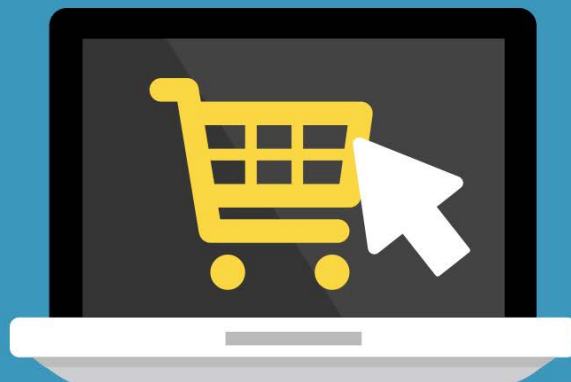




Resource Book
October 2015

eCommerce Advanced
online workshop

ecommerce-ballarat.eventbrite.com.au



The Central Highlands Digital Enterprise (DigiBiz) program was a two year project and concluded in December 2014. During this period, 150 training workshops were conducted, with over 3000 attendances.

DigiBiz continues to provide training as part of the Centre for eResearch and Digital Innovation (CeRDI) at Federation University Australia. www.cerdi.edu.au

This document was developed as part of the eCommerce Advanced Online Workshop, 8 October 2015.

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eCommerce

By definition e-commerce refers to businesses and consumers buying and selling products online. The majority of e-commerce websites on the internet are retail stores selling products directly to the public. However there are also a proportion of online stores dedicated to business-to-business (B2B) sales or wholesale activity.

E-commerce does not only refer to the selling of physical products, it can also refer to the selling of services where payments for the services are made online.

As a general rule an e-commerce website is a website where a transfer of funds is completed electronically - hence e-commerce.

Source: Net Registry

<http://www.netregistry.com.au/resources/what-is/ecommerce/what-is-ecommerce/>

Further reading from Net Registry

<http://www.netregistry.com.au/resources/ebooks/>



Many of the tips in the eCommerce workshop are applicable to online activity that is not directly related to online selling. This can include any actions you want your website audience to take. For example

- Membership subscriptions, paid and free.
- Downloads – ebooks, audio or video that is paid and free

Further reading:

How to make your first sale online by Shopify

<https://www.shopify.com/guides/make-your-first-ecommerce-sale>

Platforms

List of common eCommerce platforms

- Shopify - <https://www.shopify.com/>
- Big Commerce - <https://www.bigcommerce.com/>
- 3D Cart - <http://www.3dcart.com/>
- Volusion - <http://www.volusion.com/>
- Big Cartel - <https://www.bigcartel.com/>

Have eCommerce features:

- Wix - <http://www.wix.com/>
- WordPress/WooCommerce
<http://www.woothemes.com/woocommerce/>



eCommerce Platform Comparison Chart:

<http://ecommerce-platforms.com/comparison-chart>

There are a number of advantages and disadvantages to each platform. Things to consider are:

- Are Australian shipping options available? – Australia Post
- Are Australian currency options available, including GST options?
- Does it require a payment gateway to settle funds?

Payment Gateways

A Payment Gateway encodes and confirms payment with your credit/debit card. See image below. Often you will have a separate merchant (bank account) and Payment Gateway.



Payment Gateway process. Source: PayPal.com

A quality Australian Gateway is Eway - eway.com.au

Payment Gateways can be expensive, so it is better to consider using something like a **PayPal** integration for your eCommerce store, particularly if you are just starting out with eCommerce.

The fees for selling are higher with PayPal, however there are no upfront fees to get started, so it is an ideal choice for those businesses with low volume sales. Learn more about PayPal here - <https://www.paypal.com/au/webapps/mpp/merchant>

Other Platforms

There is a wide variety of platforms where you can buy and sell goods and services. Some alternatives include:

- **Amazon**
<http://www.amazon.com/gp/seller-account/mm-product-page.htm>
- **Ebay** – www.ebay.com.au
- **Etsy** - <https://www.etsy.com/au>

The benefit of these marketplaces is the size of their online presence and the ability for you to reach large numbers of local and international customers.

The main disadvantages are the seller fees that apply, which are not always clear when you first start.

It can be difficult to be unique

Consider a variety of options – Your own website, Ebay and Amazon. This will help you reach a wider audience.



Provide registration for your events, either paid or free with Eventbrite, which has grown in popularity in recent years. It is easy to set up and has a simple user interface.
<https://www.eventbrite.com>



The Rise of Mobile Commerce

No matter what way you chose to sell your products and services, the platform will need to adapt to mobile devices.

When choosing templates for your website or online store, ensure it works well on mobile devices.

A popular term to look out for is '*Responsive Design*', which means it fits properly on all screen types.



Image source: Designed by Freepik.com

A good place to start when searching for website and eCommerce templates is Australian owned marketplace, Theme Forest by Envato - <http://themeforest.net>

Here you will find a variety of designs for most popular platforms at affordable prices.

It is best practice to read about the developers and other buyer's comments before making a purchase with Theme Forest.



SEO - Search Engine Optimisation

Product pages often do not receive the SEO treatment they deserve, particularly those with large inventories. It is important they do, as Search Engine such as Google account for a significant percentage of website referral traffic.

'How can people find your products and services, if the web pages they 'live' on are not being indexed by Google the way you want?'

Most website and eCommerce platforms including Wordpress, provide SEO-specific features where you can control information such as: *Page Title, Meta Description* and *Image alt* text.



SEO Key Areas

- Page title
- Meta description
- Image file name ie. *intro-to-seo-book.jpg* not *IMG00143.jpg*
- Image alt text
- url – */introduction-to-seo-book.html* not */product-code?211453*
- You can edit and change the url of your webpages and product pages in most platforms
- Headings – H1, H2, H3 etc. Avoid using the H1 tag more than once on a page.
- Body copy – Don't simply 'pepper' keywords in your webpage text or product details. Provide a quality and relevant description.

For more details visit:

<http://elliott.digital/digital/mobileged-don-advanced-seo>

Top SEO Resources

Moz

<https://moz.com/learn/seo>

Shopify

<https://www.shopify.com/guides/make-your-first-ecommerce-sale>

Yoast SEO for Wordpress

<https://yoast.com/wordpress/plugins/seo/>

Google

<http://static.googleusercontent.com/media/www.google.com/en//webmasters/docs/search-engine-optimization-starter-guide.pdf>

Advanced SEO Technique

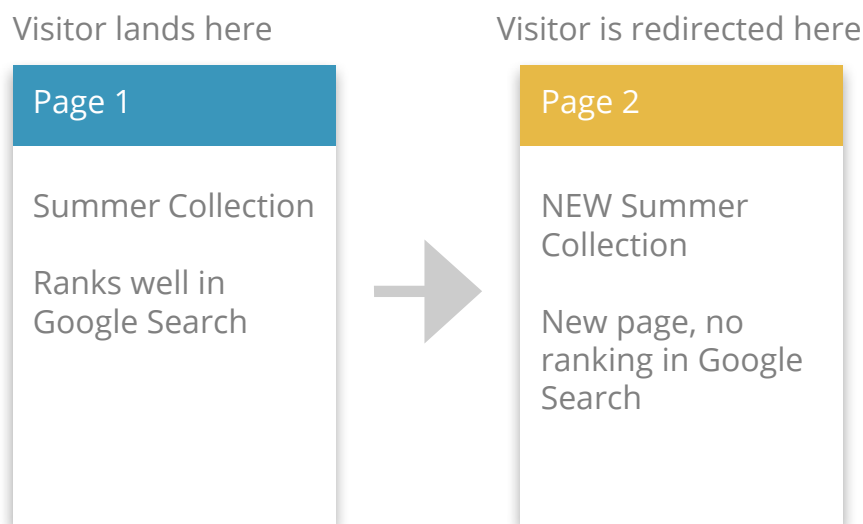
301 Redirect

When you have a webpage such as a product page that you no longer have in stock, and you want to keep the SEO ranking, which you have built up over time, you can redirect to another page and maintain most of that page's SEO value.

This might be valuable if you have a product or service that has been updated for a new version or a slight change to the product that requires some changes to the page info but it is still relevant.

It can also be useful for pages and products you have shared via social media that those links don't become broken.

Moz have a great overview here.
<https://moz.com/learn/seo/redirection>



It will depend on your CMS or eCommerce platform as to how you go about a redirect. For Shopify visit:

<https://docs.shopify.com/manual/your-website/navigation/url-redirect>

WordPress have several plugins, one of which is:

<https://wordpress.org/plugins/simple-301-redirects>

Paid Traffic

There are a number of ways to generate website traffic through advertising including:

- Paid Search
- Social Media Ads
- Website banner and text ads
- Mobile app ads

Paid search through Google Adwords is popular, however can be expensive for small business owners. To learn more about Adwords visit:

<https://www.google.com.au/adwords>

A powerful tool within Adwords is *Remarketing*, which allows advertisers to display relevant ads to users based on their search history. This method uses a cookie to understand a users search habit for up to 30 days.

Many website users do not feel comfortable about this method. You can learn more about remarketing here:

<https://support.google.com/adwords/answer/2453998?hl=en>



Social Media Advertising

Major social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Instagram allow business owners to advertise their goods and services through each platform.

The benefit of advertising on these platforms is the ability to target users on various characteristics such as demographics. Listed below are links to some of the advertising pages:

- Facebook Ads - <https://www.facebook.com/business/products/ads>
- Twitter Ads - <https://ads.twitter.com>
- Instagram Ads - <https://business.instagram.com/advertising>
- LinkedIn Ads - Visit or create your LinkedIn company page and goto the Advertising section. Learn more about LinkedIn company pages here: <https://business.linkedin.com/marketing-solutions/company-pages/get-started>

Creativity for eCommerce

When it comes to content on the web, the competition is tough! This means that you need to develop quality content, in particular multimedia content such as images and video.

You cannot simply 'get away' with bland images for your products or social media activity.

Although, not everyone has the time or skills to develop top-of-the-line marketing material, there are a number of apps that can help take your marketing material to the level it deserves.



Infographic by Hubspot:
<http://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/visual-content-marketing-infographic>



Canva: <https://www.canva.com>



Pixlr: <https://pixlr.com>



Instagram | HYPERLAPSE

Hyperlapse: <https://help.instagram.com/hyperlapse/>



Snapseed: <http://snapseed.com/home/support>



Vine: <https://vine.co/>

Social Media

The type of social platforms that will work for you depend on the type of business you have and your target audience.

There are no 'hard-and-fast' rules. You can make an impact on any social platform, however, time and money will determine success at some point.

It is at this point you need to consider a marketing version of *Diminishing Marginal Returns*. When a new social platform or a new feature such as video arrives on a platform, engagement rates soar. However as each day, month and year passes, so too does the engagement rate. Email marketing was once approximately 20% engagement rate, whilst it is currently around 11%. Source: <http://www.smartinsights.com/email-marketing/email-communications-strategy/statistics-sources-for-email-marketing>

First-mover Advantage

In order to stay above the spiral of diminishing marginal returns, successful marketers continuously look to new ways of marketing their goods and services. This can be through new platforms or new features of platforms, such as previously mentioned creative apps.

To get an idea of social media trends, look at Australian statistics such as Social Media News: <http://www.socialmedianews.com.au/social-media-statistics/>

Try a new social media platform to reach your audience, even if you think they are not using it. Listed below are some upcoming platforms.



Snapchat:

<https://www.snapchat.com>



Instagram:

<https://instagram.com>



Ello:

<https://ello.co>

Email Marketing

As noted earlier, email has a high rate of engagement, considerably higher than social media. Although it is diminishing, it is popular among eCommerce business owners, in particular for closing deals or promotions.

A quality email list can take a long time to develop, whilst having time to create regular email campaigns can be difficult for small businesses.

There are a number of platforms, both paid and free on the market, however, the most popular is MailChimp. <http://mailchimp.com/>

MailChimp is incredibly simple to use and is free to get started and for most small businesses it can remain free.



Another popular aspect of MailChimp, is their resource page <http://mailchimp.com/resources/>, which contains a variety of useful email marketing tips.

It is important to avoid unsolicited tactics such as spamming or possible security breaches such as buying email lists.

The simple way to think of spam is:

'If the recipient didn't sign-up to your email list, then it is spam.'



Email marketing works particularly well integrated with social media marketing, and both should be used regularly together.

Measuring It All

Of course, it is pointless going through all of this eCommerce activity if you don't measure how effective it is.

The key point here is Analytics and Optimisation. You should be analysing website activity and optimising your content to improve business outcomes.

The main platform to get started with Analytics is Google Analytics - Visit <https://support.google.com/analytics/> to learn more about Google Analytics and how to implement it on your site. Platforms such as Shopify and WordPress have the capability of installing Google Analytics on your website.

To optimise your website and product pages, you should look to run tests such as A/B testing, this will allow you to gauge which version of a web page performs the best. A great tool to get started is Optimizely - <https://www.optimizely.com>.

Like your website and product pages, you should be regularly analysing your social media activity. Platforms such as Hootsuite <https://hootsuite.com/> provide a social media reporting function to help you gauge which social media posts and platforms are performing the best for your business.

Each social media and email platform boasts it's own analytics features such as Facebook Insights, Twitter Analytics and MailChimp Analytics. Simply visit these platforms and view your profile for details.



Further Resources

For more information about DigiBiz training, visit <http://www.digibiz.net.au>

For DigiBiz resources, visit our resources section:
http://www.digibiz.net.au/cb_pages/resources.php

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