



# Kick2tart

## Your Graphic Design Career

By Starting Your  
Own Successful Website

Bronson Dunbar



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(FOR DOUBLE-SIDED PRINTING)

# **Kickstart Your Graphic Design Career**

By Starting Your  
Own Successful Website

Bronson Dunbar



<http://www.bronsondunbar.com>

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# Table of Contents

|                                                                                            |     |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| Acknowledgements .....                                                                     | vi  |
| Preface .....                                                                              | vii |
| Introduction .....                                                                         | 1   |
| 1 Why a Website? .....                                                                     | 3   |
| What Makes a Website Different? .....                                                      | 4   |
| Run Your Website Full Time or Part-Time .....                                              | 6   |
| What Are the Advantages of Starting a Website? .....                                       | 7   |
| What About an Online Designer Community? .....                                             | 8   |
| 2 Plan Before Jumping In and Starting Your Website                                         |     |
| Planning can be the difference between success and failure                                 |     |
| 3 Where to Host Your Website                                                               |     |
| Hosting is one of the most important working parts of a website                            |     |
| Who is SiteSell and what makes them special?                                               |     |
| Upload Your Own HTML                                                                       |     |
| BlockBuilder                                                                               |     |
| What else does Site Build It! have to offer?                                               |     |
| Brainstorm It!                                                                             |     |
| Site Build It! Forums                                                                      |     |
| Action Guide                                                                               |     |
| MHQ and TNT                                                                                |     |
| Resources HQ                                                                               |     |
| What is a Google Verification Tag?                                                         |     |
| 4 No Quick Short Cut Formula to Riches or Fame                                             |     |
| If you don't like working hard or being persistent you won't get far with anything in life |     |
| Quiet Times                                                                                |     |
| Overload                                                                                   |     |

Difficult Clients

Money Management

## 5 Getting Clients and Building Your Client Base

Clients Mean More than Money to Your Business

Getting Your Very First Clients and Client Testimonials

Getting Your First Paying Client

And The Rest Will Follow

Custom Client Projects

What happens if a client asks for a refund?

Building Your Client Base

Setup an Affiliate Program

Promote Yourself Anywhere You Can

Directory of Services or Pricelist

Media Kit

Print-On-Demand Shop

Offer Specials from Time to Time

What about paid advertising on other websites?

## 6 Using Social Media, like Facebook and Twitter

Social Media Can Be a Great Asset to Your Website

The Benefits of Using Social Media

What You Can Post About on Facebook and Twitter

Creating a Facebook Page for Your Website

How to Customize an Existing Facebook Page URL

Creating a Facebook page Welcome Tab HTML Page

Creating Your Facebook Welcome Tab app

Invite Contacts from Your Email Client to Join Your Facebook Page

Conclusion

About the Author

Share Your Success

Resources

Bonuses

Bonus 1

Bonus 2

Appendix A

Planning Your Website the Right Way Worksheet

Appendix B

Creating an Advanced Welcome HTML page

Alphabetical Index

# Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my father, Colin Dunbar, for helping make this book a reality. Without his help, my book would not be available in all the popular formats and it would not have come as far as it did in the timeframe, as well as with the copy editing and publishing advice.

Another person I owe a big thank you to is my mom, Marinda Dunbar, for all her love and support. I would like to thank both of my parents for always supporting me in all my endeavors, and helping me along the way on my journey.

I would also like to thank each and every one of my clients. Without you putting your trust and faith in me, I would not be where I am and who I am today.

# Preface

One of the first people to influence me in business and becoming my own boss is my father, Colin. He has always had a keen interest and knowledge of the business world and I would like to think this has rubbed off on me, and molded me into the business person I am today.

My creative streak and pursuit for perfection comes from my mother, Marinda. My mother loves to be creative and get things very close to perfect, and I believe I got these traits from her.

One of my all-time favorite people and a big influence in my life is Bruce Lee. He was a world famous martial artist as well as an icon all around the world. Despite all the odds and the obstacles that stood in his way, he still became successful and achieved his goals. The most important thing I learnt from him is to never give up no matter what.

Another influential person that I admire and look up to is Sir Richard Branson. He is to me, one of the greatest entrepreneurs of the 20th Century, and if I build an empire I would like it to be very close to the way he runs his company, Virgin.

Lastly, this person is not in the field of business or design: Hunter “Patch” Adams. He is a doctor that is trying to revolutionize the medical world. I admire his outlook on life, his philosophy of laughter and the way he works with people. One day, I would like to visit his hospital Gesundheit! Institute in Pocahontas County, West Virginia.

Bronson Dunbar  
22nd May 2012



# Introduction

Have you just finished your graphic design studies and can't seem to find a job because you have no experience or your portfolio does not show enough variety? Or are you tired of working for a boss who doesn't appreciate you, not to talk about the traveling costs and the time it takes to get to and from work?

Most people dream about working for themselves. Whether you are a graphic designer or not, *Kickstart Your Graphic Design Career By Starting Your Own Successful Website* will give you the information you need to start your own successful website and work for yourself.

In this book you will learn how to start and run a successful website as a business.

Find out why most websites fail and how you can avoid these mistakes by following the 5 steps in this book to plan your website the *right way*.

Learn how to get clients and keep building your client base by doing a few simple things.

Be prepared for some of the most common things that happen when starting and running your own business, whether it is a website or not.

Discover how you can use one of the most popular social networking sites to your advantage with your website.

I wrote this book because after I studied graphic design, something I enjoyed, I struggled to find a job. When I did, working for a boss was terrible. I want you to be able to work for yourself and become your own boss, doing what you enjoy.

## Kickstart Your Graphic Design Career

Just to recap what you will be able to take away from this book:

- You will learn why most websites fail and how you can avoid this by planning your website the *right way*.
- What is hosting and what to look for when choosing a host for your website.
- How you can get clients through your website and build your client base.
- How to use social networking sites like, Facebook and Twitter, to your advantage.

Let's get started!

# 1

## Why a Website?

Quick preview of what I'll be discussing in this chapter:

- Increase of Internet users.
- Starting your website full time or part-time.
- Advantages of starting your own website.
- Why you should not try and promote yourself as a designer and get business through a designer community website.

## What Makes a Website Different?

You've just completed your graphic design studies, and now you have to decide what you are going to do. You have the following options available...

- Find a job and work for a boss.
- Open your own graphic design business offline.
- Start your own online graphic design business through a website.

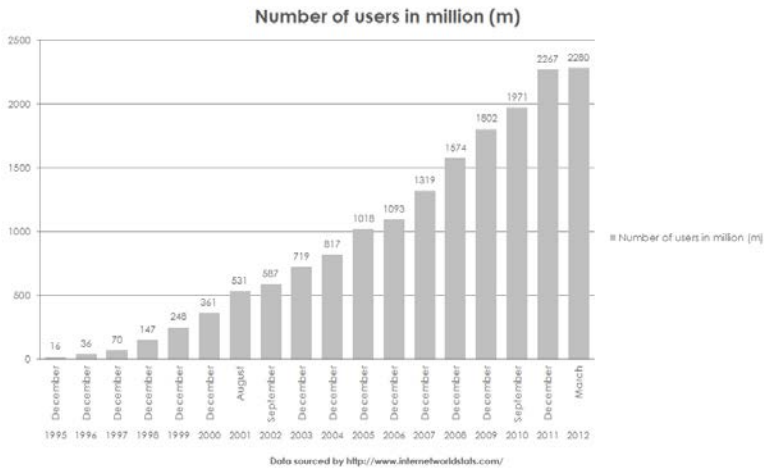
After I finished my studies I couldn't find a job, and when I did, working for a boss wasn't for me; travelling, working for someone else, etc. I couldn't open my own offline studio because of the cost involved (especially just after my parents paid for my studies).

So, I decided to go the online route and start my own graphic design business, using a website. I have grown as a designer and a business person by running my own business strictly online and making a living for myself. In *Kickstart Your Graphic Design Career*, I explain the do's and the don'ts when starting a website as a business. I offer guidelines on how you can grow your online business, get clients and make living for yourself.

*Why go online by starting a website?*

Since the Internet started in 1995 the number of users has gone through the stratosphere. Today the Internet is becoming more accessible to anybody that has a computer, as the prices from Internet Service Providers (ISP) have come down a lot.

All of this has changed as you can see in the graph below; more people are now connected to the Internet and can access the world wide web, which means there is a greater audience for anybody who has a website or more importantly an online business.



The number of Internet users is increasing every year, and it's not by a few hundred, but by *millions*. Because the Internet is becoming available to more people it makes the web a viable place to start a business.

In order for you to start an online business you will need a website where you can offer your services or sell your products. It is possible to run a business and get customers through a website as I explain in more detail in Chapter 5.

The great thing about starting your own online business is that you don't need to be a web developer or a technical person in order to do it. I had help and guidance along the way but I was not a technical guru. In this book I have included the key points as well as a worksheet for planning your own website the *right* way, so that anybody who is looking to start and run a successful online business can, and won't have to guess or wonder about how to go about it.

If you're a curious type of person like me, you can of course learn the technical side of things as it will only benefit you.

A website is created by using the web computer languages, HTML (Hyper Text Markup Language), CSS (Cascading Style Sheets) and sometimes JavaScript.

HTML is used to create the actual web page with basic formatting. This page can have text, images or a form. One example of a form is a contact form, where you type in your details to contact the owner of the website.

## Kickstart Your Graphic Design Career

To read more about HTML and how it works, go to the following link:  
<http://www.w3schools.com/html/>

CSS is used to change the look and feel of a web page and is used with HTML. For example, the way text, images or forms look on the page.

To read more about CSS and how it works, go to the following link:  
<http://www.w3schools.com/css/>

JavaScript can do many things, one example is it can be used to create animations on a page or add user interactivity to a page.

To read more about JavaScript and how it works, go to the following link: <http://www.w3schools.com/js/>

Depending on the type of website, there can be more involved, but for most sites all you need is HTML, CSS and maybe JavaScript.

Once the website is created, you need to register a domain which is, for example, *www.bronsondunbar.com*, and then the website is hosted with a hosting company in order for it to be available on the world wide web as I discuss in Chapter 3.

Please remember that you don't need to be a HTML, CSS or JavaScript guru in order to start a website.

You can start a website by using a Content Management System (CMS), such as WordPress, Joomla or SBI!'s BlockBuilder. The purpose of a CMS is to make it as easy as possible to start a website, all you have to do is to create and add keyword structured content to your website, as I discuss in Step 4 of Chapter 2, and you can be running your own site.

## Run Your Website Full Time or Part-Time

When I started my website, I had just finished my graphic design studies and could not find a job, so I decided to start and run my website full time. I did not have any financial commitments when my website started, that is why I was able to run my site full time from the get-go, but if your situation doesn't allow you to, running your website part-time is a better option.

If you have a job at the moment and you are relying on your income every month, it is better to start and run your website part-time until your site is generating enough income for you to live off. If you can start and run your website full time from the beginning, you can

## Why a Website?

possibly establish your online business in less time than by doing it part-time. Always weigh up the risks.

So, before you start making a steady income off your website you may want to start it part-time and then later run it full time, as your income grows.

## What Are the Advantages of Starting a Website?

If you look at a company that is well known, you will notice their website domain is the name of the company. A lot of designers and businesses like to register their website domain as the name of the business or if you are a designer your first and last name, because these are the words you want people to remember you by. For example, my site domain is *www.bronsondunbar.com*. It shows that you are an independent designer or business when referring people to your website or when you get found at the search engines and it makes it easier for people to remember your site.

You can use <http://www.checkdomain.com/> to see if the domain name you have in mind is available. I would recommend doing this before you start planning, designing and choosing the hosting for your website.

By having your own domain, you have the option of setting up your own email address, such as *bronson@bronsondunbar.com*. With an email address from your own domain, you will look more professional than sending clients an email from a Gmail, Yahoo! or Hotmail account, which most people have.

And here are the other benefits...

### *It is cheaper*

Starting a website is much cheaper than trying to start an offline business because you do not have costs such as office furniture, stock, rent, travelling costs, etc. Unless you have the financial backing, it is nearly impossible to do, especially just after finishing your studies.

## Kickstart Your Graphic Design Career

### *Search Engines*

With a website you also have search engines such as Google, Bing and Yahoo! on your side, which if your website is structured the *right way*, are a great advantage to have. I will get to that in Chapter 2.

### *Reach more people*

By starting your own website, you have the opportunity to reach many more people than you could offline, within your own town or city. You also have more credibility as a designer or business by having your own website.

### *Flexible working hours*

You set your own working hours and you don't have to be stuck in the 9-5 routine. If you are like me and enjoy working at night, you can do that without any hassles.

### *Affiliate program*

By setting up an affiliate program for your website, you can have other people promoting what you offer by giving them a percentage of each order they get you, no matter where they are in the world.

### *Social Media*

With the rise of social media and the popularity of websites like Facebook and Twitter, you can effectively market your website and what you offer, without having to spend money, as I explain in Chapter 6.

And I decided to leave the best for last...

### **You can do it from home.**

Many people wish they can work from home, they see it as a dream. By starting your own website, you will be able to work and earn an income from home. No need to travel hours, get stuck in traffic, work with somebody that drives you nuts or worry about getting retrenched.

## What About an Online Designer Community?

Some people might say, why not just create an account at an online designer community website like WhosCreative™ (<http://www.whoscreative.com>), display your portfolio and bid on projects that are advertised on the site.

## Why a Website?

If you go this route, consider how many other designers are in the community, in other words a lot of designers in one place. And if there are jobs available, you have to compete with every other designer by trying to offer the lowest bid, which at times can be shooting yourself in the foot, just to get the job and make money for yourself.

This can turn into an uphill battle and be difficult if you want to make a name for yourself as an independent designer or business.

With all of this in mind, I am sure you can see why starting a website as your own online business on the web is better than starting an offline business or working for a boss in an unstable economy.

Just to recap what was discussed in this chapter:

- The increase in Internet users since it started is proof that the web is a viable business opportunity.
- HTML, CSS and JavaScript are the most common web computer languages used to create websites and you also get CMS's if you do not have the time to learn these languages.
- You can start your website part-time or full time, depending on your circumstances.
- With your own website you will be able to reach many more people than in your own town or city.
- Trying to establish yourself as a designer or business through an online designer community can turn into an uphill battle and may not be worth it in the long run.

Time to get on to the next chapter...

Kickstart Your Graphic Design Career

**Designers Dream**  
Template  
Being Creatively Inane...  
Search Engine Optimized  
All Photoshop De...  
Google Yahoo! Bing  
+ All Photoshop De...  
+ All Photoshop De...  
Google Yahoo! Bing

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**Planning Your Website**  
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**#1** How to Work With the DesignersDream 2012 Template

**#2** Shortcuts and Tips When Working with the accompanying Photoshop PSD files

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