

Internet Marketing Tips And Techniques



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How to Put a STOP to Your Distractions

Getting Distracted? Put a STOP to It!

Do You Have Too Much to Do and TOO Little Time?

The word "busy" carries a very subjective connotation with it, especially in case of internet marketers. As a matter of fact, almost all of us internet marketers are "busy", so to speak, but guess how many of us are "fruitfully" busy? Very few indeed, and those few people are the ones who reach the success ladder. I would tell you it is not easy to get rid of distractions so easily, especially if you are a lazy fellow like me, you would be getting bored of "working" pretty soon. The excitement would give way to boredom, which in turn would distract your attention away from internet marketing and near the things you love to do or believe. So what are those things?

1. The Desire for the Magic Bullet: Do you buy everything that your favorite gurus promote to you? Then you have a secret desire of acquiring the "magic bullet of success" that is "ever so eluding me!" So you buy this or that guru's product, you get disappointed when you fail to find the "magic bullet" you secretly wish for, and you indulge in guru bashing. Like -

"This X Guru totally sucks. He is cr*p, his products are cr*p and everything that belongs to him is cr*p. Beware of buying anything from this scamster, or you are doomed."

Only kidding, but I guess you would be saying something similar ;-)

Even though many gurus would lure you to their products with the promise of magic bullet, I doubt they themselves believe in it. They know what actually works (hard work) and what people actually want (money without any hard work). Time you learn to read the minds of gurus. How would you do that?

Follow what the guru actually does, not what he is says. If you see him coming up with a new product every now and then, you know what you have to do-focus more on selling than buying. I guarantee you would have a good sleep at the end of the day! ;)

it does not matter whose product it is or if I or someone else has created the product, nor does it matter if it is a "limited time offer" or "one time offer"; i also

does not matter if it is a "too good to be true" offer or that the discount expires tomorrow.

IF YOU DON'T NEED IT, DON'T BUY IT!

Excuse the caps please ;)

Here is a surefire way to put an end to your buying craze: have a "To Buy:" list. Whenever you seem to fall for a "oh so tempting offer", just put it in that list, and tell yourself you would buy it tomorrow or when you have this much of money in your Paypal account.

Look at that list next morning with a fresh mind, I bet you would be kicking your butt for even putting that product in your list!

Whenever you're out to buy the "next best product", ask yourself the following questions:

- a) Do I really need the product right now? Can it fulfill my immediate goals?
- b) How can the product help me? How much ROI (return on investment) can I expect from it?
- c) Does the seller stand behind the offer?
- d) Can I really afford it? Could my money be better spent on something more important?

If your answer to (a) and (b) are NO, then run, don't walk. But if you say YES to them, then move on to C. If the seller relies on a bunch of testimonials from his guru buddies to convince you of the product's quality and does not himself stand behind him, then again perhaps you need to ask around (in forums) or contact the seller before you buy it. If you think the money could better be spent on something more useful or important, then spend on that instead and skip buying the product which is apparently "less important" to you.

Example, I have \$200 in my Paypal account. I need a new shopping cart script which costs as much; on the other hand, I would like to outsource around a dozen articles to my ghostwriters, because I hate writing. This outsourcing task would also cost me the same. So need to gauge my priorities.

Shopping cart software is not as important because I can use the free shopping cart buttons offered by Paypal. On the other hand, if I spend the money on content outsourcing, I can have the articles done up faster than if I were to write them myself (because, as I said, I hate writing). I could use these articles to generate some immediate traffic, which in turn would bring some immediate sales (hopefully). I can then use a part of the sales proceeds in buying the desired shopping cart script. Makes sense? Which brings me to the use of the tool called "reward" that I would discuss next!

I have heard that women are compulsive shoppers compared to men; I am not sure if that is true in case online shopping as well, but hopefully the above advice would help both genders. ;)

At the end of the day, it is human to fall to temptations, but then again, we humans also have the power to control our temptations, even if by a small percentage. Best of all, you don't need to spend big bucks on a mindset booster software or a lot of "NLP" audios from some guru to achieve this end; you can do this by following my free advice above.

While the advice is free, a few sips of beer is definitely appreciated (coz I feel thirsty) ;)

1. The Self-Exploitation Symptom: If you have too much work to do and too little time to invest in them, blame it on your poor planning. Everyone gets only 24 hours per day but some of us are better time managers than others. In fact I would be the first one to come forward and acknowledge it: yep, indeed I cannot manage time like others, but lately this trick is working for me.

Let us say I have a lot of tasks to do. I pick about 5 important tasks out of them, especially the money-making tasks (the ones that would make me quick cash) and do each of them per day. I usually plan my tasks by date, rather than name of the day of the week. So I would rather use this format:

1st July:

Task 1

2nd July: Task

2

Rather than:

Wednesday:

Task 1

Thursday:

Task 2

Let us face it, days come and go, and we seldom are able to keep our eyes on them; we much prefer to keep an eye on dates, because once they go, they never come back. Planning your tasks by date adds a feeling of urgency to your tasks (that is, they must be accomplished ASAP or they would never get done).

Notice that I have more than 5 tasks to do, but I am planning my tasks in a way so that I don't stress myself out too much at a time. And then of course, I keep the incomplete/non-money making tasks for Saturday (and sometimes Sundays too; though I try hard to take Sundays off, sometimes that just doesn't happen).

I don't plan tasks for a whole month: it simply would mean spending too much time on planning. At most, I plan tasks only for 2 weeks ahead (short term tasks of course, but almost all of them have long term implications on my business). Once they are done, I plan the next fortnight's tasks (again this is something I do only on weekends)

Another thing that works for me is the "reward" system. In my task planner (I just use a Microsoft Word file, no sophisticated software or anything) I add a reward at the end of the completion of a week's tasks; sometimes the reward is in the form of foods, domain names (I am very addictive to domain buying) or anything else! That reward has to be motivating and enticing enough to make you slog through the whole week ;)

2. The Entertainment and Addiction Mania: Entertainment is perhaps one of the biggest reasons of distraction for internet marketers - at least it is for me. Some are addicted to television; myself, it has been quite a while since I have watched television. Though I was addicted to it during my childhood and teen years, I gave it up when it started belching out all that sappy cr*p (hopefully you are more fortunate in that case). I am more addicted to YouTube. Then there are others who

are addicted to twitter. Yet others simply cannot take their attention off of the warrior forum; again I would admit it is very addictive.

I usually keep the weekends for entertainment, but in weekdays too sometimes I get distracted and visit YouTube. That happens only when I am doing something I don't want to do (for example, writing) or am involved in a project that is taking far too long to complete.

Right since I have started planning my tasks as I described above, my distractions have however minimized. I know I am running against a deadline and even though I do no more than one or two tasks per day, those tasks are long enough to cover almost the entire day, so that I have very little time left for entertainment when I am done with them!

So I try my best to cram all my entertainment addictions in the weekends, especially Sunday. I try to take at least one day off per week to get recharged and refreshed! Sometimes I even indulge in writing boring short stories ;)

3. The Email Demon: Email is a demon indeed: once open up the inbox and start answering emails, it seems to be a task that is never going to end. That is why I reply only to the most important emails as soon as I wake up, then sign-out from my Gmail account, remove the Gmail notifier icon from my system tray (this notifier is a major cause of my distraction, as I have realized lately). When I am done with my tasks, I log back into my Gmail account and answer/read the not-so-important emails. I check my email twice or at most three per day, no more and no less. Earlier I used to answer all emails at once and at the end of it, I would get so tired that I did not have any energy or motivation left to finish my more important tasks; boredom and YouTube were what used to happen to me next!

I have not used it yet, but Gmail offers a cool plugin called "Email Addict" which can be found at <http://groups.google.com/group/gmail-labs-help-email-addict/topics>; it is designed to rid you of chat addiction by making you invisible in chat for 15 minutes so that you can do something else. You can enable it in Labs. Again this is something I have not used yet, but it could just be what would help you get rid of chat addiction! I got to agree that chat is one of the hardest to get over addictions: once you start it, there is no end to it, just like offline gossiping. It can waste hours and hours of your precious time if it gets out of control. No wonder I (and a few of my friends) have permanently become invisible in Gmail chat. ;)

Part time breaks in between a long/grueling task, or after this task is over (such as link building):

I am not perfect, and neither are you, so there would be times when you stray, but once you are able to put yourself back on track quickly, promise yourself never to get strayed again until you are done with the day's tasks!

Do you get your project ideas while doing something else (immediately put it down in a text file) or pooping (passing bowels) or bathing (try not to forget until you are back to the desk) or going to sleep(keep a pen and a paper close to you)? It happens to me sometimes.

Sometimes, if there is one thing keeps distracting you then get distracted ONCE (i.e., be done with it) and come back to your original task.

One project should not take no more than 1-3 months to complete, and don't spend more than a fortnight on a single project esp. if you suffer from adhd (now that was a joke, of course).

Is your browser distracting you? Use Firefox leech addon:

<https://addons.mozilla.org/en-US/firefox/addon/4476>

2 Backlink Myths Busted!

When people start speculating, there is just no logical end to it. Be it stock markets or search engine optimization, speculations only manage to confuse gullible people instead of helping them! Speaking of SEO, there are way too many myths prevailing on backlink building and SEO in general that I would better start writing an ebook on them!

Perhaps the funniest thing is that such myths are more often than not mere figments of imagination of those who hardly know a thing about the topic! In this article I will bust two such myths.

1. Myth 1 - You need to keep adding content to your website to maintain its search engine rankings: Utter falsehood! You can not only get good rankings for your website but even maintain those rankings WITHOUT adding content regularly! I have so many websites that I have not touched for years, and their

rankings only get better with time! Guess what is the secret?

Instead of adding content, I focus more on a building backlinks.

Now, I am not asking you to stop putting content on your website. Content, quality content that is, is what attracts visitors to your website and makes them stick around and buy your stuff. When people see quality content on your website, they would instantly perceive you as an expert in that niche, which in turn would help build trust between you and your prospects.

Once your prospects start trusting you, they would not hesitate to buy whatever you have put together, provided of course that you are selling quality products!

My point is that, saying that one MUST keep adding content every day or week to their website in order to maintain its rankings is stupid! If anything, you should keep building backlinks for your website instead!

Lastly, here is a fact that I bet would jerk you from your seat - I have seen even the worst websites dominating the first page of Google by sheer virtue of backlinks. I am speaking of sites that contain very little content except whatever is scrapped through RSS feeds from other sites, and of course AdSense ads! While I neither build nor recommend building such sites, I am telling this to you in order to illustrate the power of backlinks over content!

2. Myth 2 - You need a lot of backlinks to get any decent rankings on search engines: Yet another baseless myth on search engine optimization. If you thought there is no end to your backlink building exercise, you are dead wrong! There is always an end to a process, and backlink building, being a process, is no exception either!

How many backlinks you would need to build for your website would naturally depend on your niche market's competition. The more competitive your niche is, the more backlinks you would need in order to push your website to the first page of Google!

I will give you some hypothetical figures here to illustrate my point:

If you are marketing in the mainstream "weight loss" niche, you may need to build, say 250 backlinks for your site in total. On the other hand, if you are marketing in a sub niche such as "weight loss for moms", then just 50-100 backlinks might suffice! Remember that these are just hypothetical figures, but I

hope they would give you an idea of how many backlinks you need to build for a certain site.

All said and done, if anyone told you that you have to build 10,000 backlinks to get your website ranked on the first page of Google, they are wrong! In case of backlinks, what really matters is quality and not quantity.

Don't believe me? Try submitting a batch of articles to 1000s of low quality article directories, and then submit another batch of unique articles to only the top quality directories. The results would be before your eyes within less than 2-3 months!

Similarly, getting 100 backlinks from sites averaging between 6-8 PR (PR here stands for Pagerank btw) is far better than garnering 1000 links from PR 1-2 websites!

2 Dofollow Clones of Yahoo Answers!

So what if Yahoo Answers™ is nofollow? I have found two websites which are "DOFOLLOW" clones of Yahoo answers. :D

This article should be read only by those who have a basic knowledge of "dofollow" and "nofollow" linking. If these terms sound foreign to you, you may want to read this free report on backlink building before proceeding further:

Building backlinks is one of the most important things you can do for your website. For the uninitiated, backlinks are links from other websites that are pointing back to your site. They are also known as incoming links and inbound links. As an internet marketer, backlinks are vitally important to your success.

Backlinks help your website move up in importance on search engine pages. With a large quantity of backlinks, your website will move up in the rankings for your selected keywords. The more backlinks you have to your site, the better. However, not all backlinks are created equally! As you learn in this report, you need to have the right type of backlinks in order to move up in the rankings.

When websites first started linking to each other, backlinks were used by webmasters to suggest other websites that he or she enjoyed and wanted to pass on to the visitors. This still happens quite a bit but these days backlinks are an important part of a webmaster's Internet marketing strategy.

Search engines like Google use the number of backlinks a website has in order to determine its relevance. If your site has 10 other sites pointing to it with a link and the keyword phrase "make money online," the search engines spiders will be able to determine that your site has to do with making money online.

If you have a hundred sites pointing to your site and using the keyword phrase "make money online", that is even better! The sites that are linking back to your site have to meet certain standards in order to be counted as "votes" for your site and that keyword phrase. In this report, you will learn the most effective linking strategies in order to quickly and efficiently move your site up in the rankings.

Basic Backlinks Concepts

Before we get into the exact strategies for building backlinks to your website, you need to be familiar with a few important concepts. These terms will help you understand backlinks so you can put them to good use with your own Internet marketing projects.

Although there are several different search engines, for the purpose of simplicity we will be talking about how to increase your rankings in Google. Google is by far the most popular search engine and if you can rank well there you can be sure that your sites are ranking well in other search engines like Yahoo and MSN.

Google also gives you the added benefit of the page ranking system. Google has a way of evaluating each website and giving it a page rank of anywhere from 1 to 10. The higher the page rank, the more important a website is in the eyes of Google.

This is important when you are building backlinks. When a high page rank website links to your site, Google will begin to see your site as more important as well. In the Internet marketing world, this is known as passing along "link juice." You will get more link juice from having a PR 5 website link to you than having a PR 1 website link to you.

Links come in different varieties - one way links and reciprocal links. One-way links are links from another website to you with no link going the other way. Reciprocal links occur when both you and the other website are linked to one another, kind of like in a "scratch my back I'll scratch your" type situation.

Google will also look for the relevancy of the websites that are linking to your site. This is called "link relevancy" and it is an important thing to remember when you are looking for backlinks. For example, if you have parenting, home repair and relationship advice blogs pointing to your make money online blog, these links won't be seen as valuable as other make money online blogs pointing to you.

However, the most important thing to do is get backlinks. If it comes down between having irrelevant links and no links at all, always go with the irrelevant links.

Another important concept is no follow. It used to be that all links coming back to your website were treated equally. These days however some websites, blogs and forums use no follow HTML tags to avoid giving popularity to links.

Basically, nofollow tags tell search engine spiders that the link that will appear next is not relevant or important. Many sites, blogs and forums participate in what is being called the "do follow" movement. You'll see how these sites come into play a little later in this report.

Another important concept is anchor text. If you're familiar with HTML, you know that anchor text is the text it is used in place of a URL. This text will appear in blue and have an underline. When a visitor clicks on that word or phrase their web browser will take them to that website.

The HTML code for building anchor text looks like this:

```
<a href=http://www.yoursitehere.com>Your Anchor text</a>
```

For forums, you can usually use the following code:

```
[URL=http://www.yoursitehere.com]Your Anchor text[/URL]
```

When you choose anchor text for linking to your website you should do some keyword research to find out which turns you should be targeting. By using these keywords as your anchor text, you'll increase in the rankings for those keywords.

There are many methods to get free backlinks to your website, which you'll see in this report, but I should also mention paid links. You can pay to get backlinks that will help boost the importance of your website. For some people, buying links from a service like Text Link Ads is an efficient way to reach the top of the results page for competitive keywords.

Building Backlinks Step by Step - for FREE!

Now that you know the basics in the world of building backlinks, it's time to start building traffic and link juice. As previously mentioned, there are many ways to build quality backlinks to your site. These methods cost nothing but time, or maybe some outsourcing costs if you choose to go that route.

Keep in mind that backlink-building is a slow and steady process. If you build too many backlinks too quickly, you may be seen as a spammer in the eyes of Google. This is especially true if you have a brand new site. A large explosion in backlinks spells "black hat seo" to the Google spiders. It's best to develop a strategy from these methods and build your backlinks up over time.

We'll go in depth on each of these methods in this report so you can put this advice to work for you immediately.

Article Marketing

This is by far one of the most effective ways of increasing your backlinks and improving your site's ranking. In a nutshell, article marketing is accomplished by writing a series of short articles and then distributing them to article directories. Each one of these articles has a relevant back link with anchor text that you choose.

To use article marketing to your advantage you simply come up with a list of keywords that you would like to target. Write, or have written, articles that use each of these keywords in the title and several times throughout the body of the article.

After the articles have been written, submit them to several different article directories. You should choose 20 to 30 quality directories that have a good page rank. Remember that these article directories will be sending link juice your way, so you shouldn't just post to any directory you find.

Ezine articles (<http://www.ezinearticles.com>), Go articles (<http://www.goarticles.com>) and SearchWarp (<http://www.searchwarp.com>) should be at the top of your list for directory submissions. Automated article submitting programs like Article Post Robot (<http://www.articlepostrobot.com>) make this process very simple.

The second benefit to submitting to article directories is that your article can get picked up and distributed on other blogs and websites with your backlink intact. For this reason, it's absolutely necessary that you create quality articles that are genuinely helpful to your niche. If you're not sure what to write about, try reading several articles in your niche to get topic ideas.

When you first start out, you should write and submit at least 10 articles using relevant keywords to your website. In the bio box of each article, be sure to use a link back to your site with the relevant anchor text. Submit and manage at least one article per week in order to continue building backlinks. This is an ongoing strategy that will build lots of backlinks over time.

Commenting on Do Follow Blogs

Do follow blogs are blogs that have opted to remove then no follow instructions from the comments section. This means that any comments that you make on these blogs will send link juice back to your website.

Commenting on do follow blogs is a quick strategy that you can use to build more backlinks for your site. Just as with the other techniques in this report karma you should give preference to relevant, do follow blogs.

Do follow blogs are relatively easy to find. When a blog is a dofollow blog, the webmaster normally advertises this fact proudly. The do follow movement is growing and it is becoming possible to find do follow blogs in every niche you can imagine.

One of the simplest way is to find do follow blogs is to search for the popular "U comment, I follow" image in Google images. This is an image that do follow bloggers use to set themselves apart from their no follow peers.

You can also visit the directory Do Follow Blogs (<http://www.dofollowblogs.com>) for a succinct list of do follow blogs. You can also find a frequently updated directory at <http://www.feverishthoughts.com/do-follow-bloggers/>.

Develop a schedule for commenting on do you follow blogs within your niche. Don't let this become a time wasting activity. Visit five to 10 relevant blogs in your niche each week and make comments.

The one important thing to remember is that when you post on these blogs you should make your comments relevant and appealing. Don't spam them with comments. Do follow bloggers generally don't approve comments that seem like spam. Read the post and take a bit of time to come up with something relevant.

Posting on Do Follow Forums

Some forums have no follow tags that prevent you from getting backlinks from posting on their site. However, there is a growing list of sites that uses the do follow tags. Just like do follow blogs, you can get a great deal of link juice from popular forums.

Forums are terrific for backlinks because they normally have very high page ranks. They also have a good deal of activity so it's easy to stay involved and post frequently. The more posts that you have, the more backlinks you create around the

'net.

There is a frequently updated list of do follow forums here:

<http://www.dollarsblog.com/dofollow-forums/>. Although this list is comprehensive, you shouldn't try to join more than a handful of forums for the sake of your sanity!

Participating in a forum can be a real distraction if you let it be. Don't get sucked into spending all day at a forum and pretending that you are working. Go a few times a week and participate in conversations that appeal to you and your niche.

Remember that slightly relevant backlinks are better than no links at all. If you don't find something that relates to your niche in this list, just try an Internet marketing forum or other general forum to build backlinks.

By visiting a do follow forum frequently, but not so much that it interrupts your productivity, you can build a stable of backlinks that will grow your site's ranking.

Social Bookmarking for Backlinks

Social bookmarking is a portion of Web 2.0 that will help you build quality backlinks quickly. Bookmarking websites allow you and other users to bookmark websites as their favorites and share them with others.

Suddenly instead of having a favorites list locked away in a web browser, everyone's favorites are out in the open. People can share their favorites, and if your website is one of those favorites, it can quickly be passed along to others who are interested in your niche topic.

Using social bookmarking, you can gain backlinks to important pages in your website or on your blog. Simply join a few popular social bookmarking sites like:

<http://del.icio.us>

<http://www.stumbleupon.com>

<http://www.digg.com>

<http://technorati.com>

<http://reddit.com>

<http://www.propeller.com>

<http://www.faves.com>

Each time you have a new post or add a section to your website, you should submit a link to these directories. Many Internet marketers have even banded together to exchange social bookmarks, therefore increasing the number of backlinks that each person gets.

If you belong to a social networking site like Twitter.com or Facebook.com, you may be able to ask for "a Stumble" or a post in order to increase your backlinks. If you have a number of marketers on your friends list who understand the concept, they can help you increase your page rank.

The only problem with some social bookmarking sites is that they have no follow tags in their links. You can waste a lot of time by submitting to sites that aren't going to give you the benefit that you think they are. You can help automate the process by using a social bookmarking utility like <http://socialposter.com/>.

Socialposter.com helps you easily submit to a variety of social bookmarking sites all at once. Not only does it help you save time but you'll also be ensured that the sites you submit to will provide you with do follow links.

Submitting to SEO Friendly Directories

Although web link directories have faded in popularity over the last few years, they are still a terrific source of "link juice." SEO friendly directories will list your website among others that are relevant to your topic.

Unlike the other methods, listing your site in directories is a onetime process. You may want to start with this first and then start building up the other activities as you develop your other backlink building strategies.

Although you only submit your link to a directory once, you can submit to as many relevant directories as you can find. You can start your search here: <http://info.vilesilencer.com/top>

It's important to look at the directories you are submitting to carefully. You should avoid directories that use redirects or dynamic URLs. These sites basically

leave you without any benefit at all. Ideally, you'll want one-way links from quality directories to your website.

I hope that this report has helped to open your eyes to the power of backlinks and how easy it is to move up the search engine rankings your sites. Remember that building backlinks is a process that you should take time to develop.

Building lots of low quality backlinks all at once will harm your ranking and your business. Use all of these strategies to create backlinks and in no time, you'll have the page rankings that you've been looking for.

As we all know, Yahoo! Answers is nofollow! If you setup a profile at Yahoo answers and put your website links there, you would find that they are all "nofollowed" (if you don't already use this nofollow plugin for Firefox, you are in dead waters: <http://www.quirk.biz/searchstatus>).

In case you want to test the nofollow tag, just setup an account with Yahoo Answers (skip this if you already have a Yahoo account):
<http://answers.yahoo.com/>

Once done, click on the "My Profile=>Edit My Info" link at the top-right corner. In the "About Me" box, put a link in this format: <http://website.com>. (I haven't used the site for a long time so I don't remember if they allow HTML tags or not), and click the "Preview" button.

If you are using the Search status plugin I recommended above, and have turned on the "highlight nofollow links" option in it, you would notice that your links are highlighted in red, meaning that they are nofollow (i.e., NOT followed by search engines).

<http://www.quirk.biz/searchstatus>

Of course, if you wish, you can still leave your link there. In an earlier article I wrote about why you should building a couple of "nofollow" links for your website along with "dofollow" links, so as to give an impression of "natural link building" to Google. Besides, if your answers are good enough, people would click to view your profile anyway, and hopefully would click-through to your website! :D

Okay, let's now talk about the Yahoo answers dofollow clones!

Here are the two clones:

a) Answerbag.com: UPDATE: One of my blog readers says that Answerbag no longer offers SEO-friendly backlinks as it used to. You can however, put your link(s) into your profile using HTML, like:

```
"<a href="http://www.yourwebsite.com/">[your keyword phrase]</a>
```

Your anchor text will show up properly and be clickable, on the profile page, BUT when you look at the source code, the text appears ONLY in the Description META tag. In any case, since the link doesn't appear in the HTML coding, it can't be seen as a link by search engines, so it is essentially NO-FOLLOW."

I am keeping the rest of the article intact for reference purposes! :)

First, you will want to join the website. Keep in mind that you MUST confirm your email address or you won't be allowed to post answers (at least, that was how it was setup when I joined it). The site, as it seems to me, has a buggy system; even after confirming my email address thrice, it still kept telling me that my account was "unconfirmed. It took me 3 more retries to get it right. I hope you have better luck.

Once you have confirmed your email, you can login to your account. From the top right corner, click "view my profile and activity".

On the next page, click the "My Settings" tab.

There are two places you can leave your links at: the "My Website" box (only hard links, such as <http://website.com>, are allowed here) and the "About Me" box a little lower down (HTML is allowed here, so you can have your links formatted as " <a href="<http://website.com>">your keyword here ". The link you put in the first box is nofollow, while the second one (i.e., the "About Me" box) is dofollow.

While there is no such hard and fast rule, I know for a fact that usually, message boards and forums hate advertising and marketing of any kind (I just had my profile signature deleted at a niche forum because someone over there reported it as "profile spam", even though I linked to the "About" page of my website that had ZERO advertising; so you can well imagine how strict these forums and message boards are). So I put my domain in the "My Website" box and a link to my

"About" page in the "About Me" box!

Once done, click the "Submit" button. You would be able to view your public profile by clicking on the "See My Public Profile" link at the top.

To increase your profile's visibility in search engines, you would want to either ask or answer at least one question on the site.

b) Help.com: Yet another dofollow clone of Yahoo Answers, this one is much better than answerbag.com as far as navigation and layout is concerned. I just wish I had a website like that. Hope you know of a good script to run such sites ;)

Anyways, first off, you would want to sign up by going to: <http://help.com/login>

FYI, that is also your login page! ;)

Once done, log in, and click on "Settings" tab. Before doing anything else, set your password here. This would not only prove convenient for you when you login next time, but also keep your account safe from hackers.

Once done, click on the "Profile" tab.

On the next page, in the "Edit Profile Blurb" box, you would want to enter your website links. HTML tags are allowed. Once done, you can view your public profile (this is what others, including search engines, will see) by clicking on the "Public Profile" link at the top.

Once you are happy with your profile, click the "Help.com" logo at the top left corner to return to the website's homepage. To increase your profile's visibility in search engines, you would want to either ask or answer at least one question on the site.

In my next issue I would offer you a few tips on how to write good answers. But here is one short little tip. If you are answering a question pertaining to a topic you have little knowledge about, pick up a question which has already received a few answers/comments. This way, you can get a fair idea of how to answer the question. Being a copycat is bad enough, but being a fool, esp. when you are struggling to become an expert in your niche, is even worse!

2nd BOMB from FTC-New Rules for Affiliate Review Sites!

Yep, I am back with a bad news (but please don't shoot the messenger, okay? ;)) – FTC has just updated their "rules"! Previously, adding disclosure in the footer of your review site was enough (or, I thought so).

But now, the disclosure should not only be located ABOVE THE FOLD (so that the reader does not have to scroll down to read it), but should also be in COLORED text. In addition, you simply cannot just say: "Hey, Click here to read my disclosure". Your disclosure must be able to convey the whole message completely to the reader, without having to click on any link!

To learn what the buzz is all about, please check the warrior forum thread located here: <http://www.warriorforum.com/main-internet-marketing-discussion-forum/299615-ftc-no-affiliates-compliance-w-review-affiliate-sites.html>

I am going to include most of the email as I find this surprising. No affiliates are in compliance with review sites & affiliate sites FTC says.

What do you think about this?

"Earlier this week I told you that we are making some changes to our affiliate policies. The first and biggest change is required by the FTC. They informed us that our review affiliates (that is any affiliate doing a review of our course on their site) were not in compliance. Literally, not a single one. That sure took us by surprise!

What that means is that if you have a review on your site, and you think that you have a proper FTC disclosure, you actually don't and we need to get you in compliance right away.

We can help clear up the confusion, but if you have a review of any course on your site, you will have to change your disclosure right away (by December 17).

We have put together a short document that spells out the new requirements very clearly. You can find them here: Legacy Learning Systems Disclosure Requirements. Affiliate Disclosure Requirements and Examples

<http://www.learnandmaster.com/affiliates/disclosure-requirements.html> You will notice that some of the rules are totally new, including that your disclosure will now have to be in colored text, appear above the fold, and not rely on a clickable link. Other requirements also apply that you've probably never

heard before. Again, if you have a review on your site of any of our courses, you MUST read this and get your site into compliance.

Take a look at the information here: Legacy Learning Systems Disclosure Requirements

Where did these requirements come from?

They are based primarily on the following:

December 2009 FTC Disclosure Guidelines

FTC disclosure guide from May 2000, which the FTC has told us is still very much in effect.

Our direct conversations with the FTC.

We recognize that most popular interpretation of the 2009 FTC Disclosure Guidelines is that having a short disclosure or link to a disclosure at the bottom of the review page is adequate. The FTC has told us that it is not. It is quite possible that the FTC will be cracking down on this industry wide, so I also suggest making these same changes to all of your review sites, not just the ones that promote our products".

What have I done?

Well, so far I have only updated my review sites, although I cannot rule out FTC's axing even the so called "information" sites containing affiliate links - in the near future. An example of such a site would be this one. I am hoping that the FTC guys would be too bored to detect the affiliate links! ;)

Since I have only a handful of affiliate review sites, updating them was not hard at all. However, in order to keep up with the ever changing rules of the fickle-minded FTC, I devised a plan: using PHP includes instead of plain HTML code (in a future chapter I will be discussing PHP includes). That way, if FTC changes their rules again in future, all I have to do is to change just ONE file (instead of manually updating dozens of different affiliate review sites).

So let me give you an example of how to do it on your WordPress blogs.

First, write your disclosure in HTML. Make sure that it is succinct and yet conveys the message very clearly to the reader; you don't want them to scroll down to read the whole thing (that would violate FTC's new "rules").

From what I read, you can write a very short disclosure and then provide a link to your longer disclosure page, but even the SHORT disclosure should convey the

message clearly to the reader. :D It is a lot like writing an Adwords™ ad. ;) (kidding)

Let us say that your disclosure is like this:

Disclosure: *Blah Blah Blah. Click here for more details.* (Replace the italicized part with your own disclosure; note that your disclosure does not necessarily need to be italicized, at least I did not read any such thing in the "rulebook").

Open Notepad or Xpad. Put your disclosure HTML code in a blank text file, under the 'Save as Type' option, select "ALL Types"; then add a .html or .htm extension to the file name when saving it!

<http://www.mcrenox.com.ar/xpad/>

Bingo! You have done it! Now just upload the file to your webserver. ;)

Next, download and install the PHP Code Widget.

<http://wordpress.org/extend/plugins/php-code-widget/>

Now click on "Appearance=>Widgets". Drag a "PHP Code" widget to the widget area - preferably to the very top of all the other active widgets! Then click on the widget to open it. In the second box (the larger one), put the following PHP code:

```
<?php include("http://yourdomain.com/disclosure.html"); ?>
```

Where <http://yourdomain.com/disclosure.html> is the URL of the file you just uploaded to your server! DO NOT check the "Automatically add paragraphs." option! Save and close the widget, then check your blog to see how it looks like. Again, make sure that you do not have to scroll down to read the disclosure: it must be ABOVE-THE-FOLD!

Non-Wordpress users can simply include the given PHP include code at any part of their site, provided that the whole text appears above-the-fold!

If you are not comfortable with PHP, you can try using a "Text" widget instead and include Iframe or JS Code. Here are two nice free tools that would convert any HTML code into Javascript:

<http://accessify.com/tools-and-wizards/developer-tools/html-javascript-converter/>

<http://www.htmlshop.com/tools/html2java2.asp>

BTW, I have kept the "footer disclosure" intact. With FTC...you just never know...when they combine their "old" and "new" rules to make a third "amendment". ;)

Perhaps the most unfortunate thing is that despite being a non-US citizen, I still have to comply with FTC rules, mainly because a majority of my customers are from America, and also because my domains and servers are US-based. :(

My last advice is to branch out: involve yourself in different business models. Don't put all your eggs in one basket. I hope you can figure out what I mean, LOL.
:D

BEWARE of Posting Affiliate Links on Your Blog!

Unless you want the FTC to come knocking on your door, that is! ;)

This may sound rather funny but it is true: FTC is planning to crack down on bloggers, licit and illicit, who use affiliate links in their posts, UNLESS the affiliate either discloses the fact that he is receiving compensation through that affiliate link OR proves it through "scientific means" that the product has indeed helped him (in case of a make money product, a Paypal screenshot might do ;)).

Here are some links where you can get more information:

FTC plans to monitor blogs for claims, payments (notice the irony: just below this article you would see Google ads promoting money making schemes, with no disclosure or proof whatsoever!)

<http://www.google.com/hostednews/ap/article/ALeqM5j6DZ0gpsCSwquntzof4FR4yfqYXwD98V7B880>

Here is the common man's perspective:

FTC Going After Bloggers = Epic Fail

<http://www.seobook.com/ftc-going-after-bloggers-epic-fail>

But probably the most ridiculous thing I have ever heard is, the US government is trying to protect us, "internet users"... from cookies???

Cookies Be BANNED!

http://www.businessweek.com/technology/content/jun2009/tc20090618_888470.htm?chan=top+news_top+news+index+-+temp_technology

Notwithstanding the fact that most modern day browsers are sophisticated enough to protect the average internet surfer from cookies, good or bad!

When will government realize that people are NOT stupid? :D

Just reminds me of Paypal trying to freeze accounts of internet marketers for selling resell rights products, when they don't even know the meaning of the term

"resell rights"! ;)

True, to an extent we internet marketers ARE responsible for what we promote, and to that extent, I think the regulation is fine! At least it would rid people of the 100s of tainted affiliate pitches that flood their inboxes daily! But beyond that, I guess this is just a superfluous regulation!

Personally, I don't use too many affiliate links and on the footers of pages where I have affiliate ads, I include a link to a standard disclaimer statement. But guess that is not going to be enough now. Looks like now you would have to make your disclaimer statement bigger and bolder than your affiliate endorsement (which in turns means a considerable drop in conversions)!



BEWARE of Posting Affiliate Links on Your Blog-Part 2

Now, the sky is certainly not falling, but it pays to keep yourself updated on the latest news!

As a matter of fact, much of what is being touted to you as "FTC guidelines" (including what I am going to say here) are not the actual guidelines; from what I know, the actual guidelines would come up on 1st December of the current year. That would indeed accentuate the shivering cold of winter for all of us! To lessen your "pain", it is a good idea to start "feeling" it right from today! :D

Here is the original article:

The Hammer of FTC (which is even more powerful than all the Google penalties combined)

<http://www.ftc.gov/opa/2009/10/endortest.shtm>

And here are links to some more "related articles" you may find helpful:

FTC decides 'results not typical' no longer good enough. (Legal Review)

<http://www.accessmylibrary.com/article-1G1-193313385/ftc-decides-results-not.html>

How the Common Man is Doomed (A fellow internet marketer's explanation of

the guidelines)

<http://www.workathometruth.com/blog/2009/10/08/ftc-publishes-final-guides-governing-endorsements-testimonials/>

What Should You Do to Comply-from Brian Clark of CopyBlogger Fame

<http://www.copyblogger.com/affiliate-marketing-disclosure/>

Some other articles that may be helpful to you:

FTC Will Monitor Your Blog Posts For Paid Reviews & Endorsements

<http://www.jaankanellis.com/ftc-monitor-blog-posts-paid-reviews-endorsements/>

The Mama Blogger Has Some Suggestions for Fellow WAHM Bloggers

<http://www.mamablogga.com/ftc-internet-affiliate-programs-mom-bloggers/>

Mass Control Guru Speaks (poor soul! ;)) <http://masscontrolsite.com/blog/?p=59>

The Warriors Team Up for the Battle-Discuss Strategies and Action Plans ;)

<http://www.warriorforum.com/main-internet-marketing-discussion-forum/131147-ftc-publishes-final-guides-governing-endorsements-testimonials.html>

Andy Beal Offers Some Balm for Our Pains Though-Says Only Bad Karma Would Get Punished

<http://www.marketingpilgrim.com/2009/06/should-you-fear-the-ftcs-sponsored-blogging-crackdown.html>

Izea Offers Some Helpful Perspectives That is Worth Reading-Whether Or Not You Use Them:

<http://izea.com/ftc-compliance-easy/>

<http://izea.com/izea-favor-stricter-ftc-disclosure-requirements/>

Izea=>The same folks who are behind projects like disclosurepolicy.org and payperpost.com (unless I am wrong); btw, here is one interesting article on PPP that seems to be related to the topic at hand - that is, "full disclosure of compensation received by the affiliate".

<http://www.techcrunch.com/2006/10/29/payperpost-is-now-officially-absurd/>

The battle between affiliates and FTC is scheduled to begin on 1st December, when the finally guidelines are supposed to come out for everyone to see...gotta see who wins and who loses ;) (kidding)

I only hope FTC does not nudge me to add disclosures to the affiliate links of my old posts and articles. If they do then that would worse than even the day job! It is not about disclosure, it is about the amount of time I would have to spend without any additional compensation in return, not to speak that pinpointing all the affiliate links on just one blog (this one, that is) containing over 100 posts...
hmm... :(

My Personal "XXX" Views-Testimonials:

Anyway, per the new update, FTC plans to crack down not just on the affiliate marketers but also the IM gurus with all those over-the-top testimonials, such as: "I was able to make \$1m thanks to [my guru buddy's] product"!

Hmm, now that really gets interesting, considering that FTC is grossly understaffed to battle with the 100s of IM gurus alone (with a couple of new "gurus" born everyday), not to speak of the army of affiliates! We will wait and see. Maybe they would outsource part of their job! ;)

Will this put an end to practices like "testimonial begging" or "JV for testimonials" indulged in by some internet marketers? Maybe the gurus would soon come up with a report called: The Death of Internet Marketing (and Rise of Offline Marketing) :D

Personally I am happy and relieved about one thing: this would be (hopefully) the end of gurus' over-the-top, hyped-to-the-core, testimonials we see on the salespages of other gurus; IMHO these testimonials tend to make an already painfully long salesletter even longer (okay, maybe wishful thinking but I really hope these testimonials are wiped out)!

Now, for us little guys-as far as getting testimonial from customers goes-one

thing I have learned (I am not sure if my XXX option holds water here but I would say it anyway) is that - if you overdeliver at every point you are bound to get UNSOLICITED testimonials.

Maybe you would get fewer *unsolicited* testimonials, but they that are 1000 times more valuable than the testimonials you get by begging your guru buddies. Those testimonials are not only FTC compliant (I am not a lawyer but this is what I believe) but also your precious business assets! By all means, after you are done with delivering the product, ask, ask the customer for a testimonial...

The rule of thumb here is: Don't make an indiscreet effort to get a testimonial from your customer, like begging, twisting arms, offering cash/non-cash incentives, etc. Do everything discreetly, such as - have a link to a testimonial form just below your product download link, ask the customer for a testimonial in the product thank you email, etc. Here is one more method that almost always works; however I don't get time to do it as often as before:

Every time you receive the "Notification of Payment received" email from Paypal, promptly email the customer asking him about what he felt about the product. NOTE: Esp. in IM niche, personal emails are far more effective than autoresponders. If you cannot handle this job yourself, it maybe a good idea to outsource it (provided that you get someone with a cool temper and winsome disposition)!

Now, when you personally email the customer asking about product feedback, chances are that he would either:

a) Not reply to your email at all (which may mean that he may not be happy with his purchase, not motivated enough to give you a testimonial right then, or perhaps he never received your email request in the first place because it got filtered as junk mail before reaching his inbox), in which case, another followup a few days later may do the trick!

b) Send a positive reply. Guess you are a lucky fella! ;) Now, you can use this positive reply as testimonial, though I would ask for his permission first (99% of the times you would get the permission, but still it is a safe bet) as a courtesy.

Very few customers indeed would come up and say that: "Hey chap, I don't like your product man. What a cr*p!" :P" They would much prefer asking for a refund (which may or may not be any indication of your product quality, based on the nature of the refund)!

To be honest, the number of testimonials on a salesletter really doesn't matter as far as sales conversions go; in fact one of the top converting Clickbank™ products called Fatloss4idiots doesn't even have testimonials at all (last time I checked it)! Hmm, I suppose it is time to copy them! ;)

Also, unlike what Frank says, you don't need to give chunks and chunks of free content upfront (it is good if you do it, but it is not mandatory) to notch up your sales. I know many top marketers (in non-IM niches) who do nothing more than sending pitches and pitches; and I would assume that they make plenty of good money or they would not have been in business for so long! Even one of Frank's non-IM lists is just like that-little "useful" free content and more "pitches"; while I am not sure about the conversions stats of that product, I do know that many people are bitching about that product in forums. ;)--

My Personal "XXX" Views-Affiliate Marketing:

So what is it that an affiliate marketer could do to get around this FTC rule? Disclose your affiliate compensation. Sounds simple, but it needs to be done in a creative manner! As Brian Clark points out (<http://www.copyblogger.com/affiliate-marketing-disclosure/>), the disclosure should fit in nicely with your product review rather than looking something out of place; at the same time, you need to make sure that the disclosure does not hurt your sales conversions. Depending on your niche, you may word your disclosure in many different ways, such as (texts with blue color indicate hyperlinks):

a) Lose Money Fast (affiliate link)-This one works pretty well for IM niche! ;) (kidding)

b) Discover how to Lose Weight Fast

(Note: that is my affiliate link. If you don't want to buy from my affiliate link, [here is the direct link](#))

c) Productname is our top recommended antispymware software for keeping your PC Healthy and Spyware-free!

Disclosure (this can be added at the end of your product review): Even though xx.com (your blog's domain name) is affiliated to productname, the above review is fair and accurate to the best of our knowledge.

d) Click here to Lose Fat Fast with Hoodia X

That is my affiliate link. The commission I get from your purchase is what keeps me alive and kicking, and gives me power to continue churning out good (or cr*ppy) articles like this. :) If you don't want to compensate me for my hard work you can use this [direct link](#) instead! :(

e) Here is a tackier one:

Autopilot Cash-[Click here](#) to make \$1000 per day!

(I just wanted to disclose the fact that it is my affiliate link. If you buy from my affiliate link, it earns me enough money to keep my a** intact, and helps me churn out even more free great tips for you. To keep this site running for free, I would request that you buy from my affiliate link. In case you want to buy from the direct link, [here it is.](#))

f) [Click here](#) to discover the secrets to making \$100 everyday from AdSense™ on autopilot and start living that *easy life* that you deserve!

Disclosure: Xx.com is affiliated to productname. However, that does not (and would not) in anyway influence the content of our review. Whatever we have posted above is accurate based on our own knowledge and belief. Xx.com however advises the reader to do due diligence before making any purchase decision based on our recommendation!

g) Best option: Get your own custom disclosure policy from:

http://disclosurepolicy.org/generator/generate_policy

Other tools that maybe useful: <http://www.freeprivacypolicy.com/privacy.php>

(it is actually a privacy policy generator tool)

<http://www.puttingblogsfirst.com/5-1-free-online-privacydisclosure-policy-generators>

Etc ;)

Final tips:

a) Keep your product reviews neutral and "politically correct"; write them in an objective, "reporter-style" tone. Don't go overboard with your reviews unless you

want to face FTC crackdown.

b) Same goes for posting customers' testimonials on your product salespages: it is perhaps best to avoid the testimonials that look like a bit "above-the-board", the ones that specially mention results such as "I lost 70 pounds with the help of your product" or that "I made \$1000 with the tips you shared in your ebook", etc. Here is why!

<http://whitehatcrew.com/blog/ftc-testimonial-changes-press-release-not-quite-accurate/>

(BTW I don't blame you if you cannot understand the mumbo-jumbo of FTC's press release; even I could not!). If you are active in the diet niche (esp. as a product vendor), you may also want to read: Results Not Typical' Banned From Diet Ads

<http://www.thatsfit.com/2009/10/08/results-not-typical-banned-from-diet-ads/>

c) IF you can afford it, connect yourself with a local attorney-preferably a "cyber lawyer". In India finding a lawyer who is well versed with cyber laws is a tough deal; hopefully you would be more lucky!

Now, perhaps those who are not from US are wondering: "But why am I reading all these? I don't care about FTC. It cannot do a thing to me because I don't live in US".

Neither do I, but can you offer that excuse to FTC when they chase you? Good luck to you fighting with them! In my opinion, IF:

a) Your domain registrar is based in US (Solution: Move all your domains to a non-US registrar, but not before estimating the costs of domain transfers);

b) Your web hosting/server/datacenter is located in US (again, solution is as simple as moving out and relocating to a different country);

c) The vendor/affiliate network you are promoting is based in US, such as Clickbank or CJ (again, the solution is: switch your vendor relationships from US to non-US vendors);

d) A majority of your bulk traffic comes from US (solution: block all US traffic with the IP deny manger of your control panel, and be happy losing tons of money

everyday (*unless yours is a local business site*), because internet has not penetrated anywhere else as deep as it has in US, if my web stats are anything to go by);

Then you are better off complying with FTC than trying to find "loopholes" in their ruling! Most certainly, you won't be slapped with a lawsuit; you would probably surrender out-of-court (unless you happen with be a big gun with fat wallets and hefty bank balance; however FTC is more likely to go after the "little guys" who can be more easily and *economically* subdued than the big cooperates), but what would suffer in the end is your business - the months or years of hard work and sweat that you invested to built it from scratch would all go waste!

Think about it - is not it much simpler to add the required disclosures on your website and comply with FTC guidelines than losing your business? Hmm, you have to decide that!

I don't know about you, but I am seeing a positive side to this ruling too (just as I saw it in the testimonial guidelines above): It would potentially wipe out a ton of competitors from your respective niche, because a lot of your competitors are simply affiliates trying put up dishonest reviews, MFA sites and other cr*p in the hope of making a quick buck. Like it or not, a majority of these sites rank on the first page of Google™!

Most of these folks guys are unlikely to be honest and upfront as required by FTC; if they were really so honest would not they have built an honest and credible business right from start? The end result would be that: many of them would probably quit even before being struck by the FTC hammer! On the other hand, the honest guys would continue doing business with appropriate disclosures because they have nothing to hide.

As the old saying goes- when a ship starts sinking the rats leave first while the captain leaves at last! :D

<http://www.zyra.info/ratship.htm>

Therefore, if these guidelines have some downsides they also have some upsides, as you see. If indeed FTC is able to go forward in enforcing this ruling on all affiliate bloggers (for product reviews) and IM gurus (for the "solicited" and insincere testimonials they receive from their JV partners and friends), the web would be a much cleaner and credible place!

I am one with Brian Clark (see above for the link this article) on one thing - IF

your blog content is useful to the readers (and not some piece of "sh*t"), then I don't think they would mind affiliate links. If at all, they would want to support you for the long hours you spent on writing the helpful articles or product reviews; they know everyone needs money for paying off bills and sustenance.

Certainly, a few customers suffer from the typical entitlement attitude (some time ago Paul Myers had posted a useful thread on the Warrior Forum regarding this topic, and it got a huge number of responses from other forum members) and believe that the whole world should be gifted free to them on a silver platter; sure enough, they are not the *right* customers for your business!

UPDATE: The following blog posts (from Paul Myers and Michael Fortin respectively) are also worth reading:

Be careful what you promise

<http://talkbiz.com/blog/be-careful-what-you-promise/>

Is This The End of Affiliate Marketing?

<http://www.michelfortin.com/affiliate-marketing/>

NOTE: If Michael is to be believed, more than those "unethical" affiliate marketers, the vendors whose products these affiliates are promoting (esp., if the affiliate's site happens to be an authority for the respective vendor's product, or an authority in product reviews in general, such as the Techcrunch blog) are at risk of being hounded by the FTC.

It is not a cause of concern for me, however, because affiliate traffic counts for only 10-20% of my overall site traffic. If asked, I would be the first to raise my hand and say that I am neither good at affiliate recruitment nor affiliate marketing! :D

It remains to be seen how far these regulations indeed help FTC achieve their "aims"!

When the Can Spam Act came out in 2003, people thought it would spell the end of spam. Guess how WRONG they were! 4 years on and spam has only increased manifold. Spammers seem to be getting away by offering fake "unsubscribe links" and a fake "optin info". In a nutshell, it did nothing more than complicating the lives of legit email marketers

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/CAN-SPAM_Act_of_2003

Post-Can Spam, you would either need to display your home address in the footer of all your emails (which are being read by all your subscribers; thus opening yourself to possible stalking), or get a post box address.

-----DIGRESSION-----

In India (especially, if you live in a remote suburb), getting a post box is one hellish experience.

After waiting for a year for the post box I had no option but to get a US post box address, which costs almost 4 times the amount required for an Indian post box. Hmm, still all the better considering that you are safe from stalkers...well, hopefully! Did I tell you I never got any refund from the Indian Postal authorities; all I received instead is "promise" of a post box! :(

-----END of DIGRESSION-----

That is why, I wonder how far these new "FTC guidelines" will be able to wipe out dishonesty from the online media (as well as crippling the honest marketers who use the internet to eke out a living)!

If nothing else, once again it is a reminder in favor of diversity: don't put all your eggs in one basket. This means that don't do only affiliate marketing, only plr selling, or only info product creation; rather, do ALL of them, or do as many of them as possible for you! Diversity is the key to success in online marketing.

If you are not shy and lazy like me, and possess persuasive power, you can even do some offline marketing! ;)

MORE Links:

FTC Sticks to Its Regulations as Blogger Backlash Builds

<http://www.fastcompany.com/blog/jennifer-vilaga/slipstream/backlash-grows-blogsphere>

FTC Responds to Blogger Fears: "That \$11,000 Fine Is Not True"

<http://www.fastcompany.com/blog/jennifer-vilaga/slipstream/ftc-bloggers-its->

not-medium-its-message-0

Chris Rempel Says-The Sky Is Not Falling - But This Is Definitely a Game Changer

<http://www.thelazymarketer.com/blog/2009/10/09/the-sky-is-not-falling-but-this-is-definitely-a-game-changer/>

FTC Reassures Bloggers - Big Brother Isn't Watching (NOTE: THIS IS STRAIGHT FROM HORSE'S MOUTH- it has nothing new to offer that except for some twists and misleading facts and statements; all in all a must read. If you thought that Google's algorithm is the vaguest thing, you are terribly WRONG!)

<http://legaltimes.typepad.com/blt/2009/10/ftc-.html>

An Open Letter to the FTC

http://www.mediabistro.com/galleycat/publishing/an_open_letter_to_the_ftc_139297.asp

The FTC sued me out of business two years ago yesterday- here is my story

<http://www.warriorforum.com/main-internet-marketing-discussion-forum/133433-ftc-sued-me-out-business-two-years-ago-yesterday-here-my-story.html>

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## **BEWARE of Posting Affiliate Links on Your Blog-Part 3**

Just to be clear, this is no more than a personal rant, so you may as well skip reading this article (hmm, talk about disclosure - hey FTC I am complying with your "guidelines" right from the start :D )!

As far as I can tell, two different schools of thoughts are running parallel on this issue. While one school says that FTC would give you two warnings before slapping a fine on you, another school disagrees with it. They say that guidelines, bereft of the force of "law", would not be able to offer "justice" to either parties- that is, the buyer or seller; rather it is just a "bullying tool" to be used by FTC against the "vulnerable", as and when it pleases!

Interestingly, FTC not only denounces the \$11k fine "myth" (<http://www.fastcompany.com/blog/jennifer-vilaga/slipstream/ftc-bloggers-its-not-medium-its-message-0>) but also touts this very "non-legal" nature of the "guidelines" as a big "advantage" (read Mary Engle's article here <http://legaltimes.typepad.com/blt/2009/10/ftc-.html> AND the comments therein too) – since guidelines do not have the "force of law", you need not fear. Wrong! On the contrary, you have more to fear about these guidelines.

If the guidelines are NOT enforceable in a court of law, it means the FTC can pressurize you to bow to just about anything and you won't have the chance to defend yourself in a court (they say that in US anyone who sues a government agency goes bankrupt, but not so in India – here, private organizations have sued the government left and right several times and won too, as long as the "government" was the guilty party; however if there are just "guidelines" and no concrete laws on a matter, then court cannot help you much).

Let me give you a better example of the difference between "law" and "guideline".

Take for instance, Paypal vs. your bank. While the bank is regulated by a regulatory body (in our country it is the RBI; I am not sure about US or UK), Paypal is pretty much self-governed (some people say that in UK they are regulated by the UK-based financial system; however, I am not sure if the same applies to US, Australia, or Canada; in India, so far as I know, Paypal is NOT regulated by the RBI, the governing body of the Indian financial system; in fact, I doubt they even know about Paypal at all)!

This in effect means that while banks have a set of rules to follow (meaning that they just cannot shut off your account, or hoard your money to get free interest on it at their whims), Paypal can do all those things with impunity! Paypal can limit/freeze your account at will, hoard your hard-earned cash at will, and you would have nowhere to go to because their vague "Acceptable Use Policy" would protect them, or so they think!

The Paypalsucks.com website has ample evidence of aggrieved customers filing mass limitation against Paypal; however Paypal, instead of defending itself in the court, usually opts for an out-of-court settlement by paying large sums of money to the aggrieved customers, each time such a lawsuit is filed).

It is no different with the FTC "guidelines" either. If you have ever experienced the "shoot first and ask questions later" rule of the big corporates, including Paypal, you know what to expect from FTC (in fact, government agencies are worse than private organizations)!

You know you would be doing everything possible to make sure your site is FTC-compliant, but there is no concrete law you can look up to, in case of doubt. For the same reason, you cannot even have your site verified by any attorney because-again - guidelines are just guidelines, not laws! FTC can, at its will, twist their "guidelines" to suit their requirements (that is, prove their allegation against you), and slap you with a big fine.

Much like Google keeps changing its algo all the time and till date nobody knows for sure what their "actual" algorithm of Google actually is; or, much like the "newbies" who wonder why, even after diligently studying and applying all the "secrets" gurus taught them, they are unable to travel in big cars or live in large bungalows like those gurus! ;)

FTC can slap you with a fine on a whim or fancy (just pray that a FTC official don't have a bad hair day), using a trivial "loophole" you might have overlooked; they would take your entire business with them as they have already done to someone else!

<http://www.warriorforum.com/main-internet-marketing-discussion-forum/133433-ftc-sued-me-out-business-two-years-ago-yesterday-here-my-story.html>

I am not saying this for the purpose of "fear mongering"; hey, I have nothing to sell you (if I were a lawyer I would have certainly sold you a bunch of "FTC

secrets" by now :D) here!

## **What the FTC Really Wants from Affiliate Marketers!**

I should start with the usual disclaimer that I am not a lawyer, and the following article is just an amalgamation of my personal "XXX" thoughts. Actually, this article is all about what I plan to do/am going in order to comply with the FTC's "guidelines". Tell me what you think!

I have been pretty busy in revamping my old affiliate sites to comply with FTC rules. This explains why you didn't receive a XXXZine issue last Saturday, the relatively small size and less boring nature of this article, as well as the reason you keep receiving only "FTC-related" articles from me all the time! :D

Actually, I have been reading a lot of blog articles and forum posts on this "FTC" thingy, and this is what I understand about the way these "guidelines" would be affecting affiliate marketing.

So, what to do: Generally speaking, these guidelines came up because of the rampant rise of blogs that are "paid to post", "paid to review", etc. Then there are of course the "[less-than]honest" affiliate review sites to blame too. As a matter of fact, "affiliate reviews" are not by themselves a cause of concern - even if your site has nothing more than a bunch of affiliate product reviews, you maybe able to save your a\*\* as long as the product reviews are well researched and honest.

If you are promoting a product you have already purchased and found helpful, your own experience is enough to back up your review of the respective product; however, if you have not purchased it, you may need to gather the review materials from external sources, such as message boards, forums, answer boards (such as like Yahoo answers), etc. I would like to add that the "fake" affiliate review sites indeed make it very difficult for me to find real reviews on a given product, esp. if it happens to be a Clickbank™ product; almost always you will find these review sites at a position they don't actually deserve - the first page of Google™!

Truth to be told, I would be the first to become happy in case those sites disappear from the web, but only time will tell how far FTC would be able to purge the web from these scums.

I do know one thing: if you want to blow up the neighboring country with an atom bomb, your own country would also get scarred, since both countries share

the same border. Similarly, when the "bad" guys are slapped, the "good" guys, at least some of them, are going to be affected by the slap too! Right now the best we can do is to "comply", "diversify", and hope for the best! :)

Ads vs. Affiliate Links: There is a difference between ads and affiliate links. What are ads? Ads look like, say - AdSense™! :D Now, if you are a publisher of any of the large ad networks, make sure that the company complies with FTC rules by fully disclosing the identity and origin of these ads. Google already does it by tagging their ads as "Ads by Google" or "Sponsored links"; Amazon.com does it with their logo and a link to privacy information; eBay too does it in a similar fashion.

However, if YOU maintain your own in-house ad inventory, it is YOUR responsibility to make sure that your ads are complying with FTC guidelines. You can do this by making the appearance of the ads as distinguished as possible. This means

- a) Giving the ads a color and layout completely different than that of your site content!
- b) Distinguish the ads from the rest of the content on your site with a tag like "Sponsored link", "Ads powered by Yourdomain.com", "Recommended by YourDomainname.com", "Approved by YourCompanyname/Websitename", etc.; usually the link to these "tags" should lead to a full disclosure page where you would disclose the nature and origin of these ads, your advertising policy, nature of the compensation received by you, etc. As you might already know, you can draft a basic disclosure policy from the PPP guys themselves!

<http://disclosurepolicy.org/>

Affiliate links are a different game altogether, since a novice online surfer can hardly distinguish between an affiliate link and a general link (add to that the fact that most savvy affiliates nowadays "cloak" their affiliate links to save their commissions from being "hijacked" by fellow affiliates, as well as to make the affiliate links "SEO friendly").

Affiliate Links vs. General Links: FTC does not seem to have any problem with general links (and why would it, as the whole web structure is based upon links). However if you are using affiliate links you need to make yourself clear. Like say, I am promoting Angela's backlinks. Now, the FTC may not mind the following link:

[http://angelasdiscountmarket.com/backlink\\_builder1.html](http://angelasdiscountmarket.com/backlink_builder1.html)

But it might flag this link (even though only a savvy internet surfer would know that it is an affiliate link, as it is "nicely" cloaked ;) :

<http://findw.net/recommends/angelasbacklinks.htm>

So, after I include an affiliate link of Angela's backlinks in my blog post, I may have to add the following disclosure:

"Even though I am affiliated to Angela, my assessment of her backlink service is accurate and honest to my best knowledge. As a matter of fact, I seldom promote anything if I don't find it useful!"

Now, if I add more than one affiliate links, say, for promoting BOTH Angela's and Paul's backlinks, then I would need to modify the above disclosure as follows:

"Even though I am affiliated to both Angela and Paul, my assessment of their backlink services is accurate and honest to best knowledge. As a matter of fact, I seldom promote anything if I don't find it useful!"

Will you lose a sale or two as a result of adding the above disclosures? Yes and no!

If you are operating in the IM niche, you need to remember that while many IMers are happy pitching their own affiliate product before your nose, they hate it if you pitch an affiliate product to them; some would try every possible ways to make sure that you don't get the credit for the affiliate sale, including hijacking your affiliate ID, "sniping" off your affiliate ID from your link, etc.; in fact, besides SEO concerns, this was one of the foremost reasons why affiliates started "cloaking" their affiliate links so as to make them "less obvious" than a naked affiliate link!

However, it is also true that if you teach your followers by offering them with good quality content and resources, and embed an affiliate recommendation or two within your content in an unobtrusive, "contextual" manner, I don't think many people would mind it or mistrust you as a result; if it were the case then I would not be making some decent \$\$ by promoting Angela's and Paul's links (and to think, I mainly write long boring articles :D ).

Point to be noted: I don't promote just about every linking scheme or service

available under the sun; I promote only Angela's and Paul's backlinks because I am still their paid customer and as such, know how good/bad they are. This certainly does not mean that you need to buy each and every product you want to review! :D

As Linda rightly puts it, if a person does not trust a blogger, he has no business reading it in the first place, much less clicking on any affiliate link the blogger might have included in his posts!

<http://affiliate-blogs.5staraffiliateprograms.com/3267/affiliate-links-disclosure.html>

In non-IM niches, most people don't know how to distinguish between an "affiliate link" and a "non-affiliate link"! Being ignorant of affiliate marketing, they don't have a valid reason to hate affiliate links IMO; so, as long as your affiliate recommendation is honest and the content helpful, you are OK!

Note to Self: Hmm, now I need to inculcate the habit of adding disclosures every time I add an affiliate link in my looong, boring blog articles. In case I do forget it, please do me a favor by reminding me of the same (hopefully the FTC guys would be too bored to even notice the affiliate links, but I don't want to take any chances here ;) ). Thank you! :D

## **2 Steps to Managing Multiple Domains with Wordpress!**

Here is a very boring article on how to manage multiple domains using WordPress 3.0.1. Read it only if you have got insomnia (and want to get rid of it fast). ;)

Perhaps you already know that you can setup "multiple blogs" with the new version of WordPress. You can setup the sites either in a "subfolder" or "sub domain" format. But did you know that you can manage totally separate websites with just one installation? I am talking about managing different top-level domains. :D

Things to keep in mind:

1. The sites you host on Wordpress would NOT have a "normal physical existence" on the server; rather they would exist only in the WordPress database (see <http://wpmututorials.com/basics/mu-is-virtually-yours/>). If you are well-acquainted with the concept of "virtual hosts on Apache" (see <http://httpd.apache.org/docs/1.3/vhosts/>) then you know what I mean here! ;)

2. WordPress 3.x sucks quite a bit more RAM than its predecessors. Wordpress 3.0 was notorious for sucking as much as 256 MB of RAM (<http://core.trac.wordpress.org/ticket/13847>), but I hope that the issue has been fixed in the new version. Still, you will need quite a bit of memory to run it. To give you an idea, I have only two "no content, no traffic" sites hosted on Wordpress and that alone accounts for a memory usage of 19-21 MB. :D For reasons of disclosure I would also like to mention that I am using the free semiologic theme (<http://www.semiologic.com/software/sem-reloaded/>) as well as around 40 plugins, of which 15 are "shared" and 2 are "compulsory". I would mention some of the plugins later in this article! ;)

In short, I would really suggest that you go with a VPS or virtual private server (at the very least) if you want to try out the "multisite" feature of WordPress, otherwise version 2.9.2 should be more than enough to meet the needs of a regular WordPress user! :)

3. Even though all the sites would be hosted on the same database, you would still need to go to the backend of each site to manage it - for example, configuring plugin settings, posting articles, etc. In short, even though they are hosted under the same environment, they would behave like totally separate websites. If you configure the sites correctly, the search engines would also treat them as different sites, rather than part of a single site.

4. For best results, you should install WordPress in the root of your server, e.g., under the "public\_html" folder. I am not sure if my instructions would work for an addon domain install, because honestly I have never tried it that way!

5. Lastly of course, if you are on a shared host your webhost has to support it. Some do, some don't. With a VPS of course you are free to configure the server the way YOU want. :D

Okay, now enough of rambling. Let us get on to the meat! :)

Step 1: Web Hosting configuration:

That are some adjustments you need to do (or ask your web host to do them for you) on your server. Please note that the adjustments I list here would work only for "subdomain" installs, which I believe is a better option than subfolders anyway! Also you must be using Cpanel™; no I don't believe that is the best one out there but that is just what I am acquainted with, so if you use something different, this tutorial may not make much sense to you. ;)



a) Ask your webhost if they support "Wildcard DNS subdomains" and if they do, ask them to enable it for your server/account.

If you would like to use the "subfolder" install instead, ask your host if they support "mod\_rewrite". Most webhosts support it anyway!

b) Next, you would need to add a wildcard entry to the DNS settings of the main domain where WordPress is installed. So, log into the WHM of your server (if you don't have access to the WHM...well you know what to do-bug your host hard to do it for you! :D ), then go to "DNS Functions >> Edit DNS Zone"!

From the list, select the domain name where WordPress is installed, and click "Edit". Scroll down until you find the line "Add New Entries Below this Line." You would find several empty boxes. :D Here, add the following:

- Under the "Domain" column, add an asterisk: "\*".

- Under the "TTL" box, enter "14400"

- The third box should contain "IN"

- In the fourth box, select "A"

- In the fifth box, enter the IP address of your server!

Please note that all the websites you are going to host on WordPress should share the same IP address as well as nameservers

([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Name\\_server](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Name_server))! BTW, this is not something you need to worry about at all unless you use multiple custom nameservers like me. :D

c) Next you would need to add a ServerAlias entry in the httpd.conf file of your server! The steps to follow are:

- Login to your server using SSH (if you don't have a SSH client use the free Putty)

  - cd /etc/httpd/conf/

  - open httpd.conf in an editor

  - Find the entry for "domain.com" (the domain where WordPress is installed)

-Add an entry ServerAlias \*.domain.com domain.com

-Restart the httpd service

Now I don't use SSH at all because I am not very well-acquainted with it. These instructions are what my webhost gave me, and I pasted them here "as is". ;) If you at a FTP guy, you can find the file under /usr/local/apache/conf. Of course you need to have root access to the server in order to access that file. ;)

Better yet, why not cajole your host into doing this for you; I know I did! ;)

"Oh man, I am almost bored to death after reading so far; got a headache too; I guess I got to go to bed!"

Well, I told you so ;) But cheer up because you have completed the hardest step in the series. Now we are on to better and interesting things. ;)

d) Okay, from here on I would say maindomain.com to denote the domain where WordPress is installed, and domain2.com to denote the second domain you are going to add into the WordPress network. I hope that is okay! :)

First, log into the Cpanel of maindomain.com, then click on "Files=>Backups=>Databases" and download a backup of your SQL database (the one used by WordPress)! This is not an essential part of the job but a much-needed precaution! Next, click on "Domains=>Parked Domains" and add domain2.com there as a parked domain. Once done, you should see domain2.com added to the list of parked domains; also under the "Redirect to" column, you should see "not redirected". Perfect! :)

Step 2: Wordpress Network configuration:

a) Download a backup of all the WordPress files on to your local hard drive. Again, this is not an indispensable part of the process but would help you in case something goes terribly wrong with your blog!

b) Next, edit the "wp-config.php" file with PSPAD (<http://www.pspad.com/en/download.php>) and just below the line "define('WP\_DEBUG', false);" add this line:

```
define('WP_ALLOW_MULTISITE', true);
```

Save it and upload the file back to your server!

c) Next, you should increase the memory limit of WordPress too (this is the perfect time to do it). Go to "wp-includes" folder and edit the "default-constants.php" file with PSPAD. In that file, locate this line (about line number 21):

```
if( is_multisite() ) {  
  
    define('WP_MEMORY_LIMIT', '64M');
```

Assuming that you are managing a mutisite install (why else would you read this boring article ;) ) and that your max PHP memory limit is about 150 MB, you can change that "64" value to "128" (that is what I have set mine) or anything else you prefer! If you don't know about the PHP memory limit of your server, you should contact your host and get that info!

d) Login to WordPress. You should see some a menu now -"Tools=>Network"! Click to go to the network.

e) You would be given two choices here: either subfolders or subdomains. I chose "subdomains". Please be sure that you are choosing what you really want, as changing this option later on maybe quite difficult, if not possible. ;)

There are some scenarios described at <http://wpmututorials.com/basics/everything-you-wanted-to-know-about-creating-a-network-of-multiple-sites-in-3-0/> where you may be given just one choice instead of two!

You would be offered with two text boxes full of codes: one should be copied to your site's .htaccess file, and the other to your blog's wp-config.php file, but not before removing that define('WP\_ALLOW\_MULTISITE', true); line from the wp-config.php file first! :D

Also create two folders called "blogs.dir" and "mu-plugins" under the "wp-content" and CHMOD them both to 755. If you don't know what CHMOD means, you can read my very boring FTP tutorial in the chapter called "Easy FTP Formula!" ;)

f) Login to WordPress. Congrats, you have just been promoted to "Super Admin"! :D.

g) Click on "MY Sites=>Add New" to add a new subdomain site to WordPress database.

In the "Site Address" box, enter: domain2.mainblog.com

The next two boxes are self-explanatory. If you want to be the admin of both sites you should enter the same admin email as the one you entered when installing WordPress on maindomain.com!

Note down the site ID of your new site! It will come handy for your next big step!

Okay, we are done...well, not yet. ;)

Step 3: Domain Mapping Plugin configuration:

a) First download the domain mapping plugin from <http://wordpress.org/extend/plugins/wordpress-mu-domain-mapping/>. Upload the "domain-mapping.php" file to "mu-plugins" directory, and the "sunrise.php" file to the "wp-content" directory!

b) Next, edit the "wp-config.php" file with PSPAD and just below the line "define( 'BLOG\_ID\_CURRENT\_SITE', 1 );" add this line:

```
define( 'SUNRISE', 'on' );
```

Save the file and upload it back to the server!

c) Next, click on to "Super Admin=>Domain Mapping". Once there, enter the IP address of your server in the first box; ignore the next box! As for the next four options, I have set it in the following way (but your preferences may differ from mine):

-Remote Login=>UNCHECKED (for security reasons)

-Permanent redirect (better for your blogger's pagerank) =>CHECKED

-User domain mapping page=>CHECKED

-Redirect administration pages to site's original domain (remote login disabled if redirect disabled)=>CHECKED

d) Now click on "Super Admin=>Domains" to add a new domain. Once there, type the site ID of the subdomain site that you added earlier, and in the next box enter "domain2.com". Leave the "Primary" option CHECKED!

I made a mistake by unchecking this box because I thought that the new domain I was adding is NOT the primary domain on the server. Well that mistake cost me hours. :P

e) Okay, click on "MY Sites" and login to the dashboard of domain2.com.

f) Once there, click on "Tools=>Domain Mapping". There, under "Active domains on this blog", you would be offered the option to set the primary domain for your blog. The options would be:

domain2.com

domain2.mainblog.com

Obviously you will select the first option as the primary domain for your blog! :) Now every time you try to visit domain2.maindomain.com you would get redirected to domain2.com. ;)

Of course, if you have remote login disabled, then you would get redirected to domain2.maindomain.com/wp-admin every time you want to access the dashboard of domain2.com. :)

I hope everything is clear thus far! The process is so involved that I just hope I am not missing something here, LOL.

Further reading:

Using multiple Domains with WordPress MU:

<http://www.wpwebhost.com/using-multiple-domains-with-wordpress-mu/>

Wildcard DNS and Sub Domains

<http://ma.tt/2003/10/wildcard-dns-and-sub-domains/>

Wildcard Subdomains:

<http://www.wolf-howl.com/seo/wildcard-subdomains/>

How to Use WordPress 3.0 Multisite for a Blog Network:

<http://www.jtpratt.com/how-to-use-wordpress-3-0-multisite-for-a-blog-network/>

WordPress 3.0 and Domain Mapping:

<http://wordpress.org/support/topic/wordpress-30-and-domain-mapping>

Wildcard Catch-all Subdomains (a basic tutorial on mod-rewrite and wildcard subdomains; a MUST-READ whether or not you use WordPress):

<http://www.easymodrewrite.com/example-subdomains>

I think I promised you something else...oh, the plugins! Okay, here is a list of the plugins I am current using on that multisite blog (just the list okay? Already you are so bored! :D):

Advertising Manager (Personally I don't like the interface of the new version of this plugin, especially the "Edit" section, but figured out that that my favorite version won't work under a multisite environment, so had to bite the bullet :( )

<http://wordpress.org/extend/plugins/advertising-manager/>

Or Adinjection: <https://wordpress.org/plugins/ad-injection/>

Or Adrotate: <https://wordpress.org/plugins/adrotate/>

Akismet (must-use plugin; I dropped both the files - akismet.php and akismet.gif – individually - in the mu-plugins folder; DO NOT drop the entire "akismet" folder there or the plugin won't work!)

<http://wordpress.org/extend/plugins/akismet/>

Autolink URI (activated across the network):

<http://wordpress.org/extend/plugins/sem-autolink-uri/>

Bad Behavior (activated across the network)

<http://wordpress.org/extend/plugins/bad-behavior/>

Cleverness To-Do List

<http://wordpress.org/extend/plugins/cleverness-to-do-list/>

Comment License

<http://wordpress.org/extend/plugins/comment-license/>

Comment Rating

<http://wordpress.org/extend/plugins/comment-rating/>

Contact Commenter (if the admin privately replies to a commenter, that reply is also BCC-ed to the admin; no idea why)

<http://wordpress.org/extend/plugins/contact-commenter/>

CryptX

<http://wordpress.org/extend/plugins/cryptx/>

Exec-PHP

<http://wordpress.org/extend/plugins/exec-php/>

Executable PHP widget

<http://wordpress.org/extend/plugins/php-code-widget/>

Fast and Secure Contact Form

<http://wordpress.org/extend/plugins/si-contact-form/>

FeedBurner FeedSmith

<http://www.google.com/support/feedburner/bin/answer.py?hl=en&answer=78483>

Frame Buster (activated across the network)

<http://wordpress.org/extend/plugins/sem-frame-buster/>

Gurken Subscribe to Comments

<http://wordpress.org/extend/plugins/gurken-subscribe-to-comments/>

Highlight Comments <http://wordpress.org/extend/plugins/highlight-comments/>

My Brand Login (activated across the network)

<http://wordpress.org/extend/plugins/my-brand/>

No Curly Quotes (activated across the network)

<http://wordpress.org/extend/plugins/no-curly-quotes/>

Official StatCounter Plugin

<http://wordpress.org/extend/plugins/official-statcounter-plugin-for-wordpress/>

Ozh' Absolute Comments

<http://wordpress.org/extend/plugins/ozh-absolute-comments/>

Pretty Link

<http://wordpress.org/extend/plugins/pretty-link/>

Redirection (activated across the network; if it redirects your blog homepage to a non-existent page, just enter the homepage URL (without "www"), select "URL only" from the next box and "Do nothing" from the third box; this should fix the issue)

<http://wordpress.org/extend/plugins/redirection/>

Remove Links in Comments

<http://wordpress.org/extend/plugins/remove-links-in-comments/>



SABRE (a MUST-HAVE plugin whether or not you allow user-registrations on your blog, because it stops the bot registrations nonetheless!)

<http://wordpress.org/extend/plugins/sabre/>

SEO Ultimate (activated across the network; the 404 monitor module of the plugin maybe particularly annoying to some; you may want to disable it after a certain time)

<http://wordpress.org/extend/plugins/seo-ultimate/>

Silence Is Golden Guard (activated across the network)

<http://wordpress.org/extend/plugins/silence-is-golden-guard/>

Simple Trackback Validation