



Getting Your Project or Community Group Online

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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

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

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

What Do You Need?

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

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)

- 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.



webflow

weebly

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

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

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*

Understand Search Engine Optimisation (SEO)

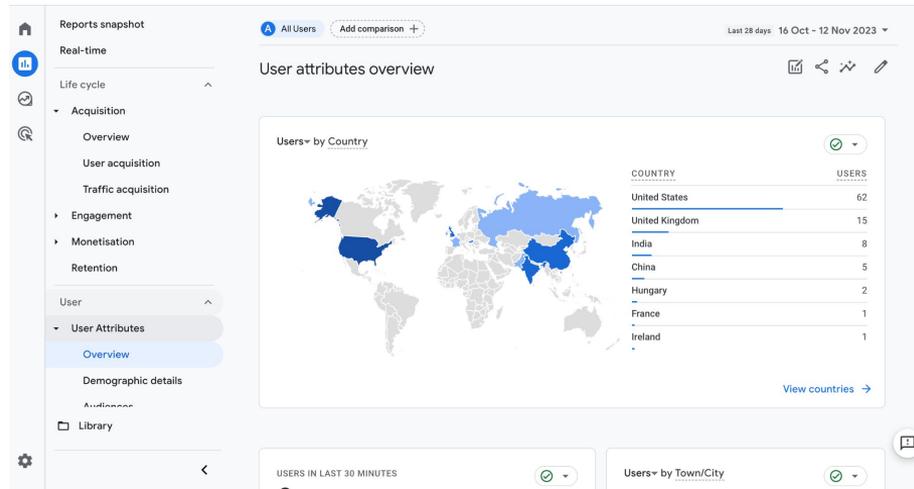
- Helps your website rank higher in search results
- Organic (does not use paid advertising)
- Your website **must** be mobile friendly
- Optimise page titles, meta descriptions and image alt tags - include relevant keywords
- Fix broken links
- Logical site structure, fast loading, good user experience
- 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)

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)

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

Social Media (1)

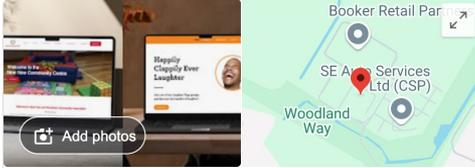
- A very effective and inexpensive way to promote your project
- Engage directly with your followers
- Produce relevant content and publish regularly - like blogging, it is a long term strategy
- Most popular social media platforms include:
 - Facebook
 - Instagram
 - X
 - LinkedIn
 - TikTok
 - Nextdoor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

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



Sybiltec Web Design

Website Directions Save Call

5.0 ★★★★★ 10 Google reviews ⓘ

Web designer in England

✓ You manage this Business Profile ⓘ

Located in: The Engine House

Address: 2 Veridion Way, Erith DA18 4AL

Hours: Closed · Opens 9 am Fri ▾

Phone: 07768 059730

[Edit your business information](#)

Google Ads can help your business grow

Get £400 in Google Ads credit when you spend £400. [Terms and Conditions apply](#)

[Start advertising](#)

Appointments: [calendly.com](#) Providers ⓘ

Questions & answers

[See all questions \(7\)](#) [Ask a question](#)

[Send to your phone](#) [Send](#)

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

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

Contact Information

This resource was produced by Future Communities

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- Email: info@future-communities.net
- Phone: 020 8320 1360
- X: [@futurecommunit1](https://twitter.com/futurecommunit1)
- YouTube: [@futurecommunities9383](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCfuturecommunities9383)

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/

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