Meet the Trainers (1)

Gary Parker

BA (Hons) Social Science

- Chair of Future Communities
- 20+ years of experience in business support and fundraising
- future-communities.org.uk

Meet the Trainers (2)

- Providing website design and development services to SMEs
- Worked with a range of small business from a variety of sectors

Sybil Mayard

MSc Computer Science

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Workshop Outline

1. The Benefits of an Online Presence
2. What Do You Need?
3. Build a Website
4. Create a Professional Email Address
5. Track the Performance of Your Website
6. Promote Your Project
7. Other Useful (Free) Tools
8. Stay Safe Online
9. Contact Us
10. Useful Links

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The Benefits of Having an Online Presence

- Low operating costs
- Your website is accessible to customers 24/7
- Manage your project from anywhere with an internet connection
- Reach an international audience
- Easier to track analytics and customer behaviour
- Small carbon footprint

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What Do You Need?

- Website
- Custom domain
- Professional email address
- Hosting
- SEO (search engine optimisation)
- Email marketing
- Blog
- Social media
- Ads

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Build a Website

- Think about time available, your budget, your skills and the requirements of your project
- Plan the requirements of your site:
  - Pages required and content
  - Features (e.g. blog, photo gallery)
  - Functionality (e.g. newsletter signup form, e-commerce, contact form, chat bot)
- It is possible to build a website for free
- Using a website builder is the quickest way to get started
- We'll discuss a few popular website builders
- Don't forget to include legal information (privacy notice, terms & conditions)

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Wix

- You can develop a website for free
- No need to get a hosting plan - Wix provides the hosting
- Apps are available from the Wix App Market if you need additional features
- The platform does not require maintenance
- Wix can be used to build an e-commerce store
- To access advanced features e.g. removing ads, connecting a custom domain or taking payments online, you must upgrade to a paid plan

WordPress.org

- A very powerful and customisable platform
- You have access to a vast range of themes and plugins to enhance the functionality of your site, many of which are free
- Use WooCommerce to convert your WordPress site into an e-commerce store
- WordPress itself is free, but you need to set up hosting and a register a domain before installing it
- The platform needs regular maintenance (keeping themes, plugins and WP core files updated), and backups

Shopify

- A very popular e-commerce platform, which powers millions of merchants worldwide
- You can sell an unlimited number of products on your Shopify store
- Themes are highly customisable without the need for editing code
- Apps are available from the Shopify App Store if you need more features
- The Basic Shopify plan costs ~~£25/month~~ **£1/month for the first 3 months!**
- Or, contact us about setting up an unlimited trial store for you
- 24/7 access to the Shopify Support team via chat, email and the community forums

Other Website Builders

- Squarespace
- Webflow
- Weebly
- etc.

Register a Custom Domain

- A domain is what appears in the address bar of the browser
- Choose a domain which is as short as possible
- Include your project's or community group's name
- Choose the most appropriate domain extension
  - Common extensions: .org.uk, .com, .co.uk
- Avoid hyphens and numbers
- Purchase more than one domain (optional)
- Domains start from ~£7/year + VAT
- Common domain providers include:
  - GoDaddy
  - Namecheap
  - 123 Reg

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Create a Professional Email Address

- Convenient and low-cost communication
- Free providers: Gmail, Outlook or Yahoo
- Upgrade to a paid email provider for a customised email address in the form of yourname@company.com
- Choose an email hosting package when purchasing your domain
- Select an email package that gives you ample storage space
- A professional email address is preferable for sending email campaigns

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Set Up Your Hosting

- Required for installing the WordPress software
- Choose a plan that includes an SSL* certificate
- Research prices and features to ensure that you are getting the best deal
- Choose a package that best suits your needs (monthly traffic, storage space)
- Hosting costs start from ~£6/month + VAT
- Here are a few hosting providers:
  - SiteGround
  - Bluehost
  - DreamHost
  - WP Engine

SSL: Secure Sockets Layer

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Understand Search Engine Optimisation (SEO)

- Helps your website rank higher in search results
- Organic (does not use paid advertising)
- Your website **must** be mobile friendly
- Optimise page titles, meta descriptions and image alt tags - include relevant keywords
- Fix broken links
- Logical site structure, fast loading, good user experience
- Submit your site to Google Search Console
- Ensure that your site has an SSL certificate installed
- Add new content to your website on a regular basis
- Can use AI-generated content, but edit it before publishing
- Ask other website owners to link their website to yours (backlinking)

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Start a Blog

- Demonstrates that you are an expert in your field
- Maintaining a blog keeps your audience informed and engaged
- Helps to improve the SEO of your website
- All of the website builders mentioned previously offer blogging tools
- It is a long term process
- Your content needs to be relevant
- Publish posts on a regular basis (e.g. every 2 weeks)

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Track the Performance of Your Website

- Install Google Analytics 4 (free tool)
- Monitor metrics such as pageviews, acquisition, number of users, locations of users, devices and browsers used etc.
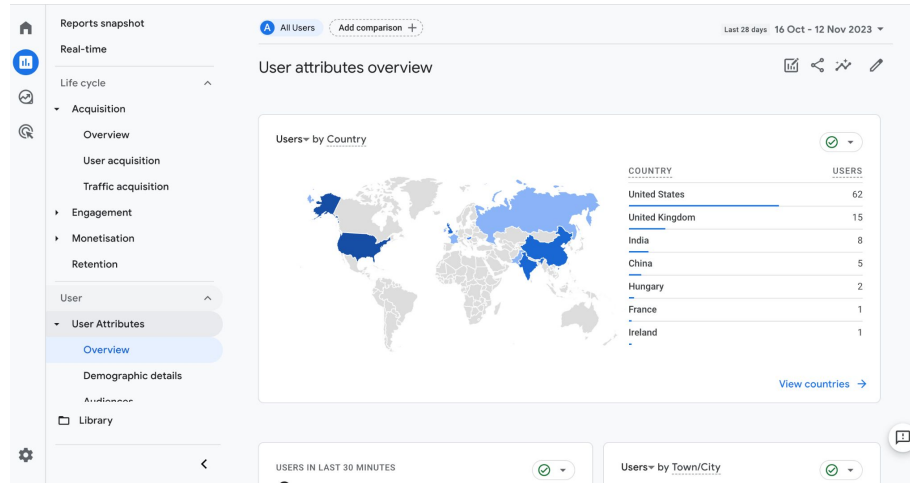
Utilise Email Marketing

- Email marketing is a powerful tool for keeping your customers engaged
- Think about the content, e.g. newsletter, offers, competitions, launch of new products/services
- Monitor key metrics:
  - Open rate
  - Click-through rate
  - Bounce rate
  - Unsubscribe rate
- Common email marketing platforms (all of these offer a free plan):
  - Mailchimp
  - MailerLite
  - HubSpot
- Be aware of GDPR requirements

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Social Media (1)

- A very effective and inexpensive way to promote your project
- Engage directly with your followers
- Produce relevant content and publish regularly - like blogging, it is a long term strategy
- Most popular social media platforms include:
  - Facebook
  - Instagram
  - X
  - LinkedIn
  - TikTok
  - Nextdoor - good for creating a local presence

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Social Media (2)

- The algorithms are constantly changing. Experiment with different strategies to find out what works best for you
- Look at your analytics to understand how your posts are performing
- A couple of tools to help you manage your social media:
  - **Meta Business Suite**
    - Works with Facebook and Instagram
  - **Buffer (free plan)**
    - Connect up to 3 channels
    - Schedule 10 posts per channel at one time

Get Reviews

- Enter as much information as you can (contact info, opening hours, booking link, FAQs …)
- Ask your clients to write reviews - send them a link that takes them directly to the form
- Respond to all reviews

Utilise Paid Advertising

- PPC stands for **pay-per-click**, a model of digital advertising where the advertiser pays a fee each time one of their ads is clicked
- Paid advertising is a fast way to gain visitors to your website and increase conversions, but can be expensive - define your budget
- You can run paid ads on search engines like Google or Bing, or on social media platforms
- Advertise on the platform(s) that your audience is using
- Monitor the performance of your campaigns so that you can make adjustments and improvements

Other Useful (Free) Tools

Generative AI:
- ChatGPT

Document creation/collaboration:
- Google Docs

File storage/sharing:
- Google Drive
- Dropbox
- WeTransfer

Project management:
- Trello

Graphic design:
- Canva

Social media scheduling:
- Meta Business Suite
- Buffer

Video conferencing:
- Zoom
- Microsoft Teams
- Google Meet

Meeting scheduling:
- Calendly

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Stay Safe Online

- Don't reuse passwords across multiple websites
- Use a password manager
- Install malware protection software on all of your devices
- Don't submit personal data on insecure websites
- Check the address bar in the browser to verify that you are actually on the site that you intended to visit
- Only download apps/software from legitimate sources and always install the latest version
- Don't click links or download attachments from suspicious emails
- Keep your devices up to date
- If using WordPress, keep your plugins, themes and core files updated

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Contact Information

This resource was produced by Future Communities

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Useful Links (1)

- Wix: www.wix.com
- WordPress: wordpress.org
- Shopify: www.shopify.com/uk
- SEO Starter Guide:
  developers.google.com/search/docs/beginner/seo-starter-guide
- Mailchimp: mailchimp.com
- MailerLite: www.mailerlite.com
- Google Ads: business.google.com/uk/google-ads
- Google Analytics: marketingplatform.google.com/intl/en_uk/about/analytics
- Google Business Profile: www.google.com/intl/en_uk/business/

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Useful Links (2)

- ChatGPT: chatgpt.com
- Google Drive: workspace.google.com/intl/en_uk/products/drive
- Dropbox: dropbox.com
- WeTransfer: wetransfer.com
- Canva: www.canva.com
- Meta Business Suite: business.facebook.com
- Trello: trello.com
- Microsoft Teams:
  www.microsoft.com/en-gb/microsoft-teams/group-chat-software
- Google Meet: meet.google.com
- LastPass: lastpass.com

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