

Presented by
MyNAMS Insiders Club



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INTRODUCTION: WHY YOU NEED TO DRIVE STEADY TRAFFIC TO YOUR BLOG

"Making money from blogging requires you to do only two things: drive a lot of traffic, and then maximize the income from that traffic."

John Chow

Today's media landscape allows anyone with an internet connection and rudimentary writing skills to broadcast their message to the world.

One of the most common outlets people use for sharing their ideas is a blog, which is short for "weblog". It's both a cheap and easy way to create your own space online. Blogs come in all shapes and sizes and there are blogs on every subject imaginable.

It's hard to say how many blogs there are and how much readership they get, but WordPress alone says that over 400 million people view about 20 billions of its pages per month. That's a mind-boggling number that is hard for anyone to wrap their head around.

Some blogs are personal, where people share their everyday stories or indulge in their hobbies with their readers. Other blogs are dedicated to business, where large, small, and solo businesses provide useful information to their readers to build relationships, nurture leads and drive sales.

You can do anything you want with a blog and it takes little time or money to start up. All you need is to have something you want to say to the world.

While blogs come in all shapes and sizes, there's one thing they all have in common. All blogs need visitors to come and read what they have posted. This is what we commonly call 'traffic'.

Traffic is the lifeblood of the Internet. For anyone who puts anything up online, traffic is a must. The reasons traffic is so important are:

- Web traffic means people coming to your site from search engines and other sources. It's how people find you and it's also how your blog becomes popular and widely-read.
- More traffic means more readers and every online publisher wants more readers, whether you're having fun with your hobbies or selling products or services.
- A higher volume of traffic means more chance of finding your ideal reader or target market. It's a numbers game. Assuming that a certain percentage of your traffic turns into long-term fans and advocates, more traffic means better chances of finding those people.
- With more traffic you'll sell more, if selling is your aim. Again, it's a numbers game. More traffic means that you'll get your offer in front of more eyes.

- More traffic and the growing readership it brings means more chances to engage with people online. This is what the internet is all about, whether you're selling or not. You can grow your community with your blog.
- Traffic equals credibility. A blog with more traffic is seen as more credible and a better authority than sites where there is little traffic. Credibility is important to people who are looking for trustworthy information online.
- If you have more traffic coming into your blog, you can send more traffic out to other sites you maintain. Your blog can be a lead magnet and you can send those leads to your website, sales page, membership site, online forum, or social media profiles.
- A popular blog with good traffic and a big following can become your full-time job. If you blog for a hobby now, you can turn it into an occupation someday by attracting visitors or even selling it eventually.

It's not as difficult as you think to drive traffic to a blog, and there are a variety of different ways to do it. This course will teach you many of these different techniques and get you started with them. By the time you finish this course, you'll be able to:

- Recognize and explain the key ways that blogging will help you meet your business objectives
- Specify the most effective methods to drive the right traffic to your blog, considering your target market and their tastes and needs
- Outline a plan for driving quality, consistent traffic to your blog via the most effective traffic sources possible

- Gain a thorough understanding of the best practices for driving traffic from social media to your blog, including sites like [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [LinkedIn](#), [YouTube](#), [Google Plus](#), [Pinterest](#), [Instagram](#) and [Tumblr](#)
- Reap the benefits of guest blogging, in which you contribute blog posts to other people's blogs
- Explore online forums, groups and related traffic sources to find your target market and draw traffic from these sites
- Outline a system to build traffic to your blog through blog comments
- Identify the steps to easily and effectively publish posts on blogs via email
- Set up an automated blog post RSS feed that publishes your latest post or posts in a "blog broadcast" email to your subscribers
- Utilize a system for effective content planning and SEO for your blog
- Identify and implement more creative ways to enhance blog traffic
- Recognize the most commonly made mistakes in producing a blog so that you can avoid them.
- Identify and measure key statistics to maximize blog traffic results and make critical enhancements or changes
- Plan the measurement methods you will use with your blog traffic
- Complete a blog planning worksheet utilizing the key learning points of each module to begin driving more traffic to your blog now.

As a first step, define the one specific purpose of your blog. Ask yourself: "What do I want to do with my blog?" Is it to build a community or spread brand awareness? Is it to sell directly or nurture leads? This will guide every decision you'll make from its name and design to content topics and where you'll seek traffic.

LEARNING ACTIVITY:

1. What is the purpose of your blog and what results do you wish to achieve? How will driving more traffic help you and your business?

THE MOST EFFECTIVE METHODS TO DRIVE THE RIGHT TRAFFIC TO YOUR BLOG

There is an endless variety of traffic sources you can choose from. Some marketers get quite creative in finding new sources of traffic. In this module, you're going to learn the most common traffic strategies. These are the most common because they consistently produce the best results. They make use of popular sources, like Facebook and YouTube.

However, don't stop with the traffic sources covered in this course. You may find a certain place where your target market hangs out online which can serve as a less-known but just as effective source of traffic.

The traffic sources introduced here will be explained in more detail in the following modules and you'll learn a few tips and tricks for using each.



Social Media

Social Media sites like Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn are goldmines for traffic. These websites are among the most popular on the internet today. People are increasingly using social media for nearly everything they do every day, from keeping in touch with friends and reading the news, to finding blogs to read and products to buy.

There is a great deal of variety in social media sites, but the basics are the same. You create a profile and then connect with other users. Through the site, you share content and read content shared by others. Each social media site also has its own unique features that you can use to engage with other users.

Guest Blogging

Guest blogging involves writing a blog post on someone else's blog. It gives you exposure to that blogger's audience, many of whom will read your post and find it interesting enough to come over to your blog and check it out.

Online Forums

Online forums are sites where people create profiles and discuss common interests with other users. All online forums are centered around common interests and there are forums for nearly any topic you can imagine. There are forums for types of businesses and industries, spiritual pursuits, musical genres, hobbies, sports, areas of science, foreign languages, video games, and so on.

Blog Commenting

One source of traffic that we'll cover here is blog commenting. This refers to reading other blogs and leaving a comment. Based on your comment, other readers will want to come to your blog and see what you have to offer.

Email

You can create a feed so that whenever you update your blog, an email goes out to all of your subscribers. This way, you can draw traffic to your site without having to do it manually each time. The email is automatic.

SEO

SEO, or search engine optimization, refers to things you can do on your website to improve its ranking in the search engine results pages. The main way this is done is through the use of keywords in your blog content.

Which sources are right for you depends largely on where your potential readers are already hanging out online. If they're social media users, Facebook and Twitter are good sources. If they're business professionals, you might try the social media site LinkedIn. If there's an online forum closely related to your blog, this is an excellent source.

By the end of the course, you'll have selected a handful to try. You'll also know how to measure the results of these efforts in order to decide which to focus on

Learning Activity:

1. Based on the goal of your blog, describe your key readers, where you can find them online, and what you want them to do when they get to your blog.
2. List the main traffic methods you are using with your blog now and which ones you would like to implement from the ones listed in the module.

MAXIMIZE YOUR BLOGGING EFFORTS THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media is great for blog traffic. Practically everyone uses social media and follows the brands, thought leaders, celebrities and news sources they love. It's the perfect place to tell people about your blog.

Plus, with social media you have a built-in community already. Through social media you can interact with other users directly and build relationships, which makes people more likely to check out your blog. You can also learn about your readers by following them, reading their posts, and checking out their profiles.

Social Media Best Practices

Start by researching which social media sites your target blog readers already use. If you don't have this data or can't obtain it, start by checking out the social media sites covered in this chapter. Sign up, create a profile and spend some time lurking and seeing how each site you're going to use works. It's important to get a feel for it before you start posting.

Put links to your blog in your profile anywhere you can. Most social media sites (like Facebook) have a place to put the URL of your website. If the site allows you to, write a short description of your blog, emphasizing the reasons that people should check it out. Add it to your description and anywhere else you can, such as in a 'sticky' post that stays at the top of your own newsfeed.

Every social media site works differently, but promoting a blog is the same on each: Whenever you publish a new post, update your social media site and let

everybody know. Don't just share a link, but tell people why they should check it out. If you don't write blog posts frequently, share older ones to get traffic to those and rejuvenate them.

As you go about using the social media site to promote your blog, always take some time to look at the content your audience members post. Social media is social, and this means that you need to interact with your audience. In general, the more you interact with other users (reading, liking, commenting, sharing, messaging, etc.), the more they'll reciprocate and check out your posts.

By looking at your audience members, you can also gain insights about them. Through their posts and profile, you can gain an understanding of their interests, opinions and needs, and you can use these for future blog content. Look in particular for problems your blog posts can solve.

Also, as you go about using social media pay close attention to your audience's reaction. Look at which posts generate a great deal of traffic and which seem to sink into social media oblivion. Try to understand the reasons behind your success and failure and use this to create better posts in the future.

Finally, make sure that your blog is mobile-friendly. Many people use social media on their mobile devices and this is a trend that's growing. There's a good chance that anyone who clicks through from social media to your blog is doing so with a smart phone or tablet.

Facebook

Facebook is, at the time of writing, the most popular social media network. It currently has hundreds of millions of users, and the demographic that enjoys Facebook includes nearly everyone. No matter what kind of blog you have, it's likely that you have potential readers on Facebook.

Visual content is popular on Facebook, so put an image on your post. If you have an image on your blog post, Facebook will automatically put this image on your post when you share the link. If not, you can choose an image to include.

For the text of your posts, keep it minimal. Rather than trying to write a summary of your blog post, simply write a catchy phrase to entice people to check it out. Quick and witty usually works well on Facebook.

Facebook also likes videos. You can create a teaser video for your blog post and share it. Your teaser video doesn't need to be a big production. It can be just a 30-second to one-minute video of you talking to the camera, telling people why they should read your blog post or some highlights from it.

One good way to get your post seen is to use Facebook Ads. This is their native ad network that allows you to extend your reach. The good thing about Facebook Ads is that it's very flexible and targeted. You can decide exactly how much you want to spend, who you want to target, and how long you'd like the ad to run.

Twitter

Twitter is also extremely popular. It's a "microblogging" platform, which means it allows a small character limit on posts. This can present a challenge but there are some ways around it. One is that you can shorten link URLs. When you paste a URL into Twitter's tweet box, it will automatically shorten it to 22 characters, or you can use a third-party service to create smaller URLs, such as [Simple Click Tracker](#). When a user clicks on this link, they'll be redirected to your blog post.

The real challenge is telling people about your blog in the slightly over 100 characters this leaves you. With Twitter, you really have to perfect the art of saying more with less. Posts need to be quick and to the point, but still deliver their message.

Some ideas for writing quick but enticing tweets include:

- Using a quote from the post. Take an interesting sentence from the post and use it for your tweet. Choose something that will pique the interest of your followers.
- Asking a question that your blog post will answer.
- Including a statistic that's relevant to your blog post.
- Using a number, such as "35 ways to..."

Twitter now lets you include an image with your tweet and, just like Facebook, images get more activity. Upload an original image that's relevant to the blog post.

Twitter users like hashtags. These are keywords that follow the "#" symbol. Hashtags make your tweet searchable. When users search for a hashtag you used in a tweet, the tweet will appear in the search results. Only choose one or two because of the character limit.

On Twitter, people "retweet" content they like. This means they post it to their followers. It's been said that simply adding "Please RT" to your tweet leads to more retweets. In addition, when people do retweet your post, thanking them directly can help you begin to build a relationship and engage in conversation.

LinkedIn

LinkedIn has a more specific user base than Facebook or Twitter. While these two are used by practically everyone for everything, LinkedIn is designed for business professionals. People use LinkedIn to network, find jobs, and nurture business relationships.

LinkedIn offers a variety of ways for users to interact with each other, such as Groups. The more you use these features and are visible on LinkedIn engaging with other users, the more likely it will be that people will check out your blog. LinkedIn users don't like self-promotion, so being engaged with other users builds trust.

You can add your blog feed to your LinkedIn profile and it will automatically update your connections whenever you update your blog so you don't have to do it manually.

You can also post to your groups when you update your blog, but only do this when your post is relevant. Users don't like when irrelevant content is posted to groups.

YouTube

Videos are wildly popular online and YouTube is the most popular video site. They offer an alternative to text for content creators, but they can also function as a way to encourage people to visit your blog. You can promote your blog posts by making "teaser videos," as mentioned above for Facebook. In a teaser video, you're basically just telling people about your blog or highlights from a specific blog post.

It's important for every video to have a strong call to action. The call to action tells the viewer specifically what they need to do in order to gain the benefits you mention in the video. It's not enough to say, "check out my blog." Instead,

you should tell the viewer, "click on the link in the video description" or "go to this link" and give it to them.

YouTube is owned by Google and YouTube videos often appear at the top of the search engine results. This is why it's also important to maximize your videos' SEO with keywords. There are many places where you can put keywords, such as the video title, description, and meta data. Put keywords wherever possible.

Don't forget that YouTube is a social media site, so use it socially. Interact with other users, subscribing to their channels, watching their videos, leaving comments and so on. The more you interact with other users, the more they will check out your blog.

Google Plus

Google Plus is a social media site that has many features in common with other sites like Facebook. It's not as popular as Facebook and Twitter, but it's Google's own social media, which means a few things. First, it performs well in Google's search results. Second, if you use any other Google products like Gmail or YouTube, you already have a Google Plus account waiting to be activated.

Like all social media sites, Google Plus has its own unique features. Probably the most innovative is its Circles. Circles allow you to categories different groups of friends. This allows you to post content only to select groups, which means that the content is highly relevant to that group. This cuts down on junk postings that get ignored. It also lets you tailor content to certain segments of your connections.

Google Plus uses many of the same features pioneered by other social media sites. You can post images and animated GIFs, as well as use searchable hashtags. One special feature of Google Plus is its formatting. You can use bold, italics, bullet points, and strikethrough in your posts.

Pinterest

Pinterest is a visual social media platform where you share images and post them on your "pinboards." Pinboards are collections of images based on a common theme. You can create a pinboard with an image from each of your blog posts so that people can find them all in one place. Users can follow pinboards, so your readers can follow your blog post pinboard and they'll be notified whenever there is new content up.

As with all social media sites, you should interact with other users as well as posting your own content. You can "repin" content that you like, which is something like retweeting on Twitter or sharing on Facebook.

Always add a description to each pin telling what the blog post is about and selling it to users so they'll want to check it out. Pinterest allows you to write up to 500 characters in your descriptions, so make the most of them.

Instagram

Instagram is another visual social media site. On Instagram even more than Pinterest, visuals are all-important. Use Instagram's editing capabilities to make your images really unique and interesting. You can also share videos and use hashtags to make content searchable.

One thing that's popular on Instagram is a photo series. This is a good way to keep users tuned in. Each post is just one in the series. If done effectively,

people will be waiting for the next post. If possible, create your blog posts in a series format if you're using Instagram.

Themed images are also popular on Instagram. Try creating a theme for your blog posts and share corresponding images on Instagram. There are also Instagram-wide themes where one user has created the theme and other users contribute their own content to it. A good example of this is #throwbackthursday or #tbt. Try finding themes that are related to your blog posts, or writing blog posts related to themes on Instagram.

Finally, contests are popular on Instagram. A good way to engage Instagram users is to host a contest on your blog and mention it in your Instagram posts.

Tumblr

Tumblr is actually a short-form blogging platform where users can post text, image or video content, as well as share the content with others. Memes are particularly popular on Tumblr. You can create your own meme to tell your Tumblr readers about your latest blog post.

Reblogging is big on Tumblr. Many users do more reblogging than writing original posts. You should reblog other users' posts, but also encourage your readers to reblog yours. Sometimes all it takes is to simply ask them, "If you liked this blog post, reblog," and add a Tumblr add-on to your blog.

Certain pages that Tumblr finds particularly useful or valuable get designated as "Explore Pages." These are given extra traction in searches by Tumblr. Ask your readers to recommend your Tumblr blog as an Explore Page.

Finally, tagging is extremely important in Tumblr. Make sure to tag all of your blog posts with relevant keywords. Most users find new content on Tumblr through its search function using tags.

LEARNING ACTIVITY:

1. Identify the main social media outlets where your ideal blog visitors are hanging out.
2. Outline some ideas for posts you can create on social media that will encourage people to visit a blog post. Focus on the most effective social media platforms for your market (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube, Google Plus, Pinterest, Instagram, Tumblr, etc.) Just pick 2 or 3 platforms if you haven't been using social media much yet.

GUEST BLOGGING, FORUMS, AND COMMENTS

Beyond social media there are some other ways to drive traffic to a blog and that are highly effective and commonly used.

Guest Blogging

Guest blogging is when a blogger writes a post for another blogger's blog. Some blogs encourage guests to write for them and some have featured authors. Guest blogging is a great way to expand your audience. When you write for someone else's blog, your content gets seen by their audience. If you provide exceptional value for that new audience, there's a good chance the readers will check out your blog.

Through guest blogging, you also improve the SEO of your own blog. If you publish a guest blog post on a blog that gets a great deal of traffic, the link back to your blog is very valuable. When there's a link from a high-traffic (popular) site to your blog, it tells the search engines that your site is credible, high-quality and worth sending traffic to.

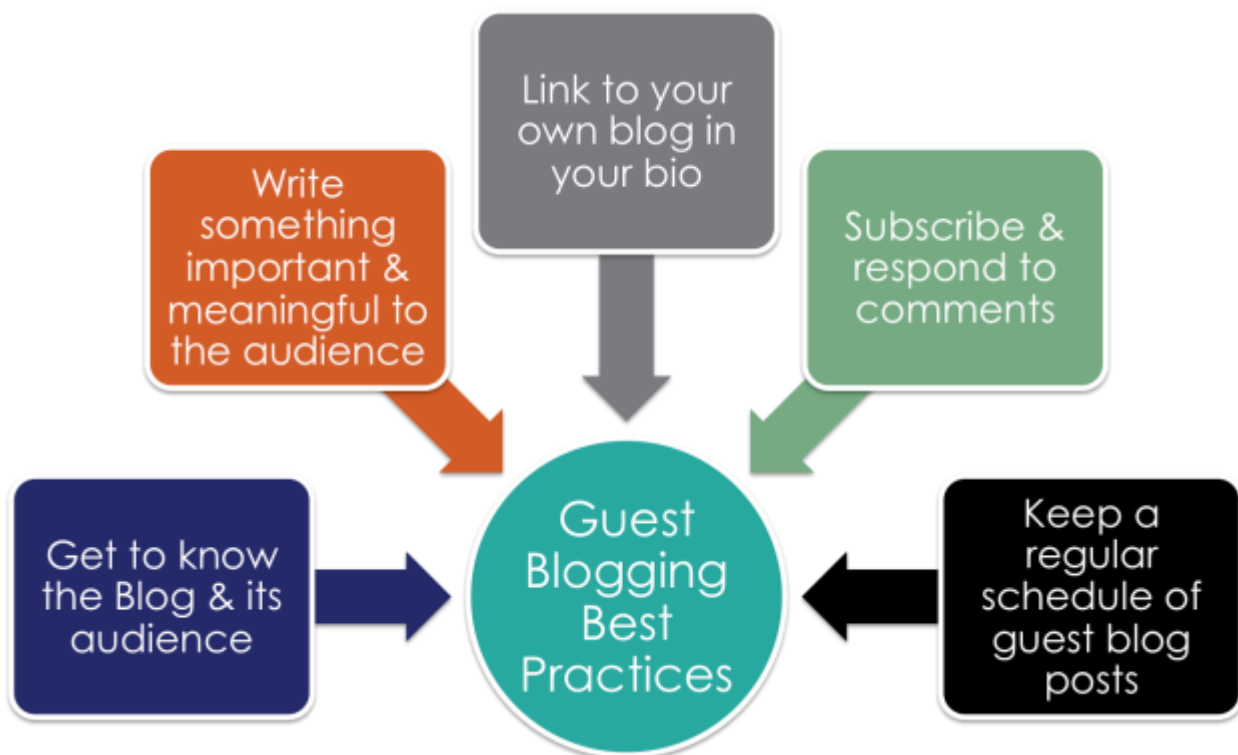
How Guest Blogging Works

First, find a good blog on the same or a similar topic as your blog. Make sure it gets a great deal of traffic and has plenty of readers. Contact the owner of the blog with a pitch for an article you could write for them. You could also send a finished article, which can be edited later to meet their editorial requirements, if any. Once they publish your blog post, you'll see a surge in traffic.

Guest blogging is a bit more time consuming than posting on social media. But you can get a great deal of traffic from it. If you choose the blogs you're writing for well, you can also gain a whole new audience. You may even gain a new joint venture partner if the blog owner sees that your post is popular.

You can also do guest blogging the opposite way by allowing others to write blog posts for your blog. If the writer already has a name and following, you will get some traffic by publishing their work.

Guest Blogging Best Practices



Before you approach a blog about guest posting, get to know the blog and its audience. This helps a great deal. You'll know what kind of content the blog owner and his or her audience likes. Look over the blog's past posts and try to find a good topic that hasn't been covered yet.

The keys to a successful guest blog post are relevance and value. Write something that's important and meaningful to the blog's audience. Make sure it's appropriate for that blog and also relevant to your own blog.

Make sure that the blog allows you to put a link to your blog in the bio box. This is important because when people read your post and want more, they'll click this link. It's also important for the backlink, as we mentioned before when discussing its SEO benefit.

After a guest blog post is published, subscribe to comments and respond to them. Respond to all comments if possible (all that aren't spam), or at least as many as you can. If nothing else, thank the commenter for reading. If they ask a question or bring up a good point, write an insightful response. Don't promote your blog here.

Guest blogging should be an ongoing effort. Decide on how many posts you can do per month, make a list of blogs where you can post, and stay on a regular schedule. Guest blogging usually brings a big spike in traffic that will taper off as new content is posted on the blog. If you keep regularly posting on good blogs, you can sustain this traffic.

Forums and Discussion Groups

Online forums generally garner less traffic than social media or guest blogging, but maintaining a presence on an online forum with a link to your site is a very

easy thing to do that can bring a small stream of traffic. Of course, depending on the forum, its members, and the way you work it, it could be more like a rushing torrent.

Online forums and groups are where people discuss common interests. They're not for promotion, although some forums like it and some have promotional sections. However, sharing your latest blog post as part of a forum's community isn't typically seen as "promotion" as such. It all depends on the forum.

The key is that you put your link in your profile and, hopefully, in your sig file (signature file, or the place at the bottom of your posts that has your name and other information). You'll get traffic passively to your blog by regularly posting helpful comments or questions on the forum.

Some forums have sections for members' blog posts. They may have a section called something like, "What Did You Blog About Today?" Here, you can write a short post telling the other members about your post and why they should check it out.

Start by looking for forums where you can find your potential readers. Spend some time checking out the forum to see what kind of posts there are and read the posting rules. Look for others advertising their blog posts. If you see other members doing this, you've found a good forum.

Make sure also that a forum has a large and active membership. A small forum with only a few members, or a dead forum, won't bring you much traffic.

As with all of your other traffic efforts, monitor traffic. If a certain forum isn't getting you much, drop it and find another. Ideally, you should have one to three forums where, every time you post, you see a spike in traffic.

Blog Commenting

Another fairly quick and simple method for driving traffic to your blog is blog commenting. This involves reading and commenting on the blogs of others. When you comment, you are given the option to add a link to your website in your profile. This makes your profile icon or avatar clickable. If people like your comment, they'll click on your profile to learn more about you.

The key here is to comment on blogs that are related to your niche, widely read, and that allows you to include a link somewhere (usually in your profile).

Since blog comments get notoriously swamped with spam, there are some do's and don'ts you have to follow in order to successfully drive traffic from blog comments:

DO leave a comment that's interesting, helpful or insightful, and that's relevant to the content of the article (this shows that you actually read the article).

DON'T put a link to your blog directly in the comment unless the blog owner allows it. Otherwise, your comment will be marked as spam. Spammers often put random links in their comments that are unrelated to the blog.

DO subscribe to comments and check back so that you can respond to follow-up comments or questions.

DON'T say anything promotional in your comment, like "By the way, check out my blog." This will get your comment marked as spam. If people are interested in hearing more from you, they'll click your profile.

DO get into the regular habit of reading blogs and commenting on a few daily.

DON'T leave a comment if you truly have nothing valid to say. A comment that says something like, "Good post" won't gain you any traffic.

DO subscribe to the blogs you like and read them as soon as they're updated so that you can be an early poster. If you post early, your comment is more likely to be seen.

Finally,

DO fill out your profile completely with an image and link to your website or blog. This shows that you're a real person and not a spam bot. And, of course, it's the main way people will discover your blog!

LEARNING ACTIVITY:

Make notes on the steps you'll take to build traffic to your blog through blog comments, guest blogs, and forums. Use the ideas in this module to guide you.

SETTING UP SYSTEMS FOR EMAIL UPDATES

In addition to manually telling your audience that you have new content on your blog, there are also ways to do so automatically. You can set up a blog feed, through which your blog will automatically notify your readers by email whenever you post something new. This will send repeat traffic to your site with no effort at all on your part.

The way this is done is through an RSS feed. RSS stands for "Real Simple Syndication" and that's exactly what it is. It's relatively easy to set up and once you've set it up, your content is syndicated.

Through RSS, readers subscribe to their favorite blogs. New content is aggregated and brought directly to their email inbox so they don't have to access the sites they like to check for new content. It pulls the latest content from each blog and brings it all directly to them.

Setting up RSS

There are many different ways to set up an RSS feed. Many blogging platforms including Blogger and WordPress automatically give you an RSS feed when you start a blog. Go to your blog dashboard and look for it. You can add whatever information you need to there.

If you don't automatically have an RSS feed, there are several free services you can use. One of the most popular is [Feedblitz](#). If a reader subscribes to several different blogs through [Feedblitz](#), they'll get new content from these blogs

together and they can manage their settings in one place. Your blog will be added to their [Feedblitz](#) blogroll.

To set up an account with [Feedblitz](#) or a similar service, you need to enter information about your blog and get verified. Once verified, the service will send you a piece of code to put on your blog. This code creates a subscription form where readers can subscribe easily.

There are various ways to display your RSS feed on your blog or other places. The most common is a "Subscribe" button or an RSS icon. Blogging platforms offer other options as well, like WordPress's widget that you can install on a site or blog.

Email Newsletters

If you market to your audience through an email newsletter, you can also use this to drive traffic to your blog. Each time you update your blog, send your subscribers a message giving them a taste of what to expect and including a link. They can click straight through to your blog through the message.

If you don't already have an email list, this is another good way to promote your online content. You can sign up for an email marketing service like [Aweber](#) or [MailChimp](#), and then build a list of email subscribers. The email marketing service will give you a sign-up form that you can put on your blog, site and other places. You can then send content to your subscribers, including updates about new blog content.

LEARNING ACTIVITY:

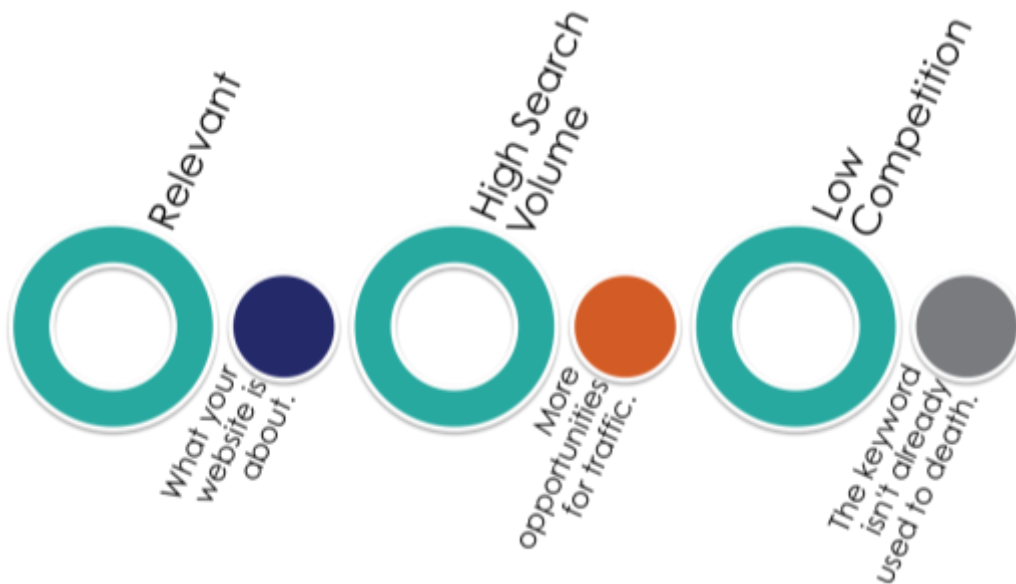
1. Create an RSS feed for your blog using a service such as Feedburner, or locate the url of your current feed.
2. Set up an automated blog 'broadcast' in your email autoresponder service to tell your subscribers about your latest posts. Find the instructions in your autoresponder's help section.

BASIC SEO FOR YOUR BLOG

SEO stands for "search engine optimization." It includes things you do both on and off your blog to bring traffic to it. All of the traffic techniques we've discussed thus far have been "off-page SEO," which is aimed at bringing traffic from other sites. In this module, you'll learn the very basics you need to know for your blog about on-page SEO.

On-page SEO revolves around keywords. These are the search terms that people are looking for when they use a search engine like Google or any other platform that provides a search function. You have to determine which keywords (or phrases) your potential readers are searching for in order to get this web traffic.

The best keywords are:



- **Relevant.** They describe what your website is about and what the person using Google is searching for.

- **High Search Volume.** Ideally, there are many people searching for this term, which means more opportunities for traffic.
- **Low Competition.** This means that the keyword isn't already used extensively by a million other websites around the world.

It's difficult to strike this balance between high search volume and low competition. To get started learning about keyword research, focus on relevance and look for keywords that have at least a relatively high search volume.

How to Choose and Use Keywords

You can start by brainstorming. Ask yourself, "What would I type into Google in order to find a blog like mine?" Start making a list of these ideas both for your blog in general and for each specific blog post you write. These are keywords that fit the bill of being relevant. You can also try searching some of these in Google just to see what comes up. You may see blogs that are similar to yours.

There's a better way to find keywords and this is to use actual data provided by Google itself. This is called keyword research. It involves conducting research on the keywords from your initial brainstormed list to see if they have a high search volume or not.

There are sophisticated premium programs you can use to discover a wealth of keyword data, but you may not need them. All you need are a few good keywords to use in your writing. Here are three free keyword research tools you can use:

[Google Keyword Planner Tool](#)

This is Google's keyword tool, which uses its own data. It's free and easy to use. You enter in your ideas and it will give you data on the keywords as well as suggestions. You'll need to first sign up for a Google AdWords account, but that's free and you don't have to run ads to use their tool.

[SEMRUSH](#)

SEMRUSH is similar to Google's tool but it lets you check out your competitors' keywords. If you enter the URL of a competitor or blog similar to yours, it will show you what keywords they use and offer ideas.

[Keyword Tool](#)

Keyword Tool is another similar tool but it's simpler and more stripped-down.

Keywords should be used naturally in your blog posts, their titles, descriptions, image 'alt' text (accessible by clicking on the image), and anywhere else you can use them. What's important is that you use the words naturally, varying the way you phrase things. Don't "stuff" your content with keywords. Stuffing makes your blog difficult to read and can also get you penalized by the search engines.

Categories and Tags

Categorizing and tagging your blog posts offers additional SEO benefits. Create a handful of categories and categorize each post accordingly. You should have a few different categories but don't create too many. Make them general enough that you can organize all of your blog posts into five or so.

When you post a blog post, you can also add tags. Tags tell the search engines what your blog post is about so that they can send traffic to it. Tags are like

keywords; they're words and short phrases that are possible search terms. You can give each post several tags that are relevant to its content.

SEO Plugins

One more option for boosting the SEO power of your blog is to get an SEO plugins. These are programs that you add to your site which give you SEO benefits or automate SEO tasks for you. If you're using a blogging platform, see which SEO plugins it offers for free, such as [WordPress SEO by Yoast](#).

LEARNING ACTIVITY:

1. Brainstorm and research some keywords that will support and optimize your blog content.
2. Identify categories and tags to help people find your blog post, based on your keyword research.
3. Pick one blog post to optimize for SEO. Select a relevant keyword, edit your content to include the keyword in appropriate places, and make sure it is in a relevant category. Be sure to include an image with a keyword in your 'alt' text for the image.

If you'd like, install a plugin for SEO and use it to guide the optimization of your blog post.

MORE CREATIVE WAYS TO DRIVE TRAFFIC TO YOUR BLOG

The traffic methods this course has covered thus far are the most common, most effective and easiest to implement. However, there is no end to all of the creative ideas out there for driving traffic to a blog. This module will introduce you to a number of creative and slightly "out of the box" ideas for traffic generation.



Publish a Podcast

Podcasting is very popular today. You can create a podcast based on your blog where you discuss various topics, have guests, and interview people. Put supplementary content such as images on your blog and tell your listeners to refer to them.

Press Releases

Write a one-page press release about your latest blog post. Make it a newsworthy event. You can submit your press releases to media outlets and websites that publish press releases online.

Blog Commenting

By searching WordPress org, you may find a plugin to manage comments on blog posts, but there is nothing like a real person reading and commenting on a blog with helpful insights. And blog owners notice. So, if you're really interested in working with others as a guest blogger or to build an affiliate relationship, start commenting and keep it real.

QR Codes

QR codes are scannable 3D barcodes. They're simple and black-and-white, so you can put them anywhere. If you scan a QR code with a mobile device, it directs the device automatically to the code's URL. You can create QR codes for your blog and put them everywhere online and off.

Contests and Giveaways

Host a contest or giveaway on your blog. This gives people a reason to visit and engage directly with it. Ask for submissions of some sort and reward the winner with a prize. Ask for content submissions and publish the best ones. You can then advertise your contest on social media and everywhere else to drive traffic back.

Reach out to Key Influencers

Identify people who are influential and reach out to them. Get them to talk about your blog. Offer an incentive or offer to promote them if they'll promote you. Focus your efforts on social media on getting to know and interact with these individuals.

Promote Offline

Wherever you go offline, tell people about your blog. This includes business cards, speaking engagements, networking events, etc. Put your blog on all of your offline promotional materials.

LEARNING ACTIVITY:

1. From the ideas above, list which ones you could integrate with your current methods.
2. Determine one creative example to use in the future.

ANALYZING YOUR BLOG'S PERFORMANCE

The only way to know whether your traffic efforts are paying off is to check your analytics. There are programs you can use that will give you data on your website's performance. You can use this data to refine your traffic strategy and make improvements.

There are many different programs but a good place to start is Google Analytics. Google Analytics is free but offers very comprehensive reports on all aspects of a website's performance. There are also plenty of tutorials and other information on how to use the program.

The Most Important Analytics for Bloggers

Your analytics program will tell you how much traffic you're getting and where it's coming from (called "referral sources"). This analytic tells you directly whether or not you're choosing the right traffic sources. If you notice that a particular source isn't driving much traffic, you can drop it and replace it with another. On the other hand, if one traffic source is generating a great deal, you can focus your efforts there.

Analytics programs also tell you how your blog is performing in terms of keywords. It will tell you which keywords you're ranking for in the search engines as well as which keywords people are searching to find your site.

Your analytics program will give you a wealth of other information about who's visiting your blog and what they're doing there, such as their geographic region,

the device or operating system (OS) they're using, whether they're new or repeat visitors, and which pages they're viewing.

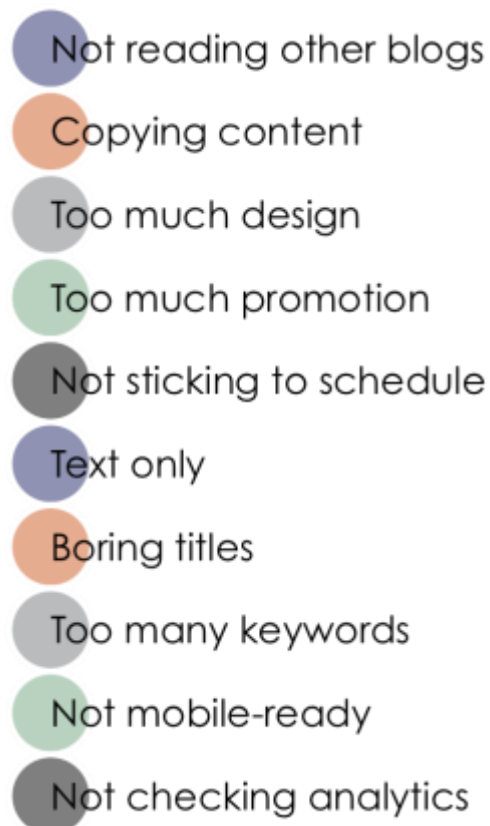
Google Analytics and other analytics programs give you a tremendous amount of information and not all of it will be useful for you. Decide which metrics are the most important to you and focus on them. One of the nice things about Google Analytics is that it creates custom reports for you so that you can get only the information you need.

LEARNING ACTIVITY:

1. Explore your Analytics and the statistics that are available to you. If you don't already have your blog set up with Google Analytics, read the [instructions for setting it up](#). Most blogging platforms will have a place in the theme to add your analytics code, or there are Google Analytics plugins to help.
2. Identify which key statistics you'll track to maximize your blog results
3. Review your analytics every week or so to see where you can adjust your traffic and content tactics.

COMMON MISTAKES TO AVOID WITH YOUR BLOG

Now you're ready to really get serious about getting more blog readers. But first, here are ten mistakes bloggers often make that cost them traffic.



1. **Not reading other blogs.** Spend some time reading other people's blogs, not just for commenting or networking, but to get a feel for what makes a good blog. You'll get ideas for your own blog, as well as information on what kind of blogs are already out there in your niche.

2. **Copying content.** Never copy content from another blog. Make your blog unique. If you use Private Label Rights (PLR) content, change it enough so that it's original and add your own value and insights to it. Try to do something with your blog that you don't see anyone else doing.
3. **Too much design.** A good blog has a clean design where the post is the star of the show. There shouldn't be clashing colors or design elements that clutter up the blog. Also, don't use any design elements like Flash Player or extensive ads that take time to load.
4. **Too much promotion.** Naturally, you want people to see your blog. But don't make it all about promotion. When talking about your blog, tell people how it will benefit them. Make it reader-focused and never about you.
5. **Not sticking to schedule.** Create a publishing schedule and stick to it. Don't try to publish a new post every day. Instead, decide on how often you can post and create a schedule from there. Frequency doesn't matter as much as consistency.
6. **Text only.** Add images and other media to your blog. This makes it much more interesting to look at. Also, images will appear on your social media posts when you share.
7. **Boring titles.** Spend time thinking of good titles for your posts that are enticing and original. In many cases, the title is all a potential reader will see before they decide whether to read on or not.
8. **Too many keywords.** Keywords are important to SEO but don't get overly obsessed with them. You only need a few keywords at a time. Use them naturally and don't stuff.

9. **Not mobile-ready.** Make sure that your blog looks good on mobile devices. It should either have a mobile version or be mobile-ready. At least some portion of your readers will be accessing your site via mobile.
10. **Not checking analytics.** It's very important to keep a steady routine of checking analytics to see if your efforts are paying off.

LEARNING ACTIVITY:

Use the provided checklist to ensure you don't make any of the mistakes listed.

CONCLUSION – CREATE YOUR ACTION PLAN

Now that you know how to drive traffic to your blog and manage it for continued traffic and readership.

Online marketing is all about building relationships. Even though your end goal may be to sell, building a relationship with your audience should always be at the forefront of your mind. If you can create authentic relationships with your readers, they'll stay with you for the long-term and tell others about you.

In this course, you've learned:

- How blogging can help you meet your business objectives
- The right traffic methods for sending your target market to your blog
- How to create a plan for driving consistent targeted traffic to your blog
- The best practices for driving traffic from a variety of social media sites and other sources
- The importance of guest blogging and how it's done
- Methods for driving traffic from online forums, groups, email and blog comments
- How to set up an RSS feed so that your readers are notified automatically when you post new content
- The basics of effective SEO that you can apply to your blog immediately
- A number of creative, "outside the box" blog traffic methods
- The importance of analytics and how to implement them to make improvements on your blog
- The most common mistakes so that you can avoid them

Now, you're ready for the next step, which is to fill out an action plan for the steps you'll take now that you've finished this course. After that, you're ready to start implementing what you've learned and driving more traffic to your blog than it has ever seen before.

LEARNING ACTIVITY:

1. Review all your notes and worksheets from the course.
2. Next, make a list of the actions you will take as soon as you get back to work. Identify the most important tasks that will lead to the biggest potential payoff.
3. Set deadlines for each of the tasks you identified.



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