- Good color options.
- Clear, professional photos (avoid clipart).
- A professionally designed site or blog.
- Incorporate your branding and mission statement into your site.
- A warm and welcoming site that encourages audiences to return.
- Dress to impress!

Incentives

- Offer “incentives” (or “takeaways”)
- Free eBooks or PDF documents
- Authors can encourage other authors with eBooks about the craft of writing.
- Newsletters (monthly; if you don’t have a blog)

Content Matters:

- Have content that keeps visitors on your site – & keeps them coming back!
- Updated content = better search engine ranking.
- Content matters more than graphics and pretty things.

Lesson 3: More about Your Website

Dot What? – Choosing a Domain Name

- Choose your name (angellaforet.com)
- Choose your ministry (healinghope.com)
- Choose your organization (bethanybible.org)
- Choose your passion (healingmarriages.com)
- Choose a variation on your name (angellaforet.net)
- Choose your publication (AngellaBooks.com)
- Choose a name that interests you (angelicious.com)

What Do You Think of When You Hear...

- John Grisham? (Legal thrillers)
- Donald Miller? (Contemporary faith)
- Stephen King? (Horror)
- Brandilyn Collinns? (“Seatbelt Suspense”)

Branding – Your Online Presence

- What is branding?
- The way you are identified as an author, speaker, teacher (or all three).
- What is your “brand?”
- Look at your mission statement – this will help define your brand.
- Look for ways to further define your brand by coming up with a “tagline.”
- Incorporate your brand into your website and even your domain name.

Blog, website or ... what?

- I recommend trying out a blog format. Blog platforms, such as WordPress, can be used as the “framework” of a website.
- You can also set up a free blog
- Blogger.com
- WordPress.com
- TypePad.com
- Consider having a professional web designer set up your site. It’s tax deductible, and your site will be polished & professional.

Finding a web designer

- Don’t be afraid to ask around for web hosting references. (Don’t even bother with Google, it will take forever.) Some good resources:
 - Fellow writers
 - Web designers
 - FaceBook/Twitter/MySpace friends
 - Teenage computer techs

Lesson 4: Social Media

Determine Your Goals

- What are your goals for Social Networking?
- To drive traffic to your site
- To interact one-on-one with your audience
- To interact with other professionals
- Learning from others
- Inspiration for your writing or ministry
- Targeting your readership
- Teaching and sharing your ministry with others
- Spreading your ministry

Research Your Options

- Once you've defined your online presence goals, check out the different social media options. Get to know one very well, and then look at others.
 - Facebook: great for personal interaction.
 - Twitter: great for short, informative interaction.
 - LinkedIn: professional networking.
 - Flickr: photography.
 - YouTube: videos & podcasts.

Establish Your Online Presence

- Establishing your online presence will be different based on whichever social medium you have chosen. Here are things you'll need:
- A profile (name, information, website)
- Author/personal photo (make it professional!)
- Tag line/mission statement
- Clear understanding of how to communicate your goals to your audience
- Clear understanding of the program you're using
- A Few Social Networking Tips
- Be unique, but don't be obnoxious.
- It's social media, not direct marketing!
- Showcase your work, but not too much.
- Be professional at all times.
- Your Social Networking medium reflects who you are – watch what you say!
- Remember to reciprocate – promote your fellow authors, speakers & teachers.
- Be patient: you'll get the hang of it.