

# *I have a new website! Now what?*

## **A guide to increasing traffic to your new site.**

Creating your website is only the first step in crafting an online presence. With millions of websites on the internet, and thousands of new sites being created every day, it's important to make sure that your new website gets the attention it deserves. Below are a few tips to help drive new visitors to your site.

### ***Fresh Content***

There is a very popular saying on the web that “content is king.” In other words, it's really the information on your site that brings people back again and again. By providing content that is useful, well-written, and *frequently updated*, you are more likely to draw visitors back to your site, and to have visitors recommend your site to friends.

### ***Social Networking***

Obviously, social networking has been the “hot thing” on the internet for some time now. Social networking is constantly evolving, and many people are sharing content on a variety of different social platforms. Below are a few ways you can and should allow users to “connect” through your website

#### **RSS**

RSS stand for “really simple syndication.” RSS allows your site to produce a “feed” for your users. Many people on the web follow multiple blogs and news sites. RSS feed readers (like Google Reader) allow users to get a notification every time there is something new on one of the sites that they follow. By providing an RSS feed, you are providing a way to notify your visitors every time you post something new.

#### **The “Blogosphere”**

Blogs are everywhere these days, and they can be a great way to let others know about your site. By participating and commenting on other websites, you often have a chance to include you own website address. This allows readers of your comment to check out your site.

Likewise, try to start up relationships with other bloggers you like. For instance, you could include a link to their website on your site, and they might be willing to do the same. (Lists of other sites you like are called “blogrolls”).

## **Facebook**

Facebook is the most popular social network in the US. With nearly 600 million users, this social network is a great way to gain more visitors to your site. There are several different strategies that website owners can use effectively.

- Your website (or each blog post) should have a Facebook “like” button. This allows any user who comes to your site to like your content. Their “like” shows up in all of their friends’ news feeds. In other words, when one person “likes” your content, dozens of other people know about, and are exposed to, your site!
- Anyone with a business can create a Facebook page for their business. This allows users to set up an online shop on their business page, offer deals and discounts, and stay in touch with visitors.
- By creating a status update on Facebook when your site has new content, you can drive a lot of visitors to your site. While you don’t want to be compulsive or annoying about it, you can say something like this:  
*“Hey Everyone! I just got my new website up and running. Check it out, and if you like what you see, click “like” on the top right hand part of the page.”*
- Facebook has a few other widgets you can include in your site. Check them out through the Facebook website to see if you would like to include them in your site.

## **Twitter**

Twitter is a “microblogging” platform that allows you to create updates, or “tweets” in 140 characters or less. People can then respond to or follow your tweets. If you have the need to provide regular, short updates to your website followers, Twitter might be a good option for you.

## **LinkedIn**

LinkedIn is a professional social network. It’s a place to post your job history, resume, and qualifications in order to connect with others in your professional field. If this is relevant to your site, consider setting up a LinkedIn account. We can then integrate your LinkedIn profile with your website.

### **Bulletin Boards/Online Forums:**

While online bulletin boards have been around for a while, they remain very popular in certain virtual communities. If you want your website to allow for lots of discussion, you may want to consider offering an online forum on your site. However, you will need to monitor the discussion board for appropriateness, or for any users that are being “trolls” (users who are mean and nasty for the fun of it). Please talk to us if you’d like us to add an online forum to your site.

### **Up-and-coming social networking**

There are many other social networking sites, and new types of ventures are coming on the scene every day. For instance, as I write this guide, Groupon (a website that provides daily local discounts) is becoming much more popular, and Foursquare (a geo-location social network) is also gaining in popularity. Both of these websites can potentially be integrated into the social media aspect of your site.

**At Northern Vista**, we stay updated to the latest social networking trends. We will be giving you periodic updates and hints that will help your website to stay on the forefront of the social media world.

## ***Interacting with your visitors***

Oftentimes, visitors to your site may want to contribute to the virtual community you have created there. There are several ways to help make your site more interactive for visitors.

- Allow users to post comments. Likewise, make sure you monitor comments and try to respond to your commentators in some way. Ask questions in your blog posts/articles/pages in order to elicit a response from your readers.
- If relevant, create polls or other interactive widgets on your page that allow users an easy way to offer their opinions or feedback
- Consider implementing an online forum
- Be sure to promptly respond to emails or private messages from visitors.

## ***Analytics***

Analytics software is software that tracks how many people come to your site, where they come from, how long they spent on your site, and many other things. This information can be extremely useful. For instance, if you get lots of traffic to your website when you create tutorials, you might want to consider writing more tutorials. Likewise, if visitors only spend a few seconds on your site, it probably means they're getting bored easily.

Google offers a free analytics program called...Google Analytics. It's a great way to track how well your site is doing. If you are intending to make money off your site, this information is crucial.

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### **A short example:**

On my own personal blog, I posted a tutorial on how to make homemade red currant mead. Along with the how-to guide, I included a nice picture I had taken of some red currant berries. After a few weeks, I began to notice something strange. Many new visitors were coming to my site after searching for "red currants." Sure enough, my currant picture was in the top ratings on Google search. While I didn't intend to simply be a source for pictures of berries, it brought people to my site who would have otherwise never visited.

In response, I began to post more pictures with my blog posts. (Make sure you are careful about copyright). It's had a positive impact on my website traffic, and I'm just glad to get more visitors to my site, regardless of the reason.

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**Northern Vista** always includes analytics tracking in all of our websites. Either we monitor your site, or you can monitor it yourself.

## ***In conclusion***

To make a website successful, it takes a lot of work by the website owner. Hopefully we've given you several ways to make your site more meaningful and popular. After your website is

up and running, we are always available to set up additional consultations and to add more interactivity to your site.