




Subversive Web Marketing

An Overview





The purpose of this portion of our presentation is to describe our plan for using low-cost electronic methods, alongside the more traditional marketing approaches, to market MuVo.com




Subversive Web Marketing

- Questions To Be Answered
 - What is subversive web marketing?
 - Why should we use subversive web marketing techniques?
 - What promotional avenues are available to us in the world of subversive web marketing?





This presentation will address three basic questions with regard to subversive web marketing:

1. First, what is subversive web marketing?
2. Secondly, why should we use subversive web marketing techniques?
3. And finally, what promotional avenues are available to us in the world of subversive web marketing?



What Is Subversive Web Marketing?

- A set of techniques used to increase traffic to a web site which are specifically meant for use on the web
 - “Subversive” because it is largely transparent to the end user
 - “Web” because it is almost exclusively electronic
 - “Marketing” because it seeks to present the site in such a way that more visitors are attracted and then converted to regular customers




Subversive Web Marketing is a term used to describe a set of marketing techniques which are specific to use on the web. The goal of Subversive Web Marketing is to use electronic means (the World Wide Web, email, newsgroups, ezines, etc.) to present a web site in such a way that more visitors are attracted and then converted to regular customers.

Attraction of visitors is only the first step and is deceiving (as a measure of a web site’s success) if those visitors are not then converted to regular customers and site registrants.

We call this approach to marketing a web site “subversive” because it is largely transparent (although not always) to the end user.


We call this approach to marketing a web site “web” marketing because it is almost exclusively electronic in nature.

And we call this approach “marketing” because, as was mentioned above, it seeks to present the web site in such a way that more visitors are attracted and then converted to regular customers.




Why Subversive Web Marketing?

- At least 58% of visitors to a web site arrive as a result of web / electronic marketing techniques¹
 - Links (17.2%)
 - Search Engines (16.5%)
 - Web Directories (11.3%)
 - Email Signatures (7.0%)
 - Usenet Group References (5.9%)




¹ GVU 10th WWW Survey - http://www.gvu.gatech.edu/user_surveys/survey-1998-10/



The most recent user study conducted by the Graphics, Visualization and Usability department of the Georgia Institute of Technology (in October 1998) found that at least 58% of visitors to a web site arrive as a result of marketing techniques which use the web or other electronic means as their primary vehicle.


1. 17.2% of the nearly 17,000 responses* indicated use of links to find web sites.
2. 16.5% of those nearly 17,000 responses indicated use of search engines.
3. 11.3% indicated use of web directories.
4. 7.0% indicated use of email signatures.
5. And 5.9% indicated use of usenet references.

* Note that there were 3,291 respondents but 16,891 responses because respondents were allowed to choose more than one option. These percentage figures are based on the total number of responses rather than respondents.




Why Subversive Web Marketing?

- Only 24% of visitors to a web site arrive as a result of more traditional marketing techniques¹
 - Printed Media (12.2%)
 - Television (6.2%)
 - Books (5.4%)



¹ GVU 10th WWW Survey - http://www.gvu.gatech.edu/user_surveys/survey-1998-10/



The same study indicated that 24% of visitors to a web site arrive as a result of more traditional marketing techniques:

1. 12.2% of the nearly 17,000 responses indicated that the visitors arrived as a result of seeing a reference to the web site in printed media.
2. 6.2% indicated that the visitors saw a reference to the web site on television.
3. 5.4% indicated that the visitors saw a reference to the web site in one or more books.



Why Subversive Web Marketing?

- The remaining 18% of visitors to a web site arrive as a result of:
 - Referrals from friends (12.6%)
 - At least part of this can legitimately be seen as a result of viral marketing, a standard web marketing technique
 - Miscellaneous (5.6%)¹



¹ GVU 10th WWW Survey - http://www.gvu.gatech.edu/user_surveys/survey-1998-10/

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The remaining 18% of visitors to web sites arrived as a result of other activities:

1. 12.6% arrived as a result of referrals from friends (note that at least part of this can legitimately be seen as a result of viral marketing, a standard web marketing technique – it is included in this “other” category in the interests of being conservative in our estimates).
2. 5.6% of the nearly 17,000 responses indicated arrival at the web site as a result of miscellaneous reasons.



Why Subversive Web Marketing?

- Ignoring subversive web marketing techniques in favor of marketing a site solely using traditional marketing approaches would result in a loss of 58% of a site's potential visitors




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Therefore, ignoring subversive web marketing techniques in favor of marketing a site solely through traditional marketing approaches would result in a loss of 58% of a site's potential visitors, and logically, a loss of 58% of potential conversion events (purchases, site registrations, etc.)



Eight Promotional Avenues

- Search Engine Positioning
- Banner Advertising
- Ezine Advertising
- Newsgroup Contributions
- Opt-In Email Lists
- Viral Marketing
- Reciprocal Link Relationships
- Autoresponder Co-Op Partnerships



Under the heading of “Subversive Web Marketing,” there are eight primary avenues by which a web site can be promoted (there are obviously others – this is just a summary of some of the major avenues which are commonly used):

1. Search Engine Positioning, through which we will attempt to position MuVo.com in the first 30 results on major search engines for particular key words and phrases.
2. Banner Advertising, through which we will attempt to a) accomplish branding; b) obtain conversion events; and, c) obtain profile information for potential customers.
3. Ezine Advertising and Newsgroup Contributions, through which we will attempt to consistently place content-rich articles in front of end users who have little or no knowledge of MuVo.com.
4. Opt-In Email Lists, through which we will announce major launches and events related to MuVo.com
5. Viral Marketing, through which we will solicit the help of visitors and site registrants in marketing the site to others
6. Reciprocal Link Relationships, through which we will carefully promote MuVo.com on other web sites
7. Autoresponder Co-Op Partnerships, through which we will utilize the email programs of other web sites to promote MuVo.com



Search Engine Positioning

- 84.8% of web surfers use search engines to find web sites¹
- 84.6% of those searchers do so with the intent to buy at least once a month¹
- Consensus: anything lower than the top 30 rankings on a search engine is virtually useless



¹ GVU 10th WWW Survey - http://www.gvu.gatech.edu/user_surveys/survey-1998-10/

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Search Engine Positioning is vital to the promotion of any web site because 84.8% of web surfers use search engines to find web sites.

In addition, 84.6% of those searchers do so at least once a month with the specific intent to make purchases.

Proper search engine positioning will market MuVo to a well-targeted audience which is prime for conversion from visitors to purchasers.

The consensus among the web industry today tells us that anything lower than the top 30 rankings on a search engine is virtually useless.



Search Engine Positioning (cont.)

- Therefore, it is important to a web site's success that it be ranked within the top 30 rankings of major search engines for appropriate key words and phrases



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Therefore, it will be important to our success that MuVo be ranked within the top 30 rankings of the 10-15 major search engines for appropriate key words and phrases:

music
audio
sound
band
song
music downloads
cd
mp3 player
specific genre names
specific artist names
etc.




Search Engine Positioning (cont.)

- How to Achieve Top 30 Rankings
 - Choose appropriate (relevant) key words
 - Use meta tags (key word and description)
 - Employ key word optimization
 - Use doorway and information frame pages targeted for specific search engines
 - Track, evaluate key metrics, adjust! Track, evaluate key metrics, adjust!





Achieving high rankings in the major search engines is a meticulous process which involves a number of steps:

1. Choosing appropriate (relevant) key words and phrases
2. Using proper meta tags on individual web pages
3. Employing key word optimization
4. Using doorway and information frame pages targeted for specific search engines
5. And perhaps the most important part of the process – track results, evaluate key metrics, and adjust! And then do it all over again!



Search Engine Positioning (cont.)

- Definitions
 - Key Words and Phrases: a set of words and short phrases which describe the contents of a particular web page
 - Meta Tags: hidden code within a web site which tells various search engines (although not all) what the main subjects of a web site are
 - Key Word Optimization: the inclusion of key words and phrases as a certain percentage of the total word count on a particular web page



Some of the terms used in search engine positioning may not be familiar to everyone, so here's a brief primer:

1. Key Words and Phrases: a set of words and short phrases which describe the contents of a particular web page
2. Meta Tags: hidden code within a web site which tells various search engines (although not all) what the main subjects of a web site are – for our purposes, the important meta tags are: a) a tag which contains a list of keywords and phrases; and, b) a tag which contains a description of the web page
3. Key Word Optimization: the inclusion of key words and phrases as a certain percentage of the total word count on a particular web page (various search engines uses this statistic to compare pages which treat a particular subject – the closer a page is to the somewhat random and often-changing optimization percentage set by a particular search engine, the higher that page will rank in that search engine)



Definitions (cont.)

- Definitions (cont.)
 - Doorway Pages: web pages designed specifically to rank high in particular search engine listings. They typically include a simple graphic (or Flash movie), perhaps some descriptive text, and a “Click to Enter” link. Clicking on the link brings the user to the home page (or a sub page) of the main web site. Each page contains key word language in a specific form which is targeted toward a particular search engine.



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Doorway Pages: web pages designed specifically to rank high in particular search engine listings. They typically include a simple graphic (or Flash movie), perhaps some descriptive (but often hidden) text, and a “Click to Enter” link.

Clicking on the link brings the user to the home page (or a sub page) of the main web site. Each page contains key word language in a specific form which is targeted toward a particular search engine.

These pages are often hosted under a different domain than the main web site as search engines are monitoring the number of links into a web site as a means of increasing or decreasing its relative rank in a search.



Search Engine Positioning (cont.)

- Definitions (cont.)
 - Information Frame Pages: similar to doorway pages, these are pages targeted to specific search engines. The key difference is that they employ frames code, with only one frame which presents the home or sub page and the targeted key word language within the “noframes” tag.



Information Frame Pages: these are similar to doorway pages as they are pages which are targeted to specific search engines. The key difference is that they employ frames code, with only one frame which presents the home or sub page and the targeted key word language within the “noframes” tag.



Banner Advertising

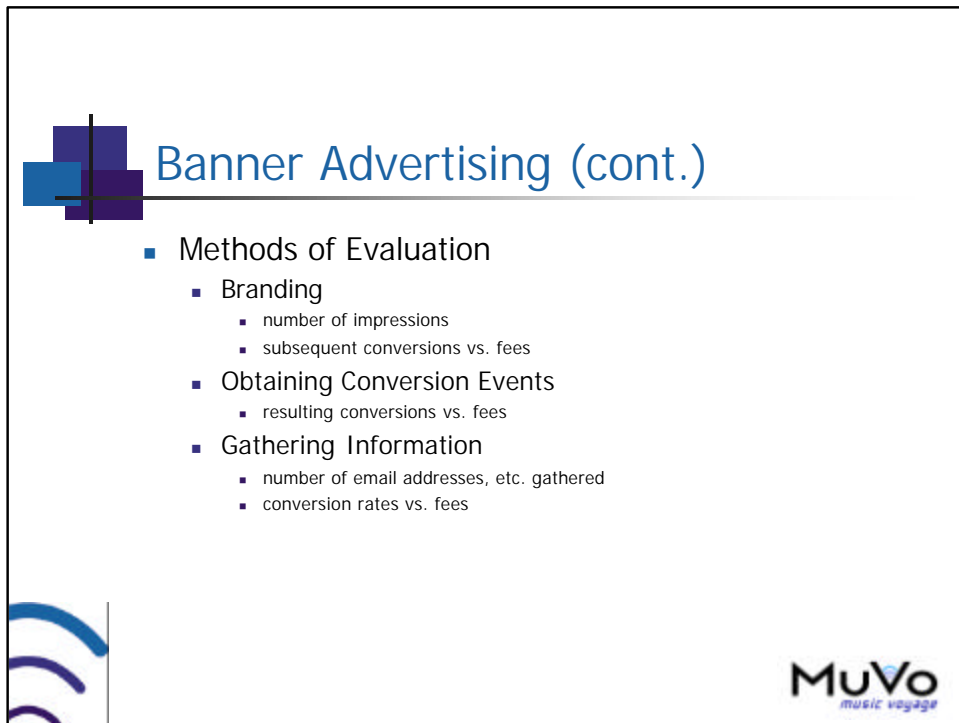
- Three Basic Objectives
 - Branding
 - Obtaining Conversion Events (sales, registrations, etc.)
 - Gathering Information from Potential Customers
- Three Methods of Evaluation
 - Banner advertising should be evaluated on the basis of success in meeting those three objectives
 - The criteria are different for each objective



In our banner advertising efforts, we will have three basic objectives:

1. Branding
2. Obtaining conversion events (sales, registrations, etc.)
3. Gathering profile information from potential customers

As there are three basic objectives (and different banner ads with different target audiences and different placements will be used to reach each of those objectives), we will evaluate the success of each banner with different criteria

The slide features a title 'Banner Advertising (cont.)' in blue text, positioned to the right of a decorative graphic consisting of overlapping blue and purple squares. Below the title is a bulleted list of evaluation methods. In the bottom left corner, there is a graphic of three blue curved lines. In the bottom right corner, the 'MuVo music voyage' logo is displayed.

Banner Advertising (cont.)

- Methods of Evaluation
 - Branding
 - number of impressions
 - subsequent conversions vs. fees
 - Obtaining Conversion Events
 - resulting conversions vs. fees
 - Gathering Information
 - number of email addresses, etc. gathered
 - conversion rates vs. fees

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Banner ads whose purpose is branding will be evaluated on the basis of:

1. The number of impressions
2. The number of subsequent conversions (the number of people who do not click through the banner but who later visit the site and register, make purchases, etc. – this can now be tracked by some ad services through the use of cookies), the value or worth of those conversions to us (determined through simple ROI calculations), and the fees we paid to run the ad

Banner ads whose purpose is obtaining conversion events will be evaluated by comparing the worth of the resulting conversions to the fees we paid to run the ad. Some banner ad companies (Bluestreak is a good example) are beginning to create banners with proprietary technology which will allow conversions to take place within the banner itself so that the visitor never has to leave the site where the banner is being shown.

Banner ads whose purpose is gathering information will be evaluated by comparing the worth of each person who submits information (to sign up for a MuVo newsletter for example) to the fees we paid to run the ad.



Banner Advertising (cont.)

- Branding
 - AdKnowledge Study
 - 24 percent of banner campaign-related conversions (sales, registrations, etc.) were direct results of an ad click
 - 32 percent came from users who viewed an ad but did not click (visited the site later)
 - 44 percent came from repeat customers
 - Conclusion: banner advertising can have significant branding impact



Banner advertising can have a significant branding impact on the person viewing the ad.

A study recently conducted by AdKnowledge found that while 24 percent of banner-related conversions were direct results of an ad click, 32 percent of conversions came from users who viewed an ad but did not click (visiting the site at a later time). And 44 percent came from repeat customers.

This tells us that the banner ad was successful in accomplishing a branding purpose.



Banner Advertising (cont.)

- Branding (cont.)
 - Problem: a significant and ongoing investment is required to accomplish branding through banner ads
 - Amazon.com and eBay spend approximately \$6M per month on their banner advertising programs
 - Solution: the most effective online branding approach for MuVo is to run our banners through the Creative network (where our primary customer lives anyway)




The problem for MuVo, however, is that studies have generally shown that a significant and ongoing investment is required to accomplish branding through banner ads.

For example, Amazon and eBay spend approximately \$6 million per month solely on their banner advertising programs.



This type of investment is obviously not practical for MuVo.

The solution is to realize that the most effective online branding approach for MuVo is to run our banners through the Creative network (web sites, software packages, etc.) – this is where our primary customer lives anyway.



Banner Advertising (cont.)


- Obtaining Conversion Events
 - Average click through rate is currently less than 0.4 percent
 - This is an average figure which takes into account both well-designed, well-targeted banners and horribly-designed, horribly-targeted banners
 - With well-designed and well-targeted ads, it is possible to achieve a 5-6% click through rate



With regard to using banner advertising to obtaining conversion events, the current statistics are not entirely encouraging.



The average click through rate (the percentage of people who are exposed to a banner and then click on it) is less than 0.4 percent. However, this is an average figure which takes into account the entire spectrum of banner ads: one end, well-designed, well-targeted banners and on the other end, horribly-designed, horribly-targeted banners.

With well-designed and well-targeted ads, it is within the realm of possibility to achieve a 5-6% click through rate, which is generally much more attractive.



Banner Advertising (cont.)

- Obtaining Conversion Events (cont.)
 - Important Metrics
 - How much is one visitor worth (VW) to us?
 - How many visitors (NV) does a particular ad bring?
 - What does the banner ad cost us (BC)?
 - If $VW * NV > BC$, then it is a "good ad buy," regardless of how much the ad costs us



No matter what the click through rate is, however, banners designed to obtain conversion events can be effective regardless of the click through rate.


A simple ROI calculation will determine whether a banner is effective or not.

1. First, we have to determine how much one visitor is worth to us. The worth of one visitor is easily calculated by dividing monthly revenue by the number of unique visitors in a month.
2. Secondly, we have to determine how many visitors a particular banner on a particular web site (or through a particular banner ad service) in a particular time frame brings to MuVo. This is easily discovered through traffic reports (either reports we compile ourselves or reports provided to us by a banner ad service).
3. Thirdly, we have to know how much the banner ad costs us.

If the number of visitors times the worth of one visitor is greater than the cost of the ad, then it is a good ad buy, regardless of how much the ad costs us. If it is less than the cost of the ad, it is not a good ad buy, regardless of how little the ad costs us.



Again, these metrics represent a valid measurement when obtaining conversion events is the objective of the banner ad.

There are even banner ad services which are now charging on a pay per conversion basis, which is extremely attractive. More investigation is necessary, though.



Banner Advertising (cont.)


- Gathering Customer Information
 - Important Metrics
 - How many potential customers submit their profile information (CI) through a particular banner ad?
 - What percentage of those people (PE), when contacted, are converted to customers
 - What is the cost of obtaining customers through other means (CC)?
 - If $(CI * PE) / \text{Cost of Ad} < CC$, then it is a "good ad buy," regardless of how much the ad costs us



When using banner advertisements to gather customer information, another simple ROI calculation becomes the basis for evaluation:



1. We first need to know how many potential customers submit profile information through a particular banner ad.
2. Secondly, we need to know what percentage of those people, when contacted, are converted – make purchases, register for the site, etc.
3. Finally, we need to know what the cost is of obtaining customers through other means.

If the number of potential customers who submit information times the percentage of people who are converted, divided by the cost of the ad is greater than the cost of obtaining customers through other means, then it is a good ad buy regardless of how much the ad costs us. Conversely, if it is less than the cost of obtaining customers through other means, then it is not a good ad buy regardless of how little the ad costs us.



Ezine Advertising

- Ezines: electronic newsletters
- We currently have an unedited list of 526 music-related ezines
- Although ezine sponsorship can be effective, even more effective is the submission of articles (due to credibility issues)
 - We will have an endless supply of articles which can be submitted to genre-specific ezines a few days after they first appear on MuVo.com, along with a link back to our web site



Ezines are electronic newsletters which are typically emailed to a list of subscribers for free. Although they often employ mailing list software, these are not discussions – they are one-way newsletters.

We have an unedited list of 526 music-related ezines. The list is unedited because some of them may actually be web sites of print magazines and not actually email newsletters. That doesn't mean those web sites don't have value for us – just that they belong in a different promotional category. Some of these 526 ezines may also turn out to be discussion lists. The list needs to be categorized according to genre.

Some people don't realize that there is a better use of ezines than simple classified ads (which are largely ineffective) and sponsorships (which can be even more effective than banner ads). The most effective approach to "advertising" in ezines will be to submit articles to music-related ezines on a regular basis. We will have a virtually endless supply of articles which can be submitted to genre-specific ezines a few days after they first appear on MuVo.com, along with a link back to our web site.

Advantages:

1. There is no cost to us to have ezines run these articles
2. The links will have more credibility than sponsorships and classifieds.



Ezine Advertising (cont.)

- We can also experiment with sponsorships (many ezines will allow us to advertise at no extra charge in exchange for the content we provide)



We can also experiment with sponsorships in ezines and evaluate their effectiveness through simple ROI calculations (similar to those used for banner ads).

In fact, many ezines will allow us to advertise at no extra charge if we provide articles. Some online marketers have experienced their best results when an ezine contains both an article they wrote and a sponsorship notice.



Newsgroup Contributions

- In addition to submitting articles to relevant ezines, articles can be posted to relevant newsgroups (as long as there is no hint of commercial interest) a few days after they appear on MuVo.com, with links back to the web site
- We currently have an unedited list of 1,639 music-related newsgroups




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Newsgroups are discussion lists which are generally very non-commercial in nature. They are in fact very hostile to any suggestion of commercial promotion in their midst.



However, they generally accept content which is provided for free. So in addition to submitting articles to relevant ezines, articles can be posted to relevant newsgroups (as long as there is no hint of commercial interest) a few days after they appear on MuVo.com, with links back to the web site.

We currently have an unedited list of 1,639 music-related newsgroups. This list needs to be categorized according to genres.



Opt-In Email Lists

- Email lists from PostMaster Direct and other similar opt-in email services can be effectively used when MuVo.com is launched and at other key points in its life (new product launches, artist-specific promotions, etc.)



There are several services on the web which offer opt-in email lists for purchase. Opt-in email lists are lists of people (and their email addresses, of course) who have asked to be notified of events, product promotions, news, etc. regarding certain subjects. There are many such opt-in lists related to music (some of which number in the millions).

These lists can be effectively used when MuVo.com is launched and at other key points in its life (the launches of Explore and Create, new Creative product launches, artist-specific promotions, etc.).

They can also be used as invitations to subscribe to free MuVo newsletters (this would reduce the commercial nature of the initial mailing and allow further marketing to be done to a larger list – an invitation to visit MuVo.com might not result in the same number of site registrations as a direct invitation to subscribe to a music-related newsletter; this might be particularly effective if the opt-in email lists were genre-specific).



Viral Marketing


- Viral marketing is a technique for web advertising through which we would rely on our site visitors to publicize the site
- Three Specific Approaches (with more to come)
 - Musical Greeting Cards
 - “Download-of-the-Day” Icons
 - Affiliate Programs



Viral marketing is a technique for web advertising through which we would rely on our site visitors to publicize the site.

Three specific approaches have occurred to us, although there are certainly many other things which could be done in this vein:

1. Musical Greeting Cards – these are electronic “cards” which people can send to their friends. The “cards” would include information on MuVo, along with links back to the site. Genre-specific and artist-specific cards would be especially effective.
2. “Download of the Day” icons – these would be small graphics (run by a Javascript program) which we would allow people to place on their websites. Through the Javascript program, we would rotate the available download on a daily basis. People would place them on their site as a way of keeping content fresh, and the link back to us would drive further traffic to MuVo.com. Sitepoint (www.sitepoint.com) uses a similar concept with their “Tip of the Day” feature.
3. Affiliate Programs – depending on the margin we have on certain products, CDs, downloads, etc., we might consider beginning an affiliate program whereby people could earn commissions through selling our items through their web site. Linkshare and Commission Junction offer services to manage such programs.



Reciprocal Link Relationships

- Must be cultivated very carefully to prevent loss of traffic
- Volume of links into a site plays heavily in the weighting some of the major search engines give to web sites, so reciprocal links cannot be ignored
- Links to content providers may be the best approach




Reciprocal link relationships must be cultivated very carefully because for every link into MuVo.com, we would need to provide a link off of the site, making it more difficult to keep traffic.

If this was the only consideration, it might be tempting to not enter into reciprocal link relationships at all. Unfortunately, many of the major search engines are now weighting their listings at least partially on the basis of the number of links into a site. In other words, the more sites that link to MuVo.com, the higher it will be listed within search engines.

We will therefore need to carefully consider partners with whom we wish to establish reciprocal link relationships. Perhaps the key here will be to seek out web sites which will provide us with content for the site. In exchange, we will provide a small link at the bottom of articles and other content, and ask them to provide a link back to us from their site. This might “weight” the reciprocal link relationship in our favor a bit more.


Of course, none of this discussion is related to links between MuVo.com and the Creative family of web sites. Those links will of course be included. Links back from other Creative web sites, as well as links from doorway and information frame pages, will also help our rankings in search engines.

Because of the care which is required, these relationships will not be established until sometime after site launch when we will be in a better position to evaluate the results of such relationships.



Autoresponder Co-Op Partners

- An often overlooked, but highly effective technique for marketing a web site
- Two basic uses of autoresponders:
 - "Email this article to me"
 - Other web sites' guestbook thank you's



Autoresponders are an often overlooked, but highly effective technique for marketing a web site.

All articles on MuVo.com should have a link reading "To receive your own copy of this article via email, click here," or something to that effect. This link would be to a form which would require the user to enter their name and email address (along with traditional opt-in and opt-out check boxes). Once they have entered their name and email address, our autoresponder would send them the article in text format. We would then have their name and email address to use in future electronic marketing programs.

Another technique which can be highly effective is to contact other web sites and offer to send out guestbook and member registration thank you's in exchange for the right to include our message within the thank you email as if it is coming from the owner of the other web site. In other words, when someone registers at musicabc.com, the form sends one of our autoresponders an email which then responds to the registrant with a thank you letter from musicabc.com. The thank you letter says something to the effect of "Thank you for registering at our web site...As a way of saying thank you, we are also including a free article on the Back Street Boys. The article is written by so-and-so, an authority on music trends among teenage fans. Etc., etc. Within the article, we include information on MuVo.com and how to get a lot more interesting information.

Fan sites might be a tremendous opportunity for this type of program and would allow us to have genre- and artist-specific autoresponder messages with links back to appropriate information on MuVo.com