

Your Web Site and WordPress

By [Peter Lawrence Alexander](#) / August 10, 2008 / Links updated July 2016

In my attendance recently of the [Virginia Production Alliance](#) in Richmond, Virginia, I met Dan Portnoy of the [Portnoy Media Group](#). Dan came and spoke about how producers and artists can use the Internet to market themselves and their films.

As part of film/actor/composer marketing, Dan recommended building your web site with a free program called WordPress. Well, that caught my attention because that's the program Sonic Control now uses. It's also the program Dan Portnoy uses along with some other pretty impressive company sites. Below is a short list so that you can get an idea of how flexible WordPress is, and how you might use it to build your site and promote yourself.

[The Walt Disney Company](#)

[Alanis Morissette](#)

[Sony Music](#)

[Variety Magazine](#)

There's also a [WordPress For Dummies](#) book.

You can do the work yourself. Or you can bring in a designer to help you. What's great about WordPress is that it's built around what the industry calls a CMS – content management system. On several sites Alexander University has, we've struggled with the CMS that's been provided. WordPress solves that problem, and we're moving several sites to it using an outside designer.

If you go to a company who's developed their own CMS, the cost of site development, which also requires hosting your site on their servers for \$60 a month or more, is seriously high.

By comparison, you can host your site on servers like [Bluehost.com](#) and [Dreamhost.com](#) for \$100 a year.

So financially, WordPress could be a good move for you.

Another benefit of WordPress is that indexes every word for you, which makes it easier for search engines to find you.

You can setup podcasts and RSS feeds with it.

And you can add video.

What Dan recommends is a little known site called [Vimeo.com](#). With Vimeo, you can post your videos there, and get code to post the video on your web site. You can store up to 13 files each up to 500MB and have them performed in full screen HiDef.

Compared to YouTube, screen size is better. The YouTube player size is 490 x 400 pixels. The Vimeo player is 650 x 370.

What's great about this is that starting with [QuickTime 7](#), any personal computer can play HD without additional hardware.

For a producer/film, Dan suggested the following architecture for the site:

- Main page
- Cast/Crew
- Synopsis
- Contact
- Links (important for Social Networking)
- Store (optional)

For a composer, Cast/Crew could be projects you've worked on, while Synopsis could be your bio.

Dan also suggested the need for an action component to give customers/clients a reason to return to your web site.

For a mailer program, Dan recommends [Constant Contact](#) where the pricing is based on the number of names in your list (up to 50,000) not how many times you e-mail.

Design Considerations

A marketing/merchandising decision you have to make is how you the composer want to use your site. The marketing options are:

- a living business card with minimal flash that moves quickly for the end user
- a very clever hot looking site loaded with Flash and other graphics that's filled with show appeal
- a working business-to-business web site for presentation, FTP, etc.

A Living Business Card – A good example is [David Newman's](#) site.

Show Appeal – There are a lot of these, but UK game composer [Ian Livingstone's](#) is most impressive in this regard, as was the late [Michael Kamen's](#).

Business-to-Business – A B2B site is going to avoid Flash because it's a working business site used for communication and work flow.

How Much Music?

Well, in band marketing that I've done, I've found that for a short demo, 30 seconds is enough. If someone wants to hear more, they can ask. This falls in with Dan's advice which is don't give away too much for free. You want people coming back for more.

Men in Black?

Another trait I've found on many composer web sites is the use of white lettering on a black background. On one hand it can look cool, but not when 60 or more other composers are using the same idea! Another reason not to use white lettering on black background is that's it's hard to read. When I worked in the ad agency business, we used to study Starch Reports which told us how well a print responded and what parts were read. A headline in reverse was fine. Very eye catching. But when you have a lot of text with white on black, readership drops dramatically because it's so hard to read.

So, rethink if you want to have a "black" web site.

Conclusion

Marketing yourself as a composer is a tough job. But by using the materials suggested here and some of these ideas, it just might get easier for you.

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