

# 2009 Top 10 Web Secrets

Courtesy of <http://iwebu.blogspot.com>

Here are my top 10 Web Secrets listed Letterman style:



10. **The Ten Commandments of Website Creation**. It all starts with a well designed and well constructed website.

Today, I got religion about website creation, content and design:

1. **Thou shalt update thy website on a regular basis** - don't have one if you can't maintain it!!!
2. **Thou shalt have a manageable website** - less ambitious web sites are more manageable.
3. **Thou shalt do your homework** – look at your competition's websites. Make a list of sites you like – analyze why you like them. Make a list of sites you don't like – analyze why you don't. This is critical info to have before you hire a web designer or build your own site.
4. **Thou shalt only put up well written web content** - if you are not a good writer have someone who is edit your stuff!
5. **Thou shalt not make your website visitors hunt for your contact information** – nothing is more frustrating.
6. **Thou shalt make your text BIG enough** - many people cannot read 9 point text.
7. **Thou shalt use gender neutral colors** - unless you specialize in serving only one gender.
8. **Thou shalt not use a web design that makes your website difficult to use** - sure, you could add background music, animations and more to web pages – but that doesn't mean you should. Many people do not have the latest technology or fast cable modems, so avoid using flash based pop-ups, animations and splash screens that take a long time to download.
9. **Thou shalt think hard before sharing personal information** of the type: "Our cats, Boots and Zoey, are a delightful part of our lives."
10. **Thou shalt only use professional photographs** on thy website.



9. **Stumble Around**. When you can't think of a single thing to blog about or Twitter about, this is all the help you need.

When I want to find out what the latest and greatest websites are in my area of interest, I **Stumble**.

Huh?

**StumbleUpon** discovers web sites based on your interests. Whether it's a web page, photo or video, the personalized recommendation engine learns what you like, and brings you more.

How does this work? **Easy**. And it's **FREE!**

**Step One:** You download a very simple mini toolbar. This takes seconds. (StumbleUpon lets you **demo** the tool bar.) The toolbar consists of 3 elements: a **Stumble!** button, a **thumbs up** button, and a **thumbs down** button.

**Step Two:** You specify your interests. Mine, for example, include topics like cyberculture, web development, and computer hardware. Yours might be mental health, psychiatry, and self improvement.

**Step Three:** Click your Stumble! button. StumbleUpon takes you to a website that relates to your interests.

In my case, doing this takes me to "**Top Ten Mistakes in Web Design**". Excellent! This might be the inspiration for a future blog entry. I click on the thumbs up button. Not only does this automatically save the website into my favorites, but clicking the thumbs up button tells StumbleUpon that I like this type of website.

I click Stumble! again. This time it takes me to a website selling a book "**Structure and Interpretation of Computer Programs**" Whoa! Way too technical for me. I give it the thumbs down.

Over a very brief span of time, the StumbleUpon algorithm will do a better and better job of learning what types of websites I am interested in, and those that I dislike.

There are countless ways to creatively use the power of StumbleUpon, from keeping tabs on your competition, to keeping abreast of the latest developments

in your field, to boosting your creativity.

Have fun!



8. [SharedBook](#). Affordable reverse publishing - now that's a cool idea.

Many mental health and other professionals have accumulated wonderful articles, lists of resources and other material on their websites or even in a series of word documents.

**Bottom line: There's a huge amount of content on the web that users would like to keep in a more permanent form.**

Enter [SharedBook.com](#). SharedBook's "reverse publishing" capability allows users to select content and assemble it in book form. With a few clicks, a book is formatted and displayed; it can be purchased as is, or photos and text can be added for further personalization. Better yet, you can sell your book on line and SharedBook handles the entire transaction. You don't put any money up front, but everytime you sell a book, you share in the proceeds with SharedBook.com.

Perhaps even more amazing is their [Blog2Print](#) platform - aka "Got a blog? Make a book!".

Next time you feel like selling a printed version of your blog - how about "**My Best Blog Entries of 2008**", go to Blog2Print, where they you can print your blog and turn it into a professionally-published book.

With just a couple of clicks, you choose a cover, the posts you'd like to include, and you're on your way.

Wanna try? Go to [Got a blog? Make a book!](#) Type your blog URL in the space provided, and click "**Print my blog**". Wow! Talk about instant gratification! You can even SELL copies of your Blog! No cost to you, and you get 20% of each copy sold.

**Passive income - that's the Web 2.0 way.**



7. [TED](#). Inspiration at it's very best.

Imagine if, whenever you wanted to, you could listen to a relatively brief, (no more than 18 minute), presentation given by one of the greatest and most entertaining minds in the world.

You would be inspired.

You would be enlightened.

You would be clicking on the [TED](#) website.

**TED** stands for **Technology, Entertainment, Design**. It started out (in 1984) as a conference bringing together people from those three worlds. Since then its scope has become ever broader.

The annual conference now brings together the world's most fascinating thinkers and doers, who are challenged to give the talk of their lives (in 18 minutes).

The **TED** website makes the [best talks](#) and performances from TED available to the public, for **FREE**. More than 200 talks from their archive are now available, with more added each week. Better yet, these videos can be freely shared and reposted.

Want to experience the power and exhilaration of **TED**?

Here are three of my favorite presentations to get you started:

[Robert Lang folds way-new origami](#)

[Jill Bolte Taylor: My stroke of insight](#)

[Einstein the Parrot: Talking and squawking.](#)

Economy got you down? Sick of politics? Turn off the telly and click on **TED**. One of the nicest gifts you can give to yourself.



6. **Very Bad Websites**. Serves as both comic relief and a what-not-to-do when it comes to websites.

Just as you can learn from visiting the very best websites, you can learn a lot from visiting the very worst.

Conveniently for all interested parties, there is a web site that collects and ranks the absolute turkeys of web design, web navigation and web content. I am talking, of course, about the fabulously edifying and entertaining "**Web Pages That Suck**".

The great thing about this website, is that not only do they rank the worst of the worst on a yearly basis, but they accompany their selections with witty commentary.

You too can explore such atrocities as:

**Tally-Ho Uniforms & Accessories** - one of the top 10 worst websites of 2007

**Yvette's** - a rising contender for the worst of 2008

**Burlington Ufo and Paranormal Research and Education Center** ("This is so godawful that it ruptures the very fabric of space and time")

Remember my August 22, 2008 post, **Web Secret: Ten Commandments of Website Design**? This is what happens when you simultaneously violate all ten commandments.

**Bonus Secret:** Wondering if your web site sucks? Then read their "**Checklist 1 - 149 Mortal Sins That Will Send Your Site to Web Design Hell**", and wonder no more.



5. **Web 3.0**. Coming soon, in a future near you.

I spend a significant amount of time writing about and lecturing on the power of Web 2.0. Unsurprisingly, some smart-ass in the audience inevitably asks "What about Web 3.0? What will that be like?"

First of all, if you forgot the definition of Web 2.0, press your internal refresh button by reading my previous post on the subject.

Now back to the subject at hand. For a while, there were mostly incomprehensible definitions of Web 3.0. (Well at least incomprehensible to non-geeks). Take for example, Wikipedia's esoteric [entry](#). Pretty much all I got out of reading this article is that we won't see evidence of Web 3.0 until 2010.

Then one day, I came upon [howstuffworks.com](http://howstuffworks.com)'s actually understandable "[How Web 3.0 Will Work](#)". Briefly, this is what it says:

**Web 2.0:** You've decided to go see a movie and grab a bite to eat afterward. You're in the mood for a comedy and some incredibly spicy Mexican food. Booting up your PC, you open a Web browser and head to Google to search for theater, movie and restaurant information. You need to know which movies are playing in the theaters near you, so you spend some time reading short descriptions of each film before making your choice. Also, you want to see which Mexican restaurants are close to each of these theaters. And, you may want to check for customer reviews for the restaurants. In total, you visit half a dozen Web sites before you're ready to head out the door. *This may take a while...*

**Web 3.0:** Instead of multiple searches, you type a complex sentence or two in your Web 3.0 browser, and the Web does the rest. For example, you type "I want to see a funny movie and then eat at a good Mexican restaurant. What are my options?" The Web 3.0 browser will analyze your response, search the Internet for all possible answers, and then organize the results for you.

That's not all. Many experts believe that the Web 3.0 browser will act like a personal assistant. As you search the Web, the browser learns what you are interested in. The more you use the Web, the more your browser learns about you and the less specific you'll need to be with your questions. Eventually you might be able to ask your browser open questions like "where should I go for lunch?" Your browser would consult its records of what you like and dislike, take into account your current location and then suggest a list of restaurants.

**Is that cool or what?**



4. [7 Ways to Get People to Read Your Blog](#). Try 'em, they work.

Just read a clever blog post on [ProBlogger](#): "[7 Dark Truths: Why Readers Really Become Subscribers](#)" written by Nick Cernis.

Nick believes that all regular readers of a specific blog fall into one of seven categories. I have adapted his thoughts to serve you, my readers.

### **1) They want to be you**

I left my social work gig to become a full time geek. So I read [the Fried Social Worker blog](#) because sometimes I want to remember those days.

### **2) They want to be with you**

One of the most powerful blogs on the planet is [The Huffington Post](#). Ariana Huffington goes to amazing insider events and hangs with all kinds of bright, interesting people. So I read her blog and pretend she's my BFF.

### **3) They want your brain**

Read my blog, and know what I know.

### **4) They want your goodies**

Are you always giving away great kernels of wisdom and links to valuable resources? They will come.

### **5) They want your wit**

Day in day out, the funniest blog on the internet is [The Sneeze](#). Guaranteed I will feel better if I eat chocolate. Guaranteed I will laugh my head off when I read any gem in the ["Steve Don't Eat It" column](#). My favorite is "[Pickled Pork Rinds](#)".

### **6) They want to stay ahead**

Do you regularly read your competitors' blogs? You should - it's the best way to stay ahead. Chances are, a lot of your readers are your competitors. It's how they keep abreast of what you're doing and try to stay in front.

### **7) They want to check up on you**

OK that may be a little paranoid.

So Nick believes that all you need to do if you want more readers, is to use the seven categories for your own blog marketing purposes:

#### **1) Become a superstar**

If you become well-known expert in a specific field, people will want to be you and read you.

#### **2) Become a heart-throb**

I'll quote Nick here: "If you write openly in a way that tugs on people's heart strings, chances are they'll want to hear from you again. It's rare to find bloggers who spill their soul in a mature way that you can learn and grow from."

### 3) Become an expert

If you become an expert superstar, readers will flock to you.

### 4) Become generous

Think differently: what could you offer your readers for free that would be invaluable to them? Free website advice? Free marketing help? A free podcast?

### 5) Become funny

If you can be funny, people will read you.

### 6) Become a market-leader

If you can create something that's truly remarkable, there's a good chance you will get more readers

### 7) Tell your Mom

Tell your friends and family about your blog.

Go forth and use your new knowledge to gain the readers you deserve!



### 3. Whopper Sacrifice. The best in viral marketing.

If you read my [August 23, 2008 Web Secret](#) you know that viral marketing refers to techniques that uses pre-existing social networks (eg Facebook, LinkedIn, etc.) to produce an increase in brand awareness or achieve other marketing objectives.

Recently I read about a viral marketing ploy used by - of all companies - Burger King, that is so clever, elegant and thought provoking, **I just had to share it with you.**

Basically, Burger King created an application for [Facebook](#), called [Whopper Sacrifice](#) that rewarded you with a coupon for BK's signature burger for every 10 'friends' you managed to delete from your massively cluttered list of Facebook friends. The application then sent a notification to the banished party via Facebook's news feed explaining that your desire for a Whopper was stronger

than your love for the unlucky former 'friend.'

The app also added a box on a user's profile page charting their progress toward the free burger with the line, "*Who will be the next to go?*". Sacrificed friends had the option of sending an AngryGram to the axing perpetrator.

The marketing ploy was so successful that visitors to [WhopperSacrifice.com](http://WhopperSacrifice.com) are now told that "*Facebook had to disable Whopper Sacrifice after your love for the Whopper sandwich proved stronger than 233,906 friendships.*"

**I figure that for the cost of about 23,000 burgers, Burger King probably reached 500,000 potential customers.** And they got a ton of free publicity for their innovative viral marketing tactic.

Now it's your turn. How will you virally market your products and services? **The majority of viral marketing techniques don't cost a penny. Just brain power.**



## 2. [Ethics of Online Counseling and Everything Else.](#)

**Ethics in the online world. Sorely needed.**

Anytime I present to a group of eager professionals wanting to promote their private practices and businesses using Web 2.0 platforms, they ask me about **the ethics of using Facebook, YouTube, Skype, and other social media.** Anytime I listen to a speaker talk about online counseling, guaranteed - someone in the audience asks about the ethics of providing online counseling.

Now I would love nothing more than to include information about the ethics of the Internet in my presentations. But here's the rub - go find it. Every couple of months I do a search for any articles/conferences/presentations touching upon the ethics of online professional practice, and I usually come up empty handed.

The truth of the matter is that the Internet, social media, and a broad range of web based applications are developing at warp speed, and **the ethics folks are just beginning to come to grips with the implications of these technologies.** A major association recently revamped their code of ethics and they didn't even touch upon online counseling.

Another confession: until recently, I had a bias that online counseling was somehow less than face-to-face counseling. Then, at last year's [2008 World EAP \(Employee Assistance Program\) Conference](#), the head of India's largest EAP revealed in a presentation to conference attendees that **in India, 70% of all EAP counseling is delivered online, via e-mail.** Turns out that over there,

counseling is still a major taboo. If you have problems, your family is supposed to help you solve them, NOT a therapist. I would venture to guess that counseling services of all stripes in India are delivered primarily via the Internet. So wrangling with the ethics of all of this would seem to be important and timely.

Finally, just a couple of weeks ago, I came across some resources, at least about the ethics of online counseling.

- [The International Society for Mental Health Online](#)
- [Suggested Principles for the Online Provision of Mental Health Services](#) - these date from 2000 but are a good starting point)
- [The Online Therapy Institute Blog](#)
- A new book, **Therapy Online - A Practical Guide** by Kate Anthony and DeeAnna Nagel, is slated for publication in fall 2009. If you subscribe to the Online Therapy Blog, you will get an announcement about the book.

If any of you come across articles/books/blogs/webcasts about the ethics of social networking platforms and Web 2.0 - please give me a holler!

**and the number one web secret...**



1. [The Social Media Marketing Triangle™](#). **Achieve your optimal presence on the Web. Learned in the kitchen.**

Last week I attended a social media marketing workshop in Manhattan. I always like to have a grip on the depth of my knowledge and ignorance of Twitter and the like. For extra punishment, I stayed to listen to a panel discussion about social media marketing.

The panel was a complete waste of time. It was lead by a Betty Boop like, very clueless person. Sample question asked of the panel of full time social media experts: "*So like, how much time do you spend on social marketing each day?*"

But the social media presenter was [Rick Rochon](#), a very knowledgeable guy, and he said:

**"Having a website is like having a billboard in the desert."**

He meant that if you don't drive traffic to your website using other social media, it's a waste.

He advocates having a "*blebsite*" - linking a website and a blog.

I take it a step further - if your serious about promoting yourself or your business, you need a **Social Media Marketing Triangle™**.

I thought about this concept after I heard my contractor talking about the "**kitchen work triangle**" as he attempted to remodel my "vintage" kitchen into something more 21st century. He kept harping about the need to have an invisible "work triangle" created by the arrangement of the sink, the stove and the refrigerator. It seems that the placement of these three elements in relation to each other is intrinsically connected to designing an efficient kitchen.

It got me thinking - **maybe the key to self promotion on the web is an invisible "triangle" that you create on the Internet by cross referring between at least 3 web platforms.**

Take, for example, your [website](#), your [Facebook](#) page and your [Twitter](#) account. **What if the strategic placement of any three social media elements in relation to one another is fundamentally connected to successfully marketing yourself or your organization on the Internet?**

The more I think about it, the more I like it. Your website refers to your blog, your blog refers to Twitter, your Twitter account refers back to your website. The more triangles - the better. If you have the patience to build 4 triangles, you have a tetrahedron of social media networks.

How geodesic...

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