



## September 2009 Newsletter #20

### More time off

I know, I just took time off - but it was May and that's 4 months ago - before summer!

I'll be away for the weekend of **Sept 11 - 15** (OK a bit longer than the weekend) and again **September 24th to October 5th**. As usual I'll have my trusty Laptop. This allows me to get emails and do any urgent work (like corrections, urgent updates). But there might be a day or so delay in some cases. Both trips are by car to the U.S. - first to Plattsburg where Cobourg's band participates in re-enactment festivities and then to Myrtle Beach for some relaxation.

### Not all sites are equal

I see a lot of sites in my surfing - many have opening pages that have a nice flash display that shows off the skill of the designer and maybe impresses visitors the first time. But the next time they come it's just a nuisance. Site owners know this because they often have a link - click here to go straight to the site! Some sites have sound as soon as you open their home page - the first thing I do when that happens is mute all sound. It's generally considered bad practice and people surfing at work hate it! And from the stats of visitors, we know that lots of people surf while at work.

But the big sin that designers still commit, is to make their pictures and other files (like flash) too big. With high speed now very common, why is this a problem? We used to need files to be small to make it a more pleasant experience for dial-up users but although that's still good, it's not nearly as important. If you have a very popular site, then each time a new person comes to your site, they will open all the pictures and look at all the flash files on your pages. Even if they don't care about it, their browser opens the files which means they download them. Well why does this matter? Because your web site has a limit on the amount of traffic (bandwidth) and if you exceed it, you'll have to upgrade and pay more for hosting! Not good. So keeping file sizes small means less traffic and lower cost for you especially if you have a very popular site.

### Hosting

As explained above, your host account has a limited amount of bandwidth. For most of you, this won't matter at all since you'll not come near the limit - I keep file sizes small so you'll need lots of visitors to come near your limit. That's a high class problem. But you may have seen other hosting companies who offer unlimited bandwidth for a low price. How do they do that? Well they are assuming that most people will come nowhere near a sensible limit but will feel better if they are told it's unlimited. But they have fine print - called Terms of Service (T.O.S.). If you exceed the (unstated) limit very occasionally, they won't bother you (neither will I). But if you exceed it (e.g.) 3 times they quote a clause in their T.O.S. and cut you off and tell you to go elsewhere. Their price structure is such they would rather you go away. Not nice.

Host companies with very low prices crowd maybe 1000 users onto one server (I currently have 50 but 200 to 300 is about the limit). And very often response times get very slow and they even go off air more than they should.

One of the things that makes some hosting cheaper is that it does not have the support and it may not have the software (like a full CPanel) which both cost money to provide.

## **Pay Online**

If you'd prefer to pay online using any credit card, I can bill you with an Invoice via PayPal that allows payment by credit card (or PayPal account). But you have to let me know so I can send it to you.

## **Client Information page**

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**John Draper**