

# ted demopoulos' effective internet presence



now required for success in business and life

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## Why You (Need To) Care

### ***First Impressions Matter, and They are Often Online Today***

I asked the 500 people in my keynote speech yesterday how many had googled<sup>1</sup> me. Almost everyone's hand went up.

A senior hiring manager at a Fortune 500 company trained all his people how to look up potential employees online last year, going well beyond a simple search engine lookup. The results affect who gets hired and who doesn't.

“18% of working college graduates report that their employer expects some form of self-marketing online as part of their job”

Digital Footprints, Pew Internet and American Life Project, December 2007

A reporter from Investors Business Daily interviewed me yesterday. It was obvious he had googled me online before we spoke. If he had found nothing or nothing interesting, we wouldn't have been speaking.

My friend Bruce has a new girlfriend. He definitely googled her before considering dating her, and she looked him up online as well. Is “Love at first google” possible?

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<sup>1</sup> google: to search on the Internet, commonly done using search engines such as Google, Yahoo!, and Microsoft's Live Search. “Google” with a capital “G” is typically used to refer to searching with the google.com search engine.

People google you all the time. They google you before they meet with you, they google you if they may be working with you, they google you if you're dating their sister.

If they really care, or are Internet savvy, they will do more than simple search engine lookups.

83% of recruiters used search engines to learn more about candidates in 2007, up from 75% in 2005 according to ExecuNet.com. 43% eliminated candidates based on the results in 2007.

### ***If You Don't Exist Online, Do You Really Exist?***

Good Question.

Certainly people are googling you, and if they find favorable results it's much better than if they find unfavorable results or nothing at all.

### ***People Look for Businesses and Organizations Online Too***

In fact I haven't used the phonebook in years, how about you?

You can also find reviews and recommendations online, unlike in the phonebook. Need a plumber in Raleigh, a prostitute near Heathrow airport, or maybe just some reviews of a book you're considering buying? They are all online.

## **Who Are You?**

Who are you? Who, who, who, who?  
I really wanna know. Who are you? Who, who, who, who?  
Tell me, who are you? – The Who, 1978

Today when people want to know “Who are you?” the answer usually comes from Google.

That's why an Effective Internet Presence is important.

What should they find?

You certainly have some control over what is on the Internet about you. Not total control; no one 'controls the message' anymore. But you have some control, just like you have some control over who you marry or mate with for life or a while (Claudia Schiffer is already married, George Clooney isn't available, Britney Spears and Lindsay Lohan have “troubles” and are probably not interested, and Veronica Lodge and Jughead Jones are comic book characters).

For starters, we'll assume you're a good person, but even good people make mistakes. We prefer that the good is readily findable online and the mistakes aren't!

Hector had narrowed the job search to three candidates, and they all looked great. They interviewed well and quick Googles were positive. He decided to make a job offer to Ralph.

Since they were all right out of college, I suggested a quick look in MySpace.com first.

Ralph's MySpace page had an interesting entry. He had drunk 18 beers last Saturday night and when he woke up the next morning at home, immediately looked out the window to see if his car had made it home too. He remarked that he had no idea how he or his car had gotten back, but was very happy his car was safe.

He's lucky – he got the job anyways.

So, when people look you up online, what should they find?

## ***This Personal Branding Thing***

A brand is what prevents something from being a commodity. It's why I pay more for a cup of Starbucks coffee than the coffee down the street. The coffee down the street may be better, or it may be swill, I don't know. The Starbucks brand assures me that I'll get a good, strong, although over roasted to my taste, cup of coffee. There is trust and safety in brands.

Personal branding is, you guessed it, branding applied to you. It describes:

- What's special and unique about you?
- Why are you not a commodity?

This must come out immediately when people google you.

Your Personal Brand is who you are.

Your personal brand will help attract the right people, organizations & opportunities, AND repel those that are inappropriate for you.

Your personal brand, which includes what people find when they look you up online, needs to be authentic. It has to be the real you.

You do however have choices. You can and perhaps should NOT put some of your true self online. Some personal branding experts may disagree vehemently, but you certainly have choices and you can self-censor some of the “True Authentic You” if you choose.

Are you a promiscuous homosexual, an anarchist, or do you sympathize with abortion clinic bombers? Do you believe women shouldn't be allowed to vote, dogs are the embodiment of Satan, or the world will end on August 4<sup>th</sup>, 2011?

You may want to keep these views offline, or at least not associated with your name. It's your choice.

So what's OK online and what's not? Here are some general guidelines:

OK	Not OK	Usually OK
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Personality</li><li>• Professional Information</li><li>• Family Information</li><li>• Most Things!</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Religion</li><li>• Sex</li><li>• Politics</li><li>• Nudity</li><li>• Illegal Behavior</li><li>• Immoral Behavior</li><li>• Anything Not Acceptable in Public</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Hobbies</li><li>• Family</li><li>• Foolishness</li></ul>

Of course these are just guidelines. Some of them are open to debate.

Notice your personality is OK. Actually it's more than OK – it's essential (assuming you have one). People don't hire, date, or otherwise engage with personality-free, faceless, generic humans. Humans have personalities and it's absurd to pretend we don't, online or offline.

Also notice that most things are OK online. Emphasis on most, which certainly does not mean all.

So, what should we avoid online?

- Religion and Politics: Some people insist on delving into religion and politics in every aspect of their lives, often annoying those unfortunate to be around them!

If you want to start a blog or otherwise pontificate on your faith, I won't insist you shouldn't, but please keep it separate from your professional (on and offline) life. This may be difficult if you can't have a conversation without mentioning Jesus or Allah or Zoroaster in every other sentence, but then at least you'll scare away the people you'll annoy and who'll annoy you, probably most of the world. Shamans, Popes, Priests, Mullahs, and other holy dudes excused of course.

Politics are a bad habit, much like smoking cigarettes or annoying uninterested people with your religious beliefs. Many smokers, at least in the US, are considerate and try not to annoy non smokers with their foul smelling hobby. People into politics should be considerate and not annoy normal folks with their foul views, which, like smoking, should be their own business.

I don't care if you like Hillary Clinton, and you shouldn't care if I think Greece should revert to a Monarchy or I smoke. However, your or my opinions (or smoke) may offend or upset others unnecessarily, and are often inappropriate in public.

Besides, someone may decide they don't like you before they get a chance to actually know you.

- Naked pictures, and illegal or widely accepted as immoral behavior, should obviously be kept private.

The bottom line? The Internet is a very public place – in case you haven't noticed. Don't do anything you wouldn't do in public!

Even worse, the Internet is part of your permanent record. Maybe you peed in Times Square once when you were drunk back in your college days? It's probably OK now – unless someone posted pictures or video online.

Nothing online every really goes away, even if you think you deleted it. For example, the “Internet Wayback Machine” and Google cache contain copies of “deleted” information.



“Unlike footprints left in the sand at the beach, our online data trails often stick around long after the tide has gone out.”

Digital Footprints, Pew Internet and American Life Project, December 2000

## What's Your Name?

What's your name, little girl? What's your name?  
– Lynyrd Synyrd, 1977

I, Ted Demopoulos, am lucky. So is Seth Godin. Ditto for Zaphod Beeblebrox, and Rumpelstiltskin.

If you google me, you find me. Yes, there are a couple of other people named “Ted Demopoulos” out there, but you won’t find them on the first 50 or so pages of search engine results.

Are YOU lucky? What if I google you? Is your name Jim Smith, or Bill Bailey, or Sue Jones?

Are there hundreds of you in the New York City phonebook, never mind on the Internet? Worry not, Dear Jim/Bill/Sue, people CAN still find you (details coming up!), but I STRONGLY (hence the obnoxious all caps) recommend you make it easy on them.

Let’s say there were lots people named “Ted Demopoulos” out there, instead of just a very, very few. Well, I could legitimately use any of the following variants of my name everywhere it appears online, as well as offline: on my business cards, my resume, voice mail, in the phone directory, etc.

Ted J Demopoulos, Theo Demopoulos, Theodore Demopoulos  
Theodoros Demopoulos (the traditional Greek spelling), Theodore James  
Demopoulos

Hmmm, there doesn't seem to be a single reference to "Theodoros Demopoulos" on the Internet, but in my case "Ted Demopoulos" is unique enough.

Here is a concrete example. "David Scott" is a pretty bad name. Google "David Scott," and you'll find the astronaut that walked on the moon, the six-time Ironman world champion, the congressman, two college professors, and two authors – and that's only on the first page of Google results!

What's a "David Scott" to do? Well, my friend David Scott decided to use his middle name and became "David Meerman Scott." He is the only "David Meerman Scott" around, and he uses this full name online and professionally.

More examples:

- George Bush, the US president guy, had a problem. There was a previous president with the same name, probably his uncle or cousin or some other relative. Suddenly, "George Bush" became "George W. Bush," differentiating himself from all the other George Bushes who were president.

- You also may have heard of the famous actor “Michael Fox.” He goes by “Michael J. Fox.” Seems there is another actor, one no one has ever heard of, named “Michael Fox.”

You could even make up a middle name and just use it if you want to. This is perfectly legal in many countries, although I’m not a lawyer and you may want to check with one. Do you think comedian “Andrew Dice Clay” really was named “Dice” by his parents? I doubt it – google him if you really care.

You could even change your entire name! Although that’s somewhat extreme, many people do it. Actors in particular seem to although they often change from great names to generic common names, such as Muzyad Yakhoob who changed his name to the far more common Danny Thomas. Admittedly, Muzyad made that change pre-Internet.

So if you’re Jim Smith, David Scott, or Bill Bailey or Sue Jones, whattayado?

- Jim Smith changed his name to “LL Cool J.”
- David Scott became “David Meerman Scott.”
- Bill Bailey became “Axl Rose.”
- Sue Jones? Well she did nothing, which is why you don’t know her, but rumors are she is about to marry Zaphod Beeblebrox and take his last name.

George Jones, who has almost no Internet presence yet and a very common name, recently commented on my blog, “Maybe I'll use my college nickname as my middle name, ‘George Bull Dog Jones’ or maybe ‘George BD Jones’ as it seems a bit more professional.”

Good creative thinking George!

“The same rules apply for naming products, services, companies, books, and other things that you want to have a unique identity on the Web. For example, before I finalized any of my book titles, I made certain that the phrase was not being used on the Web,” adds David Scott. Which “David Scott”? David Meerman Scott.

## ***If You Change Your Name . . .***

If you change your name, what about any Internet presence you may already have? How does that get associated with you?

If you radically change your name, say to ‘Attila The Hun II’ from ‘Sam Smith’ there is not much you can do other than add your previous name to the metatag 'keywords' of any blogs and Web sites you have, much like I include common misspellings of 'Demopoulos'. That will help a little. (Ask a propeller head how if you need too – it’s easy).

If you just add a new middle name, like ‘Sam I Am Smith’ you have few problems as you are still a ‘Sam Smith’ and old Internet items will still show up in most Internet searches.

## **Techniques**

Here is a quick whirlwind tour of some specific techniques that will help you build an Effective Internet Presence, starting with some real simple, free, and easy techniques and moving on to more labor and perhaps cost intensive.

No attempt is made to be all inclusive here, and even if I attempted that, it would be out of date before I finished!

## ***Easy, Quick, and Cheap/Free***

### **Social Networking Sites**

Most social networking sites allow you to join for free and then setup a “profile” – essentially information about yourself you want to share, and then “connect” with other people you know who are also using that social networking site.

Most social networking sites allow much more, and they all differ. Most allow you to create and join subgroups and communicate with fellow members. Apparently in Facebook I can even “poke”, “dry hump”, and “throw a cake at” my Facebook “friends.”

There are more social networking sites than you can effectively join. Some have high search engine visibility; some have none but can be very useful for networking.

A great resource on social networking, especially if this is all new to you, is *The Virtual Handshake: Opening Doors And Closing Deals Online* by David Teten and Scott Allen, available at

<http://thevirtualhandshake.com/free-book-download.html> or buy it at Amazon (cheaper than printing the book, and you can read it at the beach or in the tub easier than on your computer screen).

Some social networking and similar sites include MySpace.com, Facebook.com, LinkedIn.com, Doostang.com, Ning.com (which allows you to create your own social networks), Jobster.com, Naymz.com, Emurse.com, Friendster.com, Ziggs.com, Ryze.com and at least a few hundred others.

Three that have high Internet visibility, that is the search engines love, at least today, are LinkedIn, Emurse.com, and Jobster.com

We'll look at two in more detail, LinkedIn and Facebook.

## LinkedIn

LinkedIn is a business oriented networking site that's been around for over five years and boasts over 16 million members.

**The search engines love LinkedIn**, so if you don't have any Internet Presence, joining LinkedIn, setting up your profile, and inviting a few dozen people to be your connections is a great way to start.

Even if you can only find a couple of people in LinkedIn you know, once you connect with them you can see their connections, many of which you'll no doubt know and can connect with. It's important to have a few dozen connections minimum, otherwise you'll look like a loser!

LinkedIn also allows you to receive endorsements from other people. Supposedly these are well respected but I think they are slightly bogus. LinkedIn allows you to request endorsements from any of your connections, and most will say a few kind words, whether you deserve them or not.

THE book on LinkedIn is Jason Alba's [\*I'm on LinkedIn -- Now What???\*](#), released September of 2007.

## **Facebook**

Facebook started out as a college only social networking site but is now used extensively for business, and boasts over 60 million users.

Search engines, at least as of today, do not love Facebook, so your Facebook profile will not help build much of an Internet Presence. Supposedly Google and other search engines index “public profiles” in Facebook as of recently, but they haven’t found mine yet!

I expect Facebook to become much more search engine friendly, but it doesn’t compare to LinkedIn today for developing a quick Effective Internet Presence.

Still, Facebook is a great networking tool if for nothing else because everyone seems to be on it.

There is a history of Facebook being used in investigations by colleges, universities and police for everything from underage drinking to hit and runs. Be careful what you post in Facebook just like everywhere else online.

## Leaving Comments on Targeted Blogs

Another fantastic quick technique to help build an Effective Internet Presence is to leave thoughtful comments on targeted blogs in your area of expertise.

How do you find appropriate blogs? Use a blog search engine. I recommend and use Technorati.com.

Let's say you are a direct marketing (DM) specialist. You should be reading some of the excellent marketing blogs with a DM slant and leaving insightful comments, as opposed to just "I agree" and "good post" type comments.

You might read and occasionally comment on [Bob Bly's Blog](#), Dianna Huff's [Marcom Writer Blog](#), Robert Rosenthal's [Freaking Marketing](#), as well as others.

When you leave a comment, you'll be asked for your name (What's Your Name?) & your blog or Website (you can use your LinkedIn or other profile if you don't have one).

The search engines will index and display some of these comments when people search on your name, adding to your Internet presence.

## Online Book Reviews

Did you know that Amazon book reviews are indexed by the search engines, and that Amazon will also let you set up a profile, which can include a full bio, photo, and much more?

Reviewing books in your field, and setting up an appropriate profile, is a relatively easy way to jumpstart an Effective Internet Presence.

Also reading and writing reviews of books in your field is a great way to position yourself as an expert.

## ***More Involved But Still Not Rocket Science***

### **Main Stream Media**

What Ted, are you nuts? What does the mainstream media, things like *USA Today*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *People Magazine*, and *ABC News* have to do with an Effective Internet Presence?

Most things in the mainstream media are echoed online. If you get quoted



or have an article published, chances are it will also be online and the search engines will find it.

For example, my editorial on Internet governance in *USA Today* & quotes in numerous newspapers and magazines are all online. A couple years back when I didn't have as much information on me online and they were more current, they often showed up in first page search results.

There are many techniques to get press, but I get press in two primary ways.

- The press finds me online and interviews me. Yes, an Effective Internet Presence can get you press and thereby a bigger and more Effective Internet Presence.
- The second way is using a service called PRLeads.com that I highly recommend. You specify which topics you're interested in, and have queries from reporters looking for sources to quote emailed to you every day. PR Leads has gotten me into *The Wall Street Journal*, *USA Today*, *The Sacramento Bee*, *UPI* and *The Chicago Tribune* among many others and ALL of these are online too!

Wanna see my picture on the cover  
Wanna buy five copies for my mother  
Wanna see my smilin' face  
On the cover of the Rolling Stone  
– Dr. Hook and The Medicine Show, 1972

And I'd love to get my picture "On the cover of the Rolling Stone" – all the covers are online now of course. Dr. Hook and The Medicine Show were on the cover very shortly after writing the song.

## **Writing Articles**

The Internet lives for content, and creating content is not hard. It's pretty easy to write articles, ranging from a mere 200 words (a long email!), to much longer. It's also trivial to get them published.

Two strategies, one very very (very) simple:

### **1. Article Directories**

You can write and submit short articles to "Article Directories." Article directories have large numbers of articles that others can freely download and use on their Web sites, blogs, newsletters, etc.

Why would you do this? Give away your content? Article directories allow you to append a "resource box" to your articles, which is a few lines of text about you that can even include links to your Web site, blog, or maybe LinkedIn profile. Anyone who uses your articles must include this resource box.

To find article directories, yup, you got it, google “article directories”.

The most important, the 800 pound gorilla of articles directories, is Ezinearticles.com and it simply rocks from the Effective Internet Presence perspective. Ezinearticles also allows you to create a profile, and the search engines love Ezinearticle’s profiles.

## **2. Articles on Targeted Websites**

Web site owners often want more content, especially if they don’t need to produce it.

Look around, using the search engines, and you may find sites in your niche that are open to content. Some of these sites may openly solicit content, or you may need to ask.

For example, I do a lot of work with Information Security and have articles published on [InfoSec Writers](#) and the [SANS Institute’s](#) Web site. I also do a lot of work with business blogging and have written articles for the blogs [Prologger](#), [The International Association of Online Communicators blog](#), and [Build a Better Blog](#). The terms ‘guest blogging’ and ‘guest post’ are typically used when referring to writing articles for blogs.

## **Web sites**

How can we not mention Web sites?

Companies need Web sites. Independent professionals need Web sites. My cleaning lady and mechanic have Web sites. You should probably have a Web site too (or perhaps a blog, a special type of Web site. See below).

Your Web site can highlight your accomplishments, much like a resume (called a CV or curriculum vitae by most of the world), but in a much more detailed, effective, and less dry and boring fashion. It can include pictures of you, articles you've written, links, video and audio, and just about anything you like (smell-o-vision anyone?).

Entire books have been written about Web sites, yet still many Web sites (including stupidly expensive corporate Web sites) simply suck!

A Web site doesn't have to be expensive -- most shouldn't be. Forget high tech bells and whistles and concentrate on simple and easy to use. It should be immediately obvious to a visitor what the Web site is about: is it for a company that sells green widgets, or is it some type of "Web portfolio" for an individual? Don't make visitors guess. They won't, they'll leave instead!

If the Web site represents you, as opposed to a company or product, I strongly suggest you use a URL (something of the form [www.something.com](http://www.something.com)) with your name in it – it will make it show up much higher in the search results when people search on you.

Do you own [www.yourname.com](http://www.yourname.com) yet? If not, buy it immediately, even if you have no plans to use it yet. It's cheap! A few bucks a year. If it's available now, it may not be later. I use [Dotster.com](http://Dotster.com) for my domains.

If it's not available, perhaps some variant is, for example [www.yourname.org](http://www.yourname.org) or [www.yourname.net](http://www.yourname.net) or [www.msyourname.us](http://www.msyourname.us).

You may need to be creative, but you want a URL with your name in it, at least in the long run!

What if your name is hard to spell, like mine? Well, I've got [www.teddemop.com](http://www.teddemop.com), [www.demop.com](http://www.demop.com), and [www.teddemopoulos.com](http://www.teddemopoulos.com).

I'm not using the later yet, but I will eventually. I don't want some other Ted Demopoulos, perhaps annoyed because I've grabbed the top 100000 search engine results for Ted Demopoulos, to snag it before I can & I do have plans to eventually use it.

## **Blogs**

A blog, a specific kind of Web site, is perhaps the best way to get an Effective Internet Presence, but blogs are not for everyone.

Although little or no technical knowledge is necessary, a blog requires regular updating, usually in the form of writing something intelligent at least once a week.

A “personal blog,” which is much like an online journal, probably won’t help you much. No one cares what you had for breakfast, if you have a runny nose, or wants to see pictures of your cat or new sweater.

A “business blog,” a blog that is focused on something you are passionate about, perhaps your industry or work, will do wonders for your Internet presence.

It doesn’t NEED to be work related as long as it’s professional and shows you in a great light. For example a blog that mentioned you were a software developer, or mason, or whatever, but focused on a charity you were intimately involved with would work well.

Entire books have been written on blogging. I’ve even written a couple, and I blog on business blogging – you can google me to find it easily!

You can start a blog in a few minutes at [TypePad.com](http://TypePad.com) (I use it) or WordPress.com.

## Lenses

You can create a “lens” about yourself at [squidoo.com](http://squidoo.com) for free. What’s a lens? From the FAQ:

A lens is one person's view on a topic that matters to her. It's an easy-to-build, single web page that can point to blogs, favorite links, RSS feeds, Flickr photos, Google maps, your eBay auctions, CafePress designs, Amazon books or music, and oh so much more.



A lens is much easier and simpler than creating and maintaining a Web site or blog. It takes about 5 or 10 minutes to set up a lens.

Lenses have pretty good search engine visibility too, and your lens can even make you money.

### ***Even More Techniques***

Podcasting, ebooks like this one, white papers, video blogging, viral video on video sharing sites like YouTube, Twitter, email newsletters, . . .

There are lots of choices, and there are bound to be some you enjoy and that work well for you.

## **Develop an action plan**

OK, so you're convinced.

You want an Effective Internet Presence so you can live long and prosper, or whatever your personal goals may be.

You've decided on your name, perhaps the name you've used all along.

How do you simply, cheaply, and quickly start your Effective Internet Presence?

### ***Where are you today?***

First let's see how you're doing right now.

Google yourself, using google.com, the #1 search engine by a big margin.

“Internet users are becoming more aware of their digital footprint; 47% have searched for information about themselves online, up from just 22% five years ago.”

Digital Footprints, Pew Internet and American Life Project, December 2007

What's there? Anything? Are any of the first page entries you? How about the next couple of pages?

If nothing shows up, try your name in quotes.

“The majority of internet users who have the inclination to query their names with a search engine do find some relevant results (60%), but a sizable segment (38%) report that a simple search does not yield any information connected to their name.”

Digital Footprints, Pew Internet and American Life Project, December 2007

Next try searching on your name and other distinguishing terms just like someone else Googling you would. Try your name and where you live, your name and the company you work for, your name and your profession – be creative, just like the person considering hiring you or the chick that thinks you're cute but is afraid you might be a dangerous nutcase will be.

Take notes on what you find, and whether the search results about you, if any, are good, bad, or indifferent.

Next try the Yahoo! search engine, yahoo.com. Yahoo! is second only to Google in the search engine world, although a distant second. The results WILL be much different. Again take notes.

If really motivated, you can also try Microsoft's Live Search, live.com, although that's a distant third at best.

Now all these three search engines can also do images searches (that means pictures) as well as video searches. You may want to check these as well, especially if your text based searches returned lots of information on you, i.e. there is lots of stuff on the Internet about you.

### **Maybe You Have Little or No Internet Presence?**

Where to start?

You might start by creating a LinkedIn profile and then connecting with some friends and colleagues in LinkedIn. It's free, easy, and cheap.

Next, you might review some books in your field on Amazon and set up an Amazon profile. This is also free, but you do need to be an Amazon customer.

Now head over to Technorati.com and find some blogs in your area, whether it be IT, marketing, cooking, or something else. There are blogs on almost every topic and profession, even the world's oldest! Read until you find some posts where you can add some useful and intelligent comments, and use your LinkedIn profile's URL.

OK, you've got a good start. Keep at it, and remember that it does take the search engines a little while to find your new Internet presence and then pay much attention.

### **You've Got More than a Little Internet Presence, Now What?**

Keep building. Keep creating content associated with your name.

Periodically try a new technique. There are lots of choices, but you can't sit still because the Internet is changing rapidly.

I'm going to try video next. Maybe I'll hate it and quit, or maybe I'll love it and my next gen Internet Presence will have lots of video.

Regularly google yourself to see what comes up.

You can also use the free Google Alerts service which will email you when Google finds new content with specific words and phrases. For example, I have an alert for "Ted Demopoulos".

### **And if you are an organization or business?**

Well you had better be googleable too. Certainly a search on your name better bring up your organization's Web site.

Also a google of what you do or sell should ideally find your web presence, but that may be much tougher.

Let's say you sell bathtubs or sex. A google of "bathtubs" or "sex" is probably not going to return anything about your business on the first few pages as these terms are just too competitive.

Hmmm, but what's special about your organization?

Maybe you specialize in "Antique 1700s reproduction bathtubs" or pictures of naked "bubble butt redheads" and can score highly on those and related search terms.

Then again, maybe your business is regional in nature, and you can score highly with the search engines on "Boston bathtubs" or "Toledo whorehouse."

## ***How to Bury Dirt***



Uh oh, some bad stuff or at least undesirable or inaccurate things about you are high in the search results. Digital dirt is the term some people use.

What you going do?

- You can request to have undesirable things taken down, but that may or may not work.

I'm sure Bosley Hair Replacement would love to have Bosley Medical Violations, an anti-Bosley site, go away, but despite Bosley's lawsuit it's still there.

Similarly, I'm sure United Airlines, united.com, would love to have untied.com, an anti-United Airlines site, go away, but I doubt it will.

- You can bury the digital dirt in the search results. This is usually the best course of action.

By generating lots of positive Internet content about yourself, the undesirable results could be relegated to page 40 or so of the search engines results, where nobody looks.

All the techniques we discussed before work well, but some negative search results just might not go away.

- If “undesirable results” just won’t go away, if for example you are OJ Simpson or allegedly embezzled a few billion dollars, there are two things you MUST do:
  1. Present your side of the story. That means some of the top ten results must be yours. You might directly refute the “undesirable results” or simply present yourself in an alternate and more favorable light.
  2. Know about the “undesirable results.” There are plenty of anecdotes about people who had digital dirt they didn’t know about that affected their lives negatively. For example, you might tell potential dates and employers, “I’m not THAT OJ Simpson.” If you don’t know you can’t do anything about it.

## **A Few Words About Blogs, Bulletin Boards and Other Interactive Media**

If there is anything negative about you (or your organization or products etc.) on a blog or similar media, you can go leave comments and directly defend yourself.

That doesn't mean you should! Everything needs to be taken on a case-by-case basis.

If the negative comments are silly and not believable, you should typically ignore them.

For example, when bloggers found Target appeared to be selling marijuana for \$25.25 and insisted it was a public relations crisis, Target ignored them. No one really believed they were selling pot; it was a simple computer glitch. Stoners were not lining up to buy marijuana at Target. No crisis ensued.

If you are at fault however, quickly and honestly step up and admit fault. Be honest and correct the problem as quickly as possible. Honesty and openness are the only way to defuse the situation! It's already out in the open, and you can't and shouldn't try to "run and hide."

## **So, Where Are You Now?**

In the Movie “The Jerk,” Steve Martin is very excited when his name first appears in the phonebook. He is in “print”; he’s made it.

The phonebook is obsolete. “Print” is getting closer to obsolete every day, despite my love of physical paper books.

If the “The Jerk” were made today, Steve Martin would be very excited when Google first indexes him.

Can you be Googled? Or Yahoo!ed or Microsoft Live Searched?

Do you like what comes up?

Where are you in building an Effective Internet Presence?

The trend is clear. More and more people are googling you, whether they are potential employers, dates, old friends and colleagues looking for you, the authorities investigating you, aliens considering abducting you, or who knows what else.

## **Beyond Googleability**

We've talked primarily about "googleability," the ability for others to look you up on the Internet and hopefully find good things about you, whether they want to date you, hire you, buy your insect repellent, play golf with you, or whatever.

We could look at an Effective Internet Presence as having three levels.

**1. Googleability:**

People can find you easily online, and you look good!

**2. Ubiquity:**

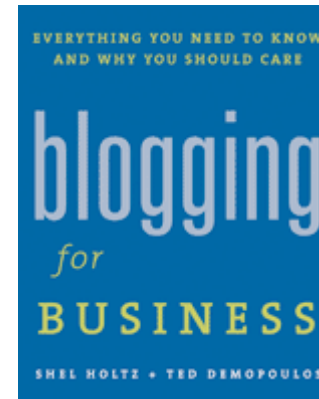
Not only do you google well, but you are all over the place in your niche. People NOT looking for you keep tripping over you, and hopefully lots of them dig what you have to say.

**3. Thought Leadership:**

You have new and independent thoughts and are credible. People may or may not agree with you, but they stop and read/listen. People discuss what you're talking about. You are widely accepted as innovative.

**Your Internet presence is becoming more and more important.  
Make it an Effective Internet Presence.**

## About The Author:



Ted Demopoulos is consultant, speaker and writer who specializes in the seemingly unlikely combination of Internet Business Strategy and Information Security.

“It’s all about information,” Ted says, “Either spreading it as far and wide as possible or restricting its access to those that need it, depending on the business requirements.”

He has been on the Internet forever and using email since well before the term ‘email’ was ever coined.

Ted has written several books on the Internet and Business, a couple of which are pictured above. He lives in Durham, New Hampshire, USA with his wife, three children, and dog who put up with him remarkably well.

Signup for Ted’s free newsletter at [www.EffectiveInternetPresence.com](http://www.EffectiveInternetPresence.com) to learn more about developing an Effective Internet Presence, including upcoming teleseminars and hopefully another ebook or two on the subject.

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